Pacifist to Padre
Bishop, Donald M.

Published by Marine Corps University Press

Bishop, Donald M.


For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/85794

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=3003908
the Army garrison forces on Iwo heard of our plight. Before we were even aware of his intentions, he had secured a plane, flew some 600 miles south to Saipan, and returned with nearly half a ton of gear for Passover. Because of him and his unsolicited cooperation, several hundred Jewish boys sat down onboard their respective ships to usher in the Passover festival of 1945. It is worth recording also that each Friday night while we remained together on Iwo, Chaplain Elder not only rounded up the Jewish men of his Army outfit for Sabbath services, but he also attended himself and worshiped with them.

An experience at the San Diego Marine Corps base will illustrate how most of our chaplains follow the policy set down by Chaplain Workman. It concerns Lieutenant Commander Walter A. Mahler, then senior chaplain at the base. A Jewish boy came to him for counseling. It was apparent immediately that at least part of the man’s trouble stemmed from the fact that he wore his Jewishness with uncomfortable awkwardness. He felt so pitifully exposed, as a member of a minority group, that he could not make a wholesome adjustment to his new surroundings and life. I suppose Walter Mahler could have slipped out easily from under that one if he had wanted to. He could have said it was none of his business as a Catholic chaplain to help a Jewish man adjust to his Jewishness. He might have told the lad to see the Jewish chaplain on his next visiting day at the base. He could have, and he might have, but he did not. For that

---

21 Father Walter A. Mahler, a Catholic priest from the Diocese in Pittsburgh, PA, was ordained in 1933 and entered the Navy as a chaplain in 1939. He was the ship’s chaplain for the USS Astoria (CA 34) and survived its sinking at Savo Island in 1942. He continued serving in the Navy during Korea and Vietnam, retiring as a captain. See “Resources,” Navy Chaplain 3, no. 1 (1989).
would have been neither the “Navy way” nor Walter Mahler’s way. Instead, Mahler patiently sat the young man down and said to him:

*Look here, my boy, don’t you ever let me catch you walking around this base ashamed of the fact that you’re a Jew. I, as a Catholic priest, get down on my knees every morning and pray to a Jew, Jesus! I hold a Jewish girl, Mary, to be one of the sacred personalities of my faith. You just walk out of this office and hold your head as high as you know how. Being a Jew is something to be proud of, not something to hide.*

I had several occasions later to work with that Jewish boy. I doubt if anything I or another rabbi might have said could ever have awakened him in quite the way that Walter Mahler had. Suddenly, he had acquired a new and wholesome respect for himself, his people, and his faith. And he had also developed an abiding sense of gratitude to a Catholicism that was eager to acknowledge its origins in the faith of his own fathers. This is the Navy way.

What makes this way all the more potentially encouraging is the fact that where chaplains behave so, their men soon catch the spirit of the thing and do likewise. On Passover of 1944, a group of Marine Corps cooks and messmen—among them Greeks, Italians, Scotch-Irish, but not a single Jew—worked for weeks, laid in supplies, studied Jewish recipes, cooked gefilte fish and matzo-ball soup, borrowed sheets for tablecloths, and filled old ketchup bottles with flowers, so that 70 Jewish
men and women could sit down to a traditional Seder feast. On the following Day of Atonement in an overseas camp, much the same sort of thing was repeated by a different group, by Christian men who gave up many hours of precious free time to prepare our dinner for the night of Yom Kippur, and who would not even allow our Jewish boys to show their gratitude by helping to clean up, because they said, “This is your holiday.” And the same thing is true in reverse. Ever since the war began, at Army camps and naval stations throughout the world, Jewish soldiers and sailors have volunteered for extra duty on Christmas, have given up furloughs and leaves to which they were justly entitled, in order that their Christian buddies might have their most important religious holiday free. Truly, in the crucible of common suffering, at least some men are learning to live together.  

They are also learning to pray together. To pray together to the same God, without any one of them being asked to relinquish an ounce of this own distinctive faith. On one occasion, when a replacement battalion was about to shove off from Camp Elliott, the commanding officer phoned me. He wanted to have a joint service of worship for the Protestant and Jewish men in the battalion, a final occasion for all to pray together before they sailed. And though Protestants outnumbered Jews in that battalion by about 50 to 1, he asked me, a Jew to conduct the nonsectarian service. In a sense, I was anticipating my very good friend Chaplain Herbert Van Meter, a Congregationalist, who at a time when it was temporarily impossible for me to be with the Jewish men of one regiment conducted weekly Jewish

---

22 Emphasis in original.
Sabbath services so proficiently that the boys began to call him Rabbi Van Meter.\footnote{Emphasis in original. Van Meter attended Oberlin Graduate School of Theology (1940–41) and completed his divinity studies at Yale University. Following his ordination, he was commissioned a Protestant naval chaplain. He served on Iwo Jima with the 26th Regiment, 5th Marine Division. The 26th Regiment went ashore on D-day and held the line until the Pacific island was secured. For his service, Van Meter received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and the Bronze Star. For an account of Herbert Van Meter’s war experiences, see Roland B. Gittelsohn, “Padre in Hell,” \textit{Leatherneck} 68, no. 12, December 1985, 44–47. Van Meter’s personal papers can be viewed at Herbert and Josephine Van Meter Papers, 1923–1987, 1995–1996, Record Group 30/288, Oberlin College Archives, Oberlin, OH.}

The most unusual experience I can remember of this kind was in the chapel of the base at San Diego. On Sunday mornings, that chapel was one of the busiest places in southern California. From 0730 until noon, a steady stream of worshipers could be seen flowing in both directions. Two Protestant services, alternating with two Catholic masses, were followed by my Jewish service at 1100. In three minutes, before I came in each week, the base chapel was converted from a Christian sanctuary into a Jewish synagogue. Almost before the echoes of the last Protestant hymn had died out, my congregation of Jewish Marines were singing in the service according to the faith of Israel. That in itself is worth commenting on, but what follows is, I think, even more remarkable.

One Sunday morning, a Marine walked in during our Jewish service. It was evident immediately that he was a Catholic, since he crossed himself as he entered and dropped at once to his knees in one of the rear rows. While we sang “Shema Yisrael,” (Hear O Israel) the watchword of our Jewish faith, he, on branded knee and with bowed head, recited his own prayers. As we went on reading a Hebrew prayer together, he rose from
his knees, sat on the bench, took out his Catholic Missal, and continued his worship. Very few members of my congregation even knew that he was there, but standing on the pulpit I could see him easily. When he had apparently completed his worship, he sat there for quite some time, listening to our prayers with obvious interest. Then he sank to his knees again, rose and crossed himself once more, and quietly left as our Jewish service continued. He returned to repeat the same performance three or four consecutive weeks. I assumed that his duties prevented his attendance at the earlier Catholic masses. So, he entered the chapel when he could, and without any embarrassment or self-consciousness on either his part or ours, while we worshiped God in our way, he, in the same sanctuary, worshiped the same God in his way.

What an inspiring example for civilian life in the world of tomorrow. Americans worshiping together because they have learned to live and suffer and rejoice together. Americans all playing in harmony from the same score, but each preserving their own religious and cultural distinctions, as the members of a symphony orchestra preserve the qualities and tones of their

---

24 A missal is a liturgical book containing the texts and prayers used by the priest and congregants during Catholic masses. Catholics attending mass now use seasonal “missalettes,” but individual Catholics of that time had their own missals, perhaps given them when they were confirmed. Since Catholic masses were said in Latin at that time, the Marine’s copy would have had Latin and English on opposite pages. The term missal comes from the Latin word missa, meaning mass.

individual instruments. That boy was not less Catholic, nor were we less Jewish, because we worshiped—each in his own way—the same God at the same time in the same room. But he knew and respected our faith more than he did before, even as we increased our knowledge and respect for his. Thus, do men at war learn to pray together.

What remains to be said, and what cuts perhaps deepest of all down into the marrow of things, is that they also learn to die together. Death knows no discrimination. Even Hitler’s shells cut through Jewish and Gentile flesh exactly the same. And in that sameness is a cord that ought to bind men closer. If this fails, there is no hope indeed. To me, there are two symbols that embrace within themselves very nearly the whole meaning of this war. One is the picture of my friend and classmate, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, standing on the icy deck of the USAT Dorchester troop transport that had been torpedoed in the dead

---

26 In his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. Martin Luther King said, “With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful harmony of brotherhood.” The metaphor of the American nation as a symphony or orchestra has been much discussed, with Israel Zangwill’s 1908 play, The Melting Pot, providing one starting point; see Works of Israel Zangwill: The Melting Pot (New York: American Jewish Book Co. 1921). John Rawls used the orchestra metaphor in his Political Liberalism, expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 204. See also David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel, eds., Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
of a February night in 1943. With him were three other chaplains. All four had given their lifejackets to seamen who were without them. The last that any mortal eye will ever see of them, they stood there near the rail—a Catholic, two Protestants, and a Jew—praying together the moment before they died together.

The other symbol that has impressed itself indelibly on my mind is the life of Second Lieutenant Martin H. Weinberg. I

---

27 Army Chaplain Alexander D. Goode (1911–43) was the rabbi among the four chaplains. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1933, and he graduated from Hebrew Union College in 1937, a year after Gittelsohn. He earned a PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 1940 while serving at a synagogue in York, PA. Gittelsohn and Goode knew one another from campus life in a graduate school that enrolled only a few dozen students. For biographical material on Goode, see “A Finding Aid to the Alexander D. Goode Papers,” American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

said before that I would mention him again. Martin was the first Jewish Marine Corps officer I met after reporting for duty in San Diego. He was also the first at whose wedding I had the pleasure of officiating. In the fall of 1943, I married Weinberg to Miss Yetta Adler of San Diego. During the following two or three months, they, my wife, and I became close friends. Marty and his wife attended Friday services at Camp Elliott regularly. When he shipped out in a replacement battalion, his wife continued her attendance and we maintained our friendship with her. Marty wrote me several interesting letters from overseas. All of them indicated that he loved his work and that he was almost childishly proud of his commission in the Marine Corps. I was scarcely surprised at his enthusiasm, since I knew that he had pleaded for combat duty well before the time that he otherwise would have been sent across.

There was only one discordant note in his communications to me. He had been sent, as an officer replacement, to a Marine division. There, he met a small number of fellow officers who resented the fact that he was a Jew. By gestures and measures more obvious than subtle, they made it clear that they wanted no part of a Marine officer named Weinberg. Be it said at once, however, that their attitude, far from being typical, was more the exception than the rule. But it bothered my friend no little amount, and we exchanged our disturbed thoughts on the subject more than once.

Marty never wrote whether the passage of time mellowed any of those who had resented him. He never will. For during the campaign on Saipan, his wife received the telegram from General Alexander A. Vandegrift: “Regret . . . your husband . . . killed in action . . . service of his country . . . no details available
... deepest sympathy.” I think that telegram was the most final and irrevocable thing I have ever held in my hand or seen with my eye.

After I had left Yetta, and I had tried to utter whatever useless and futile words of comfort my lips could speak, the strangest thought kept racing through my mind. I wondered if the two or three who had resented him were there when it happened. Did they know that Martin Weinberg gave his life for a democracy they could not even understand? Had he—incomparable irony—stopped a bullet or piece of shrapnel that would otherwise have killed one of them? Did the life-bearing blood from his shattered veins mingle and merge with theirs as it trickled down some shell-pocked slope? I wondered...

I suggested all kinds of answers when Marty first wrote of his unpleasant experience overseas. He composed the most eloquent answer of all, the answer of his deeds. And the lines are but a pale reflection of the esteem in which I hold him. But there is something far more important here than a matter of personal friendship or affection. Whoever did not or would not welcome Martin Weinberg—no matter how high his rank, how numerous his medals—is an enemy of the United States, a faithless betrayer of our most cherished ideals. Whoever understands America—understands it and loves it—must also understand and love Marty Weinberg.

Well then, what does it all add up to? Is the picture bright or dark? Is the future clear or cloudy? The only honest answer is:

---

29 Emphasis in original. Weinberg's name was listed in “Casualty Lists Released This Week Include More Names from Saipan,” Marine Corps Chevron, 29 July 1944.
“We do not know.” No one knows. There is, in the total picture, much to give encouragement and much to sadden and depress. My own feeling is that war, with its fears and frustrations, has its way of magnifying and emphasizing both extremes. Those who came into the Service with their hatreds, big and little, probably feel them more bitterly now than ever. And those who came with sparks of decent goodness, with faith in men of every creed, are stronger and firmer now than they ever hoped to be.

Perhaps the future belongs to the great majority who are at neither extreme. They can join the men of bitter violence. Or they can remain indifferent and lose the fight by default. Or they can rise up in righteous wrath, and give democratic understanding a new birth in the hearts and minds of men.
Someone has said with devastating accuracy that war consists of being bored to death 90 percent of the time and excited to death the other 10 percent.¹ For us of the 5th Marine Division, all that occurred during a year at Camp Pendleton, San Diego, California, and at our overseas base was pointed at the 35 days we spent with the 3d and 4th Marine Divisions in the conquest of Iwo Jima. It would manifestly be an injustice to the reader, and even more so to the officers and men of our division, to close this account without commenting on what all correspondents agree was the bloodiest battle of the Pacific up to February of 1945. I have neither desire nor right, however, to speak as a military expert or to interpret the progress of military events. Others have done that and will continue to do so. My only hope here is to speak soberly of how combat looks to the chaplain’s eye. From the moment that our first assault wave sank into the coarse, ugly, black gravel of Iwo’s eastern “beaches,” everything

¹ While not a direct quote, the sentiment is expressed in “The Baptism of Fire,” London Times, 4 November 1914.
we had planned and thought was under severe test. How did we make out? What did we learn?

First, and perhaps foremost, we learned that ordinary American kids are capable of courage that is incredible even to one who has seen it! Combat is not pleasant. One young officer I know turned almost completely gray haired in five weeks of it. Even now, many restful weeks later, none of us has completely recovered from the shocking, shattering effect that combat had on our emotions and nerves. But the courage of ordinary boys from Main Street is such that more than once I wanted to bow humbly and say with Jacob of old: “Indeed, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.”

I saw that courage even before leaving our transport. For the first 48 hours of the operation, my assigned duty was to remain on the ship to render whatever service I could to wounded men being brought back aboard. Some of them had lain in the open evening cold for hours before they could be evacuated. Some had been soaked to the skin with salt spray on the trip back to the transport area. Many were painfully hurt, very painfully. But none of them—literally, truthfully, none—whimpered or cried. I held one young sailor’s hand while a surgeon dug out large pieces of shrapnel from a hole in the back of his knee big enough for two fists. I was to let the doctor know when and if the pain became too great. So, every moment or so, I would lean over and ask the boy if he was being hurt. His face was pale with pain; his teeth had punctuated his lips with blood; his fingernails dug into the palm of my hand with marks that were still visible hours later. But his answer, each and every time I asked whether the doctor’s probing was painful, was NO! And

---

2 Genesis 28:16.
3 Emphasis in original.
believe me, he was no exception. In five weeks of intensive combat, through many hundreds of contacts with men who were badly hurt, the only men I ever heard cry were those who were telling of a buddy who had been killed before their eyes, or those who themselves had cracked mentally under a strain too great to bear. Quentin Reynolds expressed more than the title of a book in his sentence: “The Wounded Don’t Cry.”

There were so very many instances of incredible courage just within the scope of my own knowledge and experience on Iwo that the problem now in prospect is one of limiting ourselves to a few typical examples rather than searching for enough. On D-day, in a rain of murderous mortar fire, Joshua Rosenfield picked up a buddy who had just lost three fingers, gave him first aid, and carried him several hundred yards to the beach—with men dropping all along the way but a few feet from him—delivered him to an aid station, walked back the same death-dealing way, and carried on his duties as though nothing exceptional had occurred. Later when I complimented him on his heroism, he looked at me as though I spoke a language he did not understand and said, “Heroism? What else could I have done?”

Second Lieutenant Dewey A. Erickson was on the front lines with our Reconnaissance Company, 28th Marines, one night in the third or fourth week of action. He and his men had to cross an open ridge, exposed to enemy machine gun cross fire. Erickson bounded across in a moving parenthesis of bullets and reached cover safely. His first glance backward showed him that his runner, who had followed by a few steps, had been less lucky; he lay on the ground wounded. Erickson knew what the chances were of getting safely through that fire a second time,

---

5 Emphasis in original.
but he also knew that a kid who was hurt lay out there in plain
view of the enemy. Without pausing even long enough to regain
his breath, out he went again. It was after he had picked up his
runner and carried him to within a few precious steps of safety
that Dewey Erickson’s great heart was pierced by the bullet that
ended his life.6

Pharmacist’s Mate Third Class Aaron Cohen was one of my
best friends in the division—a young boy of about 19 or 20 years,
who had been with me for more than a year in three different
camps. On several occasions, Cohen sat in my tent far into the
night telling me of fears he would have been ashamed to con-
fess to others. As a hospital corpsman, he knew what it meant
to be a company aid man, to go in with the first assault waves
and to have the lives of frontline troops depend on his courage
and skill. When he expressed to me his very real doubts about
his ability to measure up, I could only comfort him with the
assurance that when the time came, he would be stronger than
he suspected. And indeed, he was. It was on D-day, after he had
already administered aid to half a dozen men, that he left the
relative safety of his own foxhole to attend another boy who
had been hit. That boy’s mother still has her living son, because
it was not until his wounds had been bandaged that Aaron Co-
hen was killed.7

Pharmacist’s Mate First Class Jacob S. Fishke is a few
months one side or the other of 50 years old. He was born in
one of the ghettos of Poland, came to the United States as a
young man, served in our Army during the First World War.

6 Erickson received the Silver Star (posthumously) as a result of this action on
7 PhM3c Aaron Cohen was mortally wounded during the Battle of Iwo Jima
on 19 February 1945.
No one could have blamed him if in this war he had chosen to remain at home with his wife and three daughters. Instead, he enlisted as a corpsman in the Navy, became a pharmacist’s mate, and requested combat duty with the Marine Corps. On the front lines on Iwo with the 26th Marines, he undertook more than one dangerous mission that made younger men hesitate. Almost as important as the medical aid he gave was the morale-building influence in his regiment of “Pop” Fishke’s gray hair in the front lines.

One night, a Japanese shell landed in one of our ammunition dumps far behind the lines. The result was a combination of the most fantastic fireworks and the most astounding terror most of us had ever experienced. The shock of the initial explosion was great enough to feel as if some giant had lifted our foxhole several times and had dropped it from a height of some dozen feet. For long, frightful hours after the shell struck, explosions big and little rocked our end of the Motoyama Airfield Number 1. But for the men who were living immediately adjacent to the dump, there was no time even to notice the explosions for there were other dumps nearby. And minute by minute with increasing fury, burning pieces of flares and grenades or red-hot hunks of shrapnel kept falling in places where just a few minutes’ start would have sufficed to set off another dump. That the fire was limited, and kept from catastrophic proportions, was due to the cool, calm courage of several hundred white boys and Negroes who kept dashing out of their foxholes to stamp out burning

---

8 Emphasis in original.
9 PhM1c Jacob S. Fishke received the Bronze Star for his efforts on Iwo Jima between 19 February and 25 March 1945. The History of the Medical Department of the United States Navy in World War II: A Compilation of the Killed, Wounded and Decorated Personnel in the Medical Department (Washington, DC: Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, 1951), 163.

BLACK SAND—RED BLOOD

215
fragments, while other pieces continued to fall all around them. Not all the heroes of Iwo Jima are even known by name.

And so, it went for day after incredible day. We knew these boys of ours were “tops.” We had lived with them and trained with them for months. We had been out with them on problems and maneuvers. We knew in our hearts long before D-day that no one would have to apologize for the 5th Marine Division in action. But we neither knew nor could we in advance have suspected, that plain, simple American boys could rise to the kind of courage we saw on Iwo. Major General Julian C. Smith did not exaggerate in the least when he said: “I can never again see a United States Marine without experiencing a feeling of reverence.”

Not all the courage was front line. One morning just after breakfast my clerk, Sergeant Julius L. Abramson of Des Moines, Iowa, came back to our foxhole pale as a ghost. It took a moment before he could tell me that he had just walked by one of the hospital operating rooms in time to see two feet, cut off above the ankles—still clad in socks and shoes—thrown by a corpsman into a GI can. It took plenty of courage—tough, stubborn, and resolute courage—for boys who worked at the aid stations and hospitals to see that kind of thing day after heartsick day. I keep thinking reverently of the young boy whom I watched for three hours one afternoon at a corps evacuation hospital on the beach. I was waiting for one of my boys who had been badly wounded to regain consciousness. The hospital corpsman on duty could not have been a day older than 17. He had the face of a high school sophomore, without a trace of either beard or of hair under his arms and on his chest. He was a child moving among men—men who were hurt. But for three hours, he was the nearest thing I have ever seen to an angel of mercy, hurrying with steady self-assurance from patient to patient, carefully taking one man’s pulse, tenderly lifting another’s head to give him a drink, and unflinchingly cleaning up the mess a third man had just vomited onto the deck. Where did this boy, who should have been bent over school books instead of broken bodies, secure such courage and strength? Where?

From where did the strength come that enabled 50 Negroes and 25 white boys to work at our division cemetery every day for nearly a month? No task from tip to tip of Iwo Jima called for greater or nobler courage. I would not even try—quite as much out of consideration for my own feelings as for those of the reader—to describe the sort of thing we had to face there repeatedly. Like trying to identify a hand, part of a foot, and 12
or so inches of torso brought in one day for burial. I found as a chaplain that my two or three hours a day in the cemetery taxed more than the last ounce of my endurance and strength. These boys who worked there had not two or three hours but a whole day every day like that. Digging graves and filling them—collecting and carrying bodies—taking prints of fingers so long dead that they had to be blown up first, trying to identify the unidentifiable, going through blood-soaked uniforms and pockets, coming across the body of a friend, seeing the burned maimed, crushed, and broken stumps of human beings. Courage? I bow before it humbly. It would have been far easier to go forward into the lines, to die there once rather than a thousand times where they were.

It is not easy, after you have lived and watched that sort of
thing for day after harrowing day, to remain calm and rational when you find “Carnegie Steel” stamped on the metal of which Japanese field pieces were made, or when you see Japanese rifle ammunition marked WRA (Winchester Repeating Arms) 42.\textsuperscript{11} Some of us found it easier to control our sorrow on Iwo than it will be to harness our anger if ever again American corporations seek profit at the expense of American boys. We will not soon forget the kind of courage we bowed before in combat.

What is it that enables men to reach such heights of courage, to live through the unlivable? I am afraid the answer, based on actual experience, will be very much less spectacular than some might expect. At least part of the answer is what I would call the effect of “combat anesthesia.”\textsuperscript{12} Most of us never even realized at the immediate moment the full extent of the dangers we faced. I have compared notes with scores of others to make sure that my experience was theirs too in this respect. It was. We

\textsuperscript{11} In 1892, the industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) and other partners consolidated a number of Pennsylvania steel works to form the Carnegie Steel Company. In 1901, it became a subsidiary of the U.S. Steel Corporation. The Winchester Model 42 was an American pump-action shotgun produced by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company from 1933 to 1963. Japan was a regular purchaser of scrap metal from the United States in the 1930s, and some American firms continued to sell scrap metal to the Japanese until President Roosevelt’s embargo in 1940. See “Japan, China, the United States and the Road to Pearl Harbor, 1937–41,” Office of the Historian, Department of State, accessed 31 December 2019.

\textsuperscript{12} Most uses of the term \textit{combat anesthesia} refer to medical anesthesia that blocks pain from wounds received in combat. Gittelsohn’s use of this term seems more related to “psychic numbing” or other psychological responses to traumatic events. The “2,000-yard stare” observed among Marines after battles on the Pacific Islands would be one manifestation. See, for example, Gregory W. Rutecki, “Peleliu as a Paradigm for PTSD: The Two Thousand Yard Stare,” \textit{Hektoen International} 9, no. 4 (Fall 2017); and Laura Brandon, “Making the Invisible Visible: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Military Art in the 20th & 21st Centuries,” \textit{Canadian Military History} 18, no. 3 (2018).
felt at the time almost as if we were doped, as if we had not fully emerged from an anesthetic. As if we were figures moving not so much by the compulsion of our own will as by the manipulation of strings that controlled us. As if we were passively watching someone else go through motions on a screen rather than acting ourselves. Weeks later, in fact, to this very moment, thinking back to some of the episodes we had experienced made us more violently upset in retrospect than we had been at the time.

Example number one: on the night of D+2, Japanese artillery was firing on a landing ship, tank (LST) that was unloading vital supplies. Their forward observers were operating from a half-submerged Japanese barge beached not far away. It was their instruction, radioed back after each round, which directed enemy fire. No more than about 50 yards beyond the LST were a hundred or more drums of high-octane gas and ammunition. The crew of the LST and the shore party men unloading it knew exactly what the consequences would be if only one shell landed a mere 50 yards beyond the target. There was enough dynamite there to blow the entire left flank of the beach sky high. That was one occasion when the accuracy of Japanese artillery paid dividends for us. No less than 11 shells landed precisely on target. Not one reached the dump of explosives! Later, I asked several men who had been unloading the ship how they felt on that nerve-racking night. Felt? They had not had time to feel. They paid little or no attention to the terrifying possibilities. Did not even think of them. There was a ship to be unloaded, and they were assigned the task of unloading it. In their crowded, benumbed consciousness at that moment, there was room for nothing else. Later, when we marveled at the closeness of their

---

Emphasis in original.
call, one could see their faces perceptibly pale as they realized the full measure of what they had been through almost unwittingly. Combat anesthesia!

Example number two: something very similar happened to those of us who had to face the sights and smells of the division cemetery. Without any conscious thought on our part, we found ourselves barricaded behind a kind of emotional insulation. We built up a wall of impersonality. We went through fairly thoughtless motions, as though we were committing to the earth only these rows of pale-green shrouds, nothing in them. We looked on the dried and drying blood of human beings as we might have accepted the blood of cattle in a slaughter house. It was only later, in your foxhole at night or on the ship returning to rest camp, that a sudden wave of nausea came over you with the dread realization: “My God! These were not empty shrouds or quarters of beef. Yesterday, these were the sons of mothers and husbands of wives!” But by the next day, somehow mercifully, the anesthetic had taken hold again, the wall of impersonality had been restored, and we were once more able to continue. I shudder to think what the permanent consequences might be—how very many more of us might have cracked mentally—were it not for the blessing of combat anesthesia.

Our second source of strength was America’s great gift to the human race: an unquenchable, irrepressible sense of humor. We Americans have had many assets and advantages in this war: an industry that produced literal miracles; an organized labor that kept its no-strike pledge to the thrilling extent of 99.9 percent; and an Army, Navy, and Marine Corps that performed the impossible. But greater than all these, I suspect, and in some measure at least responsible for all these, is a type of human being who can laugh even when life approaches the intolerable.
Not one of our 35 days of combat, from first to last, went without at least one good belly laugh. Any people who can laugh on Iwo Jima are unconquerable!

We first saw this American sense of humor as a saving grace during our seven weeks of boredom and insufferable tension on board ship, headed toward combat. There were nicknames, for example. From nowhere they sprang. One morning, a captain came to breakfast in the wardroom with a colossal precoffee grouch. Immediately, someone dubbed him “Laughing Boy,” a name he has not entirely lost yet. A major who has not relaxed his poker face twice in the last year was baptized “Smiley.” A certain chaplain—shall we keep this strictly impersonal?—whose cranial vegetation has known lusher days, was affectionately labeled by some of his intimates as “Curly.” And so it went.

There was the entertainment, as another example. With movies only on the few nights we were in port, with room for less than half of us to play cards at any given moment, we still managed to keep ourselves entertained. Sometimes by seeing who could count the greatest number of flying fish in a given number of minutes. Sometimes by resorting to games like casino (card game) and 20 questions, which most of us had not played since junior high school days. One day in particular hit a positive high in entertainment. Forty or 50 of us were lined up at the port rail. From somewhere topside, a sailor was lowering a bucket on a line to scoop up a pail of sea water. We all followed the bucket, bouncing along the waves, with rapt attention. Each time it filled, spontaneously we let loose with a war cry of triumph. When the momentum of the ship bounced the water out before it could be raised to the deck, a groan of feigned dismay swept from stem to stern. Once the full bucket reached a point some 20 feet above the water, we cheered madly. Then a gust of
wind caught the line, dumped the bucket, and the whole business started over again, accompanied by heartrending moans of sympathy and sorrow. Fifty Marines helping one little sailor get a pail of water. It was wonderful!

And the same kind of humor carried us through more than one bad moment on Iwo. One day at noon, about a dozen of us were squatted around a regimental observation post enjoying our lunch of K-rations and sardines. Suddenly, we heard a sinister sputter like that of a grenade. Knives, crackers, mess gear, and Marines all flew into instant and scattered confusion. We all hit the deck and waited tensely for the inevitable explosion. But there was none. Finally, we lifted our heads cautiously. A hysterically laughing chaplain's clerk explained what had happened. Determined to introduce a bit of culinary variety into the drabness of our K-rations, he had hit on the brilliant idea of grilled cheese. After putting a can of cheese on the fire to melt, he had forgotten one thing: to open a few holes in advance. But the laws of physics operate inflexibly even in the command post of the 26th Marines. When the heated can was finally opened, there were three immediate results: the helpless “chef” was generously sprayed with a coating of thick, gooey cheese; a dozen

---

14 A K-ration was an individual daily combat food ration that was introduced by the U.S. Army during World War II. It was originally intended for issue to airborne troops, tank crews, motorcycle couriers, and other mobile forces for short durations, when the more complete A- and B-rations were not available. The letter “K” was used because it was phonetically distinct from other letter-name rations. A-ration: garrison ration of fresh, refrigerated, or frozen food from dining halls or field kitchens. B-ration: field ration of canned, packaged, or preserved foods from field kitchens without refrigeration. C-ration: individual ration of a complete precooked and ready-to-eat canned meal. D-ration: emergency ration with bars of concentrated chocolate and other ingredients to provide high calorie content. The K-ration was declared obsolete in 1948. The current military forces consume meals, ready-to-eat (MRE).
men ranging in rank from private to lieutenant colonel moved faster than they had thought possible; and to our American arsenal of secret weapons was added a new one we have not stopped laughing about yet—the “cheese grenade!”

Not even our grimmest experience was untouched by flashes of humor. Chaplain Van Meter was in charge of the burial detail for his regiment. His was the disagreeable and dangerous task each morning of leading a working party into the front lines to locate and retrieve the bodies of dead Marines. One morning, his men got the shock of their lives. They had moved one body no more than a few yards when suddenly the “corpse” sat bolt upright on the stretcher and demanded: “Hey, where the hell do you guys think you’re taking me?” A Marine still very much alive had “crapped out” for a badly needed nap, and had spread a poncho over himself to keep out the noise and light. To a weary burial detail, any human lying prone under a poncho with only two feet showing meant a “customer.” It would be hard to tell who was more rudely shocked: the astonished stretcher-bearers or the corpse who sat up and talked. But both laughed heartily more than a few times in retelling the story afterward.

On another occasion our boys captured several items of Japanese military equipment as they advanced. Among them was an enemy bugle. The platoon was still under fire, with the enemy still on three sides of them. Carbines—ours and theirs—were still cracking out their staccato syllables. Suddenly from one of the foxholes, with death threatening on every hand, a Marine picked up the Japanese bugle and sounded, of all things, a movie and

---

15 For our purposes, the term \textit{crapped out} refers to going to sleep. This usage, ca. 1920s to 1940s, was military slang for sleeping during work hours or during a crap game. Christine Ammer, \textit{The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms} (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003).
liberty call. Surely, there is something refreshingly wonderful about a people whose sense of humor is as irrepressible as that.

Sometimes, the relationship between our sense of humor and our courage is more immediately apparent. A very painfully wounded boy was brought one day into a battalion aid station. Both legs had been pretty badly shot up. The medical officer immediately prepared the boy’s left arm for an injection of whole blood. As he picked up the needle, the patient, who up to that moment had seemed more dead than alive, looked up and said, “Doc, I’ll bet you a nickel you can’t hit a vein on your first try.” The doctor laughed, tried, and succeeded. Without a word, the boy reached with his free right arm into his pocket, took out a nickel, and handed it to the winning marksman. There is more than one kind of courage and far more than one explanation of it. Somewhere way up near the top of the list, I submit, belongs a sense of humor that can even laugh death in the face.

Next to their colossal courage, the thing that strikes one most about young America in combat is that for these kids of ours nothing is impossible. In training, we had done our full share of griping about military inefficiency and red tape. We said there were three ways to do a thing: the right way, the wrong way, and the Marine Corps way. Back at Camp Pendleton, one of our regimental executives had a sign over his desk that read: “Wait! There May Be a Harder Way!” One night, an unidentified wag corrected the sign to read: “Proceed! There Is No Harder Way!”

Yes, indeed, we joked, as every military outfit does, about the impossibility of getting things done. But brother, when the chips were down, when it was a case of hanging on by sheer

---

16 The term wag refers to a habitual joker, ca. 1553.
guts or getting pushed back into the sea, our boys accomplished the impossible and then some. They say the motto of the Navy Seabees is reputed to be: “The difficult we can do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer.” I have not heard a better motto yet to cover the kids who took Iwo Jima.

Let anyone who doubts that stand, as three of us did after Mount Suribachi had been secured, on top of Iwo’s southern tip volcano, and look down on the sea lanes through which we approached and the ugly black beaches where we made our landings. From there, believe me, the wonder is not that we suffered such grievous losses, but that we succeeded in taking the island at all. In the face of what American Marines and sailors accomplished against the impossible odds of Iwo, the cheap prattle of a William Randolph Hearst about unnecessary losses is nothing less than blasphemy. The answer is that we took beaches every inch of which were under observation and fire from heights that were overwhelming. We took caves and systems of caves that staggered the imagination even after one had seen them. We took one huge block house that a tank had to fire on at point blank range for three days before breaking a small hole. No one will ever again be able to use the terms American and impossible in the same sentence to me. For 40 years, the Japanese painfully hauled their supplies to the top of Suribachi by rope and rugged mountain trail. A few days after Associated Press photographer Joseph Rosenthal snapped his famous shot of Mount Suribachi crowned by Old Glory, our Seabees were building a two-lane highway up the mountain. Three tired chaplains, having climbed

to the very summit, sat down on a log to rest. A Seabee, his cap cocked jauntily on his head, shuffled over and drawled: “Hey you guys, you’ll have to move. I gotta push a road through here.” As though bulldozing a road to the top of a rocky volcano were just an ordinary day’s work.

Along with a humble respect for the average American’s courage, I carried back with me from Iwo an admittedly egotistical pride in the fact that for him, nothing is impossible. I also carried a deep-rooted conviction that at heart, he is just a good, sweet, decent, sentimental kid after all. William H. “Bill” Mauldin has done his best to portray our fighting men as rough, tough, bedraggled-looking specimens who shave, if at all, with
blow torches. Storybook Marines confirm that impression, doubled in spades. But in this respect at least, there is little in common between storybook Marines and real Marines. I found

William H. “Bill” Mauldin (1921–2003) began his career as a cartoonist in the Army, first assigned to the 45th Infantry Division, which fought in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany, and then to the Stars and Stripes military newspaper. The famous characters in his war cartoons were “Willie and Joe,” two infantrymen who endured life “up front” with stoic humor. After the war, he drew cartoons for major newspapers, twice receiving a Pulitzer Prize. See “Maudlin at War, 1943–1945,” Library of Congress, 7 August 2003.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

228
the latter, especially in combat, to exhibit a warm, soft, almost gentle human kindness.

Our long, tense, boring cruise from rest camp to the beaches of Iwo Jima was an example. We lived more closely and annoyingly crowded together than words can describe. Eighty of us officers lived in the space of about a five-room apartment. The average bunk had less than the headroom of a Pullman lower. It was almost impossible to stretch without tickling the fellow next to you. Lack of space to stow our personal gear reduced any notion of private property to the realm of pure speculative theory. Most of the time, all of us were hot, sweaty, nervous, agitated, and lonely. In short, here were all the raw materials for quickness of temper and shortness of patience. But in all our time aboard, not once did I hear any quarrel that could be considered even remotely serious. There was an unconscious consideration and kindness on the part of men who knew that in all literal truth they were in the same boat. It was not that the thing was actually planned or reasoned out so; most of the fellows would doubtless have been embarrassed to have it recognized. But the fact remains that men facing the most uncomfortable present and the most frightening future of their lives were wonderfully human toward each other.

That was perhaps even more noticeably and remarkably so on the island itself, and nowhere more than in the division cemetery. One of the most pathetic and touching sights imaginable was that of men just relieved from the front lines, coming to the cemetery even before washing or eating, dragging one weary

---

20 Passenger trains in the twentieth century often included sleeping cars; most were manufactured by the Pullman Company of Chicago, IL. Passengers could buy tickets for upper or lower berths; Pullman lowers had more headroom and were more expensive than uppers.

BLACK SAND—RED BLOOD

229
foot after the other as they passed down the long rows of crosses and stars looking for the name of a missing buddy. Marines who never cried over their own hurts and wounds were not ashamed.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
230
to shed open floods of tears over the graves of friends. One of the most beautifully human pictures snapped during our entire operation was taken when Corporal Joseph Schwartz happened by coincidence to see two boys—a Catholic and a Protestant—kneeling in prayer by the grave of a Jewish buddy. I remember clearly one morning when two Christian boys asked me to pray with them over a Jewish grave. That same afternoon, I entered the cemetery to find one of our Jewish hospital corpsmen weeping freely and bitterly over the grave of a Catholic who had died next to him in the lines.

Just a few days before we left Iwo, a most remarkable thing happened. Officially, each grave was marked with either a cross or a Jewish star, nothing more. But someone discovered that the peculiar sandstone that caused us so much trouble at the north end of the island could be smoothed and carved. That began a veritable epidemic of utterly exhausted boys, kids whose last ounce of strength had been sapped long since, bending for hours over stones they wanted to leave on the graves of friends. The night before we left, I strolled alone one last time through the cemetery and paused for one final look at each grave. I do not know when any single experience in my life has touched me so deeply. There must have been easily three or four hundred stones set over an equal number of graves. Some of them looked almost professional. But all of them had something that no professionally carved stone will ever have—love! They were fashioned with infinite love. The love of those who had fought but a few feet away when these men were killed, who had bound and dressed their wounds, who had carried them through fire to medical aid, and who now could not bear the thought of leaving them forever without at least this small token of how they felt. One of these stones will remain with me forever. Its eloquent
inscription read: “To Zeke . . . God keep you! . . . Your childhood buddy.” Marines, tough? Do not let them ever kid you. They are tough only when they face a bitter, ruthless enemy. But in their inmost heart of hearts, they are soft. And decent. And profoundly, everlastingly good!
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Earth to Earth

Something of the chaplain’s work in actual combat has of course become evident “by indirection” in the previous chapter. I would not close, however, without a more direct word on the subject. Though the padre’s chief aim under fire is very much the same as before, the circumstances controlling them and the techniques he must use are apt to be considerably different. It would be foolish to pretend for an instant that such a thing as a well-ordered schedule or typical day is even remotely possible during an action. Still, it is possible, looking back on the combat experience as a whole, to distinguish different types of activity experienced by every chaplain in greater or lesser numbers. No more need be said about the division cemetery, except that it has become an indelible, inerasable memory of nightmare. For the rest of my life, I doubt if I shall ever be able to officiate at a civilian funeral, surrounded by the sweet softness of flowers, without catching in the nostrils of memory some fleeting remembrance of what it is like to stand in a trench of 20 graves to commit 20 bodies to the ground and 20 souls to their Maker. In many respects, the regimental chaplains, who were at or near the front lines with their troops, had a harder time of it than
those of us who spent a part of each day in the rear. But one thing they need never regret missing is the devastating experience of duty hours at the cemetery.

Beyond that, what can chaplains under fire do for the living? Pretty much what you would expect them to do. Most of us spent an hour or two each day either in a battalion or regimental aid station or at the division field hospital. Lighting a cigarette or giving a drink of water or just a smile of reassurance can be a mighty big thing in the life of a kid who has just been carried in on a stretcher. Or writing a letter by dictation for a boy whose missing right arm or sucking chest wound makes it impossible for him to get off the message he is so desperately anxious to have his mother or wife receive. There is no gratitude on Earth quite like that of the wounded man for whom the chaplain has done some such favor as this.

Any chaplain worth his weight in black volcanic sand spends some amount of time “up front” also. I for one have never known a welcome quite as fervent as the handshake of a boy whose chaplain slips into his foxhole up at the battalion command post to shoot the breeze for a moment. Men will scold their chaplain severely for taking chances, and then talk about them favorably for weeks precisely because he did take chances. They want to know that he shares as much of their combat experience as military regulations and his own duties will permit.

And of course, there are religious services. In combat, they are held at any time, in any kind of place, for any available number of men, large or small. The church or synagogue might be a shell crater, a foxhole, a revetment, a hillside, or an abandoned bombproof shelter. And any time that two or more can be relieved from combat, can meet together to give thanks that they have survived and to renew their faith and courage, is the Sab-
bath. There was something deeply, intensely personal about our religious services on Iwo, something I have never felt elsewhere in public worship. I remember the first two Jewish services ever conducted on Iwo, both held in the booming cacophony of 150mm howitzers nearby. I remember a service held one afternoon for an infantry battalion that had just been relieved from the lines. I passed the word from mouth to ear that a Jewish service would be held near the command post in an hour. When the time came, of eight Jewish men in the battalion, eight were there for worship. But whether attendance was 8 or 3 or 65, there was something desperately urgent about religion in uniform that we would do well to capture for our more comfortable but less deeply personal religious life at home.

Unfortunately, not all the chaplain’s work under fire is as directly gratifying or rewarding. There are times when a deeper desire than he has ever felt before to help some unfortunate human being, combined with his complete and utter inability to do anything at all, produces an explosive sense of frustration. Like the afternoon I spent with Private First Class Don Fox. Fox was a good friend of mine in the division—a nice, decent kid who was one of our photographers. On a Saturday afternoon, word came over the field phone that Don had been hit in the head by a sniper and was in a battalion aid station. I grabbed a jeep and in quick succession just missed him at each of several aid stations along the way, finally catching up to him at a beach evacuation hospital, where he had been taken so that a competent brain surgeon might attend him. I spent the next three hours with Don, though he never regained consciousness to know that or anything else. His face will haunt me for the rest of my life—the face of a good, sweet boy—his eyes so horribly blackened, his throat so gasping for breath, his life’s blood
so freely flowing on the deck. The surgeon told me at once there was no hope. Nothing could be done except to sit there and watch a fine young friend die; nothing then for him, nothing then or later for his grieving parents. It is not good, at one and the same time, to want to do so much, yet be able to do less than

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

236
little. A chaplain suffers that feeling of futility not infrequently.

I did again the morning I searched for Herman Podzoba. Just before blackout the night before, I received a joyous letter from his wife, begging me to tell him that she had just given birth to a baby girl, their first child. Because we were in combat, the American Red Cross could not clear a cable to him, and she thought contacting me would be the quickest and surest way of reaching her husband. I felt happy to have such a mission. It was good, in the midst of carnage and death, to bear the blessed tidings of new life. Directly after breakfast in the morning, I set out in search of Herman. Because he had been recently transferred, it took some time to locate him. But I finally succeeded. Just before noon, I found Herman Podzoba—a corpse awaiting burial in our cemetery. This too is part of the chaplain’s work in combat.

Out of the same pattern, it is the task that filled most of our waking hours after we returned to rest camp. Even before our arrival, the flood had begun of tearful, pathetic letters from next of kin. Each day’s mail still brings its painful quota of broken hearts in search of hope. A stranger hears the chaplain’s name mentioned in the radio, or reads some word of him in the press, and writes in the urgent, desperate hope that here may be an untapped source of new information. Drowning souls, like drowning bodies, will seize on any straw. How did my boy die? Was he killed instantly, or did he suffer pain? What were my husband’s last words, his final thoughts? Did he leave me any message? Where and how and by what was he hit? Who was there to tell me now every detailed shred of what took place? Who? Where? How? Why? Above all, why?¹

¹ Emphasis in original.
How is the chaplain to answer, when all those who were there and saw now are themselves sleeping in the ground? What is he to say when the horrible, harrowing truth would only add to an already unbearable burden of grief? More than one chaplain has found this aftermath of hell to be even more shattering to his emotions and nerves than combat itself.

Probably as good a way as any to close this, one chaplain’s story of combat, will be in his parting words to friends who still remain on Iwo, serving there now in the garrison eternal. On 21 March 1945, we of the Jewish faith stood solemnly at the south end of our 5th Marine Division Cemetery, almost in the shadow of Mount Suribachi. Lovingly, we thought of our comrades who would not return with us. Reverently, we intoned Israel’s ancient dirge of lamentation. Hopefully, we pronounced the Kaddish, our age-old affirmation in the presence of death of God’s greatness and goodness. And I tried thus, however haltingly and hesitatingly, to say the things all of us felt deeply in our hearts:

*This is perhaps the grimmest, and surely the holiest task we have faced since D-day. Here before us lie the bodies of comrades and friends. Men who until yesterday or last week laughed with us, joked with us, trained with us. Men who were on the same ships with us, and who went over the sides with us as we prepared to hit the beaches of this island. Men who fought with us and feared with us. Somewhere in this plot of ground may lie the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under each of these Christian crosses, or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may rest now a man who was destined to be a great prophet, to find the way, perhaps,*
for all to live in plenty, with poverty and hardship for none. Now, they lie here silently in this sacred soil, and we gather to consecrate this earth in their memory.

It is not easy to do so. Some of us have buried our closest friends here. We saw these men killed before our very eyes. Any of us might have died in their places. Indeed, some of us are alive and breathing at this very moment only because men who lie here beneath us had the courage and strength to give their lives for ours. To speak in memory of such men as those is not easy. Of them too can it be
said with utter truth: “The world will little note nor long remember what we say here. It can never forget what they did here.”

No, our poor power of speech can add nothing to what those men and the other dead of our division who are not here have already done. All that we can even hope to do is follow their example. To show the same selfless courage in peace that they did in war. To swear that, by the grace of God and the stubborn strength and power of human will, their sons and ours shall never suffer those pains again. Those men have done their job well. They have paid the ghastly price of freedom. If that freedom be once again lost, as it was after the last war, the unforgivable blame will be ours, not theirs. So, it is we the living who are here to be dedicated and consecrated.

We dedicate ourselves, first, to live together in peace the way they fought and are buried in war. Here lie men who loved America because their ancestors generations ago helped in her founding, and other men who loved her with equal passion because they themselves or their own fathers escaped from oppression to her blessed shores. Here lie officers and men, negroes and whites, rich men and poor—together. Here are Protestants, Catholics, and Jews—together. Here, no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here, there are no quotas of how many from each group

---

2 Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address” (speech, Gettysburg, PA, 19 November 1863).
are admitted or allowed. Among these men, there is no discrimination. No prejudices. No hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy.

Any man among us the living who fails to understand that will thereby betray those who lie here dead. Whoever of us lifts his hand in hate against a brother, or thinks himself too superior to those who happen to be in the minority, makes this ceremony and the bloody sacrifice it commemorates, an empty, hollow mockery. To this, then, as our solemn, sacred duty, do we the living now dedicate ourselves—to the right of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, of white men and negroes alike, to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have here paid the price.

To one thing more do we consecrate ourselves
in memory of those who sleep beneath these crosses and stars. We shall not foolishly suppose, as did the last generation of America’s fighting men, that victory on the battlefield will automatically guarantee the triumph of democracy at home. This war, with all its frightful heartache and suffering, is but the beginning of our generation’s struggle for democracy. When the last battle has been won, there will be those at home, as there were last time, who will want us to turn our backs in selfish isolation on the rest of organized humanity, and thus to sabotage the very peace for which we fight. We promise you who lie here: we will not do that! We will join hands with Britain, China, Russia in peace, even as we have in war, to build the kind of world for which you died.

When the last shot has been fired, there will still be those whose eyes are turned backward, not forward, who will be satisfied with those wide extremes of poverty and wealth in which the seeds of another war can breed. We promise you, our departed comrades: this too we will not permit. This war has been fought by the common man; its fruits of peace must be enjoyed by the common man! We promise, by all that is sacred and holy, that your sons, the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers, will inherit from your death the right to a living that is decent and secure.

When the final cross or star has been placed in

---

3 Emphasis in original.
the last cemetery, once again, there will be those to whom profit is more important than peace, who will insist with the voice of sweet reasonableness and appeasement that it is better to trade with the enemies of mankind than, by crushing them, to lose their profit. To you who sleep here silently, we give our promise: we will not listen! We will not forget that some of you were burnt with oil that came from American wells, that many of you were killed by shells fashioned from American steel. We promise that when once again men seek profit at your expense, we shall remember how you looked when we placed you reverently, lovingly, in the ground.

Thus, do we memorialize those who, having ceased living with us, now live within us. Thus, do we consecrate ourselves the living to carry on the struggle they began. Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: this shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come—we promise—the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere.

Amen.
I suppose the story could have ended with the previous chapter. That, however, would have left at least the author with a strange feeling of unfinished business. Sometimes, as I look backward and inward on myself, I wonder whether I am the same “I” who found it so hard to believe on that fateful Sunday afternoon when, for an electric instant, the universe shook and God stopped breathing. I do not know what surprises me more: the stubborn pacifist of 1940 or the military chaplain of 1944. Perhaps the trouble is that I cannot entirely forget the one, and I am not yet altogether adjusted to the other. But whatever the real cause, there are moments when, thinking of myself then and myself now, I wonder if I have not suffered from a sort of spiritual schizophrenia.

What happened to the pacifism that was once so vital a part of my very credo? Where has it gone? Why did it fail? The experiences recounted on these pages, and the many hours of painful thinking that these experiences have stimulated have, I think, given me at least fragments of an answer.

Surely, one cause of pacifism’s failure is that it was compromised and cornered from the beginning. It never had a chance.
It was whittled away, piece by piece, until not enough to live was left. Like a person who is never attacked directly, but from whom, one by one, the foods he needs to live are slyly withdrawn. Until one day, he finds himself without the strength even to search for food, and so he dies. Exactly thus did pacifism perish. We allowed the nourishment it needed to be withdrawn from the world up to the point where we had on our hands an ideal that was no longer relevant in the new circumstances of international life.

Do I make myself clear? Let me put it, then, this way: at intervals far too frequent, the chaplain comes in contact with husbands or wives who are faced with ruined lives because one has been unfaithful to the other. Seldom was there an original intent to do wrong. More often, one thing just led to another. A date that seemed harmless, a drink that appeared innocent, led to another date or an additional drink, and behold, before the thing had finished, a man or a woman had done something that was never intended and would forever after be regretted. What was it our ancient rabbis said? “One sin begets another; one good deed leads to another.”1 The time to avoid trouble in one’s personal life is in advance of the first date, before the initial drink.

So with pacifism. It could have been saved. It could have worked. If, at any one of a hundred points along the way, we had put down our foot stubbornly and said, “No! We will not yield another inch! Inches add up to feet, and feet make yards. When yards are reached, it will be too late.”

Or let me say it this way: a man has a building that he is anx-

---

1 The Hebrew phrase mitzvah goreret mitzvah, averah goreret averah or “one good deed will bring another good deed, one transgression will bring another transgression,” is found in Pirkei Avot 4:2.
ious to protect from fire. In the beginning, he has an extinguisher that is provided in due proportion to the size of the building. But in the course of time, they add to the structure—a few feet here, a yard or so there. No one addition is by itself enough to make much difference. But through the course of years, the changes mount. Soon, the building is two times, three times, four times its former size. But the extinguisher is the same. One day, the structure catches fire. The extinguisher is hopelessly too small. And so, the building burns. Who or what is to blame?

Surely the simile needs no further pointing. By 1939, our pacifism had been forced into a corner where it could not work. The cards were stacked against it. The cards were callous indifference in Manchuria, a winking of the eye in Ethiopia, outright deceit in Spain, and shameful appeasement of Berlin. Against such odds as these, what chance did pacifism or pacifists stand? In a world where two and two made four, we could have succeeded. But not in the world of Munich, Germany.

Of all possible choices, perhaps pacifism is still the best. But by the days of Dunkirk, France, we no longer had all possible choices. By then, every choice but two had been eliminated, in part for the very reason that pacifism had been bypassed. It was then either slavery or war. What use, at such a time, to lament what might have been? Too late!

In a sense, this was the most unjust hoax of all. For 20 years, men of prophetic vision and faith had cried out their warnings, “If this and this and this is done, the sum total will unavoidably be war!” Their words went unheeded. Their warnings were ignored. And so, the sum total did come. And with it, the most difficult dilemma of all for the very men who had foreseen it. What to do now? If only they could stand somehow off on a detached platform—they and their loved ones—separated from
all this, untouched by the fury before them. What high historic justice there might have been in saying: “We told you so. We warned; you would not listen. Now go to your doom. Now fight this war that your deafness made unavoidable!”

But they were not detached, and could not be, these people of vision and understanding. They were in this world and part of it. And so—grim irony of fate—they who more than once had tried to stop this thing, they to whom the others would not listen, became colonels and corporals and chaplains. They said, with Gideon Jackson in *Freedom Road*, “there comes a time when a man does what he must!”

In a larger and deeper sense, our failure was religious. Professing the beliefs of Christians and Jews, we pacifists had acted as though we were Romans and Greeks. These ancients had believed that each human virtue could be deified by itself and followed for its own sake. So, they had a goddess of love, a separate goddess of beauty, another god of truth. And each became, if an end at all, purely an end by itself without regard for the others.

The great virtue of Israel’s belief in one God, which became the belief also of Mohammedans and Christians, was that it saw life whole. Truth is not truth apart and aside from mercy. There are times when to be wholly truthful is to be cruelly unmerciful; one must choose between the two. There are occasions when either love or justice must prevail, not both. Our God is a God of all these virtues, not of any one or two or three. He is a God who combines and expresses all our human ideals in one great

---

2 See either the original book or the later film, Howard Fast, *Freedom Road* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1944); and *Freedom Road*, directed by Jan Kadar, starring Muhammad Ali and Kris Kristofferson (Beverly Hills, CA: Braun Entertainment Group, 1979), 186 min.
pattern of perfection. God is truth and peace and justice and love; God is mercy and kindness and charity and order. All together. All parts of one whole. All related to and tempered by each other.

Our mistake as pacifists was that we held peace up as our God and forgot that peace can come only along with the rest. Peace among nations, such as happiness in the lives of individuals, is something of a byproduct, not a goal to be sought directly for itself. Our rabbis knew that, “on three things does the world stand,” they said. “On truth, on justice, and on peace.” So! First, on truth! Second, on justice! And only then on peace! Establish a world in which truth prevails, in which justice is triumphant, and you shall have peace. Without truth and justice, your leagues will be empty shells, your pledges hollow mockeries, your pacifism will be a ghastly joke.

Pearl Buck has put it eloquently:

*Peace cannot be made as one makes a machine or as one makes a business or even as a war is made. Peace comes only as the result of other accomplishments. There will be peace in the world only when there are equality and security everywhere for all human beings. These peace plans on which men consume their days and brains are useless. We must first think and plan how to remove oppressions and hunger and ignorance. When people are content, there will be peace. While people are oppressed by bad governments and by ignorance and by hunger there can be no content and therefore no peace. To work for peace, as though it were a thing in itself,*

---

3 Pirkei Avot 1.
with no relation to causes, is the crowning folly of our foolish age.⁴

The war will end, and peace—of a sort—will come again. Then our task will only have begun. Then we shall have to face the anguished challenge of Martin Weinberg’s widow:

My only thought and prayer now is that Marty’s death was not in vain. He held his ideals very high, and was willing to die for them. Should they ever be destroyed, I would lose all faith and trust in humanity!

This is indeed a heavy responsibility. Let no man who ever wants to sleep again take it lightly.

He was my closest friend in the 5th Marine Division. From the end of World War II until his death on 2 April 1982, we remained in touch, and saw each other whenever circumstances allowed.

In the beginning, our relationship was based on a series of coincidences. We happened to be classmates in the summer of 1943 at the Naval Training School for Chaplains in Williamsburg, Virginia. Herbert Van Meter came there directly after graduating from Yale Divinity School; I had completed seven years of civilian pulpit experience after ordination at the Hebrew Union College. We studied Navy Regulations, ran obstacle courses, did calisthenics, and practiced abandoning ship together.

Next set of coincidences: after two months of training at the College of William and Mary, we were both assigned to Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, at Camp Elliott in San Diego, California. A few months later, we were transferred to the 5th Marine Division, then in its early training stages at Camp Pendleton,

---

1 Published by permission of *Leatherneck*. Minor revisions were made to the text based on current standards for style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
California. He became the Protestant chaplain of the 26th Regiment; I was the Jewish chaplain and assistant division chaplain attached to headquarters battalion.

During our year in the San Diego area, we and our families spent a lot of time together. He and his wife were Uncle Herb and Aunt Jo to my young son and daughter.

A key to Herb’s character was revealed during the weeks our division was being shipped to Hawaii for advanced training. It was late summer and early fall of 1944. Because I was the sole Jew among 17 chaplains, it was decided that I should remain stateside until more than half our troops had arrived at Camp Kamuela (Waimea) on the big island. At that point, I was flown over to be with a majority of the men I served.

Herb, in the advance echelon, reached Hawaii six weeks before I did. On my arrival, I discovered that without any conversation or consultation on the matter between us, he had organized and led Jewish Sabbath services. Some of my Jewish Marines had started calling him “Rabbi Van Meter.”

I attended several of his religious services and Bible classes; he came quite regularly to mine. On Christmas Eve 1944, I worshiped with him and his men at their outdoor midnight service. It was an unforgettably beautiful night. Stars shone brilliantly overhead. Marines, knowing that in a week they would be sailing for combat, that some of them would never again participate in a Christmas Eve service, probably prayed more fervently than ever before.

At about 0100, we walked together from the amphitheater to Herb’s tent. Passing the Quonset hut, which served as the officers’ club for the 26th Marines and hearing the raucous singing and shouting from within, Herb turned to me and with his dry,
droll sense of humor said: “You know, Roland, from the sounds in there one might think this is the birthday of Lord Calvert, not Jesus.”

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of our attack on Iwo Jima, Herb’s widow invited me to go through his accumulated military papers and files. Memories that I thought had been mercifully repressed into my subconscious were acutely revived. Along with them, my estimate of a remarkable chaplain—a wonderfully decent, noble human being—was enhanced. What he was and did can be best appreciated against a background of the Iwo Jima campaign at large and the role played in it by the 26th Marines.

Herb Van Meter was one of 3,256 officers and men of the 26th Marines who landed on D-day. In our first two weeks of combat, 1,644 had been killed or wounded.

And the horror was not even near its end. It would require three more weeks of the bloodiest, most brutal fighting earth had ever known before the final pockets of Japanese resistance could be silenced. In Herb’s own words, written two months later to the bereaved mother of Private Robert C. Chalmers:

Robert was killed on the 21st of March near the end of the operation. By that time our forces had driven the Japanese into a narrow pocket on the north

---

2 George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, visited Virginia in 1628 and was granted the land that would become the state of Maryland. Chaplain Van Meter’s lighthearted comment may refer to Lord Calvert Whiskey. In 1934, Seagram’s acquired Maryland Distillers of Relay, MD, which produced an unaged “low-quality Prohibition-era whiskey,” and upgraded the spirit to become “a premium American blend.” See “Lord Calvert,” TheLiquorCollection.com, accessed 27 January 2021.
end of the island. But the battle was not over. They resisted desperately. The rough and broken terrain favored the defense, for it provided excellent concealment. . . . Ours was the difficult and heartbreaking task of, one by one, blasting their caves and destroying their positions. We used tanks as much as we could but there were places where only riflemen could do the job. Robert was struck down by machine gun fire while with his squad in the attack. There was nothing our corpsmen could do for him.

What could one chaplain named Van Meter accomplish under such circumstances? He would crawl between attacks from one foxhole to another, trying to reassure and encourage his weary, frightened Marines. He would grasp the hand of one, squeeze the shoulder of another, and hold firmly the uncontrollably trembling body of a third. He prayed with them, read psalms to them, helped them feel unashamed of their fear by confessing that he was terrified himself. Van Meter collected their hastily scribbled letters for later dispatch homeward. And when he had received emergency messages from their loved ones, he would deliver the messages.

He helped the corpsmen stop the bleeding and bind wounds. He carried the broken fragments of their bodies back to our division cemetery, returning them reverently to mother Earth and reciting over them words of faith strong enough to survive even the horrors of hell. And, thank God, he was where he was needed most, praying that his own conduct would set the right example for those who depended on him.

Little enough. Yet, more than any man or woman should ever be expected to do.
Then, on the long, slow, emotionally tumultuous journey back to Hawaii—and for so many weary, heartbreaking weeks thereafter—he answered the letters of mothers and fathers, of sweethearts and wives. I found and read scores of such letters in Herb’s files, each punctuated with anguish and pain.

Did you know my boy? . . . Are you sure there was no mistake? . . . Isn’t it possible that he is really a prisoner of war or missing in action? . . . Can you tell me where and how and by what kind of weapon he was killed? . . . Was he conscious at the end? . . . Did he suffer? . . . Leave any last messages for us? . . . Was he buried properly or just thrown into a trench with others? . . . Can you send us his watch, his ring, his dog tag, his pen? . . . So it went—on and on and on—page after aching page—the dried tears of 1945 mingling now with mine as I read.

Herb answered every single letter. He was still answering six months after the Iwo action had ended. Wherever there was specific information about an individual, he included it in his reply. He went to incredible lengths to obtain such information. He sought out men who had been in the same outfit, looking especially for any who might have witnessed the death itself. Pinned to many of his letters were the actual field notes he wrote, describing the circumstances he had discovered.

When he could, Herb told the families whether their loved one had been killed by rifle shot, mortar, artillery, or grenade; whether he had been evacuated to a battalion aid station, then a field hospital, and then a ship. He told them all he could, which cemetery their boy was buried in, even his grave number if Herb knew, and if Herb had personally helped carry the body to its resting place. He told the family if their son or husband or sweetheart had given his own life while trying to save another’s. He told one bereaved father that his son’s final act, just
before being killed, was to offer a wounded man the last sip of water from his canteen. To another father, who had apparently been recently remarried, he wrote how much his deceased boy had enjoyed the letters sent by his new stepmother and how eagerly he anticipated meeting her. To another set of parents, he disclosed that their son, a sergeant, had gone back for rations and water himself instead of sending someone of lower rank for them. He had succeeded in obtaining rations, but was killed while returning for water. No effort was spared by Herb—indeed, superhuman effort was expended to discover and report details that might bring a measure of solace and balm to hearts that were anguished with grief.

Every letter of consolation contained a variant of the following paragraphs:

*The cemetery is a beautiful spot high on the western shore of the island between the mountain and the first airstrip. It is in the shape of a huge cross and is surrounded by a white picket fence. It will be well-tended by the garrison forces now on Iwo.*

*A touching witness was our departure from the island. Picture, if you can, a transport loaded with troops weary from their month of combat, glad to be away from the scene of so much suffering, standing, as the ship cleared its anchorage, silently, reverently at attention in memory of the comrades they were leaving behind. All eyes were fixed on the flag in the 5th Division Cemetery, flying at half-mast over the graves of those they had known and loved.*

*It was a holy moment. Words cannot express the feelings that rise in a man’s heart at such a time.*
There were men thinking of Charles as there were men whose thoughts were with those who lie beside him. . . .

There were prayers and there were tears. We will not forget.

Chaplain Herb Van Meter’s pervasive sense of responsibility extended beyond the men he served and their families to encompass seminary students who might have to face similar duties in the future. While still in combat, he received Yale’s Divinity School News, reporting on the number of young men preparing for chaplaincy positions in the Navy’s V-12 program. Back on Hawaii, three weeks to the day after leaving Iwo, he wrote to a friend on the Yale Divinity School faculty. Here are excerpts from his letter.

One long night in a foxhole it occurred to me that the experience I was having might help them see the job they want to do a little more clearly. . . .

I don’t have suggestions to make. I want only to ask some questions. They are questions I’ve been asking myself. I’m not at all sure I’ve discovered adequate answers. But if the fellows in training can ask themselves questions like these and anticipate the answers, they are going to be ready for the job when their outfit storms ashore. . . .

What am I going to say and do for the lad who creeps over to my foxhole at night, terrified by the mortar fire that is falling all around and trembling anew each time the artillery opens up? His fright has made him almost incoherent. Tears stream down his face. . . .
What am I going to say to the lads who have broken under the strain of three weeks unrelieved on the line? They come wandering into the battalion aid station, or are brought back by friends, with a conviction of failure. Grown men cry like babies, mumble incoherently over and over: Shorty, Whitey, O my God, they’re gone! The best pals a guy ever had. . . Shorty, Whitey, where are you? Shorty, keep your head down. . .

Here they come, you take the one on the right . . . Shorty, keep your head down—Look out!

What can I say to a man when, after an afternoon searching the battlefield, we find the broken, bloated body of his brother? . . .

What can I say to a man who, on the tenth day of battle, gets a letter, not from the wife to whom he’s been happily married for four years, but from her lawyer, saying she wants a divorce? . . .

What am I going to say to the man on a stretcher who is struggling to keep from crying out in pain while the doctor splints his broken leg? Or to a man who has lost the back of his head and can’t possibly live the night, though he is conscious now and looking to me, waiting for me to speak? Or to the boy who regains consciousness and asks how badly hurt he is? He’s lost both legs. . . .

What will I say to the men who help me pick the bodies of our dead from off the battlefield? Death is sudden and violent. There is nothing dignified about it. There are few clean wounds. Heads
are blown open and brains spilled out. Arms are shattered, legs twisted and bent. Flame bakes the flesh so that it falls apart like a well-done roast.

What shall I say to the man who has just had two other fellows in the foxhole with him killed by a grenade and he himself has escaped unharmed?

Where will I get the strength day after day to go down into the trenches dug to receive the dead and read the committal service—not for one man or two, but for a dozen or twenty or forty at a time—day after day—as the toll rises, not to hundreds but to thousands?

If the fellows are wondering just what a chaplain does, tell them he wishes he could be in a dozen places at once. There are no dull moments.

Tell them, too, that these are the greatest kids in the world to be working with. They are tough; they are hard; they are careless and heedless. You despair at times. But you learn to love them and you wouldn’t be anywhere else but with them. The chaplaincy is a grand ministry.

It was a grand minister named Herbert Van Meter who helped make the chaplaincy a grand ministry. Very, very few of us, among his colleagues, could equal him. No one will ever be able to count the numbers of men and women—Marines and those who mourned them—whose spirits were strengthened, sadness assuaged, faith restored by this extraordinary human being.
According to the apocrypha of the Hebrew Union College, when the late Mrs. Neumark, wife of the distinguished [German] philosopher, first came to Cincinnati, a group of faculty wives took her under their maternal wing to teach her the English language. Since she was immediately absorbed by the city’s social life, it is said that her very first lesson in English consisted of the following statement: “No thank you, I have had an ample sufficiency; any more would be a superfluity.”

---

1 Published by permission of The Reconstructionist. Minor revisions were made to the text based on current standards for style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Footnotes have been inserted to provide background or context to the author’s narrative.

2 The Hebrew Union College is the oldest extant Jewish seminary in America, with three locations in the United States—Cincinnati, OH; New York City; Los Angeles, CA—and one location in Jerusalem for training rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal workers in Reform Judaism.

3 While the exact origination of this phrase is not known other than an approximate date of the 1800s, see Frederic G. Cassidy, “Among the Old Words,” American Speech 55, no. 4 (Winter, 1980), 295–97.
THE DANGER OF CHERISHING ILLUSIONS ABOUT BROTHERHOOD

True or not in its original context, this conclusion can certainly be applied without exaggeration to chaplains and their observations since the end of the recent war. If, then, I risk adding superfluity to sufficiency, it is only because I believe it is time for someone to protest against the Pollyanna optimism which has been far too current since the war’s end. One chaplain returned from service overseas to make the statement in public lectures that, in his three years of military experience, he had never once seen a case of anti-Semitism. An official Jewish Welfare Board came back from a survey of foreign fronts with the amazing assurance that, when men face combat together, there is no such thing as discrimination. That particular bit of optimism hit me via the mails just a day or two after I had myself endured the most discouraging, sickening instance of anti-Semitism in my entire career as a chaplain.

If this kind of nonsense represented nothing more than the foolish projection of wishes, perhaps it would not be so important to answer and deny it. Actually, however, it is far more serious and dangerous than mere wishful thinking. It is the artificial confidence which precedes total disillusionment. Far too many American Jews have already lived through the successive stages of (1) being sold a bill of goods that after the war all would be sweetness and light; then (2) discovering for themselves that prejudice and discrimination have survived the crisis of war; and finally (3) suffering a complete collapse of morale in the conviction that the war accomplished nothing. This kind of cynicism can be avoided only my being realistic in the first place. And realism in the first place requires that we recognize
the existence of prejudice in the very midst of a war which was presumably fought to destroy it.

Indeed, why not? Why should anyone have been so naïve as to suppose that covering the outside of a man with a uniform would in any way change the deep-seated prejudices which existed within him? Before the war it would have been manifestly impossible to have gathered at random any thousand Americans without including among them a certain number who hated Jews. Why, then, should we have expected to take the same thousand Americans, and merely by clothing them alike, have them purified from all such blemishes? And why, in particular, should we have supposed that as a time of greatest frustration and insecurity, men would have less rather than more need for scapegoats?

The logic and pattern of history regarding such prejudice as anti-Semitism is so undeniably clear that even if one had no actual experiences to the contrary, there would be a strong temptation to say the rosy pictures of perfect concord brought back by some of our chaplains simply cannot be true. But we need not rely only on logic. Some of us have had experience to the contrary, and it is time now for such experience to be shared.

INCIDENTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE SERVICE

It is not my purpose or intention to give here a catalog of all the anti-Semitic incidents in 31 months of experience as a chaplain. Two such incidents might well be repeated, however, because they show how distressingly deep are the roots of anti-Semitism in Gentile behavior, and how long, therefore, the struggle against it will take.

The first concerns a lieutenant colonel in our Marine divi-
sion, a man who was known to drive his men mercilessly. He had no respect for religion of any kind. He was no more a Jew than Goebbels was. He was the only commanding officer I had met while we were still in our stateside training who would not even excuse his Jewish men to attend their Seder on Passover. But when, in a certain phase of overseas training, he insisted that his battalion go out on Sunday maneuvers, and would not excuse them for church, considerable numbers of men in his outfit were heard to curse him as “that damn Jew who won’t let us Christians go to church!” And no amount of persuasion could have convinced most of them that their commanding officer was not a Jew. It was not enough that we were made to pay for the imaginary faults of real Jews; we also had to be accountable for the real failings of imaginary Jews!

The second incident illustrating the stubborn, lunatic depth of anti-Semitism in men’s minds concerned a Marine sergeant who entered his tent at 2200 one night drunk. He walked in on a half-dozen men who were sitting there—one of them a Jew. Staggering over toward the latter, he berated him as follows: “One good thing Hitler has done is to kill the Jews. The only trouble is that he didn’t get all of them. I’d like to get back to the states in time to finish them off there too!” Fortunately, the Jewish boy had enough good sense, no matter how badly he was shocked, not to join the issue there. He walked out of the tent and reported the incident to me the next morning.

After discussing the case with the sergeant’s Protestant chaplain, the two of us decided to speak to him together. We were considerably surprised to find him a freckle-faced, ruddy-headed, typical farm boy from Iowa, and a hero at that. He had been at Tarawa. He was one of those who had pulled 75mm guns to within four or five dozen yards of murderous Japanese
machine gun positions to blast them away. What made such a boy speak as he had? We found the answer in a bowed, dejected head that did not look up even once in all the time we spoke. It still hung downward as he finally mumbled: “I’ve never been so ashamed of myself in my life. The worst of it is that I don’t really feel that way. Jews to me are like any other people—some good, some bad. I guess I just lost myself in too much beer, and said things that have made me uncomfortable ever since. I’ve wanted to apologize to Willie a dozen different times but didn’t have the nerve.” What an admission! A man claims to harbor no hate against anyone. He succumbs to the influence of alcohol. And the very first thing his unbridled mind does, by instinct, is to run amuck against the nearest Jew. How many centuries went into the making of that miserable moment? How many centuries more will it take to erase it?

ANTI-SEMITISM AMONG CHAPLAINS
Incidents of this kind are discouragingly revealing, but anyone with the least bit of realism might have expected them. What was not to be expected, and was therefore the more shocking when it occurred, was prejudice of no minor kind even among chaplains who are presumed to be brotherly men of God! Try as I do to be dispassionate and objective, I cannot escape the grim conclusion that, as a matter of actual fact, the very worst prejudice I met was on the part of my fellow chaplains. I think back, for example, to the time when I made available for our regimental libraries copies of two volumes—the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) collection called “Questions and Answers about the Jews,” and the first edition of the Jewish Welfare Board
(JWB) pamphlet, “Fighting for America.” At a staff meeting of chaplains, I announced that these books were available and requested the Protestant chaplains, who served in our division as regimental librarians, each take whatever number he wished for placement on his shelves. At the end of the meeting, one Protestant chaplain voiced his vigorous objection to both books. He had previously read them. The JWB collection he refused to take because it “made Jews out to be perfect patriots.” The ADL questions he rejected because one page stated that the Romans had crucified Jesus, while “anyone who knows anything at all knows that is was the Jews who were guilty.” His final conclusion was: “If you want your Jewish boys to read this trash, give it to them yourself. I refuse to put it on the shelf for Christians to read!”

I think back with no less pain to the morning when I somehow found myself on the receiving end of a barrage from three of my colleagues—two Catholics and the same Protestant described above. What I learned from them about Jews was an illiberal education! I was told that the trouble with our government in Washington was that too many Jews had a part in running it. I was assured that the entire Lincoln Brigade in Spain consisted of Jews, which was to be expected since all the Jews were godless Communists. I was charged with being a poor chaplain

---

4 The first document may well represent something close to the ADL’s current curriculum, “Understanding Judaism and the Jewish Community,” ADL.org, Summer 2006. The JWB pamphlet is discussed in The Jewish News 5, no. 6, 28 April 1944, 19.

5 During the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), almost 40,000 men and women from 52 countries, including 2,800 Americans, traveled to Spain and voluntarily joined the international brigades fighting with Spanish Republican forces. The U.S. volunteers were collectively known as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.
because I spent too much time trying to fight anti-Semitism in the division instead of teaching Judaism! I was told there obviously must be something wrong with Jews if people are not born prejudiced, yet so many of them acquire anti-Jewish inclinations somewhere along the line. By chaplains, by men at whose side I had lived and worked nearly a year! The climax of that particular session came when one of the Catholics—incidentally the most popular priest in our division—said to me as I sat there, saddened and stunned beyond belief: “Father Coughlin is the greatest Catholic priest in the world. I would kiss the ground he walks on!” The reader will not be blamed if they read of these experiences incredulously. I myself find it hard to believe them now, nearly two years after they occurred.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DEDICATION OF THE IWO JIMA CEMETERY

The most bitterly painful experience of this kind, however, took place later—precisely at a time when it should least have been expected: in the midst of combat itself. It is commonly supposed throughout the country that the sermon I delivered at the dedication of the 5th Marine Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima was preached at a common, interdenominational service of dedication. It was not. And therein lies my saddest experience of brotherhood in arms.

Our division chaplain, Warren F. Cuthriell, had indeed originally planned such a joint service. First there was to be a secular dedication, at which, of course, the address would be given by our commanding general. Immediately thereafter, all three faiths were to unite in a combined religious memorial ser-
vice, after which any group that so wished would be free to hold its own denominational service. As an eloquent expression of his own devotion to the teachings of Christianity and the high truths of democracy, Chaplain Cuthriell invited me, as a spokesman for the smallest religious minority in the division, to preach the memorial sermon. I learned later that, immediately after the announcement of his plans, two of our Protestant chaplains visited Cuthriell to express their vigorous objection to the Jewish chaplain preaching over graves that were predominantly those of Christians. His answer was that the right of the Jewish chaplain to preach such a sermon was precisely one of the things for which we were fighting the war. When that approach failed, the six Catholic padres with us on Iwo sent their senior representative to the division chaplain to speak for all of them. They were opposed in general to any joint service of memorial, and they were opposed in particular to a sermon preached by the Jewish chaplain! Furthermore, if he insisted on carrying out his original intention, they would refuse to participate or attend!

All this I discovered only later. Ten days had passed between the invitation to preach at the cemetery and the day when Chaplain Cuthriell called me in to explain his dilemma. The objection of two Protestants he could withstand. The objection of an entire church, which would surely have made a *cause célèbre* out of the incident, was another matter. I had no right to expose my senior to that kind of embarrassment. I withdrew. After a brief secular dedication, each faith went to its own specified corner to hold its own service of memorial. The sermon I had written for the combined service was actually delivered at our own little Jewish service. Perhaps it should be added here that not one word of the original manuscript was changed as...
a result of this incident. Whatever in the sermon may seem to reflect the background of its delivery had been written before any of the foregoing was even known to me.

I do not remember anything in my life that made me so painfully heartsick. We had just come through nearly five weeks of miserable hell. Some of us had tried to serve men of all faiths and of no faith, without making denomination or affiliation a prerequisite for help. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had lived together, fought together, died together, and now lay buried together. But we the living could not unite to pray together! My chief consolation at the moment was that another Jew besides myself would have been unacceptable as dedicator of the cemetery—even though these very men professed to teach in his name!

**SOME HEARTENING EXPERIENCES**

So, the picture of wartime understanding is not nearly as lovely and unblemished as our professional backpatters would like to pretend. At the same time, however, it would be just as dangerous to assume that the kind of experiences described above constitute the whole picture as it would be to accept the other extreme of wishful thinking. Along with the heartache of open discrimination by fellow chaplains, I found also much that was enheartening. Paradoxically enough, the wide publicity given my Iwo sermon was a direct result of the prejudice that prevented its being preached as originally intended. When the inside story of the cemetery dedication plans became known to the other chaplains in our division, three of the Protestant ministers were so incensed that they boycotted their own religious service to attend mine as members of the congregation! It was one of these three men, following our Yizkor service, who borrowed the only
copy of my sermon and, unknown to me, mimeographed several thousand copies that he distributed all over the island.⁶

There were other encouraging experiences too. Had it not been for these, one could scarcely have stood the strain of prejudice. During a period of about two months, when I was unavoidably separated from the men of one regiment, the Protestant chaplain of that outfit himself conducted weekly Jewish services so inspiringly that I rejoined the men later to discover they were calling him Rabbi Van Meter!

Another true friend was Army Chaplain Newton C. Elder, whom I met on Iwo. The three Jewish Marine chaplains who were involved in that campaign had all planned, on the basis of our preliminary briefing, to be back in rehabilitation camps in time for Passover. None of us, therefore, had arranged for Seder provisions. The campaign, however, dragged out to the point where it became obvious that our Seder services would be held either on Iwo or on ships that would be carrying us back. When Carl Elder heard of our plight, he unassumingly secured a cargo plane and pilot, flew some 600 miles south of Saipan, and returned with nearly half a ton of matzos, gefilte fish, Haggadahs, and wine to be divided among the three of us.⁷ It is worth recording that each Friday night, while we remained together on Iwo, Elder not only rounded up the Jewish men of his outfit and provided them with transportation for Shabbat services—he also attended himself and worshiped with them!

One other inspiring experience remains with me indelibly. It was our last night on Iwo before sailing away. Three chaplains

---

⁶ Yizkor (Hebrew for “may he remember”) is the memorial prayer said during Holy Day services to remember the dead.

⁷ Haggadahs are the Jewish texts used during the Passover Seder.
were still on duty in the division cemetery. Since bodies were still being brought in for burial, we held off our final service of committal as long as possible to be sure all would be included. Finally, as we descended into the last grim trench of graves, darkness has already fallen. Off to the west, the last suspicion of light was reluctant to leave the sky. Overhead there were stars. It was the first night since our arrival that no sounds of firing could be heard from the cemetery. All around there was peace—great, embracing, quiet peace. And three chaplains—a Baptist, a Methodist, and a Jew—wearier than they had ever been before, climbed into the trench, stood there together before the last row of graves, and held the flashlight for each other as they prayed. It is just as impossible to forget the brotherhood and love of men like these as it would be to erase the jealous hatred of the others.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?
What does it all add up to? Is the picture bright or dark? Is the future clear or cloudy? The only honest answer is: no one knows. Though my present purpose is to report, not to evaluate and weigh, I am not sure I could add all this up to the correct total even if I tried. There is, in the total picture, much to give encouragement and much to sadden and depress. My own feeling is that war, with its fears and frustrations, has had its way of magnifying and emphasizing both extremes. Those who came into the Service with their hatreds, big and little, probably came out feeling them more bitterly than ever. And those who came with an initial stock of decent goodness, with faith in people of every creed, are stronger and firmer for the experience of war. The one positive conclusion that is inescapable is this: the record constitutes a damning indictment of the Christian church. No organization can rightly call itself either Christian

APPENDIX B

270
or a church so long as it harbors among its leaders and spokes-
people those who act as too many of my own colleagues did.

I found chaplains, divided in almost equal numbers, at both
extremes. Perhaps the future belongs to the vast majority of or-
dinary people who are at neither. In time, they can join the peo-
ple of bitter violence. Or they can remain indifferent and lose
the fight by default. Or they can rise up in righteous wrath and
give democratic understanding a new birth in the hearts and
minds of all.
APPENDIX C

Biographical Sketch of Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn

Roland B. Gittelsohn was born on 13 May 1910 in Cleveland, Ohio. Graduating Phi Beta Kappa, he received a bachelor of arts degree in 1931 from Western Reserve University in Cleveland and a bachelor of Hebrew letters from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1934. He was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1936. He also studied at the Teachers’ College, Columbia University and New School in New York. He received two honorary degrees in 1961, the first being a doctor of divinity degree from Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, and the other a doctor of science degree from Lowell Technological Institute (now Lowell University) in Massachusetts.

Gittelsohn led an active life, both as a rabbi and in his political life. He hardly distinguished between the two, arguing that the role of a rabbi, and all religious leaders for that matter, is to lead by positive example, especially when political issues affect

---

1 Biographical sketch based on information from the Roland Bertram Gittelsohn Papers, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH; and Biographical Files, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
the poor, homeless, marginalized, or otherwise unlucky of society. His early sermons, prior to World War II, made his pacifism quite evident. One early student sermon, “More Human Bondage,” so impressed the Reform movement that its leadership commissioned him to write the movement’s study guide on war and peace. As related in this volume, the attack on Pearl Harbor led him to reconsider his pacifist convictions, and in 1943 he became a chaplain in the Navy. Gittelsohn then attended the school for chaplains at the College of William and Mary from 21 June to 15 August. During World War II, Rabbi Gittelsohn was assigned to the Marine Corps’ 5th Marine Division and ministered to servicemembers of all faiths on Iwo Jima, about 1,500 Jewish Marines among them. He received three service medals—the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. For his efforts to comfort the wounded on Iwo Jima, he received the Navy Commendation Medal. His sermon at the dedication of the 5th Marine Division cemetery on Iwo Jima was widely publicized.

By the end of the war, Americans needed to understand—intellectually and emotionally—why they had fought and why so many had died. Rabbi Gittelsohn’s sermon provided the answer. “The Purest Democracy” so resonated with the public from the 1940s to the 1960s that it was published in many nationwide newspapers and in Time magazine. During the era of Senator Joseph McCarthy and House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Gittelsohn publicly denounced the attack on civil liberties in America in a time of overinflated fears.

While clearly a contradiction—a pacifist going to war—Gittelsohn’s participation in World War II solidified his determination that war must be a last resort for the good of humanity. Gittelsohn was particularly outspoken in his condemnation
of the Vietnam War, a controversial position in the 1960s. He was labeled a traitor by some, but an upholder of democracy by many others whether they agreed with his position or not.

Beyond his public political life, Gittelsohn was devoted to his congregations. He served at the Central Synagogue of Nassau County in Rockville Center, Long Island, New York from 1936 to 1953 before moving on to Temple Israel in Boston, Massachusetts, where he remained for the rest of his career. Gittelsohn also was active in many organizations such as the Social Action Commission of Reform Judaism, of which he was a founding member in 1951 and continued to serve until his death in 1995; the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, where he was president from 1958 to 1960; the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Boston, where he was president from 1961 to 1963; the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), where he was president from 1969 to 1971; the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), where he was the founding president from 1977 to 1984; and the World Zionist Executive & Jewish Agency Board of Governors, where he served as president from 1978 to 1984. He was also extremely active in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC, now the Union for Reform Judaism), serving on its board of trustees and as the vice chairman from 1973 to 1977. He was an honorary life member and the chairman of the Commission on Jewish Education from 1959 to 1968. Gittelsohn received two awards from the UAHC, the Maurice N. Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award in 1983 for service and the Jay Kaufman Award in 1984.

Gittelsohn's focus on political causes went beyond religion. He was asked by Harry S. Truman to serve on the President's Committee on Civil Rights in 1947, which produced an extensive report—*To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President’s
Committee on Civil Rights—that proposed to establish a permanent Civil Rights Commission, a Joint Congressional Committee on Civil Rights, a Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice, and recommended other federal protections. He sat on the State Advisory Council of the Governor’s Commission to Survey Massachusetts Courts in 1955. He served on a subcommittee of the Massachusetts Commission to Investigate the Advisability of Abolishing Capital Punishment from 1957 to 1958. From 1960 to 1962, he served on the Governor’s Committee on Migratory Labor, and later the Governor’s Committee to Survey Operation of Massachusetts Prisons from 1961 to 1962.

Gittelsohn was equally committed to writing, publishing numerous articles and books, such as Little Lower than the Angels (1951); Modern Jewish Problems: A Textbook for High School Classes and Jewish Youth Groups (1955); Man’s Best Hope (1961); Consecrated Unto Me: A Jewish View of Love and Marriage (1965); My Beloved Is Mine: Judaism and Marriage (1969); Wings of the Morning (1969); Fire in My Bones: Essays on Judaism in a Time of Crisis (1969); Love, Sex, and Marriage: A Jewish View (1976); The Meaning of Modern Judaism (1978); The Extra Dimension: A Jewish View of Marriage (1983); Here Am I: Harnessed to Hope (1988); How Do I Decide?: A Contemporary Jewish Approach to What’s Right and What’s Wrong (1989); Love in Your Life: A Jewish View of Teenage Sexuality (1991).

Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn died on 13 December 1995 in Boston. His first wife was Ruth Freyer with whom he had a son, David B. Gittelsohn, and a daughter, Judith Fales. His second wife was Hulda Tishler. He had two stepsons, Gerald Tishler and Douglas Tishler, four grandchildren and three step-grandchildren.
APPENDIX D

Selected Chronology

13 May 1910  Roland B. Gittelsohn is born in Cleveland, OH.

1931  Gittelsohn receives a bachelor of arts degree from Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

1934  Gittelsohn receives a bachelor of humanities degree from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

1936  Gittelsohn is ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Union College.
       Gittelsohn serves at the Central Synagogue of Nassau County, NY.

7 July 1937  A clash between Chinese and Japanese forces near the Marco Polo (Lugou) Bridge outside Beijing opens World War II in Asia.

1 September 1939  Germany invades Poland, opening World War II in Europe.

3 September 1939  France and the United Kingdom declare war on Germany.
**1940**

9 May
Germany invades Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

14 May
German forces enter France.

26 May–4 June
The evacuation of British, French, and Indian Army troops from the port of Dunkirk makes a strong impression on Rabbi Gittelsohn.

30 June
U.S. Marine Corps strength at 28,345.

16 September
The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 takes effect, providing for men between the ages of 18 and 35 to register for potential military service. Those between the ages of 21 and 35 who are conscripted will serve for 12 months. Drawing the first numbers takes place on 29 October, and the first draftees begin their service in the Army on 18 November. Ministers of religion and divinity students are exempt under classification IV-D.

27 September
Japan joins with Germany and Italy in the Tripartite Pact, forming the Axis alliance.

**1941**

22 June
Hitler’s German Army invades the Soviet Union.

30 June
U.S. Marine Corps strength at 54,359.

26 July
United States Armed Forces, Far East, commanded by Gen Douglas MacAr-
thwart, is activated to defend American interests in the Philippines.

18 August President Roosevelt signs the Service Extension Act of 1941. It extends the service of drafted soldiers to 30 months. No change is made to the exemption for ministers of religion and divinity students.

7 December The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor and Midway.

8 December United States declares war on Japan. The Japanese attack American bases that include Marines in their garrisons at Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines.

10 December The Japanese land on and capture Guam, including Marine barracks defenders.

20 December The Selective Training and Service Act of 1941 requires all men between the ages of 18 and 64 to register, and makes all men between the ages of 20 and 44 eligible for military service for the duration of the war plus six months. Ministers of religion and divinity students continue to be exempt.

23 December The Japanese land on and capture Wake Island, including a 1st Marine Defense Battalion detachment and Marine Fighter Squadron 211 (VMF-211).
24 December 2d Marine Brigade is activated at Camp Elliott, CA, for duty in Samoan Islands.

1942

7 January U.S. forces in the Philippines are forced to withdraw to the Bataan Peninsula.

February U.S. Naval Chaplains School is established in Norfolk, VA.

9 April American troops are forced to surrender to Japanese forces on Bataan.

5–6 May The Japanese land on Corregidor in the Philippines and the garrison, including the 4th Marines (Reinforced), become prisoners of war.

1 June Black Marine recruitment begins. These black Marines train at Montford Point, NC.

4 June The Japanese attack Midway, whose defenders include Marine Aircraft Group 22 (MAG-22) and the 6th Marine Defense Battalion (Reinforced).

30 June The active duty strength of the Marine Corps is 142,613 (7,138 officers and 135,475 enlisted).

7 August 1st Marine Division lands in assault against Japanese forces on Guadalcanal and Tulagi, Solomon Islands.

17–18 August 2d Marine Raider Battalion lands
from submarines on Makin Island in the Gilbert Islands and destroys the Japanese garrison.

20 August  The forward echelon of MAG-23 arrives on Guadalcanal.

3 September  The command echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW) arrives at Guadalcanal.

16 September  3d Marine Division is activated at Camp Elliott.

1 October  I Marine Amphibious Corps is activated at San Diego.

7 November  U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve is authorized by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

13 November  An amendment to the Selective Service Training and Service Act makes registered 18- and 19-year old men eligible for military service. The exemption for ministers of religion and divinity students remains unchanged.

5 December  All volunteer enlistments in the armed forces between the ages of 18 and 37 stop. All men in this age bracket, starting in January 1943, are drafted through the Selective Service System. The Marine Corps continues to enlist 17-year-old volunteers and to encourage Selective Service volunteers.

9 December  1st Marine Division is relieved at Guad-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 January</td>
<td>Composite Army-Marine Division (25th Infantry Division and 2d Marine Division units) is established to defeat the Japanese on Guadalcanal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January</td>
<td>The commandant of the naval base at Norfolk, VA, moves the Chaplains’ School to the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 February</td>
<td>Guadalcanal is declared secure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 February</td>
<td>Organization and recruitment of Marine Corps Women’s Reserve is officially announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 February</td>
<td>Marines of the 3d Raider Battalion and the Army’s 43d Infantry Division occupy the Russell Islands, an archipelago of the Solomon Islands, to use as a staging point for subsequent operations in New Georgia, the Solomon Islands, and the Bismarck Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 May</td>
<td>Roland Gittelsohn is commissioned a lieutenant (junior grade, Chaplain Corps) in the U.S. Navy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June</td>
<td>Gittelsohn begins training at the Naval Chaplains School, now located at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–22 June</td>
<td>4th Marine Raider Battalion, followed...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
by companies of the Army’s 103d Infantry Regiment, lands at Segi Point in the New Georgia group, beginning the New Georgia campaign.

30 June

The active duty strength of the Marine Corps is 308,523 (21,384 officers and 287,139 enlisted).

15 August

Gittelsohn completes training at chaplains school.

16 August

4th Marine Division is activated at Camp Pendleton, CA.

25 August

Bairoko Harbor is captured on New Georgia, ending Japanese resistance on the island.

V Amphibious Corps is activated at Camp Elliott.

28 October

2d Marine Parachute Battalion lands on Choiseul Island, Solomon Islands, in a diversionary raid prior to the Bougainville operation.

1 November

3d Marine Division (Reinforced) lands in assault on Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, at Cape Torokina as part of I Marine Amphibious Corps.

20 November

2d Marine Division (Reinforced) lands in assault on Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, as part of V Amphibious Corps.

23 November

All organized Japanese resistance on Betio ceases.

28 November

Last organized Japanese resistance on Tarawa Atoll ceases.
15 December: Army XIV Corps assumes control of Bougainville operation from I Marine Amphibious Corps.

26 December: 1st Marine Division lands in assault on Cape Gloucester, New Britain.

---

1 January: LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift becomes the 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps, relieving LtGen Thomas Holcomb, who had served as Commandant since 1937.

16 January: The withdrawal of the 3d Marine Division from Bougainville is completed.

21 January: 5th Marine Division is activated at Camp Pendleton as part of V Amphibious Corps.

31 January: Troops of the 4th Marine Division, as part of V Amphibious Corps, land on and capture adjoining islands to Roi-Namur, Kwajalein Atoll. The Army’s 7th Infantry Division, also under V Amphibious Corps, similarly captures islands off Kwajalein Island.

1 February: 4th Marine Division assault troops land on Roi-Namur. The 7th Infantry Division troops assault Kwajalein.

2 February: All organized Japanese resistance on Roi-Namur ceases.

8 February: Kwajalein Atoll is declared secure.

10 February: Operations in the Cape Gloucester
17 February Units of the 22d Marines begin landing on islands of the Eniwetok Atoll under the command of Tactical Group 1, V Amphibious Corps.

22 February The capture of Parry Island by 22d Marines completes the successful seizure of Eniwetok Atoll by Marine and Army assault forces.

20 March 4th Marines (Reinforced) land on and secure Emirau, St. Matthias Islands, completing the isolation of the Japanese stronghold at Rabaul, New Britain.

4 May The last elements of the 1st Marine Division withdraw from New Britain.

5 June Commander in chief, U.S. Fleet, is issued a dispatch naming the commanding general, V Amphibious Corps, as commanding general of all Marine units in the Pacific Ocean area and establishes the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, under his command.

15 June The assault troops of V Amphibious Corps (2d and 4th Marine Divisions) land on Saipan, Mariana Islands.

22–24 June As Soviet forces approach Lublin, Poland, they liberate the Majdanek concentration camp before the Germans can fully destroy the crematoria. That summer, the Soviets overrun the sites
of the Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka extermination centers.

30 June The active duty strength of the Marine Corps is 475,604 (32,788 officers and 442,816 enlisted).

9 July Saipan is declared secure.

21 July The assault troops of III Amphibious Corps (3d Marine Division and 1st Provisional Marine Brigade) land on Guam, Mariana Islands.

24 July The assault troops of the 4th Marine Division, followed by those of the 2d Marine Division, land on Tinian in a shore-to-shore amphibious attack mounted from Saipan.

1 August Tinian is declared secure.

10 August All organized resistance on Guam ceases.

7 September 1st Provisional Marine Brigade is redesignated 6th Marine Division on Guadalcanal.

15 September 1st Marine Division (Reinforced), as part of III Amphibious Corps, lands in assault on Peleliu, Palau Islands.

17 September Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, activates and takes control of all Fleet Marine Force commands.

12 October The assault phase of the Peleliu operation is declared over.

16 October The last combat elements of the 1st Marine Division on Peleliu are re-
lieved by troops of the Army’s 81st Infantry Division.

25 December–14 January 5th Marine Division embarks in Hawaii for operations in the Pacific. Chaplain Gittelsohn is assistant division chaplain.

1945

27 January Soviet troops enter Auschwitz, freeing some survivors.

19 February Assault troops of V Amphibious Corps (4th and 5th Marine Division with 3d Marine Division in reserve) begin landing on the southeastern beaches of Iwo Jima, Bonin Islands, with 5th Marine Division on the left.

23 February A combat patrol from 28th Marines raises the American flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima.

4 March The first U.S. Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber, which has too little fuel to return to the Mariana Islands after a mission to Japan, lands on Iwo Jima. Thirty-five more land on the island before the close of hostilities, and many more will land on Iwo’s airfield before the end of the war.

16 March Iwo Jima is declared secured.

16–26 March 5th Marine Division performs mopping-up duties on northwestern Iwo Jima.
Strength of 5th Marine Division during Iwo Jima operations: 1,200 officers and 22,050 enlisted. Casualties during the operations (8,749): 95 officers and 2,148 enlisted killed in action; 257 officers and 6,082 enlisted wounded in action; 3 officers and 139 enlisted missing in action.

21 March  At the dedication of the 5th Marine Division cemetery on Iwo Jima, Rabbi Gittelsohn gives “The Purest Democracy” sermon.

1 April  Tenth Army, including XXIV Corps and III Amphibious Corps (1st and 6th Marine Divisions with the 2d Marine Division in reserve) and Tactical Air Force, Tenth Army (primarily 2d MAW) land in assault on Okinawa.

4 April  Units of the U.S. Third Army liberate the Nazi concentration camp at Ohrdruf, Germany, a subcamp of Buchenwald. This is the first Nazi camp liberated by American troops. The full extent of atrocities is revealed when Buchenwald is liberated on 11 April.

7 April  North American P-51 Mustangs of the U.S. Army Air Forces’ VII Fighter Command first launch missions from Iwo Jima, allowing fighters to escort B-29 bombers to and from Japan.

12 April  President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies
at Warm Springs, GA. Vice President Harry S. Truman is sworn into office as president.

29 April
Troops of the U.S. 45th Infantry Division and the 42nd Infantry Division liberate Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

21 June
Okinawa is declared secured.

30 June
The active duty strength of the Marine Corps is 474,680 (37,067 officers and 437,613 enlisted).

5 July
The Philippines campaign, in which Marine air and artillery units participated, is declared ended.

6 August
A B-29 of the 509th Composite Group of the Twentieth Air Force, flying from Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, drops the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. An estimated 70,000 Japanese die from the attack.

9 August
The Twentieth Air Force drops the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Japanese deaths number approximately 40,000 people.

10 August
Fleet Landing Force (4th Marines and Marine and sailor landing forces of Task Force 31) are authorized for the occupation of the Yokosuka area of Japan.

14 August
President Truman announces that a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 August</td>
<td>4th Marines, as part of Fleet Landing Force, land at Yokosuka Naval Base on Tokyo Bay, Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 September</td>
<td>Formal signing of surrender terms takes place on board the battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) in Tokyo Bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 September</td>
<td>First echelon of MAG-31 flies into Yokosuka Airfield, the first Marine aviation unit to operate in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 September</td>
<td>5th Marine Division, V Amphibious Corps, lands at Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan, as part of the occupation force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 September</td>
<td>2d Marine Division, V Amphibious Corps, lands at Nagasaki, Kyushu, Japan, as part of the occupation force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 September</td>
<td>The leading elements of III Amphibious Corps (1st Marine Division and 1st MAW) lands at Tanggu, Hebei Province, China, to disarm and repatriate Japanese troops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October</td>
<td>6th Marine Division, III Amphibious Corps, lands at Qingdao, Shandong Province, China, to disarm and repatriate Japanese troops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 November</td>
<td>Naval Chaplains School, now located at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA, is decommissioned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28 November

4th Marine Division is deactivated at Camp Pendleton.

28 December

3d Marine Division is deactivated on Guam.

1946

27 January

Rabbi Gittelsohn is released from service in the U.S. Navy.

28 January

1st Special Marine Brigade is activated in Quantico, VA, and Camp Lejeune, NC, as a ready force for expeditionary service.

5 February

5th Marine Division is deactivated at Camp Pendleton.

15 February

V Amphibious Corps is deactivated in Japan.

1 April

6th Marine Division is redesignated 3d Marine Brigade at Tsingtao, North China.

10 June

III Amphibious Corps is deactivated at Tianjin and Qingdao, China, and 3d Marine Brigade at Tsingtao, North China. All remaining Marine units are reorganized as Marine Forces, China, primarily 1st Marine Division, 4th Marines attached, and 1st MAW.

30 June

The active duty strength of the Marine Corps is 155,679 (14,208 officers and 141,471 enlisted).

1 August

Marine garrison at Qingdao is reduced
to reinforced battalion strength, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines.

All reservists and draftees are eligible for discharge regardless of length of service.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL WORKS

1 This bibliography was constructed based on topics covered in the text and with the coordination of the editors and Cdr James L. Dance, who has been on active duty for 18 years as Navy chaplain and is currently serving as the director of Professional Development and Training at the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center in Newport, RI.
Hansen, Kim P. Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity. New York: Pal-

Navy Chaplains Bulletin. Washington, DC: Chaplains Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Department of the Navy, 1954–.


---

**AMERICAN REVOLUTION–1812**


---

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

297

1812–61

CIVIL WAR
Brinsfield, John W., William C. Davis, Benedict Maryniak, and James


1865–1917


WORLD WAR I


Schweitzer, Richard. *The Cross and the Trenches: Religious Faith and

Talbot, Neville S. Religion Behind the Front and After the War. London: Macmillan, 1918.


WORLD WAR II


Grobman, Alex. Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the


Walstad, Clarence E. *Pages from a World War II Chaplain’s Diary*. CreateSpace, 2015.


COLD WAR

KOREAN WAR

VIETNAM WAR


Davis, Elvernice “Sonny.” *Reflections of an Army Chaplain: From Sonny to Reverend Davis to Chaplain Davis to Dr. Davis to Sonny—Just Tell the Truth*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2020.


**GULF WAR**


**1991–PRESENT**


**IRAQ**


**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

AFGHANISTAN

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
Chaplains’ Corps with a General Officer as Chief Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Cong., 1st Sess. (24 March 1939).
Committee on the Judiciary, Chaplains in Congress and in the Army and Navy, 33d Cong., 1st Sess. (1854).


Kibben, LCdr Margaret Grun (CHC, USN). The Role and Mission of Chaplains in Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations (HA/POs). Newport, RI: Joint Military Operations Department, Naval War College, 1996.


“Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of Chaplaincy of the U.S. Military and Prisons.” Hearing before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security of the Com-
T


MANUALS, HANDBOOKS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS


Nay, Maj Robert (CHC, USA). The Operational, Social, and Religious

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

310


Religious Support to Funerals and Memorial Events, ATP 1-05.02 Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2018.
INDEX


Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 263n5
Abramson, Sgt Julius L., 217
African-American Marines, vii, xli, xlv. See black Marines
Air Force Aid Society, 56n2
Alger Jr., Horatio, 81–82, 82n7
American Jewish Archives (AJA), vii, xxiii, xxxi, xxxiv–xxxv
American Red Cross, 34, 56, 58, 64, 123, 125, 137, 237
Angermayer, Frances, 168n19
Anti-Defamation League, xxxix, 264–65
anti-Semitism, xxiii, xxxix, xli, 187, 192–93, 195, 198, 261–66
Army Emergency Relief, 56n2
Army General Classification Test (AGCT), 79
Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), 274
Brickner, Barnett R., xvi
battles
Bataan, 147n1, 279
Corregidor, 19, 279
Dunkirk, 14–17, 24, 247, 277
Eniwetok, 100–1, 113, 284
Guadalcanal, 115, 279–81, 285
Iwo Jima, xiii, xx–xxi, xxiii, xxxiv, xxxvi, xlv, 106, 150, 183, 190n12, 199–200
Makin Island, 49, 279–80
Saipan, 109–10, 155, 160n9, 208, 284–85
Tarawa, 90, 195, 216n10, 263, 282
Berman, Morton M., ChC (USN), xxxvi
black Marines, xxvii, xlin2o, 183, 279
Bleuler, Eugen, 133n10
blood plasma, 106
Brown v. Board of Education, xlv
Buck, Pearl, 249–50
Buford, Maurice A., ChC (USN), xxxv
Calvert, George, Lord Baltimore, 253
Canal Zone, 67
Carlson, LtCol Evans F., 49n6, 100, 105
Carlson’s Raiders, 49n6, 100, 105, 279–80
Carnegie Steel Company, 219
Carradine, John, 97n3
Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), xvii, l, 274
Central Synagogue, Rockville, NY, xxxvii, 274, 276
Chalmers, Pvt Robert C., 253
China, xlv-xlvi, 242, 289–90
Christian Service League, 198
Church of Christ, Scientist, 151
Churchill, Winston, xlv
Civil rights movement, xviii, xlv, xlvi, 274–75
Clark, Gen Mark, 114–15
Cohen, PhM3c Aaron, 214
College of William and Mary, xxxv, 25, 27, 31, 36, 251, 273, 281, 289
Combat anesthetic, 219–21. See trauma
Conscientious objector status, 65, 150
Coughlin, Charles E., 189, 266
Cummings, William T., ChC (USA), 147n1
Cuthriell, Warren F., ChC (USN), xl, 190, 266–67
Czechoslovakia, 2015
Death camps, xliiin22
De Gaulle, Gen Charles, 119
DeSousa, Cristiano, ChC (USN), xxxvi
draft, xxv, 58, 65, 88, 126n4, 277–78, 280, 291. See Selective Service System
Einerston, Norris L., ChC (USA), xxxviiin13
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 147n1
Elder, Newton C., ChC (USA), xxxviii, 200–1, 269
Elliott, Comdt George F., 57n3
Erickson, 2dLt Dewey A., 213–14
Field Medical School, 95, 106
Fisher Body Division, 77
Fishke, PhM3c Jacob S., 214–15
Fosdick, Harry Emerson, xvi–xvii, 14
Four Chaplains, The, xxxvii, 207
Four Chaplains postage stamp, 207
Fox, PFC Don, 183, 235–36
Gelles, Cpl Heinz, 194
Gettysburg Address, xiv, xxviii, xliii
Gittelsohn, Ruth Freyer, 24, 275
Goldberg, Capt Leon, 100–2, 113
Goldwater, Senator Barry M. (R-AZ), xxii
Goode, Alexander D., ChC (USA), 206–7
Grapes of Wrath, The, 97
Harp, RAdm Edward B., Jr., 30
Hearst, William Randolph, 226
Hebrew Union College, xvi, 207n27, 251, 260, 272, 276
Herberg, Will, xviii
Hermle, BGen Leo D., 174
Heydrich, Reinhard, 2015
Hitler, Adolf, xxv-xxvi, xxxix, 14, 20, 193, 196, 263
Hochberg, Emmanuel, 107
Hornstein, Lt David H., 116
Hotaling, E. Gage, ChC (USN), xxxviiin14, 200
House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), 273
humor, 221-25, 228n19, 252-53
interfaith, xvii-xviii, xxix, xxxvii, xl
Isquith, Cdr Solomon, 19
Iwo Jima Cemetery, 40, 218, 266
Japanese Language School, 79
Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 20-21
Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), xxvi, xxxix, 161n10, 261, 264-65
Kantor, MacKinlay, xlvn23
Kaddish, 238
Kertzer, Morris N., ChC (USA), 162
Kingman, Gen Matthew H., 94
Kraepelin, Emil, 133n10
K-rations, 223
Ku Klux Klan, 184
landing ship, tanks (LSTs), 119, 220
Lejeune, John A., 46n4
Leonard, William Ellery, 63
Levin, Dan, xxxiii-xxxiv, xlvii-1
Levinger, Lee J., xxviii
Levy, Sgt Aaron, 194
Lidice, Czechoslovakia, 2015, 118
Life Magazine, 100-1, 113
Lincoln, Abraham, xiv, xxviii, xliii
M1 Garand semiautomatic rifle, 87
Magnus, Gen Robert, xxxiv
Maguire, William A., ChC (USN), 124
Mahler, LtCdr Walter A., 201-2
Mandel, Lee, xix, xxxvn6
March, Fredric, xlviii
Marine Corps bases
  Camp Elliott, 57, 94-95, 106, 135, 203, 208, 251, 279-80, 282
  Camp Pendleton, 68, 211, 225, 251, 282-83, 290
  San Diego, 51, 56, 70, 84, 89, 124, 127, 130-32, 135-37, 152, 169, 185, 201, 204, 208, 280
Marine Corps Institute, 46
Marine Corps units
  2d Battalion, 27th Regiment, 156
  3d Marine Division, 211, 280, 282-83, 285-86, 290
  4th Marine Division, 129, 211, 282-86, 290
  5th Marine Division, 129, 174, 190n12, 211, 216, 230, 251, 273, 283, 286-87, 289-90
22d Marine Regiment, 113, 284
26th Marine Regiment, 204n23, 215, 223, 252–53
marriage, xxi, 48, 68–69, 73, 128, 135, 173, 275
Marshall, Gen George C., 106n14
Mauldin, William H. “Bill,” 227, 228n19
McCarthy, Senator Joseph, 273
morale, 24, 43–143, 148, 215, 261
Motoyama Airfield Number 1, 215–16
Mount Suribachi, xxxvi, xxxix, 190, 216, 226–27, 238, 286
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, xxi
Navajo code talkers, xli
Naval Training School for Chaplains, 25–26, 30, 39, 149, 251.
See Williamsburg, VA
Navy Chaplain’s School, xxxv
Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, 56n2
Neyman, C. A., ChC (USN), 26, 30
Nisei interpreters, xli
Officers’ Candidate School (OCS), 84–85
Owen, Maj Pete, 169, 174–75, 177–78
Oxford Pledge, 13
Paassen, Pierre van, 20
pacifism, xxxv, 13–16, 18, 24, 245–47, 249, 273
Panama Canal Zone, 67n7
Pearl Harbor, HI, 10–12, 14–15, 18–20, 24, 124n2, 179–80, 273, 278
Podzoba, Herman, 237
Polokoff, PhM Frank, 107
post-traumatic stress disorder, 219n12. See trauma
President’s Committee on Civil Rights, xlv, 274–75
propaganda, 12, 181
“The Purest Democracy,” xii, xviii, xx, xxviii–xxix, 273, 287
Pyle, Ernest T., 147n1
Reynolds, Quentin J., 213
Robinson, Chaplain Harold L., xxxi, xxxiv, xxxvii, li
Robinson, Chaplain Jack F., 35
Robinson, Col Ray, 174
Rockey, MajGen Keller E., xxxix, 174, 190
Roosevelt, Franklin D., xxv–xxvi, xlv, 278, 280, 288
Rosenberg, Leon W. (ChC (USN), 129–30
Rosenthal, Joseph, xxxvi, 226
Rudin, Rabbi Jacob Philip, 17–18
Schwartz, Cpl Joseph, 231
Scott, Randolph, 100n4
Seabees (Naval Construction Battalions), 226–27
Selective Service System, 65n6, 280
Seventh-day Adventists, 151
sex, 48, 67, 72–74, 275
Shapiro, Rabbi Robert W., xv
Shaw, Col James F., 174
ships
SS Dorchester, xxxvii, 206–7

INDEX
316
USS *California* (BB 44), 19n2, 124n2
USS *Christabel* (SP 162), 124n2
USS *Hornet* (CV 8), 26, 30
USS *Nevada* (BB 36), 11
USS *Shaw* (DD 373), 11
USS *Utah* (AG 16), 19
USS *Wasp* (CV 7), 26, 30

Silver, Abba Hillel, xvi
Simon, Julian L., xxxiii–xxxiv, xli–xlii
Smith, MajGen Julian C., 216
Spanish-American War, 12
Spanish Civil War, 265n5
Star of David, xlii, xlviii, 197, 238
Steinbeck, John, 97n3
Strobing, Sgt Irving, 19
sympathy chits, 170–71
Sullivan, Frank, 30

Teitelbaum, Samuel, ChC (USA), 157
Temple Israel, Boston, MA, xiv, xvi–xvii, xxxiii, 274
Tishler, Hulda, 275
Tito, Josip Broz, 118–19
trauma, 219n12
Travelers Aid, 137
Truman, Harry S., xlv, 274, 288–89
Tuskegee Institute, 183–84

underage enlistment, 131n9
Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), 274
Union for Reform Judaism, 274
United Service Organizations (USO), 45

United States Steel Corporation, 219n11
V-12 Navy College Training, 194, 257
Vandegrift, Gen Alexander A., 208, 283
Van Meter, Herbert, ChC (USN), xxxvii, 203–4, 224, 251–4, 257, 259, 269
Vorspan, Dr. Albert, xxi
War Resisters’ International, 13
Weinberg, 2dLt Martin H., 166, 207–9
Weinberg, Yetta, 208–9, 250
White, Chaplain Daryl, xxxvi
Wilcox, Richard, 100, 102
Williams, Chaplain Merritt, 30
Williamsburg, VA, xxxv, 25, 27–39, 170, 198, 251, 281, 290
Winchester Repeating Arms, 219
Wise, Stephen S., xvi
Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), 186
Women Reserves, 170
Workman, RAdm Robert D., 198, 201
World Zionist Executive & Jewish Agency Welfare Board of Governors, 274
Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), 89, 187
Zionism, xvii, 37