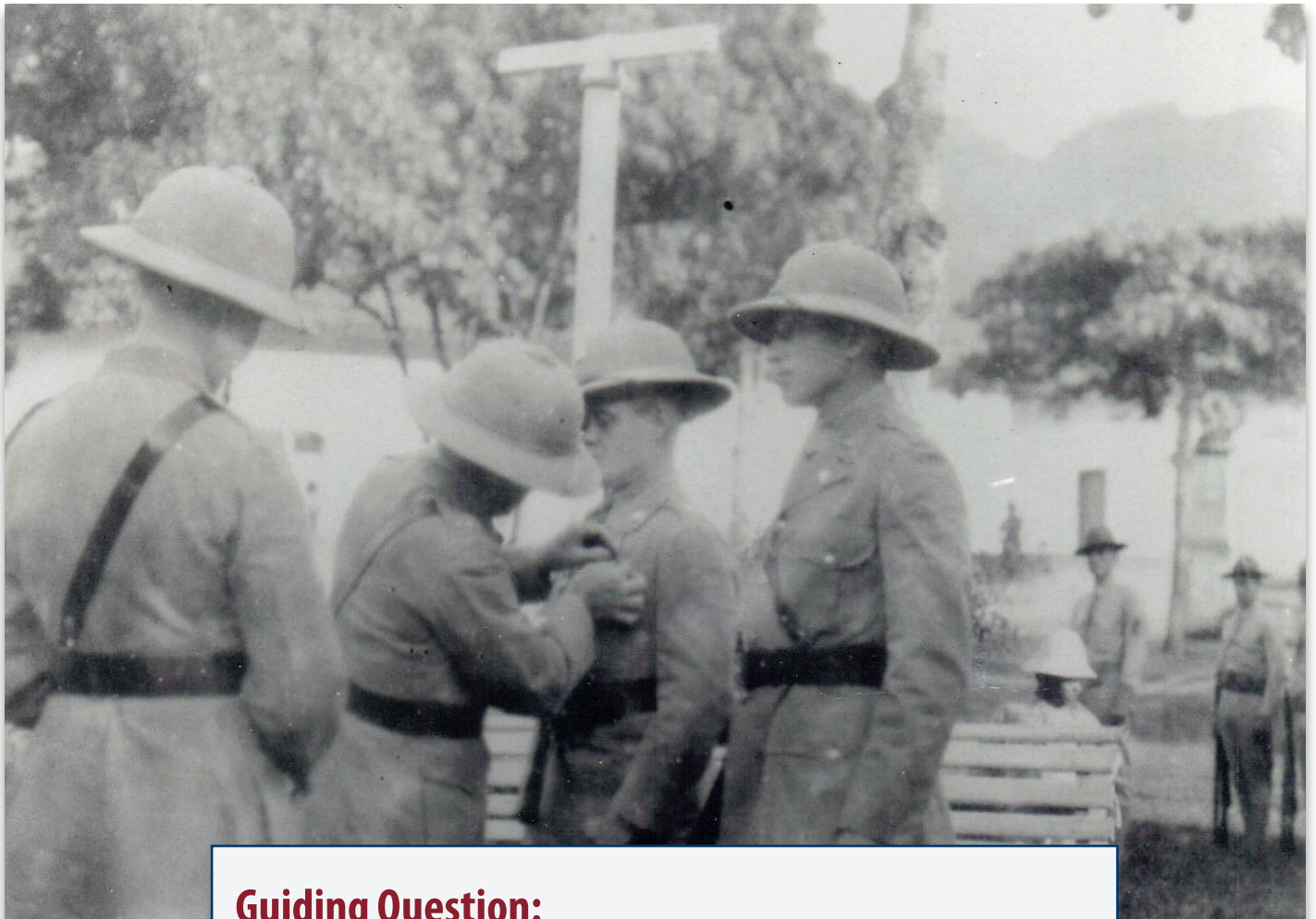


# Finding the Human Side of History

DEVELOPED BY MATTHEW POTH



## Guiding Question:

How can students use primary documents to build a personal narrative around historical events?



## Overview

Students will use the documents in their packet to create a brief historical overview of what life may have been like for U.S. military personnel from 1917 to 1945. Students will also identify further questions they have and resources they can use to find more information for these questions.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- Analyze different types of primary sources to build a profile of a “typical” veteran experience; and
- Develop a list of additional questions and resources available to find further information.



*The early twentieth century saw the growth of America into a world power. This growth often came at a high price paid by just a few. I wanted to create an activity that gave students the chance to learn about a man who helped build the America we live in today. Colonel Lee is the definition of what a Marine should be. He was a hard charging, tenacious, combat-tested Marine who put his nation and his men before his own needs. He is the type of Marine I strove to be while I was enlisted. He helped to lay the foundations of the proud traditions the Corps holds itself to today.*

— Matthew Poth

Poth teaches at Park View High School in Sterling, Virginia.

## Spotlight: Quantico National Cemetery

Quantico National Cemetery is located on land that was part of the U.S. Marine Corps training base adjacent to Quantico in Prince William County, Va. The land has been used by the military for over 200 years.

In 1918 a permanent Marine base was established at Quantico. The Marine Corps Schools, a forerunner of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command, was created there in 1921. Since 1941, the focus of the base has been individual education rather than unit training. In 1977, the Marine Corps donated 725 acres of this land to the VA's National Cemetery Administration, to establish a facility at Quantico. The cemetery was formally dedicated on May 15, 1983.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Standards Connections

## Connections to Common Core

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

## Documents Used

### Primary Sources

Frank Weller, "Shift From China Cuts Fabulous Pay of U.S. Marines" *Evening Star*, December 5, 1941  
Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1941-12-05/ed-1/seq-57/>

Letter written by Captain A. M. Sumner to his wife, Mary Morris Sumner, July 15, 1918 (transcription)  
Allen Melancthon Sumner Collection  
Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress  
<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.105990/pageturner?ID=pm0080001&page=1>

Photograph, Bain News Service, *First Aid Station, American Trenches*, 1917-1918  
Library of Congress (2014706666)  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2014706666/>

Photograph, *From left to right: First Sergeant Hernandez... 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Lewis R. Puller, USMC; Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, USMC; Sergeant Torres,...*, 1931  
National Archives and Records Administration (531653)

Photograph, *This picture, captured from the Japanese, shows American prisoners using improvised litters to carry those of their comrades who, from the lack of food or water on the march from Bataan, fell along the road... Subsequent information from military archivists, the National Archives and Records Administration, and surviving prisoners, strongly suggests that this photo may actually depict a burial detail at Camp O'Donnell,* May 1942

National Archives and Records Administration (535565)

<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/ww2/photos/images/ww2-131.jpg>

Photograph, *U.S. Marines standing in ranks with gas masks attached*, 1918

Library of Congress (2005694933)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2005694933/>

Recommendation for Navy Cross for William Lee, November 10, 1932

National Archives and Records Administration (RG 127, entry 193, box 1)

Robert E. Winslow Collection (excerpt)

Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.21324/>

Unit Journal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Nicaragua, October 7, 1932

National Archives and Records Administration (RG 127, entry 113C, box 5)

## Secondary Sources

Map, Quantico National Cemetery

National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/maps/quantico872.pdf>

Veteran Profile, Colonel William A. Lee

National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>



# Materials

- World War I Packet
- Nicaragua Packet
- World War II Packet
- War Packet Analysis and Mini-Profile handout
- Veteran Profile, Colonel William A. Lee
- Map, Quantico National Cemetery

# Activity Preparation

- Divide students into three groups (World War I, Nicaragua, World War II).
- Make one copy of the relevant packet for every member in the group.
- Make one copy of the War Packet Analysis and Mini-Profile handout for each student.
- Make one copy of the Veteran Profile for Colonel William A. Lee for teacher use at Quantico National Cemetery.
- Make one copy of the Map, Quantico National Cemetery for teacher use. Familiarize yourself with the location of Colonel Lee's grave (section 17, site 994).

# Procedure

## Activity One: Cemetery Etiquette (15 minutes)

- Divide students into three groups (World War I, Nicaragua, and World War II), with three or four students each. If group sizes are too large, consider having multiple groups for each topic.
- Ask the students to review the contents of their packet and analyze the sources. Direct students to:
  - Create a list of observations and thoughts based on the documents they are given;
  - Write down any additional questions they have; and
  - Conduct independent research (time permitting) to begin exploring these questions.

- Ask students to build a mini-profile of what service might have been like for a member of the military based on the documents. Some guiding questions might include:
  - *What might life have been like in the environment described?*
  - *What time period/war/world events were occurring at the time?*
  - *What type of hardships would this person have had to contend with?*

## Activity Two: Cemetery Visit (45 minutes)

- Ask students to share the documents in their packets (World War I, Nicaragua, or World War II) and their mini-profile with other students once the group reaches Quantico National Cemetery.
- Lead a brief discussion about their findings and additional questions they have.
- Ask students about the meaning of service.
- Lead the students to Colonel William E. Lee's grave (section 17, site 994).
- Read the Veteran Profile for Colonel William E. Lee to the class. Explain that each group learned about just one aspect of Colonel Lee's service.

**Teacher Tip:** *This can be a broad conversation to include military service, civil service, service in a student's local community, etc.*

## Assessment

- Ask each group to continue adding to the list of additional questions they created after returning from Quantico National Cemetery.
- Lead a discussion of the resources students might use to help answer their questions (i.e., census data, military records, Ancestry.com, secondary sources, etc.)

## Methods for Extension

- Students could select three of their questions to research and identify where they could go to find information to address their questions. They could write a few sentences about why finding this information might help them more fully understand what life might have been like for Colonel Lee.
- Students could use the profile's bibliography to further investigate their specific period of Colonel Lee's service. This could be a research project, an essay, or a timeline to further understand America's involvement in world affairs in the first half of the twentieth century.
- Students could visit the National Museum of the Marine Corps after the cemetery. Students could use their list of additional questions to guide their visit and attempt to find responses to as many of their questions as possible. Students could engage in a group discussion of the role of the Marines (and the U.S. military in general) over the past 100 years.

# World War I Packet:

Photograph, *U.S. Marines standing in ranks with gas masks attached, 1918*



Photograph, Bain News Service, *First Aid Station, American Trenches, 1917-1918*



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Letter written by Captain A. M. Sumner to his wife, Mary Morris Sumner, July 15, 1918 (transcription)  
Allen Melancthon Sumner Collection

**On Active Service with the American Expeditionary Forces**  
**July 15, 1918**

My Dearest,

Well I am still well, a little back of the front line for a rest, but we are all still sleeping on the ground and it looks as if we would for some time.

I have had built a little dugout, just a square hole in the ground under the trees with a roof of split logs and sand bags, but it keeps me nice and dry even in a hard rain. The men are fixed up in about the same way with every variety of shelter from boughs and shelter tents to logs covered with dirt.

It is remarkable how quickly men learn the value of picks and shovels once they have been on an active front as we have. Before that no one wanted to carry entrenching tools and they had to be made, but now everyone keeps one as close as possible and we have a lot of little German shovels they took from dead Boche and they are a very handy little tool, with a leather case to carry them.

I got a German helmet, rifle, bayonet, etc. and could have gotten any number I wanted if I could have carried them away as they were scattered all over the place where we were, as there were many German dead and the prisoners usually throw off their helmets, throw down their rifles and then put both hands flat on top of their head when they start yelling "kamerad".

A number of my men who had lost their blankets during the first fighting used some found in the German trenches and dugouts that were taken with disastrous results as the "cooties" came over to us with them, but now we are rid of them I think. Personally I have not had any trouble that way I am glad to say.

I hope we go farther back and have a chance to get leave before going up in the front line again, but no one knows, or at least won't tell.

This is a beautiful farming country and some of the wheat fields were the finest I have ever seen, beautiful wheat, all dotted with red poppies. The little villages were beautiful too and I saw the transformation of one from a pretty little peaceful village to a wrecked mass of broken stone by German artillery. In fact I have seen several villages demolished. It is one of the things that makes it so necessary to end this war the only way it can be ended so such things will not occur again in the immediate future. By complete and final victory over the Hun. It was a sad thing to see the refugees streaming back when we first came up here and then see their farms and fields torn and blasted afterward. With lots of love.

Your loving husband,  
Allen

Capt. A.M. Sumner  
81st Company, 6th Marine Machine Gun Battalion A. E.F.

*Note: Captain A. M. Sumner was killed in action four days later.*

Letters of Captain Allen M. Sumner, USMC Page 145, Copyright © 2009 Richard F. Hinton

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**VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM**

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# Nicaragua Packet:

Recommendation for Navy Cross for for William Lee, November 10, 1932 (Page 1)

*Davis*

3-CBM/LPH-wsl

HEADQUARTERS NICARAGUAN NATIONAL GUARD DETACHMENT  
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

10 November, 1932

From: The Commanding Officer.  
To : The Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.  
Via : (1) The Commander, Special Service Squadron, U.S.  
Navy, Balboa, Canal Zone.  
(2) The Major General Commandant, Headquarters,  
U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

Subject: Recommendation for award of the NAVY CROSS STAR  
to Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, U.S. Marine  
Corps.

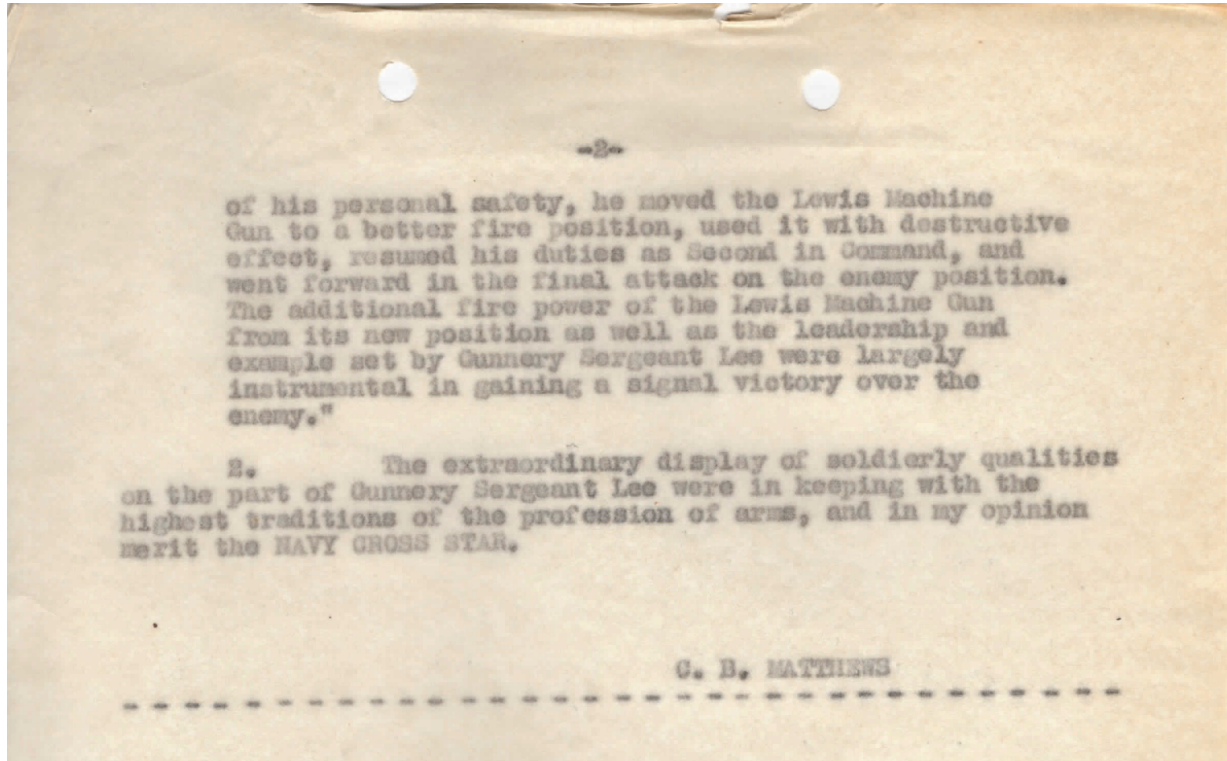
Reference: Chapters 8-4 & 8-9, MCM-1931.

1. It is recommended that Gunnery Sergeant William  
A. Lee, U.S. Marine Corps, be awarded the NAVY CROSS STAR for  
extraordinary heroism performed while serving as a First  
Lieutenant in the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua as Second in  
Command of a patrol that penetrated into organized bandit  
territory from 20 September to 1 October, 1932, as set forth  
in the following citation:

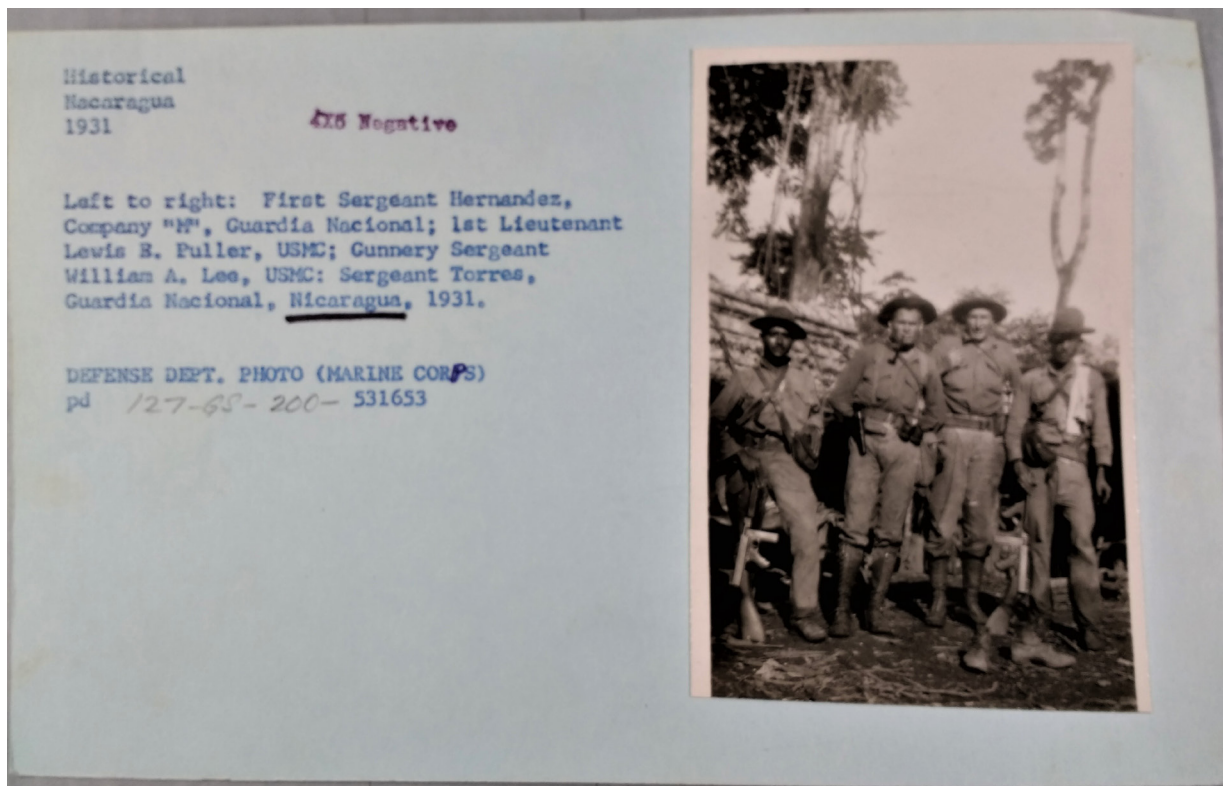
"Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, U.S. Marine  
Corps (First Lieutenant, Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua),  
distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in the  
line of his profession and devotion to duty while Second  
in Command of a Guardia patrol from 20 September to  
1 October, 1932. This patrol of two officers and forty  
men penetrated one hundred miles north and east of  
Jinotega City, Department of Jinotega, Nicaragua, into  
isolated, mountainous bandit territory with no means of  
communication and no base nearer than Jinotega City.  
On 26 September, 1932, the patrol was ambushed northeast  
of Kilande Mountain by an insurgent group of over one  
hundred and fifty, armed with not less than seven auto-  
matic weapons, grenades, bombs, various classes of small  
arms, and plentifully supplied with ammunition. Gunnery  
Sergeant Lee was wounded twice and became unconscious in  
the early stages of the combat. After a period of from  
fifteen to twenty minutes he recovered consciousness,  
and in spite of his weakened condition, with disregard

## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

## Recommendation for Navy Cross for William Lee, November 10, 1932 (Page 2)



Photograph, From left to right: First Sergeant Hernandez... 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Lewis R. Puller, USMC; Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, USMC; Sergeant Torres,..., 1931



## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM



Unit Journal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Nicaragua, October 7, 1932

FROM 0000, 25 SEPTEMBER, 1932		Sheet No. 1		JOURNAL B-1-2-2	
TO 2400, 1 OCTOBER, 1932				HDQ 2nd Marine Brigade	
DATE 7 October, 1932.				MANAGUA, NICARAGUA.	
JOURNAL FOR STAFF SECTIONS					
TIME *	SERIAL	TIME DATED †	INCIDENTS, MESSAGES, ORDER, ETC.	DISPOSITION	REMARKS
1.	25 Sept. 32		Nothing of importance.		
2.	26 Sept. 32		One RR-2 airplane, Lieut. Parmelee, pilot, with Pvt. Hacker, mechanic, took off Managua and made a flight to Octal-condega and return. Carrying 13 passengers and 1900 lbs. Guardia freight and stores.		
			Captain Fuller, GN, Lt. Lee, GN, and Company "M" were ambushed by small group of bandits, jefe unknown, at (292-377). Bandit casualties unknown. No Guardia casualties.		
			Captain Fuller, GN, Lt. Lee, GN, and Company "M" were ambushed by group of bandits estimated over 150, jefe unknown, at (291-379) west of Agua Cerve. Bandits used 7 automatic weapons, rifles and hand grenades, and expended much ammunition. Fight lasted more than half an hour. Bandits had 16 known killed. Guardia casualties 2 killed and 3 wounded, including Lt. Lee, who was wounded in head and right arm.		
3.	27 Sept. 32		Lt. Grieco, GN, Lt. Perez, GN, and patrol of 19 Guardia enlisted from Jinotega had contact at 1730, lasting 20 minutes, with group of about 40 bandits, jefe Daniel Hernandez, near Robles, (245-318). Bandits were dressed in khaki and were armed with rifles and pistols. Bandit casualties unknown, but blood trails showed evidence of several wounded. No Guardia casualties.		
4.	28 Sept. 32		Nothing of importance.		
5.	29 Sept. 32		Nothing of importance.		
6.	30 Sept. 32		Captain Fuller, GN, Lt. Lee, GN, and Company "M" were ambushed by group of about 80 bandits, jefe unknown, at (262-329). Eight bandits known killed. No Guardia casualties.		
			Captain Fuller, GN, Lt. Lee, GN, and Company "M" were ambushed by group of 40 bandits, jefe unknown, at (249-326). Three bandits known killed. No Guardia casualties.		

\* Time of Receipt or Sending. † Time Dated & Age of Information.

U. S. Marine Corps.



# World War II Packet:

Frank Weller, "Shift From China Cuts Fabulous Pay of U.S. Marines" *Evening Star*, December 5, 1941

C-10

## Shift From China Cuts Fabulous Pay Of U. S. Marines

**Leathernecks Lived in  
Luxury Where \$1  
Was Equal to \$18**

By FRANK I. WELLER.

Wide World News.

The "millionaires of the Marine Corps" are back where they started as poor boys.

They are the 970 officers and men whose pay dollar was worth \$18 in Shanghai, Peiping and Tientsin but will amount to only 100 cents again in Manila. President Roosevelt ordered them to the Philippines in withdrawing the last remaining garrisons from China.

Tales of fabulous doings with Chinese exchange abound in the corps—buck privates turning their \$20 a month into fortunes; leisure, fun and frolic where only the very rich dared draw a billfold; marines in financial or business enterprises of their own, ex-marines married and living in China on their savings!

Fantastic? Well, in China a \$1 American greenback was worth 18 Mexican dollars in local currency, but the Mex dollar would buy as much goods and services as the American dollar. Millionaires, for sure, say the Leathernecks.

### Leave After 97 Years.

It's all over now. United States marines have guarded American interests in China for 97 years. This is the first time they ever have been removed lock, stock and barrel. Too dangerous to stay, said officials—the token force could be wiped out in event of war with Japan.

But the "maligns," as Asiatics call them, faced fearful odds for nearly a century—during which they crossed steel with fanatical Chinese hordes and rammed battle banners into the muzzles of Korean cannon. They had their toughest going in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and the civil war of 1927.

There have been any number of marine landing or boarding parties in the Far East. These were chiefly small excursions to quell riots, chase bandits, save missionaries or protect property. For years China was the one place where a marine could have fun—plenty of fighting and plenty of money. They were on and off warships more times than deck paint and always boiling out of the Philippines, only to go back again when trouble stopped.

### Played Spectacular Parts.

Between times, small detachments idled around looking smart in their natty uniforms as diplomatic guards or curling the hair of potential enemies by driving nails with rifle bullets at 300 yards.

In all their China excursions, the Leathernecks were the first to land, the last to leave. They always grabbed off the spectacular spots—that was their job. But behind them came the United States sailors and soldiers with the heavy stuff that stayed put.

Marines first landed in China on business in 1844. The East India Squadron had been nosing around coastal waters there since 1825 on rumors that the Chinese didn't think so much of Yankee traders. Finally, a Canton merchant was killed in a riot and Chinese mobs stormed an American factory to avenge him.

Capt. Tilton took a small detachment from the U. S. S. St. Louis ashore on Whampoa Beach armed with muskets and cutlasses to guard the American compound until Caleb Cushing, first United States Minister to China, adjusted difficulties with local officials.

Commodore Matthew C. Perry gave the Orient its most colorful and historical, perhaps its most important, acquaintance with American marines. He steamed into Yedo (Tokio) Bay in 1853 under presidential orders to negotiate a treaty with Japan, which for nearly 200 years had shunned Western commerce.

### 100 Marines Do the Trick.

Natives, awed by ships that belched smoke and moved against wind and tide, yelled out in fright and 5,000 warriors took battle stance to stave off the sea devils. Commodore Perry trained his guns on the landing and sent Maj. Zeillin's 100 gorgeous marines ashore to drill and strut.

The stunt worked. Never were Leathernecks so garbed in white and scarlet and gold and plumes and tassels. Perry's official party followed with great pomp and splendor. The marines formed two gleaming ranks of steel on either side of the landing and escorted the commodore to representatives of the Mikado. Soon after there was a revolution in the islands and Japan went in for modernization and Western civilization.

Back in China, marines formed the spearhead in destruction of the four barrier forts blocking foreign entrance to the Canton River. Chinese soldiers clashed first with a landing party sent to protect American property. Fort after fort fell during the years 1856 to 1859 to forces consistently outnumbered 50 to 1 by natives. Imperial Commissioner Yeh apologized for "firing on the American flag."

But there was much more to this first major clash with the Celestial Empire. The United States Navy invaded inner Chinese waters as part of a determined move to establish an open door policy which Manchu rulers feared and resented.

### Instituted Mutual Assistance.

It marked, too, the beginning of British-American mutual assistance in the Far East. Both countries were trying to move their ministers from Shanghai to the forbidden capital called Peking. When the British were severely pounded by forts at the mouth of the Peiho River, American Commodore Tatnal (credited with coining this phrase) exclaimed "Blood is thicker than water!" and sent aid from his own squadron.

The 1866 punitive Korean expedition followed the killing of stranded American sailors by native forts on the Han River—an incident in the long resentment of Yankee trade invasion. Capt. Tilton's 105 Leathernecks, serving as shock troops, spiked enemy cannon in advance of Rear Admiral Rogers' sailors, who held the positions until native officials guaranteed peace.

Here, as always, the marines were vastly outnumbered. Their records brag about it. But they could shoot. At 120 yards they knocked off twice their number in Koreans, potting them through cracks in the barricades.

In 1900 Maj. Biddle and Waller led 500 sea-soldiers in the vanguard of combined American, British, Russian, French, Austrian, German, Japanese and Italian forces to wrest Peking from the Boxers (Fist of Righteous Harmony). Empress Tsz's Hsi and the Manchu dynasty. They captured the pivotal Chien-Men Gate, then the Western Gate, and drove the enemy from fortified walls with rifle fire.

### Butler's Force Biggest.

Maj. Waller said of his command: "We marched 97 miles in five days, fighting all the way on one meal a day. The men looked like Falstaff's army, with brave hearts and bright weapons."

Brig. Gen. Smedley D. Butler, dispatched in 1927 to protect Americans in the civil war between factions of Gen. Wu Pei-fu and Marshal Chang Tso-lin, led the largest marine force ever assembled in China. "Butler's brigade" of 6,000 officers and men fought mobs away from the Shanghai International Settlement and guarded lives and property north to Tientsin until Chank Kai-shek's Nationalist army took Peiping (old Peking) and moved the government to Nanking, with Chang as president of the new republic.

Only 1,200 men of the 4th remained in China, chiefly at Shanghai, when the Japanese attacked the native Chapel district in 1932, but reinforcements from the 6th brought marine numbers up to 2,500 by 1935. The 6th left again in 1938 and the 4th gradually dwindled to 970 officers and men by the time President Roosevelt decided to close out the career of "the richest Leathernecks afloat."

## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

Photograph, *This picture, captured from the Japanese, shows American...*, May 1942



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## Robert E. Winslow Collection (excerpt) Veterans History Project

**Gary Rhay:**

Let's talk a little bit about the conditions on the ship going to Shanghai; what was that like?

**Robert Winslow:**

Well, this--we were in the--we were in the hull, and we were in--in the hull, that's a low heading, incidentally, where we were, you couldn't even stand upright. We were really down in the bottom, in the bilches. And if you made one move, the Japanese--this is a different group of Japanese, incidentally, than had us on Wake Island. These were the ship board Japanese sailors, or the so-called Japanese marines, who were in charge. And they wanted to show how tough they were. So at every conceivable occasion, for no reason at all, they would take out, select somebody to--from the group of us prisoners of war, prisoners, and start beating on us with a big club of some kind, to make an example, I guess, to make us, keep us aware of the fact that we were at their mercy. And they had no mercy. Now, we didn't find out about this until after the war, but several of our group were taken up on the--aboard on deck and executed. I don't know if you're familiar with this story or not. You may be. But some of our POWs claim that they knew about this at the time, and I have always insisted that no, we did not, we didn't find out about it until the war was over, and this is all, I mean your memory--memory's playing tricks on--on people. But these were--apparently it was--this was an attempt to instill--instill the marshal spirit in the Japanese crew, the Japanese soldiers aboard, or the Japanese marines, whatever you want to call them, to--so they executed them by chopping off the heads of about, I think there were four or five, I can't remember exactly, several of our crew. Of our--our group. And I didn't know about it until after the war was over. Maybe somebody claims they did, but I don't think so.

**Gary Rhay:**

That time in Shanghai, that first camp, what were conditions like, food?

**Robert Winslow:**

I still--I still remember. We were--we wound up in--in a freezing rain. It was January, and it gets cold in Shanghai in January. And it was a freezing rain, and we had not--we had not any clothing to speak of because a few odds and ends of clothing that we had were summer clothing that we had on Wake Island. There was no winter clothing on Wake. So we stood there, they marched us to this compound, and the first--right off the docks, when we landed in Shanghai, and we had this interpreter who must have learned his English out of a book who was telling us all of the horrible things that would happen to us if we did not comply with the Japanese regulations. I remember is if you attempt to escape, you will be shot. And if you do anything, you will be shot. A long harangue, lasted about an hour, and we stood there and shivered in the cold, cold freezing rain until we finally were allowed to--to go into the barracks. And it was--we had--already in the barracks waiting for us were the North China marines that had been captured in North China. And of course they had all their winter clothing, and of course that became a problem, but they had--they had a problem whether--whether or not they should share with us or not was a--became a little difficult problem.

**Gary Rhay:**

Well, now, that--that is a good question; how--how did the discipline of the Corps hold up in this situation?

**Robert Winslow:**

Well, it held up pretty good. There were some minor problems but the Japanese, of course, recognize the officer and NCO differences, and the senior NCOs and officers were allowed to have separate quarters and better food, and this of course was a little bit of a morale problem for the rest of us. We says well, here we have--we all should be treated equally but we're not. In some cases. But for--in--I--I see no--looking back on it, I don't see any big problems with the--with the Marine discipline, it held up pretty good, pretty well. We had some--we had some minor difficulties but nothing serious.

**Gary Rhay:**

How about the food that you got?

**Robert Winslow:**

Food was, that was a problem, of course, 'cause the Japanese, after the war had discovered that, from reading about it, that the Japanese actually thought by--they might--under Tojo, Tojo's orders to the Japanese authorities that were in charge of the prisoners of war was to starve them to death; not really to starve them but to keep them at such a minimal, minimal level that they could never have enough energy to have any kind of an uprising. So the food, we had bowls of--we didn't see much rice. Very, very seldom; rice was a real bonus when you had rice. We had what we called seaweed, and we had barley, and, bowls of barley, and very seldom any kind of meat of any kind. And you had your little ration, your daily ration of barley, once in a while--gruel, I guess that's the best way to put it. And we went down, lost all--we had all sorts of dietary disease deficiencies; beriberi was very common. If you're familiar with beriberi, that's when your lower limbs, extremities, swell up, bloated with water, your abdomen puffs out; and about half of us in the camp were inflicted with various degrees of beriberi. Calogera. And other dietary deficiency diseases. When the war was over and I got back to the States, I gained 80 pounds in 8 weeks.

**Gary Rhay:**

How was the treatment by the Japanese guards, and what kind of things went on in that--that regard?

**Robert Winslow:**

Well, it seemed that our treatment--this is from the reading I've done after the war. It seemed like the farther you got from the Japanese homeland, the worse the treatment of the prisoners were. Ours was not good, ours was brutal, but the Japanese treated their own troops with--by beatings, and that's the way they enforced discipline, they beat their own, beat their own troops, and there was nothing uncommon for a Japanese officer or senior NCO to slap a subordinate for some kind of an offense that he might have committed. Or I remember one time seeing one of our sentries that was supposedly had done something wrong when they were taking us out to detail in Shanghai being beaten by his Japanese sergeant. Beaten to the--with a rifle butt. And clobbered with it, down to his knees. And the Japanese started screaming in a high voice at the time about some offense that this guy had committed. Whatever it might have been. He didn't pay enough to attention to guarding us, I guess, whatever it was. So when they beat on us, we said well, that's just about--that's really not much different than the way they treat their own troops. In our camps I was in, or the camps that I was in, there were no cases that I know of, I should say, of any deaths due to maltreatment. There was maltreatment, there was one case in--in Shanghai where they had the so-called water cure given to several people who were suspected of stealing something from the Japanese. But they survived. I mean all these people survived that.

So there was no deaths in--in the camps that I was in from mistreatment by the Japanese. There were very much so in some of the other camps farther from the Japanese homeland.

**Gary Rhay:**

Okay. Well, how did you--how did you know the war was over? And what--how did you get liberated?

**Robert Winslow:**

We were in this prison camp in Naoetsu. We were in this camp, we had--we had--Indonesian troops had been captured in Indonesia, we had British, we had Australian. It was a real melting pot. And the treatment was very brutal. Again, up to the point of physical punishment to the point where they knocked the hell out of you but nothing would be bringing any kind of death about. But all--all of a sudden one day we were told that we're not going to go to work today. So we stayed in the barracks. Of course rumors always flew in the barracks about the war being over any day, any day now, any day, so our optimists among us decided well, the war is over. The rest of us said well, let's wait and see. So all of a sudden we discovered that the bad guards, the guys who had been doing all the beating, had disappeared. There were no longer ones. The ones that remained were the mild ones, the ones that had never done us any harm. So sure enough, then we came--then before--then I think the first indication, real indication, that we had is we were in this lockdown position in the barracks, and all the rumors were flying, and here comes this American plane over, flying over. And we said well, that's an American plane, that's not a Japanese plane. We said the war must be over. So then oh, I had forgotten this. The emperor's speech. The emperor's speech. We didn't know it at the time, we didn't know at the time what was going on, but we watched out of the windows and we saw the Japanese all gathered out in the courtyard where we usually gathered, all the Japanese guards, and they had these speakers out in front of them, and this voice came on the speakers and said something in Japanese, and these guys were all bowing to--to the speaker. And it was the emperor's speech, surrender speech. And of course as soon as that happened, then the Japanese came to our commanding officer, well, our senior officer present, and turned the camp over to the senior officer present, said you are in charge now. And we--those of us who were able to do so, they--we--we went into town and had the run of the place. And it was amazing to me, another thing, another reason, you say why shouldn't you hate the Japanese, because the Japanese, as soon as the emperor said the war is over, that was the end. There were no kind of incidents of any kind, there were no--prisoner of war was partic--perfectly safe to go anywhere on the island and would be--nothing would ever happen to him. There was no revenge, nothing.

# War Packet Analysis and Mini-Profile

What war is covered by your war packet? \_\_\_\_\_

List observations and thoughts you have about the documents included in your war packet.

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List questions you have after analyzing the documents.

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Based on the documents in your war packet, build a mini-profile of what service might have been like for a member of the military during that time.

# Colonel William A. Lee

RESEARCHED BY MATTHEW POTH



November 12, 1900 - December 29, 1998

**Hometown:** Ward Hill, Massachusetts

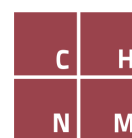
**Entered Service:** May 22, 1918

**Unit:** 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Brigade, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Company K

**Rank:** Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

**Awards:** Navy Cross (3), Purple Heart (3), Nicaraguan Medals of Valor (Cruz de Valor) with Palm (2)

**Cemetery:** Section 17, Site 994  
Quantico National Cemetery  
Triange, Virginia



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## Before the War

William “Ironman” Lee was born in Ward Hill, Massachusetts, to Benjamin and Eda Lee on November 12, 1900. Benjamin worked as a stationary engineer at Knipes Shoe Factory, and Eda worked to keep the household in order as William was joined by four other siblings: George, Francis, Robert, and Joseph.

Lee’s father, Benjamin, grew up outside Asheville, North Carolina, so the family would make yearly trips to the area. On these trips, Lee spent a considerable amount of time at the Cherokee Indian Reservation where he learned many of the skills that would help to keep him alive during his time in the U.S. Marine Corps. The Cherokee taught Lee how to hunt, stalk, live off the land, track animals, shoot, and use a knife.

Though the outdoors were an important aspect of Lee’s formative years, education was also considered vital within the family. Eda read Lee poetry instead of bedtime stories. Lee also took advantage of his extended family to help his education. His uncle, a well-known doctor in the area, taught Lee the equivalent of two years of medical school before he completed high school. Lee also visited with neighborhood families, where he became fluent in Spanish and learned from professors from both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) and Harvard University. Throughout this time, Lee became a star fullback on his high school football team.



**Left:** Photograph of Benjamin Lee and a woman (most likely, his wife, Eda). Courtesy of the Lee Family.



**Right:** Photograph of the Lee family home in Ward Hill, Massachusetts. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

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### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Military Experience

Lee's first attempt to join the military ended in disappointment. He and several of his friends went to the U.S. Army recruiting station in hopes of joining the 42<sup>nd</sup> (Rainbow) Division and see some action before the First World War ended. The recruiter turned 17-year-old Lee away because he was too young.

Lee tried the Marine recruiting office and was told that if he could get his father to sign the paperwork, he could enlist. In a defiant spirit that would define Lee's military career, he asked the first man he saw to sign the forms in his father's name. On May 22, 1918, Lee enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and reported to Marine Barracks, Parris Island, South Carolina.

After boot camp, Lee was sent to Machine Gun School at the Savage Arms Plant in Utica, New York. By September 1918, Lee shipped out to France and was assigned to Company K, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Brigade where he quickly rose to the rank of corporal. While in France, Lee and the men of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment were based in Brest, France, a major disembarking port for American forces.

As the war ended, Lee and the members of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment were sent to Nantes, France, to perform various duties. They served as military police, guarded camps and hospitals, helped with supply distribution, and transported sick or wounded soldiers to ships bound for the United States. In August 1919, Lee returned to the United States and decided to leave the Marines due to the slow rate of promotion.

In September 1921, Lee reenlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after many of the higher enlisted ranks were cleared of career Marines. Over the next five years, Lee served as part of the Marine detachment aboard the USS *Arkansas*. Marines on naval vessels ran the brig (military jail), protected the ship, and provided security for the captain of the ship in the event of a mutiny or other crisis.

In 1924, Lee and the other Marines formed a rowing team and won the Dunlop Cup. Lee also became the Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the fleet while aboard the *Arkansas*. Lee steadily rose through the ranks, reaching gunnery sergeant by April 1925. Gunnery Sergeant Lee also made a name for himself during this time by qualifying as an expert marksman with almost every weapon he tried. Lee later reflected in an interview that his time on the USS *Arkansas* were his best years in the Corps because he was able to serve alongside his brother, George.

In early 1927, Lee was shipped Central America to take part in the occupation of Nicaragua. Over the next several years, Lee led countless patrols, engaged with rebel forces, trained the Nicaraguan National Guard, and ran supply depots. Early in his deployment to Nicaragua, Lee was challenged to a knife duel by an angry local and after receiving a severe cut on his leg, he killed the man. This would be just one of many knife fights that Lee would survive.

On September 26, 1932, while on patrol with Captain Chesty Puller, who would go on to fame in his own right, Lee showed the type of tenacity that would earn him the nickname "Ironman." The Marines and Nicaraguan National Guard were ambushed by roughly 150 rebels. In the opening moments of the fight, Lee was shot in the head, lost consciousness, and was left for dead. Lee's actions thereafter solidified his status as a warrior. An excerpt from his Navy Cross citation reads:

*...Lee was wounded twice and became unconscious in the early stages of the combat. After a period of from fifteen to twenty minutes he recovered consciousness and in spite of his weakened condition, with disregard for his personal safety, he moved the Lewis Machine Gun to a better fire position, used it with destructive effect, resumed his duties as Second in Command, and went forward in the final attack on the enemy position.*



From left to right: First Sergeant Hernandez, First Lieutenant Lewis B. Puller, Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, and Sergeant Torres, 1931. National Archives and Records Administration (127-GS-200-531653).



Major Smith pins the Navy Cross on First Lieutenant Puller and Gunnery Sergeant Lee, 1930. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

#### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM



After the firefight, Lee and his patrol walked 125 miles back to base, fighting through several other ambushes. In Nicaragua, Lee was awarded three Navy Crosses, three Purple Hearts, and two Nicaraguan Medals of Valor (Cruz de Valor) with Palm. Lee's fighting ability was so legendary among the rebel forces that they allegedly put a \$50,000 bounty on his head.

When Lee returned to the United States in January 1933, he spent six months at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Washington D.C., recovering from multiple wounds and suffering from a bad case of malaria. By June, Lee was stationed at Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia, and in August 1934, he reported to Ordinance Field Service School at Raritan Arsenal, Metuchen, New Jersey. After completing training, Lee was promoted to the rank of Marine Gunner and spent the next five years assigned to the Fifth Marines in various roles. During this time, Lee took part in several pistol and rifle shooting competitions.

On August 26, 1939, Lee was shipped to the port city of Qinhuangdao and was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Peiping (now Beijing), China. U.S. Marines in China were ordered to protect American civilians and U.S. government property during the Chinese Revolution and the Second Sino-Japanese War.

With tensions between the U.S. and Japan escalating, the majority of the Marines stationed in China were withdrawn to Corregidor, a small island at the mouth of Manila Bay in the Philippines, in November 1941. However, Lee and a small detachment of Marines remained at the embassy in Peiping. On December 7, (December 8 in China) the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and moved to capture the American Embassy in Peiping. According to eyewitness accounts, as the Japanese approached the compound, Lee prepared machine guns, small arms, and ammunition for the defense of the embassy.



Lee shaking hands with General Anastasio Somoza, the president of Nicaragua, 1939. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

With about 20 Marines to support him, Lee planned to fight thousands of Japanese troops to the death. The Marines received orders to stand down and not resist. Approximately 200 Marines and sailors in the Peiping area were taken prisoner just two days before they were set to join the rest of the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment on Corregidor Island.

#### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

The Marines were transferred to Korea where they boarded ships and were sent to Japan. Once in Japan, the POWs were taken to Hokkaido Internment Camp, on the northernmost island of the Japanese archipelago. During his time as a POW, Lee was savagely beaten by guards due to his size and his demands for better living conditions for his fellow POWs. Frequently, the Japanese guards would put lit cigarettes out on his ears and, on one particularly severe incident, a Japanese soldier kicked Lee's teeth out.

After the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many of the guards fled the camp. Once Lee and the other POWs figured this out from a guard who spoke some English, they decided that those strong enough needed to take over the camp in case the remaining guards attempted to kill everyone. Lee recalled in an interview about coming face to face with one of the more "evil ones" who had sadistically beaten him several times. Lee killed the guard and helped to capture and hold the camp until the American military arrived. Lee and his comrades were officially POWs until Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. The Marines guarding the embassy are the longest recorded American POWs of the Second World War.

Upon his release, now Second Lieutenant Lee reached San Francisco, California, on September 22, 1945, and spent the next several weeks at a U.S. naval hospital recovering. Over the next several months, Lee received a steady stream of promotions he earned during his time in the internment camp as the Marines continually issue promotions to POWs. Lee was promoted to lieutenant colonel in July 1946, and eventually commanding officer of rifle range at Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina. Lee spent the next four years in charge of the rifle ranges until he retired as a full colonel from the Marine Corps on July 1, 1950. Of Lee's 32 years of service, he spent an incredible 22 years on overseas duty.



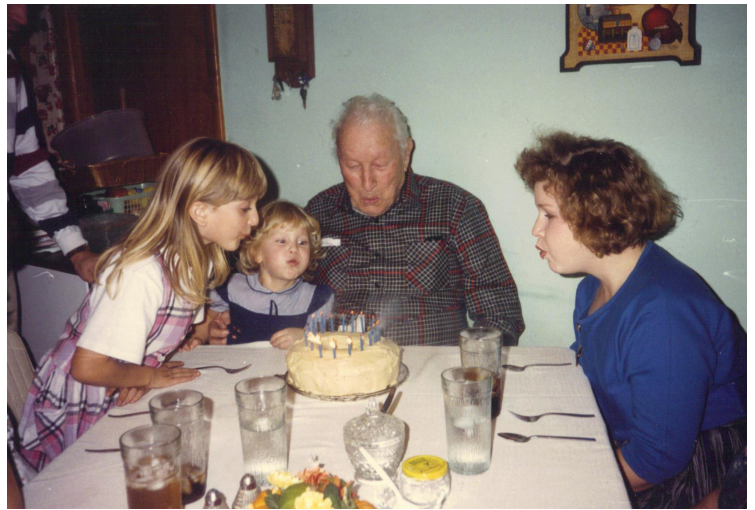
## Veteran Experience

In the spring 1949 Helen, Lee's first wife, died, which impacted his decision to retire. Lee devoted himself to raising his three daughters, Edith, Nancy, and Linda. As the conflict in Korea heated up, he attempted to return to the Marines but he was too old for active service.

Besides caring for his daughters, Lee took part in many competitive shooting competitions and became an active member in Civil War reenactments and a local Civil War Round Table in Fredericksburg Virginia. It is at one of the Round Table meetings that Lee met Ann and the two married in 1962. In 1964, Ann and Lee welcomed a daughter, Beverly, to their family.



Lee reenacting a Civil War battle. Courtesy of the Lee Family.



Lee with his daughter, Beverly (far right) and granddaughters Whitney (next to Lee) and Cristin. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

Lee poured his energy into many historical organizations, speaking at events for groups like the Order of the Purple Heart and the Navy League, attended various Marine Corps Balls, and actively worked in the local community.

At the age of 95, the Ironman showed that he still lived up to his title. Lee attended a ceremony at Marine Corps Base Quantico where a new, high tech range was being dedicated in his honor. When Lee had a chance to say a few words he told the crowd that he would like to fire the Marines current issued rifle, the M-16A2. After taking off his blazer, he fired a total of nine rounds at moving targets which were about 30 yards away. Unsurprisingly, he hit all nine targets.

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### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Commemoration

At the age of 98, Lee died of cancer at Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

At the time of his death, Lee was survived by his second wife, Ann Bradbury Lee, four daughters, three stepsons, 11 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He is buried at Quantico National Cemetery, section 17, plot 994.

Ann, whom Lee would often refer to as his “Guiding Angel,” summed up Colonel Lee’s life best when she said, “One man just can’t do all he has done in one lifetime, but he did.”



Lee with his wife, Ann, 1997. Courtesy of the Lee Family.



Grandchildren Andrew (left) and William (right) next to dedication plaque at Marine Corps Base Quantico. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

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Lee Family Photograph Collection, 1930s-1990s. Courtesy of the Lee Family.

*Left to right: First Sergeant Hernandez, Company "M"... Gunnery Sergeant William A. Lee, USMC....* Photograph. 1931. National Archives and Records Administration (127-GS-200-531653). Image.