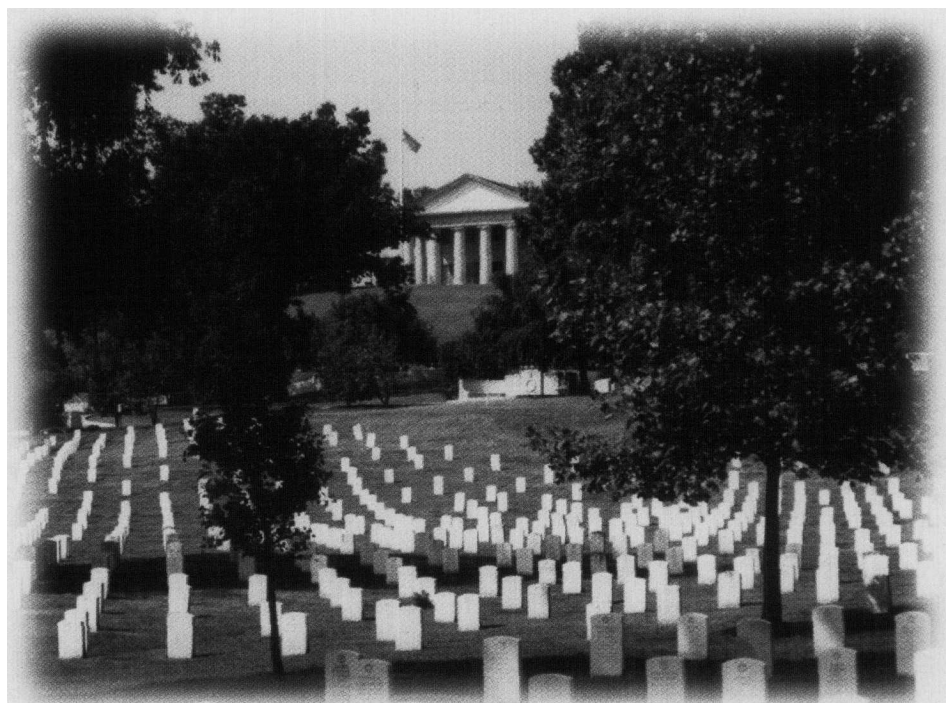


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## A V E T E R A N S   D A Y   T R I B U T E

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# Eternal Bivouac

## Marine Privates to Generals, Famous and Heroic, In Arlington Cemetery

Story by R. R. Keene • Photos by Nancy Lee White Hoffman

**F**or retired Marine Colonel John Ripley, Arlington (Va.) National Cemetery, known as the "Garden of Stone," is a place to visit old comrades and brothers in arms. Ripley, 63, is at that age where far too many names etched in stone are familiar. A face, a mannerism, moments shared in friendship and laughter, fear, hardship and valor under fire are all memories evoked by a name on a headstone belonging to a U.S. Marine.

Ripley, a Southerner from Virginia and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. (Class of '62), has an innate sense of history, especially when it comes to the Corps he served for 35 years. Ripley, himself, played a key role in making history.

Thirty-five years in the small, tight fraternity known as the Corps means you've served with nearly every leatherneck, and so they know you or at least know of you. They say things such as, "Ripley, he was the lieutenant who threw a naval officer into the drink for insulting our Corps. They put him in hack, but we were proud of him," and then raise a glass to him. They know he trained with the Royal Marine Commando in Singapore and was reconnaissance, airborne, scuba, ranger and jumpmaster qualified.

He saw combat while commanding "Lima" Company, 3d Battalion, Third Marine Regiment within the battle area known

as "Leatherneck Square" in Vietnam's Northern I Corps. He was wounded but returned as a Marine advisor and, in 1972, single-handedly stalled the communist Vietnam offensive by blowing the bridge at Dong Ha. That got him the Navy Cross. His knowledge of history got him his current job as director of the Marine Corps History and Museums Division, Washington, D.C.

That's why he still visits old friends and brothers in arms at Arlington. He never forgets those who helped him become the man he is and dutifully renders them honors.

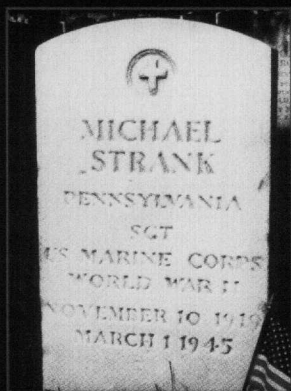
He has had various instructor/teaching assignments, and it was while president of Southern Virginia College in Buena Vista and president of Hargrave Military Academy, Chatham, Va., that he recognized such visits to Arlington could be an invaluable teaching lesson to students. He started giving tours of the cemetery to his charges. While the lessons were an excellent vehicle for teaching aspects of American history, Ripley's tours were distinctly Marine Corps in their orientation.

His tours point out that 39 Marines who were awarded the Medal of Honor are buried in Arlington with literally thousands of their leatherneck comrades. From privates to generals, they are heroes all, who either died on the field of battle or—because of their valor—were buried in honored glory when life ended.

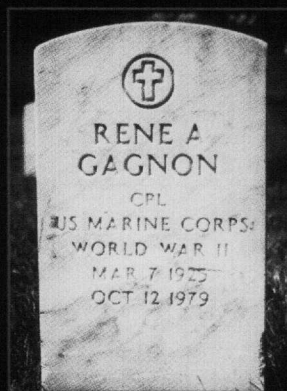




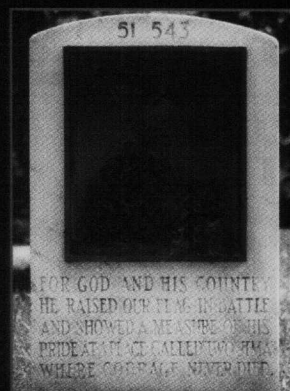
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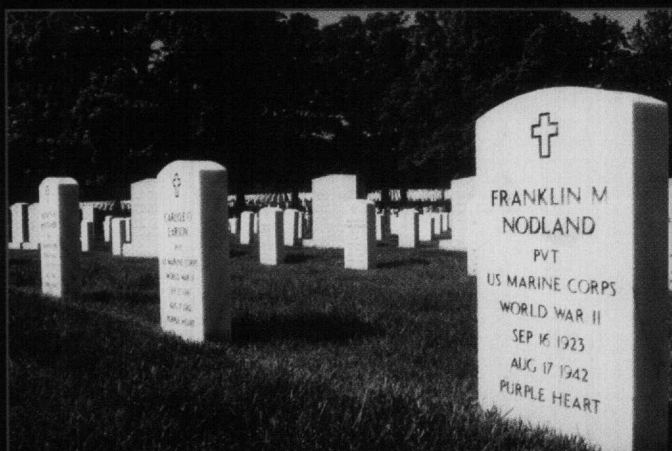
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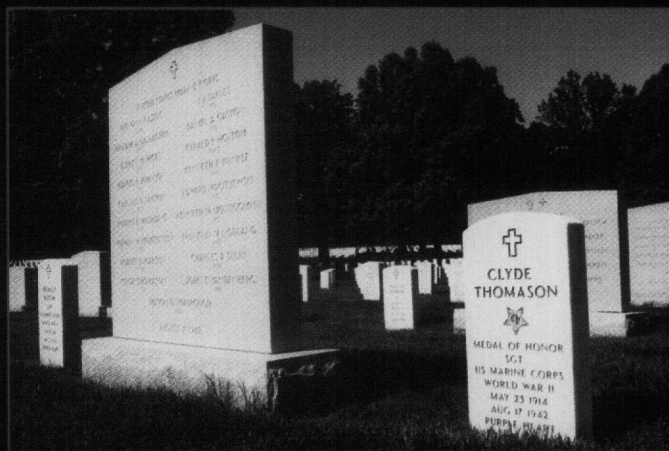
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Above: A bronze depiction of the Iwo Jima flag raising marks the back of Cpl Gagnon's headstone.



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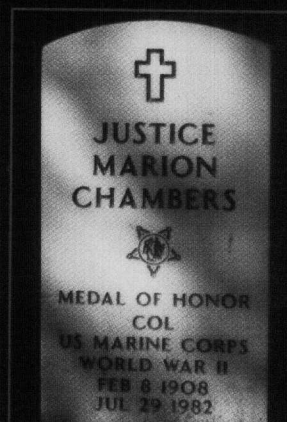
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When USS *Maine* (BB-2) exploded in 1898 in Havana Harbor, Cuba, 28 Marines were among the 266 killed. The names of all who died are etched in the stone base surrounding *Maine's* mast. (Sec. 24, Grid MN-23.5)



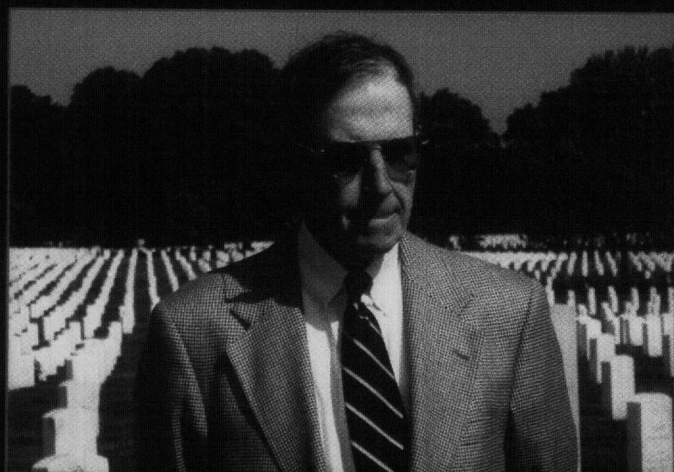
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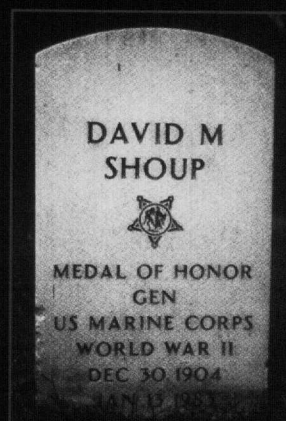


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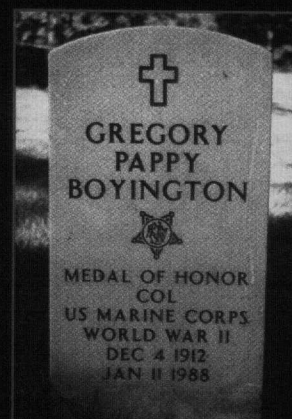


Retired Col John Ripley often leads students of history through the cemetery. He visited the graves of old friends in May, including his brother's, Major Michael Joseph Ripley, USMC, a Harrier pilot killed in 1971.

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# Guide to Some U.S. Marine Grave Locations at Arlington Cemetery

- 1.) Cpl Hayes, Iwo Jima flag raiser, Section 34, Grave 479-A, Grid T-13
- 2.) Sgt Strank, Iwo Jima flag raiser, Sec. 12, Grave 7179, Grid ZAA-25.5
- 3.) Cpl Gagnon, Iwo Jima flag raiser, Sec. 51, Grave 543, Grid DD-47.5
- 4.) Pvt Nodland, buried with other recently recovered Makin Island Raiders, Sec. 60, Grave 8042, Grid GGH-20
- 5.) The remains of 20 members of the 2d Raider Battalion killed during the Aug. 16, 1942, Makin Raid were recently reinterred at Arlington.
- 6.) Group marker, Sec. 60, Grave 8036, Grid GGH-20. Also pictured: Sgt Thomason, MOH, Makin Raid, Sec. 60, Grave 8037, Grid GGH-19.5
- 6.) 17th CMC, Gen Holcomb and 21st CMC, Gen Pate are buried side by side. Sec. 3, Grave 2501-1, Grid Q-15.5
- 7.) 20th CMC, Gen Shepherd, Sec. 7, Grave 8195-A, Grid V-24
- 8.) 13th CMC, LtGen Lejeune, Sec. 6, Grave 5682, Grid VW-22.5
- 9.) 18th CMC, Gen Vandegrift, Sec. 2, Grave 4965-B, Grid W-33.5
- 10.) Actor, PFC Marvin, Sec. 7A, Grave 176, Grid U-25
- 11.) Col Chambers, MOH, WW II, Sec. 6, Grave 5813-A-9, Grid XY-23.5
- 12.) Cpl Skaggs, MOH, WW II, Sec. 46, Grave 1066-B, Grid O-24
- 13.) 22d CMC, Gen Shoup, MOH, WW II, Sec. 7A, Grave 189, Grid TU-23.5
- 14.) Col Boyington, MOH, WW II Ace, Sec. 7A, Grave 150, Grid U-24

Other gravesites you may want to visit that were not pictured in the layout:

- 15.) 25th CMC, Gen Robert E. Cushman Jr., Sec. 2, Grave 4969-E-1, Grid X-32
- 16.) 24th CMC, Gen Leonard F. Chapman Jr., Sec. 11, Grave 215-B, Grid N-14
- 17.) Maj Ripley, Sec. 46, Grave 590.16, Grid O-24
- 18.) PFC Michael J. Mansfield, U.S. Senator and Ambassador, Sec. 2, Grave 4969-F, Grid W-33.5

There are many more of course. Those visiting the cemetery can find the names and locations of all who are buried in Arlington at the Visitors Center. The cemetery is open daily: October-March, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and April-September, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

