

Remembering the Legendary 'Jim' Crowe — Part I



BGen Simmons

MOST VISITORS TO the Time Tunnel of the Marine Corps Museum in the Washington Navy Yard assume that the square-jawed Marine, standing on top of the coconut-log seawall in the diorama of Tarawa, is Col David M. Shoup urging his Marines forward. Col Shoup, as commander of the 2d Marines, did indeed receive the Medal of Honor for bravery at Tarawa. Old-timers, however, aver the Marine to be Maj Henry P. Crowe, then commanding the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. This, they will tell you, is the legendary "Jim" Crowe and they will frown if you show no sign of recognition. Part of the problem is that the figure does not have a discernible mustache. Jim, himself, would later dismiss his red mustache with the big twists as a "silly thing."

It is sad to report that when Col Crowe died at the age of 92 on 27 June 1991 in Portsmouth, Virginia, after a long and complicated illness, his passing went almost without notice. It was, however, as he wished. He wanted no obituary or ceremony. By his instructions, he was quietly cremated and his ashes scattered at sea. This was the Jim of whom it was once said that it would take a steam shovel to bury him.

But there are many old Marines who remember Jim and, as the news of his death slowly rippled across the country, the stories, lovingly remembered and polished by much re-telling through the years, began coming in. So the time has come to set these stories down, before the tellers also pass from the scene and there is no one left to repeat them.

HENRY PIERSON CROWE was born on 7 March 1899 in Boston, Kentucky (by his account, in a little log cabin he helped his father build). Generations of company clerks and first sergeants would have trouble with the spelling of that middle name, putting it down as "Pearson," until Jim gave up and accepted the second spelling. As for the nickname "Jim," it is not clear whether it became fixed in his

first or second enlistment, but in a Marine Corps then given to nicknames, and where Campbells were "Soupy," Rhodes were "Dusty," and Finns were "Mickey," there was an inevitability to his being "Jim" Crowe.

The family moved while Jim was still a child to a farm outside Mount Pulaski, Illinois. He lived, as he liked to say, the life of a country boy. He and his three sisters walked or rode horseback the seven miles to school. After three years of high school he wanted to get away from the farm, so he went to work for the railroad. In 1916 he tried to enlist in the Army to go to Mexico with Pershing, but his mother and father would not give their approval. After the United States entered the First World War, he waited a year and then in August 1918 went to Chicago to see about enlisting.

The first great successes for Sgt Henry Pierson "Jim" Crowe came on the football field, along with some notable teammates.



Marines in greens in France were making their mark at such places as Belleau Wood and Soissons, but Jim knew little or nothing of this. What impressed him was the dress blue uniform of a Marine recruiting sergeant. He signed his enlistment papers and went back home to wait. He was called up on 28 October and arrived at Parris Island on the last day of the month, 11 days before the Armistice. He found boot camp rough but not brutal. His drill instructors, he said, were thoughtful men. "They taught us discipline, which stuck with me all my life."

ONE DAY HE passed a second lieutenant walking to his left on the company street. In momentary confusion, Jim saluted with his left hand. The lieutenant did not protest. The left-handed saluting of a lieutenant stayed in Jim's mind.

After boot camp he went to Philadelphia and then in May 1919, with the war over, was sent to France as a replacement to BGen Smedley D. Butler's 5th Brigade of Marines at the infamously muddy Camp Pontanezen at Brest. He remembered Butler for his riding crop and long nose. The duty was dull, incessant guard duty on the docks as draft after draft of doughboys sailed for home. A momentary indiscretion—he left his sentry post to get a sandwich and a cup of coffee—kept him from making corporal. He returned from France in November a private first class. His enlistment was for the "duration" and he accepted his discharge the following month without regrets.

Restless, as were many returning veterans, he worked for a time for an express company, then worked the harvest in Kansas, then went to New Orleans in 1921 with the idea of becoming a merchant seaman. In New Orleans he happened to pass the Marine recruiting office on St. Charles Street. The gunnery sergeant there was an old friend from France and Jim Crowe found himself again a Marine.

After a bit of guard duty in Louisiana

and Texas, he was made an acting corporal and sent to the 3d Regiment in Santo Domingo, in charge of 10 or so Marine replacements. Marines had been occupying the Dominican Republic since 1916. Assigned to Camp Cole on the waterfront in Santo Domingo City, Jim picked up his promotion to corporal. As such he served concurrently as the mess sergeant (he had to feed his Marines on 23 cents a day), property sergeant, and police sergeant.

He found more active employment outside the city. Malaria hit him (for the first of many times) while taking a pack train from Barahona to Azua in the southwest of the country, going along a river bank with bandits shooting at him from the other side. Quinine was then the prescriptive for the mosquito-borne fever. Jim did not react well to the treatment. His hair fell out and his teeth loosened. On his recovery the teeth tightened and the hair came back, but gray instead of auburn. His beard stayed red. He learned some bullcart Spanish but never spoke it well.

He came to Quantico in December 1923 as a sergeant, was made a military policeman, and, for the first time, played football. Smedley Butler, who had been his brigade commander in France, was now the commanding general at Quantico and football was large on his agenda. Jim, like every Marine there, did his stint at the digging of Butler Stadium. His platoon leader, 2dLt Emery E. "Swede" Larson, a Naval Academy football great, played end for the Quantico team. He suggested rather strongly that Jim go out for the 1924 team. Jim protested that he had never even seen a game of football. "That's all right," Larson assured him. "They'll teach you."

ASKED WHAT POSITION he wanted to play, Jim said, "Guard." He had played guard at basketball in Santo Domingo. The civilian coach was Hugo Bezdeck of Penn State; Jim thought him the meanest man who ever lived. The uniformed coach was Capt John W. Beckett, who would retire as a brigadier general after World War II. The athletic officer was Maj Alexander A. Vandegrift who had played some football himself at the University of Virginia.

According to Jim, he played 60 minutes in the first football game he ever saw. He was in good company. The guard on the other side of the line was 1stLt George W. McHenry, who would retire as a brigadier

general with a Navy Cross on his chest for Nicaragua. At tackle was 1stLt Harry B. "The Horse" Liversedge, who would hold two Navy Crosses and died on active duty as a brigadier general in 1951. In the backfield as fullback was 1stLt Frank B. Goettge, known as "The Great Goettge" and "Big Moose." Walter Camp, the dean of sportswriters, said of Goettge that on a good day he was "greater than Jim Thorpe."

Most of Jim's teammates were big men, six feet three or four and weighing well over 200 pounds. Jim was six feet tall, or perhaps an inch more, and weighed about 180 pounds. He had an open, midwesterner's face. His wide-set green eyes were his most noticeable feature.

From January to May 1925 he served with the 73d Machine Gun Company of the 6th Marines' floating battalion at Guantanamo, Cuba. When he came back to Quantico he went to the Rifle Range Detachment and continued to play football. Some accounts have him in the backfield of the 1925 Quantico team. The team had a new civilian coach, J. Tom Keady. Except for missing 1928, Keady would stay on as head coach through 1930.

THE QUANTICO TEAM won the President's Cup in 1925, the first year it was eligible to compete. President Calvin Coolidge had first offered the cup the previous year "in the interest of good clean healthy recreation for the people of the entire country and to encourage and stimulate athletics among the enlisted men of the Services." There was a proviso that the teams be composed "of enlisted men and officers in about the same proportion as are officers and enlisted men in the service." On the 1926 team, with Jim as a guard, there was another future lieutenant general, Joseph C. Burger, at tackle. Quantico would win the President's Cup again in 1926 and 1927, both times over the Army.

The teams in these years, although they played out of Quantico, were called "All-Marine" teams. They had three defeats and a tie in a 10-game season in 1925; three defeats in a 13-game season in 1926; and were undefeated and untied in 1927, a 10-game year.

The year 1927 also brought Jim a promotion to gunnery sergeant. "A great rank," he said, noting that a gunnery sergeant was *field* first sergeant. That year saw

1stLt Alan Shapley, another football great who would become a lieutenant general, in the backfield. 1stLt Elmer E. Hall, who in the early 1920s had been a tackle, was an assistant coach. Hall's career, and also Goettge's, would intertwine with Jim's for years to come.

While at Quantico, Jim got into match shooting. In the spring of the year Marine rifle and pistol shooters would gather for the Division Matches—on the East and West Coast and sometimes in such places as China and Nicaragua—shot at ranges out to a thousand yards. Almost every post and station was required to send a team. The best 10 percent or so of the shooters would go on to the Marine Corps Match at Quantico. From the best at Quantico the National Trophy Rifle Team would be selected: 10 members, two of them officers.

THE NATIONAL MATCH team would then go to Wakefield, Massachusetts, to shoot in the New England Matches, and to train for the National Matches. At Wakefield the light and the wind were similar to what they would find in the Nationals at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Jim fired on the 1927 Marine team which came in second to the U.S. Infantry team in the Nationals. This gave him the third "leg" needed for his Distinguished Marksman badge. The requirements for the Marine Corps' Distinguished Marksman award have remained essentially the same since it was first authorized in 1908: A Marine must first win a medal in a division rifle match and then two more awards in other top-level competitive matches to give him the three "legs" needed for the badge.

1stLt (future MajGen) Merritt A. Edson, also on the 1927 National Match team, qualified for Distinguished Marksman that same year. Years later, Jim would say that "Red Mike" Edson could "look at you, those small pig eyes of his, send shivers in you He was a great, great officer, brave man. People said, well, he took risks in combat. Well, I could assure them that any risk that Merritt Edson took was a calculated risk. He didn't just bull ahead; he didn't do that."

The same could have been said of Jim.

In May 1928 Jim was sent to Nicaragua by way of the old ammunition ship USS *Nitro* (AE-2) where he joined the 57th Company, 5th Marines, at Bluefields. He



As an enlisted man Crowe earned the Marine Corps' Distinguished Marksman Badge for winning a medal in a division rifle match and then two more awards in other top-level competitive matches. In 1929 he shot 344 from a possible 350 requalification score.

came back to Quantico for the matches, and then went out to Nicaragua again, this time with the 43d Company, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. Working out of Ocotal, he patrolled the Guiraguas River and garrisoned such places as La Cruz, San Pedro del Norte, and El Gayo. The primary mission was the protection of the Guaymil Fruit Company. Displacing the local *comandante*, who was of dubious political persuasion, Jim, as a gunnery sergeant, became virtually a dictator of his little fiefdom, dealing out "justice, marriages, divorces, and birth certificates with equal aplomb."

HIS REIGN WAS interrupted when he was pulled back to Managua for rifle re-qualification and rifle team try-outs. In 1929 he shot on the National Match team captained by Maj Julian C. Smith.

Match rifles were specially conditioned '03 Springfields, caliber .30-06 with "star gauge" barrels. The M1911, caliber .45 pistols were also carefully chosen and match-conditioned.

In those simpler days Marines fired their service rifles religiously every year for re-qualification. Before World War II, Marines once issued a rifle took it with them wherever they were assigned. In that same year, 1929, Jim shot a 344 out of a possible 350 requalification score, the Marine Corps' best for the year, presumably with his own service rifle but probably with some "conditioning" help from the armorer.

Nicaragua interrupted Jim's football career. He missed the 1928 All-Marine team, but he was back in Quantico again in 1929. That year, Capt Liversedge was the assistant coach.

In May 1930 he moved to the Rifle Range Detachment. After the Quantico matches he went to Wakefield with the National Match Team and then on to Camp Perry. This year the Marines came in first, taking home the "Dogs of War" Rifle Team Trophy.

That fall he was not on the 1930 All-Marine football team, the last of Quantico's "big teams," but in 1931 he played for the Quantico post team. The 1931 team had three defeats and a tie in a 12-game season. Victories included a 57 to 6 tromping of the Baltimore Firemen. Star of the backfield was 1stLt Harold W. "Indian Joe" Bauer, later posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor at Guadalcanal. Quantico with Crowe and Bauer would repeat its stellar performances in 1932.

BY JIM'S ACCOUNT, as he neared the end of that enlistment, the Coast Guard offered to make him a chief boatswain, a warrant rank, to coach the Coast Guard rifle and football teams. Jim was tempted, but Capt Elmer Hall, now his company commander, came back with a counter offer: Why not try for the grade of Marine gunner? Capt Hall thought he could get him on the list. It was a short list, about ten names, but there was an examination to be taken. (His official record indicates that Capt Hall was not the first to make this recommendation; from 1931 on a great number of captains, including Capt Goettge, recommended that Jim be a Marine gunner.)

While this was in the works Jim went, in June 1933, to the 14-inch gun USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38). His old football friend, Capt Frank Goettge, was taking command of the Marine detachment. By no coincidence, Goettge had asked for him as detachment gunnery sergeant. Jim played guard for the *Pennsylvania* team, but Capt Goettge found that he was slowing down. In a game between the battleships *Pennsylvania* and *New Mexico* (BB-40), Capt Goettge remarked that he didn't know what was happening to Gunnery Sergeant Crowe (and he always called him "Gunnery Sergeant Crowe," never "Jim").

"A few years ago he used to make three-quarters of the tackles. Now he's not making half of them."

Jim took the written and oral exams for Marine gunner in March 1934 while the *Pennsylvania* was in port at San Pedro, California, before an examination board

conveniently chaired by Capt Goettge. The completed package was sent to Washington. Now came a long wait. The *Pennsylvania* got underway, went through the Canal to the East Coast, passed in review for President Roosevelt, returned through the Canal to the West Coast, and went up to Bremerton where Jim learned that he was to be promoted. The Marine officers immediately present, led by Capt Goettge, cut off Jim's chevrons, and gave him a Sam Browne belt, an officer's sword, and the bursting bomb insignia of a Marine gunner.

THAT YEAR HE WON the regional President's Match, shooting a 144 out of a possible 150. By then he was the perennial secretary of The Ancient and Imperial Order of Black-Busters and Bull's-Eye Hunters, a shooter's organization given over to tall tales, the telling of which he himself was a master.

His appointment as a Marine gunner was effective 1 September 1934, and he was immediately ordered to San Diego in time for the football season. Here, when not playing football or shooting, he commanded the howitzer platoon of Company D, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines. (Actually it was a 37mm-gun platoon. Other weapons in the battalion weapons company were the 3-inch trench mortar and the .30-caliber Browning water-cooled machine gun.)

The 1934 San Diego team would be Jim's last full season at football. "Indian Joe" Bauer was both the coach and in the backfield. The team took the President's Cup as had the 1927 Quantico team. In 1935, Jim was assistant coach and, at age 36, played his last game.

Transferred to Quantico in 1936, Jim became the remount officer, in charge of the post stables and "equitation." Like himself, many of the horses and mules in the stables were veterans of Nicaragua. Part of this duty was to ensure that officers desiring horse manure for their gardens received a proper share. One colonel complained that he wasn't receiving his allotment and to hurry it up. Jim was pleased to tell him that in response to his call he had been moved to the top of the manure list.

BUT AGAIN, for Jim, Quantico was mostly rifle and pistol matches. That year he won the Wimbledon Match, fir-

ing a Winchester Model 54, caliber .300 Magnum, putting the first of 20 rounds into the black of the bull's eye, but outside the V-ring. After a split-hair adjustment, he put the next 19 bullets into the V-ring, breaking a record set in 1923. That same year he was the Browning Automatic Rifleman in the seven-man squad that won the Infantry Trophy Match.

From Quantico he was sent in October 1936 to Peiping, China, for what would be a three-year tour of duty with the American Embassy Guard. He found Peiping (now Beijing) a wonderful place and the Embassy Guard every bit as spit-and-polish as its reputation. Col Vandegrift was the commanding officer and newly selected LtCol (future Gen) Graves B. Erskine the executive officer. Between them they had tightened the command considerably. Capt (future Gen) Gerald C. "Jerry" Thomas, with whom Jim did not always get along, was by Vandegrift's specific choice the adjutant. Football friend Joe Burger commanded Company A.

Jim served as ordnance officer and also stood officer-of-the-day watches. When there was a review he usually would be the parade adjutant. In the summertime he ran the rifle range east of Peiping with Chinese pulling targets and working the butts.

LIFE IN PEIPING was very ceremonial and very social. One function Jim remembered vividly was when he was sent (probably as a snub to the Japanese who had overrun North China) to represent the Marines at a celebration of Emperor Hirohito's birthday at the Japanese Embassy. Jim found himself the junior man at the affair with the Italians, French, and British all represented by much more senior officers. The ranking Japanese was a colonel. There was much drinking of *saki*, with the traditional bottoms-up *gombei* toasting. By Jim's recollection, when the party ended, only the Japanese colonel, a Japanese major, and he were still upright in their chairs. As he departed in his rickshaw the Japanese turned out the guard in his honor and later presented him with a pass that would have allowed him to go anywhere in Japanese-occupied North China. He found the pass useful in later slight altercations with the Japanese military police.

Jim left China in 1939 with the nagging

Dealing with a Legend: Separating Myth from Fact

A prime source for this biographical profile of Col Henry P. "Jim" Crowe is his oral history conducted by Mr. Benis M. Frank at Col Crowe's home in Portsmouth, Virginia, on 4 and 5 April 1979. However, oral histories are not complete in themselves; they can best be used to flesh out the skeletons provided by official records and other documents.

Col Crowe's official biographical file in the Marine Corps Historical Center is useful but incomplete. There is nothing much in it on his enlisted service. *Leatherneck* published two very amusing articles nearly fifty years ago: "Crowe's Feats" by Sgt Frank X. Tolbert in the 15 October 1944 Pacific Edition and "He's Tough All Over" by Maj Houston Stiff in the April 1947 issue.

The "Football File" maintained by our Reference Section and including the assiduous research by Col John A. Gunn, USMCR, provided much of the information on Jim Crowe's football-playing years. For his shooting exploits, *The History of Marine Corps Competitive Marksmanship* by Maj Robert E. Barde was indispensable.

His service at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan can be winkled out of Volume I, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, and Volume III, *Central Pacific Drive*, of the official *History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*. Similarly, Volume II, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, and Volume III, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, of U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953*, offer considerable information on LtCol Crowe and his command of the 1st Shore Party Battalion.

Numbers of the oral histories in the Marine Corps Historical Center's collection touch on Jim Crowe or his times. Of these, I found the transcripts of LtGen Joseph C. Burger, Gen Graves B. Erskine, LtGen William K. Jones, LtGen Julian C. Smith, Gen Gerald C. Thomas, and LtGen William J. Van Ryzin the most useful.

Most important of all were the personal recollections and "sea stories" of some who served with Jim Crowe and whom I have liberally quoted or paraphrased, including Col William C. Chamberlain, Major Norman T. Hatch, LtGen William K. Jones, Col Brooke Nihart, Mr. Robert Sherrod, LtGen Ormond R. Simpson, and Maj Richard T. Spooner. EHS

feeling that war with Japan was imminent. In November he found himself once more with the 6th Marines at San Diego. In the Old Corps (defined as before 7 December 1941) the highest ranking Marine was the Major General Commandant or MGC. It is said that when a boot Marine was asked to identify "MGC," the answer came back, "Marine Gunner Crowe."

Along with about half the 1st Reserve Officers Course, 2dLt (future LtGen) William K. Jones, reported in to San Diego in the fall of 1939. Assigned to the 6th Marines, he came under the tutelage of Marine Gunner Crowe. Jones being a second lieutenant, Crowe saluted him with his left hand. Jones also being a Reserve, Crowe rendered the left-handed salute with his "pinkie" finger extended.

Although he would have denied it, Jim deliberately made life miserable for all second lieutenants. He treated first lieutenants with a bit more respect, but not much. He contended that there was ab-

solutely no requirement whatsoever for lieutenants, citing as proof Smedley Butler who he claimed (erroneously) made captain without ever being a lieutenant.

Jim's brand of humor, as described by one of his admirers, while wholesome, was very energetic and seldom subtle. Wrestling matches, we are told, fell into the normal course of events at parties he attended. Experienced persons stood clear when Jim reached the wrestling stage at a party.

THE 8TH MARINES, inactive since 1925, was reactivated on 1 April 1940. Jim was transferred to the new regiment and given the task of organizing and running a Scout-Sniper School in an isolated camp in Mission Valley east of Camp Elliott at Kearny Mesa (present day Miramar Naval Air Station). Embryo scout-snipers, lieutenants included, were broken out two hours before dawn for an hour's physical drill under arms, followed by a one-mile

run. That just started the day. Survivors of the course are described as never being the same again: "They were leaner, harder, and had a haunted look. But they also were more confident, and certainly more competent Marines. They were devoted to violent exercise and were completely uninhibited on liberty."

Requirements for Distinguished Pistol Shot paralleled those of Distinguished Marksman. Jim qualified as a Distinguished Pistol Shot that year.

Promotion to chief Marine gunner came in February 1941. Chief Marine gunners were a rare breed, the very top rung for warrant officers, and there were probably not more than five of them in a Marine Corps that also had warrant chief quartermaster clerks and chief pay clerks.

Then would come 7 December 1941 and Pearl Harbor, and that would change everything, including Jim Crowe's future.
To be continued □1775□

New Books

Reading for Professionals

by Evelyn A. Englander
Historical Center Librarian

FROM THE LIBRARY of the Marine Corps Historical Center, recently published books of professional interest to Marines. Except where noted, these books are available from local bookstores or libraries.

Line of Fire; Continuing Saga of the Corps. W. E. B. Griffin, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 414 pp., 1992. Book V, the latest in Griffin's fictional story of the Marine Corps, has as its setting World War II and the Battle for the Solomons. Much of the action concerns the rescue of two Marines trapped at a coastwatcher station on tiny Buka island. \$21.95

War Plan Orange; the U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945. Edward S. Miller. Naval Institute Press, 509 pp., 1991. Using primary sources from the Naval Historical Center and National Archives, Mr. Miller has produced a study of War Plan Orange, a blueprint for the defeat of Japan, and the process that lay behind the preparation of its various versions. This plan resulted in flexible strategic concepts that lead to Japan's surrender in 1945. \$34.95.

On Strategy II; A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War. Colonel Harry G. Summers, USA (Ret). Dell Publishing, 302 pp., 1992. A follow up to Col Summers' earlier *On Strategy; A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*. He describes the changes that have taken place in the U.S. military since Vietnam and explains how these changes influence the way in which the U.S. fought in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. \$4.99 paperback.

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Historical Quiz

Marines in the Olympics

by Lena M. Kaljot
Reference Historian

NAME THE EVENTS of the Marines who have participated in Olympic Games:

1. List five sports in which Marines have represented the United States in Olympic Games.
2. Following the resurrection of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, Marines achieved Olympic prominence in the 1920s through which sport?
3. Who was the first Marine to participate in the Olympic Games?
4. This Marine general, whose regiment took part in the flag raising on Iwo Jima, participated in the 1920 and 1924 Olympic Games in the shotput.
5. This Marine won the Olympic decathlon in 1948 in London, and again in 1952 in Helsinki.
6. This woman Marine represented the U.S. in Olympic swimming in the Helsinki games in 1952.
7. Name the Marine first lieutenant who won a gold medal for the 10,000-meter run in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.
8. This boxer won the gold medal at the 1976 Games in Montreal, defeating Cuban heavyweight boxer Sixto Soria.
9. This Marine won the silver medal in Greco-Roman wrestling in the 1984 Summer Olympics.
10. This coach of the Marine Corps Boxing Team was selected as one of the three coaches of the U.S. Olympic Boxing Team for the 1992 games in Barcelona, Spain.

(Answers on page 20)

Remembering the Legendary 'Jim' Crowe — Part II

This appreciation began in the Winter issue, bringing then-Gunner Crowe to 1941. In the second and final part, Pacific war propels him into regular officer grades.

ON 6 JANUARY 1942, a month after Pearl Harbor, the 8th Marines, commanded by Col Richard H. Jeschke, sailed from San Diego in the luxury liner *Monterey*, bound for American Samoa as the nucleus of the new 2d Marine Brigade. Future LtGen Ormond R. Simpson, another lieutenant greeted at San Diego by a Jim Crowe left-handed salute, was with Jim in the *Monterey*. When the ship arrived at Pago Pago, the capital of American Samoa, SgtMaj Ira Ward, an old friend, came on board to congratulate Jim on being on the promotion list for captain. Jumping over the ranks of second and first lieutenant, was proof, according to Jim, that there was no need for lieutenants.

LtGen Simpson was promoted to captain at the same time. "Mercifully," he told me recently, "Jim's assignment on the lineal list made him one number junior to me!"

The 8th Marines took over the ground defense of the island from the 7th Defense Battalion. As a captain, Jim was made the regimental intelligence officer. The brigade commander, BGen Henry L. Larsen, informed him that there were rumors of papers being delivered to Japanese agents lurking on Matapow, the highest point on the island. Jim left that night with a patrol consisting of one lieutenant and four Samoan Marines. They climbed to the top, hard work, but found no evidence of any Japanese. Oldtimers remember Jim thrashing around in the Samoan jungle, leading patrols of sweat-soaked and panting Marines, in similar searches for phantom Japanese.

AS SOMERSET MAUGHAM made it known to the world in his story and play, "Rain," which concerns Marines of a

slightly earlier era, it rains in Samoa and the rains can be depressing. Jim was a definite morale booster. With his reputation as an expert on sustenance, both solid food and liquid refreshment, and with his sometime background as a mess sergeant, it was natural that he be given the additional duty of regimental mess officer.

In April Jim was transferred to the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, and a short time later given command of the Regimental Weapons Company. Ahead was more active duty.

The 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942. Among the first casualties was old friend Frank Goettge, who as a lieutenant colonel and the 1st Marine Division's intelligence officer, was killed leading a reconnaissance patrol on 12 August.

As the bitter campaign for Guadalcanal continued, the regiments of the 2d Marine Division were fed into the battle to augment the 1st Division. On 4 November, after 10 days at sea, the 8th Marines landed near Lunga Point and went into the lines to relieve elements of the 2d Marines. Ten days later another of Jim's good friends, Indian Joe Bauer, now a lieutenant colonel and commanding VMF-212, was shot down and would be last seen

LtCol Henry P. 'Jim' Crowe wears both his trademark waxed mustache and one of two Legions of Merit presented to him for his service commanding shore party troops.



BGen Simmons

floating in the sea in his Mae West. Bauer, an ace with 11 kills, four of them in one day, would receive a posthumous Medal of Honor.

JIM AND HIS WEAPONS COMPANY held a position near the mouth of the Matanikau River. Heavy fighting continued through November and on into December. The Army was replacing the Marines. The 1st Marine Division was being withdrawn. On 9 December command of troops ashore at Guadalcanal passed from MajGen Vandegrift to MajGen Alexander M. Patch, USA, commander of the Army's Americal Division. Later, with the arrival of the U.S. Army's 25th Division, Gen Patch moved up to command of XIV Corps, which included the 2d Marine Division. The Army general would visit Jim three or four times a week. A trail, covered by two 37mm guns, stretched out in front of Jim's position. In front of a burned out Japanese tank, Jim's Marines had placed a crude placard: "Tojo 100 yards dead ahead. No Army file will go beyond this point without a Marine escort." According to Jim, Gen Patch was "tickled to death" by the sign.

During January, the 8th Marines, with other Marine Corps and Army units, made a final drive toward the west. A troublesome Japanese artillery position was bypassed in the regiment's zone of action. Jim thought he knew where it was. On 15 January 1943, armed with a shotgun (his preference as a personal weapon despite his prowess with a rifle and pistol) and followed by a gunnery sergeant and three Marines, he pushed into the jungle and found the position. By his account he and his patrol took out two 77mm guns and the 12 or 14 Japanese manning the position. For this he received the Army's Silver Star, the citation for which reads a bit more modestly:

With 8 men he rushed and captured an enemy emplacement containing a 77mm field piece, located behind the advanced



On Tarawa, holding his radio receiver, Maj Crowe directs 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. The landing was the first to debark assault troops from amphibian tractors. Awarded the Navy Cross, Crowe

is recalled "striding along the beach exhorting all . . . that the Japanese couldn't hit the side of a barn door So everyone should get out of their beach foxholes and go to work."

lines. His group killed five enemy in the gun emplacement and destroyed a large ammunition dump.

For general excellence during the period, the Army gave him the Bronze Star.

ON 31 JANUARY he and his company embarked in the hardworking USS *Crescent City* (AP 40) for New Zealand. While on the 'Canal he had grown a non-regulation beard. Before landing in New Zealand he shaved it off except for a burgeoning red mustache that would grow to eight inches from waxed tip to waxed tip and would become his trademark.

He disembarked at Wellington on 8 February, the same day Guadalcanal was declared secure. The 8th Marines was assigned to a camp at Paekakariki. Jim came down with yellow jaundice as well as malaria, the latter for perhaps the fiftieth time since Santo Domingo (and recurrences would bother him for the rest of his life). He would spend much of the next two months in and out of the Division field hospital.

By now his old friend, Col Elmer Hall, was the regimental commander. Jim was "spot" promoted to major, effective 18

February 1943, and in May became the executive officer of the 2d Battalion. The battalion commander moved on and Jim, as a major, took the battalion. The training schedule was concentrated. Jim worked his battalion hard.

Retired Maj Richard T. Spooner, a private in Maj Crowe's battalion, remembers a 60-mile foot march, done partly for conditioning and partly to outdo a celebrated march around San Diego County by the 8th Marines. At one of the halts, good troop leader Maj Crowe required all his Marines, including himself, to change their socks. Those around him saw that the major's socks were bloody. That night, as they hiked back into camp, footsore and weary, they were met by a delegation of townfolk who invited the battalion to a dance. Jim, badly lacerated feet and all, took the whole battalion to the dance and led the dancing.

THE 2D MARINE DIVISION loaded out in October. The rank and file knew they were going to land on an atoll in the Central Pacific and that they would be using amphibian tractors, for the first time, to land assault troops. Before they sailed in the elderly converted passenger ship

USS *Heywood* (AP 12), SSgt (now Maj, USMCR [Ret]) Norman T. Hatch reported in to Maj Crowe (whom he found crusty) and informed him that he had orders to cover 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, as a combat motion picture cameraman. After a long, searching pause, Jim said, "I'm not going to babysit any Hollywood Marine. I want only fighting Marines around me."

In those days a staff sergeant did not usually argue with a major, but Hatch took a deep breath and allowed as how he was a regular Marine who had "shot expert," but who also was trained in a specialty he thought as important as many others Crowe was using.

Jim gave him another long look and said, "All right, just don't get in the way."

The landing was rehearsed at Efate in the New Hebrides. Jim got the LVT crews together and said that once across the reef they were to keep going, straight across the island.

AS PART OF Combat Team 2 under Col David Shoup, Jim's 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, was assigned to storm Beach Red 3, the left-flank beach, to the east of the long pier. His battalion touched down at

0907, seven minutes after the destroyers lifted their fire. Two LVTs found a gap in the seawall and churned inland as far as the airstrip before unloading, but the handful of Marines could not hold and had to fall back. The rest of the LVTs were stopped by the four-foot coconut-log seawall. Jim's beachhead was 20 feet wide, from the water's edge to the seawall. Even so, conditions were better than on either Red 1 or 2. Of the 552 men in Jim's first three waves, fewer than 25 were casualties. To the left of the Long Pier was the shorter Burns-Philp Pier. An enemy pocket at the base of the shorter pier was particularly troublesome. To Jim's left front were heavy emplacements including a large, bombproof shelter which Jim took to be the Japanese island commander's command post. Fighting continued into the third day. Three positions had to be taken: a steel pillbox to the left front, a coconut-log emplacement, and, further inland, the large bombproof shelter. By the end of the

third day, all had been overrun and Jim's battalion had reached the airstrip.

"On the first day and a half," remembers Maj Hatch, the erstwhile combat photographer, "when things were very much in doubt . . . it was extremely encouraging to see Jim striding along the beach exhorting all and sundry that the Japanese couldn't hit the broadside of a barn door. They weren't hitting him and he was fully exposed . . . carrying helmet, shotgun, and a cigar. So everyone should get out of their beach foxholes, get up over the seawall, and go to work."

MAJ CROWE'S PERFORMANCE drew the admiring attention of Robert L. Sherrod, the *Time* correspondent, and was duly reported in Sherrod's classic *Tarawa: The Story of a Battle*.

Jim remembered fondly the close-in naval gunfire support of, amongst others, the destroyers *Ringgold* (DD 500), *Dashiell* (DD 659), and *Anderson* (DD

411), all three of which took station inside the lagoon to fire in support of Jim's battalion, sometimes landing shells as close as 50 yards. He was less enthusiastic over the carrier-based air support.

Taking the big block house, in Jim's mind, is what earned him the Navy Cross. In the stilted language of the citation:

Courageously leading his battalion ashore in the face of enemy resistance, Major Crowe maintained continuous aggressive pressure for three days from the limited beachhead establishment by his command in the midst of Japanese emplacements and strongholds. Constantly exposing himself to hostile fire and working without rest, he effectively coordinated the efforts of his own hard-pressed battalion, attached units and subsequent reinforcements, directing their combined attacks skillfully and with unwavering determination, and succeeded in overcoming one of the most heavily defended Japanese centers of resistance on Tarawa Atoll.

The muster roll of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, for the month of November 1943 shows the battalion's casualties for Tarawa to be 97 Marines killed, 17 missing in action (and later declared dead), and 279 wounded (some of whom probably died of their wounds). Of the Navy men attached to the battalion, three were killed and five wounded. That gives a total of 401 casualties, about 40 percent of the battalion's original strength.

AFTER TARAWA the 8th Marines sailed for Hawaii, setting up Camp Tarawa on the big island of Hawaii itself. In January Jim was again spot promoted, this time to lieutenant colonel. Getting the Navy Cross may have disappointed Jim. After his promotion, MajGen Julian Smith, his old shooting boss and the 2d Marine Division commanding general, is supposed to have said, "Jim, you did a magnificent job on Tarawa. We couldn't have won without you. I am recommending you for the Medal of Honor."

Jim is said to have replied: "General, you have spot promoted me to lieutenant colonel. My promotion is like the old brevet rank conferred without pay for dis-

Recovering from devastating wounds he received on Saipan, LtCol Crowe is visited in Hawaii by an old friend, the Commandant, LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift, and presented the Purple Heart. Crowe's earlier spot promotion was a problem, however.



tinguished service. There is a Marine Corps Brevet Medal awarded those who receive brevet rank. It is distinctively Marine Corps and I would prefer it to the Medal of Honor."

The catch was that the Brevet Medal (a bronze cross with a dark red suspension ribbon with 13 white stars, very much like the Medal of Honor in design) had been created in 1921 for officers who had been breveted prior to 1914 when the Medal of Honor, previously an enlisted award only, was first authorized for officers of the naval service. Only 23 awards were made and it was never repeated. Smedley Butler, of whom Jim was not terribly fond, received both the Brevet Medal and the Medal of Honor, the latter twice. There would be no Brevet Medal for Jim, but, as an unusual award, he did get the British Distinguished Service Cross for Tarawa.

THE FOOTAGE that SSgt Hatch shot of Jim's battalion went into the 18-minute documentary "With the Marines at Tarawa," which won the 1944 Academy Award for "Best Short Subject," represented by a wooden "Oscar," as metal had gone to war.

Jim's regimen for his battalion at Camp Tarawa was hard training with little recreation or liberty. In his mind the greatest contribution he had made to the costly victory at Tarawa was not his performance on the beach but rather the training he had given his men.

His training methods were realistic to the point of being more than slightly dangerous. One of his admirers reported that Jim's first sergeants held reveille by exploding blocks of TNT and that his squads dodged more bullets on Camp Tarawa's combat ranges than on Guadalcanal. Some battalion members thought that Jim's training should qualify them for an additional combat star on their Asiatic-Pacific ribbon.

In April, Col Clarence R. Wallace took command of the regiment. Ahead of them, as yet unknown to but a few, was Saipan.

D-DAY WAS 15 JUNE 1944. Jim's assigned beach was Green 2. He wanted the LVTs to bear on the smokestack at Charon Kanoa, but in the smoke and confusion his battalion, which took heavy fire from both flanks on the way in, was landed too far to the left on Green 1 in a jum-

ble with the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines. Once ashore, Jim had to push to the right.

Jim and his runner, Cpl William "Dinic" Donitaly, both armed with carbines, moved to the right front in a personal reconnaissance. In a sort of "quail hunt," they flushed several Japanese and killed them. Jim later said, "I was standing up waving my arms like a damn fool when I got hit." Two Japanese .31-caliber rifle bullets punctured Jim, one just below the heart. (Later he enlarged the Japanese rifle to a machine gun and raised the caliber to 13mm.) Another bullet struck Donitaly in the side near his left kidney.

"I'm hit pretty bad, sir," said Donitaly, "I guess I am a goner."

"God damn it," said Crowe, "don't talk like that." He slid out of his pack. Hot air from the holes in his chest hit him in the face when he breathed.

"I guess they got me too, Donitaly," he decided.

"God damn it," said the corporal, "don't talk like that, sir."

Crowe pressed the butt of his carbine against the sucking wound in his chest.

"You know, Dinic," he wheezed, "I believe this is a false alarm. I don't believe we're going to die."

"Yes, sir," said the corporal, who always agreed with the colonel.

THEY LAY THERE, growing weaker, for about three-quarters of an hour. Jim's eyesight was going, but he was still firing his M1 carbine (which, incidentally, unlike most Marines, he thought a fairly good weapon). A Marine platoon sergeant came through the brush and from a distance viewed the blood-soaked pair with suspicion. Crowe, too weak by now to speak above a whisper, raised his head a little and twirled the ends of his famous red mustache.

Recognition was instantaneous.

In a few minutes he and Donitaly were back to the battalion aid station on the beach, but they were not yet safe. Mortar shells were bursting all around. A Navy corpsman kneeling over Jim was killed. A battalion surgeon was badly wounded. Jim, flat on his back, covered his stomach with his pack, his chest with his folded poncho, and his face with his helmet. Two shell fragments tore into his chest. Other fragments hit him in the right shoulder, the right hand, and the left leg, and a

sharp sliver peeled back part of his left thumb nail. What hurt the most, insisted Jim, was that torn thumbnail.

Litter bearers moved the wounded about 200 yards down the beach to an evacuation point. (Jim says he walked.) Robert Sherrod, on the beach as a *Time* correspondent, as he also had been at Tarawa, saw him there and remembers that Jim apologized to BGen "Red Mike" Edson, now the assistant division commander, for getting wounded so early in the battle. (A fuller account can be read in Sherrod's *On to Westward*.) With some exaggeration, word went through the 2d Marine Division that Jim had died and had been buried at sea.

HE WAS FIRST HOSPITALIZED at Aiea on Oahu, initially held in a Quonset hut reserved as a ward for the moribund, but Jim stubbornly refused to die. While there he was visited by Gen Vandegrift, now the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and his old friend, Elmer Hall, now a brigadier general. Hall told him that despite his spot promotion he had been passed over by a selection board for a more formal "temporary" promotion to lieutenant colonel. All the former warrant officers, Marine gunners, quartermaster clerks, and pay clerks, said Hall, had been passed over in a block. The pass-over, by a board headed by Jerry Thomas, hurt Jim deeply. He said to Hall (and presumably Vandegrift) that he didn't think he had been spot promoted because he had "guessed right in combat" but "thought it was due to my whole career."

Someone at Headquarters put the matter right, and a temporary promotion came through, backdated to 13 January 1944, the date of his spot promotion.

"The Japanese are a funny people," mused Jim to a *Leatherneck* correspondent while hospitalized. "They do everything they can to keep you from reaching the beach. But once you're ashore, they do everything in their power to see you stay there permanently."

Jim's recovery was slow and he was transferred in September to the hospital at San Diego for more prolonged treatment. His most serious condition was "empyema," pus filling the lung cavity. As much as two cups of fluid would be drained off at a time. The doctors then tried treatment with the new drug, penicillin, and the infection subsided. He was released from the



From a family collection of photos, one in which LtCol Crowe, in postwar service, has lost some hairline, retained his red mustache, and is about to become a student. LtCol Orme Simpson would be Crowe's unofficial tutor for Quantico's AWS Senior Course.

hospital in March 1945, his weight down to 150 pounds. He received the Purple Heart with Gold Star for his wounds.

FOR THE LAST MONTHS of the war he served as training officer at Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, headquarters on Oahu. At the war's end he was sent out to China to join the 29th Marines, 6th Marine Division, at Tsingtao. Col William J. 'Bill' Whaling, another oldtime shooter, had the regiment. He made Jim the regimental inspector with additional duty as regimental mess officer. Whaling's feeling was that Jim had been out in China before and knew how to handle the Chinese.

Jim's stay in China was short. In January 1946 he was transferred to Marine Garrison Forces in Hawaii where he was executive officer for the 14th District rifle and pistol matches there. In March he moved to San Diego for the Western Division Matches. From the Western Division Matches he went to Quantico to run the All-Marine Matches.

In September 1947 he was assigned to the Senior Course, Amphibious Warfare School (today's Command and Staff College). The Quantico schools, both staff and student body, were filled with luminaries of distinguished records, most of them university or Naval Academy gradu-

ates. As an ex-warrant officer with only part of a high school education, Jim felt himself under terrific pressure. He studied hard, perhaps too hard, and he began to

The mustache is gone and LtCol Crowe is married to the former Mona Quell of Appleton, Wisconsin. The couple cuts the cake as friend Irene Sylvester looks on. Best man was LtCol William K. Jones, fellow battalion commander at Tarawa and Saipan.



get "U"s for "unsatisfactory" in his examinations.

HIS OLD FRIEND, LtCol Orme Simpson, was an instructor in logistics and Jim assigned him, without a word of request or inquiry, as his tutor for the next nine months. "It was quite an experience," remembers Gen Simpson. As could be expected, Jim always fought the "school solution."

However, Jim learned to relax and under Orme Simpson's tutelage began getting "S"s and "A"s. He found the school a great professional experience.

In addition to being a good story teller, Jim was an accomplished mimic. His impersonation of a "General Visiting the Front Lines" was a party favorite, as was his imitation of Frankenstein's monster.

FOR MOST OF THESE YEARS Jim lived fully the life of a carefree bachelor. There had been an earlier, failed marriage. Now he courted and won Mona Quell of Appleton, Wisconsin. LtCol Bill Jones, his early protege and fellow battalion commander at Tarawa and Saipan, was best man at their wedding in the Post Chapel in Quantico. MajGen Julian Smith, who had commanded the 2d Marine Division

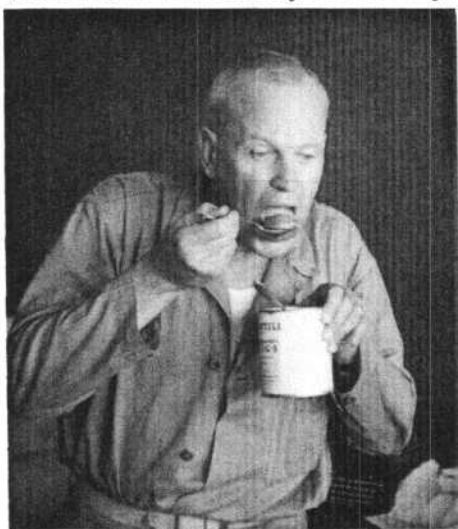
at Tarawa, gave the bride away. Says now-LtGen Jones, "It was and is the only time I saw Jim frightened." Jim and Mona would have seven children, three girls and four boys.

Jim fancied himself a master cook (stemming no doubt from his many experiences as a mess sergeant and mess officer), although his menu was limited. One cold winter Saturday at Quantico, he invited Orme Simpson, whose wife was away, to have dinner with him and Mona. Jim had made a great pot of stew. After too many martinis, they sat down to dinner. The stew was excellent and the conversation animated. About halfway through the meal, Jim excused himself. Orme assumed he was making a head call. He and Mona finished the stew and a dessert she had made. Jim still had not returned and Orme was a bit concerned. "If you are looking for Jim," said Mona, "he's gone to bed. He does that, you know."

Later Jim went on the wagon or was put on it. He immediately became the most vocal advocate of total abstinence on the part of everybody.

FROM QUANTICO, Jim went to Camp Lejeune to work with the battalion of the 6th Marines which was to be assigned to range duty at Camp Perry. After the 1948 National Matches he was transferred in January 1949 to the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton where he was the Special Services Officer, "passing out tennis balls," for a year and a half.

Also from the family scrapbook, former mess sergeant and mess officer Col Crowe samples fruit straight from the can. The "old warhorse" was headed for Korea duty.



After Korea came a chance to "make it in the movies." On the set of Battle Cry, from left, are BGen James P. Riseley, USMC; actor Aldo Ray; Col Crowe, technical advisor to director Raoul Walsh; MajGen John T. Selden, USMC; and actor Tab Hunter.

MajGen Graves B. Erskine, the "Flamethrower," had the division. After sorely trying Jim with the Special Services assignment, Erskine gave him command of the shore party battalion.

War with North Korea came in June 1950 and Commanding Officer, 1st Shore Party Battalion, proved to be a key position for the mountout from Camp Pendleton of the 1st Marine Division, now under command of MajGen Oliver P. "O. P." Smith, followed by the loading out from Japan for the landing at Inchon.

The big problem at Inchon on D-Day, 15 September 1950, was getting the LSTs in on the high tide, getting them unloaded, and then back out on the next high tide. Shore party troops were to initiate unloading at the objective. Jim landed with the first of the LSTs to beach on Red Beach and per orders assumed control of shore party activities on Beaches Red and Green.

INCHON WAS FOLLOWED by the drive of the 1st Marine Division on the South Korean capital of Seoul, including the crossing of the Han River. The Shore Party Battalion would control the LVT and DUKW traffic across the Han River after the assault crossing by the 5th Marines on 20 September. Momentarily the next day it looked as though the North Koreans would counterattack to regain Kimpo airfield. With the infantry gone forward, the

old warhorse, Jim Crowe, was designated the coordinator of the defense.

The capture of Seoul was followed by the administrative across-the-beach landing of the 1st Marine Division at Wonsan. Tactically insignificant (the North Koreans had already abandoned the city), the Wonsan landing was a major logistical effort. After the division moved north, Jim's Shore Party Battalion stayed in place to assist in the landing of the 3d Infantry Division, commanded by MajGen Robert H. Soule, USA, whom Jim thought one of the finest men he ever met. He was less fond of the X Corps commander, MajGen Edward M. Almond, USA, whom he found "haughty."

From 2 to 10 December, Jim's battalion had charge of the evacuation of Wonsan, in effect, a rehearsal for the larger evacuation of Hungnam. Altogether, 3,834 troops (mostly Army), 7,009 Korean civilians, 1,146 vehicles, and 10,013 bulk tons of cargo were taken off the beach.

FOR KOREA, Jim received Legions of Merit from both the Army and the Marine Corps. He returned to the States in May 1951 and was assigned to the Troop Training Unit at Coronado with a promotion to colonel in July. After a year and a half at Coronado he was transferred to the Recruit Depot at San Diego and given command of the Headquarters and Service Battalion. Along the way he went before a physical evaluation board. There was



In his twilight tour as commander of Marine Barracks, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Col Crowe, at left, reviewed troops along with the commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, LtGen Joseph C. Berger, USMC, center, and an unidentified naval officer. Crowe stayed after retirement, becoming police chief of Portsmouth, Virginia.

a cancer but he beat it and was found fit for full duty.

During this time he served for some months as technical advisor for the company of "Battle Cry," the motion picture based on the novel by World War II Marine Leon Uris. The studio treated him royally, with a new car to drive and a bungalow at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel complete with a well-stocked bar, but by this time Jim had stopped drinking altogether. Much of the "combat" action was filmed at Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. Raoul Walsh was the director. Van Heflin was one of the stars, and after a rocky start they became close friends. Others in the cast were James Whitmore (himself a Marine), Tab Hunter, Fess Parker, and Aldo Ray. Jim liked them all. Later he would get to act in the John Wayne classic, "Sands of Iwo Jima," playing himself.

Altogether, four years were spent at San Diego, partially because of his cancer. When it came time to leave San Diego, he chose Marine Barracks, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia, a Marine post since 1807, for what he knew would be his twilight tour.

One of his duties was to see to it that the traditional gun was fired at 2100, a custom begun in 1866 during the troublesome Reconstruction days to signal the evening curfew. In addition to guarding the shipyard, Jim's command included the East Coast Sea School and security for the Naval Ammunition Depot at St. Julien's Creek.

RELATIONS BETWEEN the barracks and Portsmouth, a city of more than 100,000 persons, were poor and Jim set about to improve them. He did so well that, even before retirement in February 1960, he was offered the position of police chief. He would serve as such for nine years until his second retirement, at age 70, in 1969.

"Exactly the man you would want on your left or right in combat," summed up Gen Simpson. "His education by conventional standards of books and degrees was poor indeed, but of those things required to make a truly great Marine: magna cum laude."

Twenty years later, on 9 November 1989, a new mess hall in the 8th Marines' regimental area at Camp Lejeune was named for Colonel Henry P. Crowe, the regiment's one-time mess officer. It was an extraordinary honor. Marine Corps facilities are not ordinarily named for living persons, but Gen Alfred M. Gray, then the Commandant, made an exception for the 90-year-old Jim Crowe.

Col William C. Chamberlain, who as a major had been the executive officer of Jim's battalion at both Tarawa and Saipan, says: ". . . I shall always remember Jim Crowe carrying a shotgun and striding along the beach at Tarawa, his waxed mustache bristling . . . His steady steps imparted courage to all who saw him. He is gone now, but that's how I shall always remember my commander and friend, striding along the beach." □1775□

Dealing with a Legend: Separating Myth from Fact

A prime source for this biographical profile of Col Henry P. "Jim" Crowe is his oral history conducted by Mr. Benis M. Frank at Col Crowe's home in Portsmouth, Virginia, on 4 and 5 April 1979. However, oral histories are not complete in themselves; they can best be used to flesh out the skeletons provided by official records and other documents.

Col Crowe's official biographical file in the Marine Corps Historical Center is useful but incomplete. There is nothing much in it on his enlisted service. *Leatherneck* published two very amusing articles nearly fifty years ago: "Crowe's Feats" by Sgt Frank X. Tolbert in the 15 October 1944 Pacific Edition and "He's Tough All Over" by Maj Houston Stiff in the April 1947 issue.

The "Football File" maintained by our Reference Section and including the assiduous research by Col John A. Gunn, USMCR, provided much of the information on Jim Crowe's football-playing years. For his shooting exploits, *The History of Marine Corps Competitive Marksmanship* by Maj Robert E. Barde was indispensable.

His service at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan can be winkled out of Volume I, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, and Volume III, *Central Pacific Drive*, of the official *History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*. Similarly, Volume II, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, and Volume III, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, of U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953*, offer considerable information on LtCol Crowe and his command of the 1st Shore Party Battalion.

Numbers of the oral histories in the Marine Corps Historical Center's collection touch on Jim Crowe or his times. Of these, I found the transcripts of LtGen Joseph C. Burger, Gen Graves B. Erskine, LtGen William K. Jones, LtGen Julian C. Smith, Gen Gerald C. Thomas, and LtGen William J. Van Ryzin the most useful.

Most important of all were the personal recollections and "sea stories" of some who served with Jim Crowe and whom I have liberally quoted or paraphrased, including Col William C. Chamberlain, Major Norman T. Hatch, LtGen William K. Jones, Col Brooke Nihart, Mr. Robert Sherrod, LtGen Ormond R. Simpson, and Maj Richard T. Spooner. EHS