

# Introduction

This volume of the Marine Corps Cryptologic and Signal Intelligence history covers the written story with pictures, charts and other information pertaining to its development. It is also being written from a point of view that family members may not fully understand the subject matter because of the technical complexities of the field. Therefore, some pictures will not have names of individuals or the actual locations, and some of them are not actual Cryptologic Marines, but they serve to give a visual account of that time period. In like manner some home made maps are used in order for the non-professional to have a better or clearer understanding of events, times and locations. Also, since many of these pictures came to us from Major (Maj) Cecil T. Carraway's, Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol) Joseph A. Petrosky's, LtCol Stephen Lesko's and Colonel (Col) Alva B. Lasswell's families I think they rate some priority.

During the 1920s into the 1930s we see limited changes until we reach December 7, 1941. Only after the attack on Pearl Harbor did things truly start to change. We have two Marine officers (both former enlisted men) working at Pearl Harbor, as linguists at that time...LtCol Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr. (retired as a Brigadier General) would move into China with Navy Radio Security Station "F" and Maj Alva Bryan Lasswell (retired as a full Colonel), would remain at Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific (FRUPAC) as the chief translator in a unit known as the "Dungeon". And you will also discover that it was this Marine officer that turned the tide of Japanese aggression in the Pacific and the Naval Fleet's success during the Battle of Midway, but there is much more to him than one unique in code recovery and translation...much more.

This historic period (1927 to 1942) of discovery served as the foundation for future training of Marine Corps Cryptologic and Signal Intelligence personnel. This story will continue on into World War – II and into later periods. Therefore, these units and personnel of today can take pride in knowing they too have a unique history and heritage based on the efforts, hard work and hardships of other Marines that went before them. This history should be used by the commanding officers of today's Cryptologic/Signal Intelligence Marines and by the United States Marine Corps to enhance the modern day concepts of military warfare and future endeavors. This history is too important to leave untold...so is the legacy of the Marines that served and died for it is off their blood, sweat and tears our field came into being.

As you move through this volume you will see both achievements and failures. You will also find some redundancies for much of the subject matter and periods are overlapping. I feel it cannot be avoided without cutting out essential points of view. You will see how the Marine Corps leadership in future years bounced off the achievements and corrected the failures, but like

birth of a child...it was a slow process that involved pain and it required a lot of dedication. Yes, mistakes were made, which is a normal process of discovery when dealing with such complex field and based on limited budgets. Yet, our Navy officers never gave up or in and continued to involve Marines in Cryptology. Many of those Navy leaders (officers and enlisted) are mentioned in this volume for our successes today stem from their early efforts to keep us involved.

Lastly, as mentioned above, unlike most professional military books you will find this book is written in what I call being “Dependant Friendly,” “People Friendly” and “Professional Friendly”. Therefore, in many cases rather than using the abbreviation, over and over again, you will find the complete spelling of a name, military rank or unit designator. In other words, this volume and those to follow will make it easier for the non-military readers to understand and in as simple a language as possible without compromising its intent. It has been my experience in reading many, many military books they fall into the same category as the “Begot Sections” found in the Holy Christian Bible. This is why this volume has simple charts, maps and timelines to enhance the overall story within the text. And this is the reason you will find many references that reflect the various sources throughout the story and in many of the charts and timelines. Therefore, this book is also being written to be “Researcher Friendly”!