

*This month we are presenting the first chapter of the extraordinary journey of Maurice Logue from British Marine Commando to President of the Calligraphers' Guild of Ashland, Oregon. In giving us a taste of his "past life" at the April meeting, he unwittingly stimulated our desire to know more. His is a fascinating story, in which his lifelong love of reading eventually expanded, after retirement, to include the actual drawing of the letters which formed the words (calligraphy.) As it turns out, he truly IS our "fearless leader!" Enjoy!*



## Chapter 1

### MAURICE LOGUE: From Drummer Boy to a "Proper Marine"

Maurice was born in Northern Ireland during the Second World War, the second youngest in a large Protestant family of eleven children. He was no different than other boys his age who idolized the British commando forces which Churchill formed after the British retreat from Dunkirk. In spite of the heavy losses suffered during the initial years of fighting, the thought was that at least there could be "pinprick raids" on the French coast. Volunteers from the Army and Marines were trained in secret in Scotland and if a raid was successful, the news would be leaked so that the British public would know about it. These dramatic actions long fueled the imaginations of school boys who were growing up in dismal and difficult times, even after the war, and Maurice determined to join the Marines as soon as possible.

The only way to do this at age 14 was to volunteer for drummer training and become a member of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines, the best military band in the world. He was accepted and took his first step into an arduous and demanding life. The barracks were outside Dover, in SE England. To get there he was put

on a ferry and then transferred to various trains. At each transfer, he was met by a NCO (non-commissioned officer) who saw that he was correctly directed.

Because for him being a drummer was a means to an end, he accepted the harsh living arrangements. There were 400 boys in the barracks, 350 of them were musicians and 50 were drummers. Divided into 28 boys to a room, they were not allowed civilian clothes and received only \$2.00 a week, \$1.00 of which was put in a mandatory savings account. By the time the boys had paid for laundry and cleaning supplies, they were left with about 25 cents. Meals were terrible, and they were ordered to bed at 9:00 pm and expected to be up and standing at attention by their beds at 6:00 am.

In-town passes were allowed only from 4 to 7 pm and they were to wear their best blues. Since these had to pass inspection by an NCO before they could leave, few of them actually made it into town as most gave up trying to please the NCO before the time ran out! Under these conditions, it became a "badge of honor" to try to escape and return home. Elaborate plans would be made to secure civilian clothes and enough money to take the train. Of course, the escapees would be caught either at the train station or at their homes and receive 90 days detention as the punishment.

The "bright side" of this life was going to London and other cities and towns with the Band. It performed within a 100 mile radius and the venues were often beautiful and the events gala. The highlight of the year was the annual Naval Dinner at beautiful Greenwich College. For Maurice, there were even opportunities to see the Queen and Churchill and meet visiting dignitaries and movie stars.

At 16 years and 9 months, the young man from Northern Ireland (who was treated like an Irishman even though he considered himself an "Ulsterman"), was given the option of transferring from the drum corps to the "proper" Marine Corps. The Drum Major pulled strings to allow him to enter the Corps early. Maurice's mother had died of cancer when he was 12 and he was soon to lose his father, a steam locomotive engineer, when he was 17. All his older brother and sisters were off on their own and so he began the next phase of his unusual career. His previous experiences in the drum corps and thus, "knowing the routines," unofficially made him the leader of his squad.

Perhaps this was the first inkling of things to come.

*Rita Orlandini*

*Our thanks to interviewer and reporter, Rita Orlandini, for tracking down our elusive president and interrogating him for weeks on end, until he finally "broke" and passed on all this secret information about his former life.*

*Coming: Chapter 2: A British Marine in the late 50's*



## MEMBER PROFILE: Maurice Logue

### Chapter 2: A British Marine in the 50's and 60's

We left our intrepid leader in 1956, entering the Basic Training Program of the British Royal Marine Recruits, at the tender age of 16 years and 9 months. The training period was 14 months, all in southern England. The recruits were developed physically through a series of seamanship and infantry trainings, culminating in a commando course. Towards the end of Maurice's basic training, Britain and France conspired to attack the Suez Canal—a vital international waterway which the Egyptian dictator decided to control.

Under the rules, Maurice was too young for combat service and was left behind, to his chagrin, when his squad was assimilated into the Commando Brigade, which spear-headed the attack.

Instead he was drafted to a Naval Gunnery Course and consequently to *HMS Ark Royal*, the largest aircraft carrier in the British Fleet to become the smallest, youngest, greenest member of the 100 strong Royal Marine Detachment. Although he didn't care for shipboard life, in retrospect he got to experience the traditional job of a Marine (now long gone) and a chance to visit all the glamorous ports in the Mediterranean.

His favorite experience of those days was in 1957 when the U.S. built a replica of the *Mayflower* to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. The *Ark Royal* was invited to escort her across the Atlantic, and the young Brits and one young Ulsterman got to spend three weeks in Virginia Beach, being royally entertained by the local Navy families. American life was a revelation to the British Marines, who were still experiencing hardships in England because of the length of her recovery from WWII. It was the Eisenhower years and everything seemed so easy and available—beer, cigarettes, food, etc. A long line of cars would be waiting every afternoon to pick up the Marines and take them sight-seeing, to beach parties, shopping, etc. Then the families would typically invite them back to their houses for dinner. The generosity of the Americans was overwhelming.

Eventually the young men had to return to the

reality of being British Marines. Every six months they were individually reviewed, and Maurice was nominated for NCO school. What seemed like a welcome chance for advancement turned into "the hardest thing I've ever done in my life." For sixteen weeks, in winter (the worst time to go through this training,) he had to do everything "by the book" and prove that he was better than other marines. A candidate could be kicked out for one mistake. They were examined every day, and the instructors were constantly taking notes. At any moment, in combat conditions, an individual could be put in charge and he had better make the "right" decisions!

Out in snow and freezing rain in January on the last deployment of the training, they spent days in trenches with no protection and little food. Maurice developed trench foot and also frostbite in one of his hands and was told "too bad." Miraculously he made it back to base and he was immediately sent to the hospital which unfortunately caused him to miss the promotion ceremony. The program was so rigorous that if the physical hardship didn't get to a person, the constant mental and psychological pressures often did. Out of 120 men who started, only 12 finished! (I expect there will be no more complaints about writer's cramp ever again!)

At some point the new NCO's had to specialize in a particular branch. Unlike the U.S. military, the Brits have a physical training branch in each of the services. Apart from the routine task of getting recruits into shape, they are responsible for coaching, organizing, and officiating all the recreational and competitive sports within the Armed Forces.

Maurice passed an aptitude test followed by an intensive 16 week course which included anatomy, physiology, boxing, swimming, fencing, track and field, and all the major and minor sports. So now he had two parallel careers peculiar to the Royal Marines: working through the Instructor Grades in Physical Training and as a section and troop leader in a Commando Unit. Typically, an NCO would serve two years in his chosen branch and two years in one of three units specializing in jungle, desert or snow warfare.

After qualifying as an instructor, Maurice was drafted to the Jungle Warfare Commando based in Singapore and supported by a helicopter assault ship.

During a trip to Western Australia, Iraq threatened to invade Kuwait, so the ship with 500 men of the 42 Commando Unit steamed to the Persian Gulf at full speed. First on the ground without air or armor support, Maurice, with ten men, was ordered to capture the civil airport, which he did by surprise, and rounded up some 140 prisoners "before they realized how few we were."

After three weeks in defensive positions around the city, in horrendous heat (140 degrees average) the Iraqis reconsidered and called it off. After further adventures in the Far East, Maurice returned to the Physical Training School near Dover and to a life-altering event in the shape of "a child-bearing sailor"!

*(To Be Concluded in the Next Issue)*

Our thanks to reporter, Rita Orlandini, for relentlessly pursuing our elusive President and documenting the early years of his former life for us.



Basic training 1955



As an instructor at the Physical Training School, 1964



## MEMBER PROFILE: Maurice Logue

### Chapter 3: Further Adventures

We left our intrepid President as he was welcoming an attachment of "Wrens," women of the Royal Navy who were temporarily assigned to the Marine base at Deal to perform administrative duties. Surrounded by fit young men in their prime, the Wrens proved to be quite popular. Even though heavily chaperoned and protectively housed, one very pretty young woman, in particular, was sought after by the men. Guess who captured her heart? Having been "smitten at first sight," Maurice learned that she had joined the Navy to see the world, and here she was on her first assignment, posted 10 miles away from her home! Maurice married his sailor in 1964 and when she became pregnant with Michael, she resigned and ended her short but fateful Navy career.

At this time, Maurice was on the staff of the Physical Training School during the day, and took up his passion—gymnastics. He was selected for the pre-Olympic gymnastic squad and had great respect and admiration for the man who was their coach. The squad was sent 300 miles north to train 10 hours a day for 12 weeks. Even though Maurice was not included in the final selection, the experience shaped his life-long commitment to physical fitness.

Next, a fateful event occurred which ended his gymnastic career. He was training on the high bars and slipped, hurtling head first into the steel section of the parallel bars. He ended up in the hospital with 90 stitches in his head and an extended "vacation." (He attributes his remarkable recovery to his hard-headedness.) Maurice, however, continued as a physical training instructor, having received a coaching certification in gymnastics, which enabled him to be assigned as a gymnastics examiner for Kent public schools. In 1965 he was promoted to Sergeant. In the Marines, this was a big transition point. It meant that you were beginning to be "known" and opened the doors, literally, to a highly organized social club. He was also promoted to Staff Instructor, i.e. a "Trainer of Trainers." In addition, he continued to train the new recruits, who came in new groups every two weeks and trained for three months.

The rotation between homeland assignments and operational assignments continued, and in 1966 Maurice was drafted to the 45 desert Commando Unit. He was sent to Aden to participate in protecting the British citizens there by chasing the terrorists both in the mountains and in town. Aden was a British coaling station but they had gradually taken over the role of protector even as the British Empire was dissolving. After a short while, Maurice was encouraged to volunteer for the position of advisor for the Sultan of Oman's forces. He took a crash course in Arabic colloquial conversation so he could talk to the "man on the street" and then flew there to be assigned to the police force. It was not the "usual" police force, however; it was a paramilitary offensive force organized along military lines. They were known as Oman Gendarmes and wore a distinctive blue and white headdress.

Maurice was leader of 100 men: 50 Arabs and 50 Baluchistanis. This was purposely done to prevent either group from getting the "upper hand." Maurice grew to like the Baluchistanis, helping them in small ways because they had to walk "home" (Southern Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan) on their one month off a year. The OG's task was to protect the principal city of Muscat, which Maurice did for six months until his duty time in that position was over. He returned to the 45 Commando in time to participate, as a Sergeant with 20 men under his

command, in the British Forces withdrawal from Aden.

During this time, Maurice was on top of a mountain when he received a radio message that his second son, Bobby, had been born. Luckily, it was time to go home and back to the Physical Training School. In 1967-68 he was drafted to the Royal Naval School of Physical Training in Portsmouth, so then he began training sailors. After spending two years with the Royal Navy, Maurice and his family returned to the home depot in Deal.

In 1972 he was promoted to the rank of "Color Sergeant" and was delighted to be told that he was selected to be the first Non-Commissioned Officer to be exchanged with a US Marine Corps officer at the Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. Maurice and his family spent a most enjoyable two years there, sightseeing and enjoying the respect and appreciation which Maurice felt he had earned. Upon the conclusion of this assignment, he was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer and, back in Britain, assigned to the 40 Commando Unit. Since the dissolution of the British Empire, the Marines were primarily concerned with keeping the peace in northern Ireland, so this was the beginning of a series of 6 month tours there. During his last tour, Maurice was decorated for a still-classified operation and subsequently posted to the Commando Training Center in Exmouth and Devon. There, from 1976 to 1979, he finished his career as the Senior Physical Training Instructor. Maurice retired from the Royal Marine Corps at age 40, having spent most of his life, from age 14 on, in its service.

London beckoned, with a job as manager of a recreational center for indoor sports. Maurice had already applied for immigration, with the intent that this would allow his sons to attend an American college. However, a disagreement over the boys' education—they were in a pre-university school and doing well—led to Maurice moving to San Francisco to live with one of his sisters. A short while later, a former Marine colleague at Quantico invited Maurice to come to work for him in Ashland, Oregon. And the "rest is history!"

Maurice had always appreciated calligraphy. It was part of the culture of England, which was responsible for its western revival. Many women calligraphers were prominently involved in the writing of the memorial books commissioned by the government.

The arrival of Maurice in Oregon was the event which leads to our fourth and FINAL chapter. How did a former British Commando become the president of Southern Oregon's Calligraphers' Guild? Perhaps the pen IS mightier than the sword.

*(Thank you to Rita Orlandini, our guild's unofficial biographer, for corraling a herd of details from the life of our President and organizing them into a coherent dialogue.)*



Receiving Certificate of Commendation



In Northern Ireland



## MEMBER PROFILE: Maurice Logue

### Chapter 4:

### The Commando Becomes the Calligrapher

In our last issue we learned that Maurice moved to San Francisco in 1980 when his visa was approved. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Ashland to work for a friend as an office manager in his credit union business. Unfortunately that business closed. Simultaneously, an economic recession was occurring making permanent employment scarce. Maurice, like many others in Ashland, held a series of odd jobs until he was invited to run a bed & breakfast in Ashland near the hospital.

During his career as a marine, Maurice had always visited the art museums in whichever country he was stationed. He particularly remembers the beautiful calligraphy in Istanbul and the Middle East. Noticing calligraphy in Oregon in the '80's triggered the dormant interest he had always harbored, and now, with time on his hands at the B & B, he bought pen and ink and Jackie Svaren's book and resolved to learn everything he could. He had no guidance or mentoring at first, so everything was difficult. It was two years before he had a huge epiphany about how some of the letters were created—the pen point was manipulated!

Finally he reached a turning point when he signed up for a class with Hope Tilton, and he realized he didn't have to do it alone. She encouraged him to join our Guild and became a mentor to him. He began taking some commissions for wedding invitations, cards, and poetry and designed and calligraphed the first menus for the Arbor House in Talent.

A chance to improve his income occurred when he was offered a job in Washington D.C. in 1984 as office manager of an electronics company. He held this job for two years and upon returning to Ashland in 1986, he was able to once again use his athletic training expertise by building and managing multiple softball fields in White City. Since he was working seven days a week, his calligraphy was put on hold until the private enterprise (which had a California owner, ) went bankrupt and the County took over the fields.

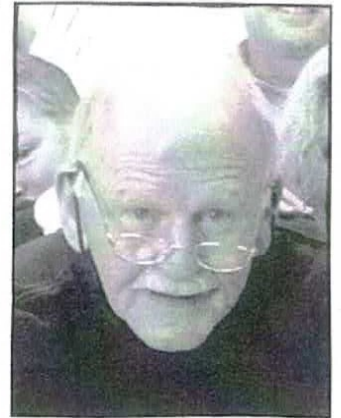
Maurice had struggled enough. In 1990 he packed everything up and went back to Northern Ireland for five years where things went considerably better for him financially. He was hired to research military history but was also asked to organize the biggest street party in the history of Belfast. It was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of VE Day and was complete with the Royal Air Force Band, the Irish Guard, and numerous veterans and community bands. The event culminated with a spectacular fireworks display. Needless to say, it was a huge success.

During these five years, he had time to return to calligraphy and sought out a preeminent Irish calligrapher to study with. In 1995, however, he decided to come back to the U.S. because he missed his friends and connections in Ashland.

During the next ten years he, happily, no longer had

to support himself because he was receiving his pension from the British Navy, and he participated in many calligraphy workshops. All the hands and all aspects of the art, including gilding and illuminations, were explored and practiced by him. His role model was and still is, Charles Pearce, the eminent British calligrapher. "Everything he has done is crystal clear and elegant," explains Maurice.

It was during this time that he formalized his own philosophy of calligraphy. He fully realized that it is a form of controlled drawing, as opposed to handwriting. Here are some other of Maurice's personal discoveries and beliefs:



*Calligraphy is almost universally admired, even by people who know nothing about it.*

*There is nothing like the broad pen, which makes calligraphy of all styles of writing, the most appealing.*

*It is possibly even more subtle than painting and requires finer motor skills.*

*Only a very few can reach a high level in both illumination and lettering.*

*There is absolutely no getting around hours and hours of practice.*

*If you embark on a serious study, it leads you into new avenues of learning. These help you develop a sense of discrimination, leading to a much deeper appreciation.*

*The practice of calligraphy forces you into constant new learning, i.e. drawing, perspective, color, materials and design.*

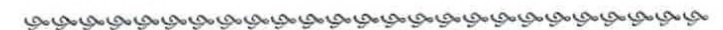
*Don't be alarmed when you can't do something right away. Your own handwriting has nothing to do with calligraphy.*

*It is a wonderful art to be involved in. As a rule, the people involved in it are very likeable, naturally curious, and eager to pass on things they have learned.*

*It is essential that knowledge is passed on. But alas, it is getting increasingly difficult to find qualified teachers to teach or advanced students ready to take on a teaching role.*

Maurice teaches because he wants to "pay it forward" and help others find the support, encouragement and expertise that he eventually found.

Thus we arrive at the present in the life story of Maurice Logue: daring commando, loving father and grandfather, calligrapher extraordinaire, and all-around good guy. Aren't we lucky?



*Thank you, Rita Orlandini, for corraling, interviewing organizing and writing this extended interview with our fearless leader.*