



Semper Fidelis & Fine Dining: A Culinary Delight in the New Globe & Laurel

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

Eighty-two and starting over.

He wrote the first check to pay the rent, and his hand didn't even tremble. He was too busy overseeing the shakedown cruise for his new *Globe & Laurel* restaurant, which opened in Stafford, Va., June 6.

The restaurant's proprietor, Major Richard T. "Rick" Spooner, USMC (Ret), trimly dapper with regulation close-cropped white moustache and close-cropped, flat-topped white hair, tells anyone who will listen, "I am the luckiest guy in the world. How many 82-year-old men do you know ever get a second shot at life?"

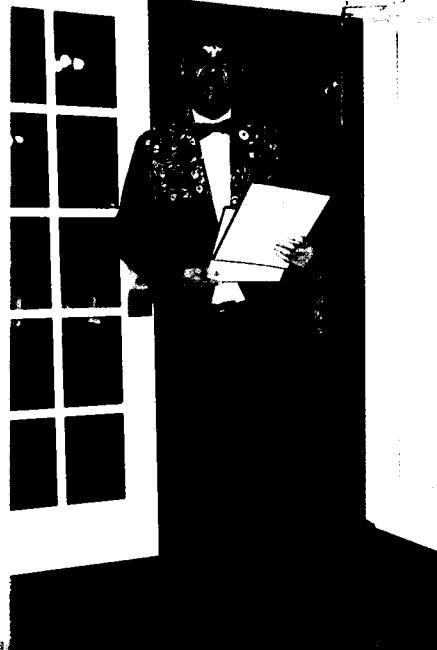
Perhaps there are a few such individuals, but none quite like Maj Spooner. The 30-year Marine combat veteran started out as a private in World War II, served again in Korea and, later, in Vietnam. He knows all about starting from scratch. "I'm a Marine, and Marines don't give up!"

For Maj Spooner, such a statement is not a bromide of leatherneck bravado. It is a fact.

He was still on active duty in 1968 when he opened the original *Globe & Laurel* on Broadway Street in the town of Quantico. There are Marines who still recall sitting on crates, quaffing draughts and throwing darts in the original establishment.

"It started as a hobby," he said. "I enjoyed English pubs. The ones I visited were usually warm, friendly and nobody felt like a stranger for very long. I wanted a pub like that for professional Marines. That's why I chose the name 'Globe and Laurel' [the emblem of the Royal Marines]."

That all went up in smoke in 1973 when



Waiter William S. Stewart Jr., who's been an icon of The Globe & Laurel's waiters for 24 years, plans to welcome guests to the restaurant's new location for many more years.

a fire left several "Q-town" establishments, including The *Globe & Laurel*, in cinders. Spooner started over outside Quantico's main gate on U.S. Route 1 in Triangle.

What formerly had been Jim's Char Broiler became The *Globe & Laurel*, and it became the area's best-known dining establishment. Every Commandant of the Marine Corps from the 1960s to the present, Sergeants Major of the Marine Corps, and nearly any Marine who's ever set foot

on Marine Corps Base Quantico also stepped across the Tudor-facade threshold of The *Globe & Laurel* along with veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. Also, the nation's top law enforcement officers, police, deputy sheriffs, constables and agents of all the three-letter government bureaus of enforcement became frequent customers.

Clientes met in camaraderie with their Marine counterparts from foreign nations and international gendarmerie. Mixed in were recognizable names from the civilian world: writers Patricia Cornwell and James Brady, actress Demi Moore and political pundit Oliver North, to drop the names of a few. There were battalions of retired and former Marines, as well as many local families and travelers up and down the Interstate Highway 95 corridor.

They were drawn, in part, by the martial atmosphere, which was more than the "touch of tradition," heralded on the restaurant's sign. The bulkheads were bedecked with the dress and field accoutrements of the military and law enforcement, along with shadow boxes and memorabilia from Marine organizations around the world.

Some of the decorative displays took time to put together. Maj Spooner points to the Royal Marine exhibit, which took him 15 years to complete. The U.S. Marines say his best display traces the evolution of the Corps' emblem from the beginning to the present.

The overheads were coated with thousands of law enforcement patches from across the country and beyond. They were presented by police officers, who estab-

lished their own rules with regard to displaying the patches.

"Every patch here represents a policeman who is entitled to wear it and has been to The Globe and Laurel," explained Spooner.

The Globe & Laurel restaurant had more icons and artifacts than most town museums and offered the finest in traditional dining and excellence in service and hospitality. Maj Spooner himself provided the tour de force by enthralling guests with his presence, ability to strike friendships, encyclopedic knowledge of the Marine Corps and love of country. Customers came to see "The Major" as much as they did to dine, drink and enjoy the atmosphere.

It was relatively smooth sailing for 32½ years. Then came the recent news that Prince William County planned to widen a portion of Route 1, razing adjacent establishments—including The Globe & Laurel. Many thought it meant standing down and retirement for the Major and his wife of more than five decades, Gloria, the co-owner, who has worked beside him as "chief of staff and sergeant major." For the Spooners, their restaurant was more than a business; its employees and their customers had become family, and The Globe & Laurel was the center of their social life.

"I can't give up and retire," said Maj

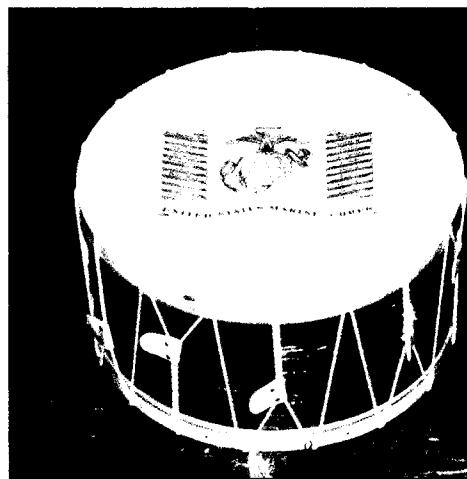
Spooner. "That's what old men do." He started looking for yet another Globe & Laurel site. Spooner wasn't having much luck finding a place in Prince William County that was close enough to the Marine base.

Enter the Stafford County Economic Development Authority. When the EDA's director, Tim Baroody, heard scuttlebutt about The Globe & Laurel moving, he and other members of the EDA along with Stafford County Supervisor Paul Milde weren't going to pass on an opportunity. Baroody knew the restaurant was "legend among the Marines." The EDA called their spokeswoman, Wendy Surman, saying, in essence, "We need to bring The Globe and Laurel to Stafford County."

Wendy remembers answering: "What's The Globe and Laurel?"

"I took my three children, and I found friendliness and warmth and inspiration in Major Spooner," she said.

For years, friends of Rick, who gathered for lunch or formal occasions in the restaurant's "Privates' Mess" often told him: "You need a bigger place! One with a lot more parking." A few were gimlet-eyed and suggested a place south, just the other side of the county line in Stafford. It would take work, but had potential. It had formerly been "The Keep" and, later, "Filly's" restaurants.



The base drum of the 1940s Quantico Marine Band has found a home above the cupola entrance to The Globe & Laurel. It is one of numerous Marine, martial and law enforcement artifacts on display.

Rick, years ago, did a reconnaissance and said that it would not only take work, but more money than he had. Members of the Privates' Mess, who were wealthy in ideas, but not so affluent when it came to cold cash, went back to grazing in their Niçoise salads.

The Stafford County Economic Development Authority also had been looking and went to the Major with a recommended prime location that needed work but sat at the entrance to the new Quantico

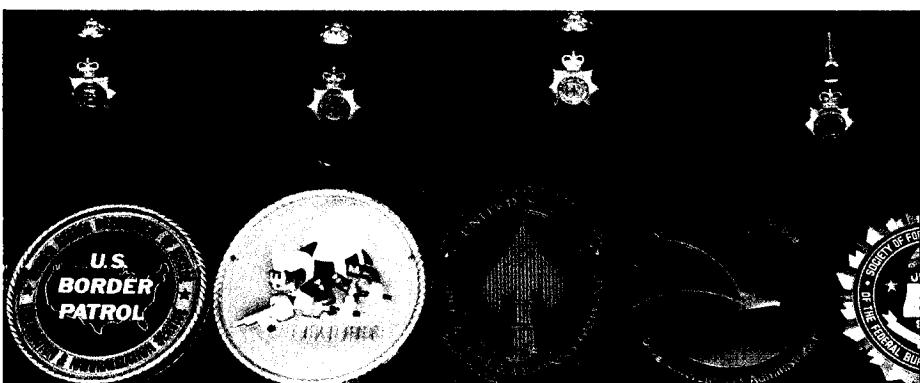
MAJ RICK Spooner believes it's important to personally welcome guests and takes the time to chat with them during their visits. His patriotism and encyclopedic knowledge of the Corps are part of the restaurant's charm.





Above: Globe & Laurel bartender Joy Leitzenberger talks to a guest who was there celebrating her birthday. Her mixology skills are matched by her persona, which makes customers feel right at home.

Below: Police helmets belonging to various "bobbies" from the British Commonwealth along with law enforcement and military emblems add to the atmosphere of The Globe & Laurel, which first opened in 1968 in Quantico Town.

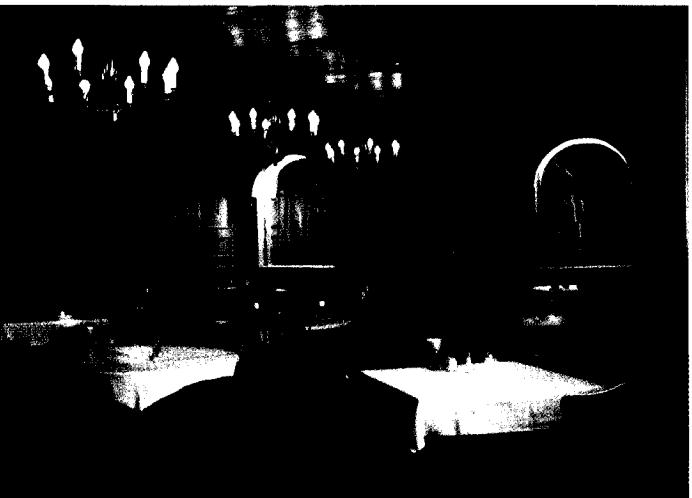


Corporate Center, a one-million-square-foot development of Class-A office space spread among several buildings in a campus setting. It sat near the base's back gate, on U.S. Route 1, off I-95's Exit 148, and only two miles south of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Those with global positioning satellite navigation systems can punch in 3987 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Stafford, Va., and be guided into what was once Filly's Restaurant parking lot.

The Major was gung-ho on the idea, but as he'd noted before, it was risky. Stafford County officials worked hard for two months to convince the Major they wanted his business and they stepped up to the plate not only with words, but action. Stafford's EDA provided a cash incentive for relocation and renovation costs and promised annual support over the next three years. Wendy Surman and Marine veteran Jim Pierce of the Quantico Gov-

Below left: The new Globe & Laurel has five dining rooms, two fireplaces and a waterfall. It can seat 150 customers and offers its traditional leatherneck-flavored menu.

Below right: Andrew Pomeroy (left), a Globe & Laurel waiter and son of Col Stephen M. Pomeroy, points out the desserts available to guests at the restaurant's first outdoor party, which doubled as a wetting down for Maj Grant Heinrichs and a birthday celebration for him and his wife, Lisa.



ernment Contractors Association, another Globe & Laurel booster organization, went to work directly helping the Spooners and serving as liaison to the county.

Thus, in early May, the Major told his customers at the Triangle Globe & Laurel, "We are not closing. We are deploying south to a new objective. The new place is going to be a destination and will become a local landmark ... and will be open in 30 days."

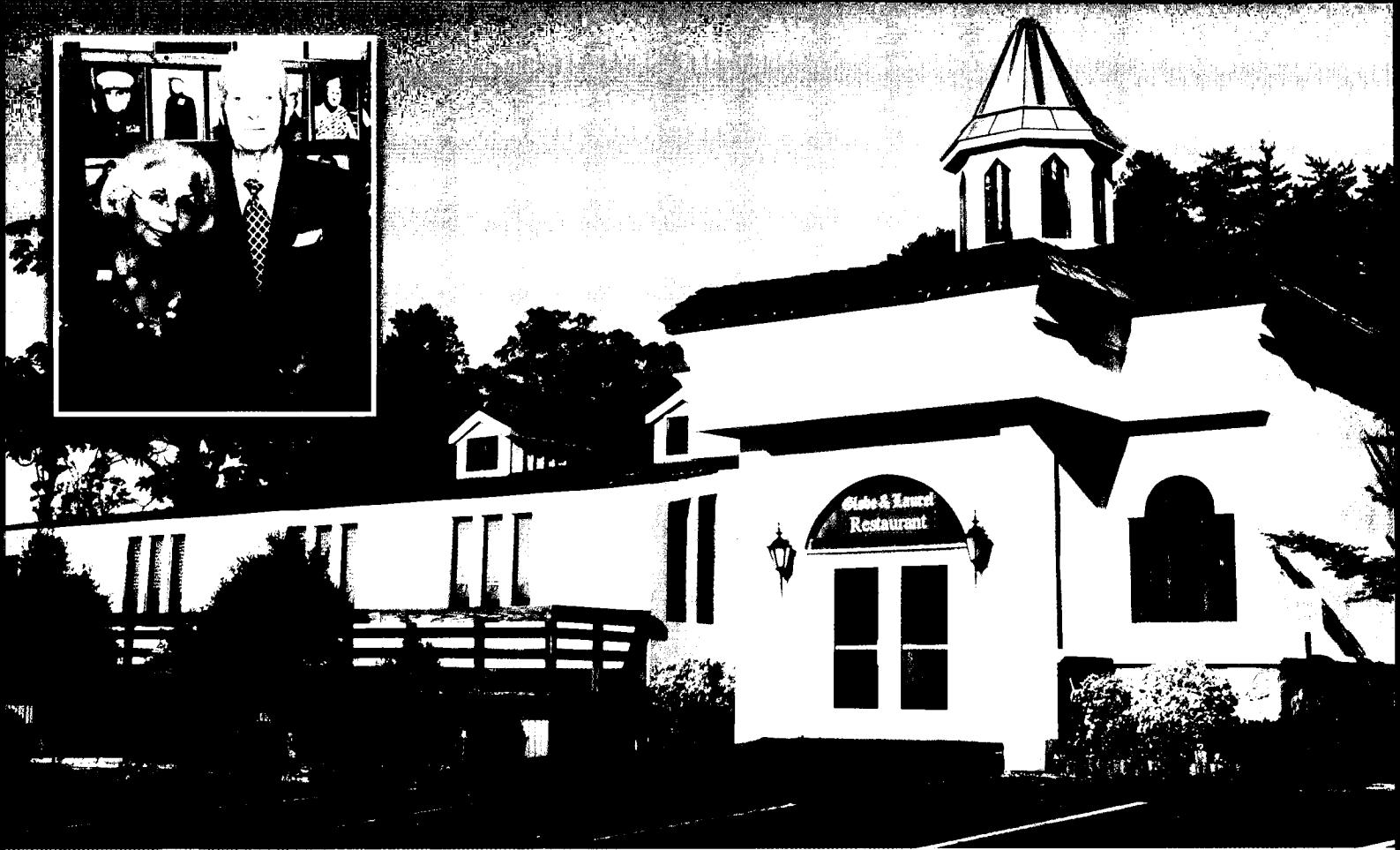
Thirty days! The Stafford County EDA shook their heads, not sure if they had heard correctly. The Privates' Mess blanched over their iced tea and coffee. Regular customers respectfully dropped hints that even Rick's positive, nothing-is-impossible Marine attitude may not be enough to compact everything into this 30-day field transport pack.

One of the members of the Privates' Mess, retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Ed Stallknecht, 95, said: "I'll move with him." Another said, "I'll help him move." Another: "I'll get the word out." Others: "I can help with some of the contract work." Most others: "Just tell us what you need from us, Rick, and we are ready."

Although their offers were appreciated, professionals who could work quickly under deadlines would do the renovation. And those hired workers who didn't already know Maj Spooner soon respected his honest work ethic. The doors to the new Globe & Laurel opened in 36 days.

Moving and rebuilding was a monumental undertaking even for a Marine the likes of Maj Spooner. The new site originally had been called "The Keep" because of its fortress-like appearance. It dwarfs the old Globe & Laurel, which was about 1,700 square feet and seated 62.

According to reports, the new Globe & Laurel is 7,000 square feet and seats 150 in five dining rooms. It includes a banquet hall, stone fireplaces, waterfall, commercially large kitchen, outdoor patio, out-



The Major and Mrs. Gloria Spooner are the co-owners of The Globe & Laurel and known throughout the Corps. Marines, law enforcement officials, their children and their grandchildren who've become Marines and law enforcement agents have been going to The Globe & Laurel for years. The new site is now open and welcoming the next generation.

door deck and that large parking lot that Maj Spooner's loyal customers always wanted.

Initially conceding there was too much space, Spooner also began seeing possibilities and potential. He made the bar area resemble the old Globe & Laurel. He brought the Glasgow-made Scottish tartan carpet from the old place. In came the highly lacquered ships' hatch covers that had served for years as tables and up went the displays and memorabilia and the police patches on the overhead. Most importantly, he set aside reserved seating and tables for card-carrying members of the loyal Privates' Mess.

"We're going to have everything from the old place displayed here, and now that we have the room, we will display some pieces of history the customers have never seen," He cautioned. "That doesn't mean it will all be up overnight. It's going to take months."

They've kept the same lunch menu, including customer favorites such as liver and onions and Marine bean soup. Evening specialties include French onion soup, filet mignon, prime rib and duck a l'orange.

Maj Spooner always wanted a place with room for Marine Corps Birthday celebrations and various military cele-

bratory events such as promotions, hail and farewells, mess nights and dining-ins. Perhaps a lounge area with stuffed chairs, and dare we mention it: a patio with ashtrays for stogies?

Bigger digs and more customers meant hiring more staff. The Major went from a squad of cooks, waiters and busboys to a platoon, which includes bartenders, duty managers and various functionaries. From June to July, the place went through its shakedown cruise: working out the kinks, gremlins and potential problems and checking to see if every newly installed item was working as promised. Teaching new employees the important business of providing outstanding customer service and that unique Globe & Laurel "touch of class" has been a perfect assignment for Gloria Spooner.

The ubiquitous Maj Spooner is everywhere, consulting with staff members, inspecting and signing for deliveries. He moves with the easy effort of a corporal in fresh khaki posting his morning watch. He is a visibly happy man with a new lease on life.

"We're starting a new campaign from this day forward," he told guests at the June 6 grand opening fundraiser and golf tournament sponsored by the Quantico

Government Contractors Association. "The Globe and Laurel is not Rick Spooner. It is a separate entity; it has a life of its own," he said.

Privates' Mess member Don Cahill, who has been the Spooners' friend for three decades, disagrees somewhat: "Even though the Major is 82, I knew he would find a way to start over. Everyone expects him to be here, and it isn't the same without him."

The dining hours are basically the same: Monday through Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. They've added "Happy Hour" from 4 to 6 p.m. And, they even kept their old phone number for reservations: (703) 221-5763.

So, if you plan to visit Quantico, the "Crossroads of the Corps," or the new National Museum of the Marine Corps in nearby Triangle, the new place for an old "touch of tradition" stands ready to serve.



Leatherneck---On the Web

See additional photos of The Globe & Laurel at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/globeandlaurel