

## 'Lee never came to squadron parties'

### OSWALD

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and stay there, reading a book. He didn't have any friends."

Donald Goodwin was Oswald's section chief at Pendleton. "He was good with a rifle," Goodwin recalled, "but he was such a hot-head I was glad when he was finally shipped out for radar training. He was always having beefs with the guys. Never could figure out what it was about, really. Just to get into a fight and vent his emotions, I suppose."

His marksmanship record indicates he was only a fair shot, although the Marine courses are notably difficult and anyone who qualifies in them must be able to handle a rifle proficiently. He qualified as a sharpshooter with a score of 212, shooting at distances of 200, 300 and 500 yards. A score of 190 to 209 earns a Marine a qualification as marksman, 210 to 219, a sharpshooter, 220 to 250, an expert. On an easier course, where recruits fired at targets 200 and 300 yards away, he barely qualified with 191. He fired the M-1 rifle on both courses.

From Camp Pendleton, Private Oswald was assigned to the Naval Air Technical Training Center at Jacksonville, Fla. There he was trained as an aviation electronics operator, a job which involved maintaining and repairing aircraft electronics systems both on the ground and in the air. In July 1957 he shipped out of San Francisco for Japan where he was to serve as a radio maintenance man with the First Marine Air Wing at Atsugi Naval Air Station, 35 miles southwest of Tokyo.

**A**t Atsugi he became a part of Marine Air Control Squadron One, known as "Max One" to its members. The mission of this unit, which included at various times between 100 and 150 men, was "to operate electronic and communications equipment for surveillance, aircraft identification and fighter direction and to perform ground control intercepts and navigational assistance to friendly aircraft."

"He was a real oddball," said Peter Connor, who bunked in the same barracks with Oswald. "He used to bring up this stuff about his name, Lee. He was proud of it because he said he was named after Robert E. Lee. He thought Robert E. Lee was the greatest man in history. He used to get in lots of fights, but he didn't make

out too well. He had a temper, but wasn't too good a fighter. He was the kind of guy you told to do something, and if he didn't feel like it, he'd tell you to take a walk."

Oswald was court-martialed twice in 1958. On April 11, he was convicted of violating Article 92 by failing to register a personal weapon, a pistol. As a result some of his privileges were taken away. His second court-martial came two months later. He had talked back to an NCO when both were off-duty and had tried to pick a fight with him. The NCO turned him in. Because it was his second offense, Oswald was broken from private first class to private.

"I remember him as being very quiet, but wild when he was drunk," says Peter Cassisi, another former member of Oswald's squadron, now a policeman in Bronxville, N.Y. "We used to call him 'Private Oswald,' just to needle him. He was that kind of guy. He'd go on a sport every once in a while, and wake up the barracks when he came back. But he was mostly by himself, and never showed up at any of the squadron parties."

Several ex-Marines recalled that Oswald would occasionally get drunk. This was probably the only time in his life he did much drinking. People who knew him before he went in the service and after think of him as a nondrinker.

In October 1958 Lee celebrated his 19th birthday and was shipped back to the U.S., his tour of overseas duty completed. He was reassigned to the Third Marine Air Wing at the El Toro Marine base near Santa Ana, Calif.

His plans apparently were fixed by this time. He began to study Russian by himself. He tried to enter a military language school by taking a test in Russian, but he flunked the qualifying test. So he continued to study on his own.

Former Lt. John E. Donovan, now a physics instructor in Alexandria, Va., was Oswald's commanding officer at El Toro. "He read most of the time," Donovan said, "histories, magazines, books on government and a Russian newspaper he used to get. He spent a lot of time studying the Russian language. There were no pocketbooks or comics for him."

Donovan recalled Oswald as an officer-batter and a troublemaker. "He would ask officers to explain some obscure situation in foreign affairs," he said, "just to show off his superior knowledge. He seemed to be in revolt against any

kind of authority." Oswald played on the squadron football team for a short time. He played end, Donovan said, until he was bounced off the squad "because he kept talking back in the huddle." The quarterback was a captain.

In the summer of 1959 Oswald applied for a hardship release from the Marines. His mother, working in a Fort Worth department store, was injured when a box of glass jars fell and struck her on the head. She was forced to remain in bed for six months, and the medical bills rapidly exhausted her slim savings. "I didn't want to tell Lee and worry him, but finally I wrote," she said that the landlord of her apartment allowed her to bring in a rolaway bed for Lee.

**S**hortly before his release, Oswald applied for admission to Albert Schweitzer College at Churwalden, Switzerland, a private school with a program in world problems, philosophy, religion, sociology and languages. He was accepted for the spring term of 1960, but he never appeared.

He returned to his ailing mother's apartment. "Of all my sorrow," she said later, "I don't think I will ever forget the shame I felt when my boy entered that small place with a sick mother. In the morning, he said, 'Mother, my mind is made up. I want to get on a ship and travel. I'll see a lot and it's good work.'"

Lee spent only three nights at his mother's house. He had saved \$1,600 from his Marine Corps pay and he was anxious to get where he was going.

Two and a half weeks later Mrs. Oswald got a letter from Lee postmarked New Orleans. "Well, I have booked passage on a ship to Europe," it began. "I would of had to sooner or later and I think it's best I go now."

She learned what he really had in mind when a newspaper reporter called in late October 1959 and said that her son had defected to Russia. "I told them they were crazy," she said. "But I learned it was true. I couldn't understand it." Lee was only a few days past his 20th birthday.

Lee told Soviet officials at first that he was in Russia as a tourist. After two and a half weeks in Moscow, on Oct. 31, he appeared at the U.S. Embassy, slipped his passport on a desk and said, "I've made up my mind, I'm through." He said he had applied for Soviet citizenship. The next day, Nov. 1, he was interviewed by Aline Mos-

by, United Press International correspondent, at the Hotel Metro-pole. "I will never return to the United States for any reason," he declared.

The interview gave him an opportunity, for the first time in his life, to feel important. His opinion was sought. His picture was taken. He responded by being as articulate as he had ever been in his life. He struck Miss Mosby as "a person very determined but unsure of himself, naive and emotionally unbalanced."

"I am a Marxist," Lee told her. "I became interested at about the age of 15. I've seen poor niggers, being a southern boy, and that was a lesson. People hate because they're told to hate, like school kids. It's the fashion to hate people in the United States."

Oswald was also interviewed by Priscilla Johnson, now a Soviet expert of the Russian Research Center at Harvard, who was in Moscow at that time. "He was the most interesting defector I ever saw," she said. "He talked in terms of capitalists and exploiters, and he said something about how he was sure if he lived in the U.S. he wouldn't get a job, that he'd be one of the exploited."

"I didn't perceive what the essential thing was—that this guy would be unhappy anywhere. I had this awful feeling that I could talk him out of it. He knew nothing about Russia. He was like a babe in the woods, like a lost child. He

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**MARINE AT 18.** At U.S. Naval base in Atsugi, Japan, Oswald flexes his muscles (right). He was a radio technician. He peered in combat gear later (top) at Marine base in California.

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