
My Memories of
Marine Sergeant George C. Scott
By Major Bob Morrissey USMC (Ret)
September 24, 1999

The author of this memoir is Maj Bob Morrissey, USMC (Ret), who was a Marine Corps combat correspondent and Public Affairs Officer, who was Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Wallace M. Greene, Jr.'s personal public affairs officer. I asked Mo if it would be OK to forward this to the WWII list because there have been a number of posts re/Scott in recent days. I hope you all approve. BMF

George C. "Patton" Scott, who died Wednesday of an aneurysm at age 71, and I were good friends and frequent liberty buddies while serving together as three-strippers at the Washington Marine Barracks from 1946--1948.

George and I were both instructors at the Marine Corps Institute, then an accredited academic correspondence school for Marines. I instructed first-year college journalism, English grammar, and authored a new MCI course in photo journalism. George instructed English literature and Radio Speaking and Writing.

Because he marched with the grace of a gazelle, he was designated guidon bearer for the elite Barracks ceremonial company. I marched immediately behind him as company right guide , ever-failing to emulate his awesome ballbearing strides. We marched in rain, snow, and Washington heat in many military funerals at Arlington cemetery--sometimes two or three a day--as well as in presidential inaugural parades and other special ceremonial occasions in DC. This was in addition to our regular MCI duties. George found funeral details distasteful to him. He became very depressed when witnessing families and relatives mourning the deaths of their Marines.

George was quoted several times in his life-after the Corps as saying that the Marine Corps made him an alcoholic. One late night when I was standing barracks duty, I was summoned to Brinkley's, the Marines' watering hole across from the gate, by a fellow sergeant moonlighting as a bouncer. "Get him out of here before he tears up the joint and gets in trouble." I proceeded to wrestle a very intoxicated George back across the street to the barracks. On such occasions, he was always belligerent, if not sometimes mean.

As I was half carrying, half dragging his six foot frame down the barracks arcade enrote to his squad bay, he suddenly paused, looked me straight in the eye, and declared in very slurred , but insistent voice: "You know, Mo, someday I'm gonna be a goddamned great actor."

"Yeah, right George," I responded, humoring him, "you'll be that."
However, he didn't hear me. He had unceremoniously passed out cold on the arcade bricks.

I believe George was falling off the wagon before reporting to DC. It got worse with time, caused by his deep disappointment that he had not seen combat as a Marine in WWII. He had enlisted in the Corps as WWII was coming to an end, specifically

choosing to be a Marine because he sincerely believed the Corps would get him into combat before the war ended, something fiercely important to him. Didn't happen. He cried on my shoulder about this.

He liked being a Marine, and was a good one, but he was never destined to make a career of it., returning to civilian life in 1949 upon expiration of his enlistment. He never considered his duties at 8th & I very exciting. He had other fish to fry. For a time he wanted to be a journalist, but becoming an actor eventually consumed him.

He was known to be irascible (as a Marine and his life thereafter). He did not suffer fools (of any rank) lightly, nor did he make friends easily, but he was very loyal to those to befriend. I don't recall him ever dating while on duty at the barracks. When we pulled liberty together (before I became married to Mary Jane), we usually went off post to a deli to enjoy our favorite sandwiches with Coke or coffee and a lot of enjoyable conversation, a blend of serious and humorous. Because I did not imbibe(at the time), he spared me from joining him when he set out to hang one on at Brinkley's. (He did, however, count on me to rescue you him on occasion.)

After watching Marine Sergeant George Scott become Gen. George Patton on the screen, I sought George's address and/or phone number through the studio. I was told to send my communication through the studio and they would ensure he would receive it. My short note read: "Dear George, you were right. You are a goddamned great actor! Semper Fi, Mo."

No reply. He was never big on maintaining friendships. His ambitions were elsewhere. Could be he may not have remembered his declaration that night in the barracks arcade so my message may not have made sense to him. I did have witnesses, however. Two noncom buddies coming off liberty were moving to help me get George to bed and heard his remark.

[Here is an additional chapter to Bob Morrissey's recollection of his time and service with George C. Scott. BMF](#)

MO REMINISCES

I'm motivated to write this, in part, because I'm venting. I'm much disturbed to read/hear the extensive news mediacoverage of the death of Sergeant George C. Scott, USMC, almost consistently reporting that Scott spent his four years in the Corps "doing nothing but burial details," which allegedly caused him to become an alcoholic. Not!

During the period we served together ('46--'48)--remember this was more than 50 years ago when we were just escaping from our teens--there existed two major entities at the Washington Marine Barracks: an MCI detachment, composed mostly of enlisted Marine instructors (some with one or more degrees) responsible for the operation of the "school," and a Barracks detachment, responsible for maintenance and security of the Barracks. Marines assigned to one or other detachment did not get along well--ever!

For instance. The barracks detachment had absolute control of the barracks main gate. Marines were required to be spit-and-polish, as they are today, when departing the compound (no civilian clothes authorized in those days). Enter a nasty little (5'6") Barracks corporal named Holmes who actually volunteered for Barracks gate sentry duty from 1600 to midnight EVERYDAY!

When MCI Marines sought to exit the barracks, Holmes subjected us to detailed personnel inspections, including haircuts

and fingernails. If Holmes could not see his reflection mirrored in your shoes, you were denied exit. Dull brass belt buckles, wrinkled uniforms, etc. were unacceptable. (Holmes was really disappointed when we were issued Eisenhower jackets --sans belts.)

When MCI types eventually got fed up with Holmes antics, we addressed our grievances to our MCI detachment officers, who insisted that Holmes was just doing his duty in a military manner at all times, then snickered among themselves. The Barracks CO, A pastured colonel, avoided any involvement.

One evening when George and I were heading out on liberty, Holmes made an extra effort to find reason to deny us exit, at which time George drew himself up to his 6-foot tallness, glowering down at the arrogant little corporal, and bellowed in his familiar raspy voice: "I thought we were all Marines, one for all, corporal. Someday soon we're going to meet outside the gate and have a very serious discussion about your biased, chicken-shit antics." Holmes read George loud and clear, paled, and waved us through the gate. (As reported in the media, quick-tempered George suffered five broken noses in his lifetime, never shying from a physical confrontation whether under the influence or not. (I never witnessed a broken Scott nose on my watch.)

George was hardly alone in his dislike for Holmes and very seriously intended he would meet him outside the barracks some night and "straighten out the son-of-a-bitch." A number of MCI Marines, including me, intended to share in the "discussion." Holmes knew it and never again left the barracks while he was serving as a gate sentry. Never! He also became aware that he was under constant surveillance within the barracks by MCI Marines just waiting for him to go out the gate.

It was for the Barracks detachment to provide personnel for "burial details" --pallbearers, firing squads, buglers, etc. Not a piece of cake, especially for pallbearers, who were required to carry coffins in a military manner from the caisson on a nearby road to the grave site, often up and down formidable hills. Occasionally, they had a helluva time avoiding dropping the coffin and having to frantically chase it down a hill. More so in rain or snow.

In addition to serving as correspondence school instructors--on which we spent more of our time than marching--MCI Marines were responsible for what was usually referred to as "funeral" details (as distinguished from "burial" details), as well as many other ceremonial events requiring marching Marines. We did considerable early am. marching and close order drilling on the barracks parade ground while the Commandant of the Marine Corps was consuming his breakfast in the Home of the Commandants facing the parade ground. Afterwards, stowing our rifles, we were expeditiously bussed from southeast Washington to an old, dilapidated (some swore it was condemned) once-upon-a-time school house. Barracks mess personnel would show about noon each workday with "gourmet" field rations to ensure us a hearty "catered" hot lunch.

We were crammed into large departmental classrooms with dangerously worn wooden floors and furnished with ancient WWI-vintage wooden desks butted up against each other. George and I wrer "butted. " allowing us to communicate with each other "very quietly" when so inclined. Our department was supervised by two civilian PhDs, both of whom had once been short-term Marines and were now final reviewers of our work. Their spacious office was in one end of the adjoining cloak room.

The school's furnace rarely functioned adequately, if at all, during cold weather, frequently requiring us to perform our

duties wearing our lined field jackets--and gloves! We had no typewriters (nor computers, of course), so all our necessary comments on, and critiques of, written lessons received regularly from U. S. Marines all over the world were reviewed and graded by us in gloved longhand.

If you wanted hot coffee, you brought your own thermos. Sometimes we got so cold that there were veiled threats of burning down the old schoolhouse just so we could get warm.

To set the record straight, neither George nor I were ever assigned to "burial" details, as is being reported. Just periodic "funeral" details--which none of us enjoyed. And none of us ever imbibed on duty. (the famous Washington Marine Barracks didn't even have a slopshute.)

So much for reminisces. RIP "goddamned great actor." Glad you chose to be a Marine and to have known you. You will not be forgotten.

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