



AMPHIBIOUS TRACTOR MEMORIAL & ASSOCIATION

Our Hero: All Alligator Marines (Past, Present, and Future)



Amphibious Tractors (Amtracs) laden with infantry, combat engineers, forward observers, mechanics, communicators, and Navy Corpsmen roared to life in the belly of amphibious assault ships. The enclosed tank and well decks filled with diesel fumes and smoke as the stern gates slowly opened and exposed the churning ocean that awaited the Amtrac's (aka Alligator Marines who crewed the Amtracs) and embarked landing force.

Powerful Naval Guns fired on the enemy waiting to unleash hell on the Marines as they closed the assault beaches of Bloody Tarawa wave upon wave. The order to "land the landing force" and the waving of a green flag from the wing wall prompted the teenaged Marine drivers, like those who previously did at Guadalcanal Guadalcanal (although the utmost savagery of Tarawa had yet to be experienced by Alligator Marines), to slam their Amphibious Tractors into gear, and drive off of the relatively safe warship into the open ocean. This was

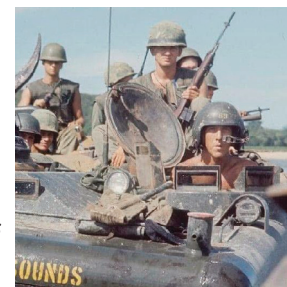
itself a perilous action even in training. The Alligator Marines unhesitatingly maneuvered their LVTs towards the murderous beaches, and almost certain death.

The Alligator Marines who survived the initial assault waves cycled back to Naval shipping to load more Marines and supplies, and time and time again, overcoming their fear, returned to the utmost savagery they were already battle scarred by. This legacy of valor and bravery was demonstrated over and over again by the Alligator Marines of 1st, 2^d, 3^d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalions; and 1st, 2^d, and 3rd Armored Amphibian Battalions across the Pacific at Kwajalein, Bougainville, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

In Korea, Alligator Marines assaulted Blue Beach, Inchon landing and supporting 1st Marine Regiment and subsequently spearheading the attack across the Han River and to Seoul. Of note, the Amtrac's demonstrated their versatility and warfighting prowess as Marines when they were ordered to dismount their Amtracs and fight as Provisional Infantry. The Alligator Marines in Korea served with distinction fighting north to, and at, the "Frozen" Chosen Reservoir with 7th Marine Regiment. Although never referred to as AMGRUNTS, they established the precedent for the Alligator Marines who followed. This includes the Amtrac's of Vietnam who earned the moniker 'AMGRUNT'.



The footprints of the amphibious giants of the Korean War were similarly followed by the Alligator Marines of 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion in Vietnam. Having previously demonstrated Amtrac's were equally skilled at amphibious and mechanized operations as they were as infantrymen, they were again employed in both roles. The legend and lore of the Alligator Marines was again forged in the cauldron of battle. The Alligator Marines who fought as infantry in Vietnam earned the title, 'AMGRUNT'. Those who went before, and those who succeeded the AMGRUNTS of Vietnam, and who fought as provisional infantry, identified as AMGRUNTS.



Without fail, new honors, unflinching success in battle, and uncommon bravery in Beirut, Grenada, Desert Shield/Storm, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and countless other missions and operations in peace and war added chapters to the legacy of the Alligator Marine as the mantle and obligations of being an Alligator Marine was handed down generation after generation. Alligator Marines did not witness these epic chapters in the annals of our Nation's and Military history. They wrote every line with their blood, sweat, tears, minds, bodies and spirit. The first to fight of the first to fight, Alligator Marines maintained the peace and watched scores of their brothers perish in a barracks in Beirut. They rescued American citizens from the clutches of tyranny in Grenada.



Alligator Marines led the "text book" breach under fire through the vast mine fields into Kuwait City, and restored sovereignty to a people. They maintained peace and politeness in war ravaged Somalia. It was the Alligator Marines who lifted the Ground Combat Element in the 'March Up' to Baghdad, Amtrac mechanics tirelessly working on towed Amtracs to get them back in the fight and keep the attack moving forward. Amtrac's famously rescued U.S. Army soldiers from captivity, and were highly decorated for selflessly offering their own lives and futures saving the lives of comrades under relentless fire in Nasiriyah.

Like the AMGRUNTS of Korea and Vietnam they fought from Amtracs, wheeled vehicles, and on foot as provisional infantry. They did so with unwavering courage and sense of purpose. They embedded as isolated personnel with the Iraqi and Afghani army and police as infantry combat advisors and suffered great hardship and loss living with and fighting alongside their foreign counterparts. All the while and until this day, Alligator Marines served afloat on Amphibious Warships providing Marine Expeditionary Units the unique capability to fight for, from, and on the sea in the defense of the Nation's vital interests and citizens.

**The Hero of our story is generation after generation of Alligator Marine –
from the Alligator to the ACV. Legacy Matters.**

