



## Historians Corner, Paul R Petersen

Paul is the Author of *Quantrill of Missouri*, *Quantrill in Texas*, *Quantrill at Lawrence* and *Lost Souls of the Lost Township*. Petersen is a retired U.S. Marine Corps master sergeant and a highly decorated infantry combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is a member of the William Clarke Quantrill Society, the James-Younger Gang Association, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Jackson County and Missouri State Historical Societies.

## In Service to Their Country

The United States Marine Corps, known as the greatest fighting force in the world has earned its reputation in every corner of the globe. From the recent fighting in Fallujah to the jungles of Vietnam they've proven what an American fighting man can do. Securing their reputation in the South Pacific during WWII they first came to prominence during the harsh fighting in France during WWI where they cleared Belleau Wood of the hated Germans who referred to their ferociousness by calling them "Trufel Hunden" or "Dogs from Hell" or Devil Dogs for short. But one of their earliest exhibits of service to their country took place in Virginia on October 17, 1859. As the fledgling United States was being torn apart by Social Justice Warriors led by the country's first modern terrorist John Brown, in charge of a cadre of Black Lives Matter followers it was the United States Marine Corps that put an end to the revolt against liberty and justice.

John Brown from Kansas attempted to stage an armed slave revolt by taking over the United States arsenal in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Brown led a large group of anarchists and Black Lives Matter individuals. Besides being heavily armed with arms supplied by Yankee abolitionists Brown brought with him 1,500 pikes on long poles with the intention of invading the South and decapitating the family of slave owners and mounting their heads on pikes to instill fear in the Southern population. Age or gender was no obstacle. Terrorism was the goal.

Brown believed on his first day over 500 black slaves would join him. He had already sent agents to nearby plantations to rally the slaves then move southward sending out armed bands along the way. They would recruit more slaves, steal whatever food and supplies they would need including horses and wagons. Brown would have to move quickly before word reached Washington D. C.. Brown cut all telegraph wires leading out of the city and seized a passing train. The first casualty was a free black man, Hayward Shepherd, baggage handler on the train who was murdered in cold blood when confronted by Brown. Brown also took about two dozen hostages.

For some reason, Brown let the train continue, and the conductor alerted the authorities down the line. A massive uprising did not occur, because word had not been spread about the uprising, so the slaves nearby did not know about it. Although the white townspeople soon began to fight back against the raiders, Brown's men succeeded in capturing the armory that evening. When a company of militia captured the bridge across the Potomac River, any route of escape for the raiders was cut off. During the day, four townspeople were murdered, including the mayor. Realizing his escape was cut, Brown began a sporadic gunfire with the surrounding forces.

On October 17, President James Buchanan ordered a company of U.S. Marines led by 1stLt Israel Greene from the Marine Barracks, 8th & I, in Washington to march on Harpers Ferry under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee of the 2nd U. S. Cavalry Regt. Lee had been on leave from his regiment, stationed in Texas, when he was hastily called to lead the detachment and had to command it while wearing his civilian clothes. Lee offered the honor of retaking the arsenal to the local militia but they refused fearing a huge loss of life. Lee then turned to the U. S. Marines. Lee sent his volunteer aide-de-camp, Lt. J.E.B. Stuart under a flag of truce to negotiate a surrender. If they refused the Marines were to immediately attack. When Brown refused Stuart gave Lt. Greene and his Marines a signal and the Marines using a battering ram attacked. Lt. Greene was the first through the door and identified and singled out Brown. Greene later recounted what events occurred next: "Quicker than thought I brought my saber down with all my strength upon Brown's head. He was moving as the blow fell, and I suppose I did not strike him where I intended, for he received a deep saber cut in the back of the neck. He fell senseless on his side, then rolled over on his back. He had in his hand a short Sharpe's cavalry carbine. I think he had just fired as the Marine who followed me into the aperture made by the ladder received a bullet in the abdomen, from which he died in a

few minutes. Instinctively as Brown fell I gave him a saber thrust in the left breast. The sword I carried was a light uniform weapon, and, either not having a point or striking something hard in Brown's accouterments, did not penetrate. The blade bent double. In three minutes, all of the raiders still alive were taken prisoner and the action was over.

According to Lee's notes, Lee believed Brown to be a fanatic or madman. Lee and Stuart searched the surrounding country for fugitives who had participated in the attack. Few escaped, and among those who did, were sheltered by abolitionists in the North. One of Brown's sons escaped and went back to Kansas where they refused to surrender him as a fugitive from justice. He later joined the Kansas Jayhawkers who continued his father's fanatical plan of arson, murder and plunder on Missouri citizens. Brown was taken to the court house in nearby Charles Town for trial. He was found guilty of treason against the commonwealth of Virginia and was hanged on December 2. After his death Brown was transformed into a martyr by the North. To the South, he was a murderer who wanted to deprive them of their property and they were repulsed by Yankees who sanctioned and applauded his theft, murder, and treason. Just as modern day George Soros has recently given \$500,000,000 to help destroy the United States Constitution correspondence found in Brown's possession revealed that monetary support was received by New Englanders and Ohioans to further Brown's efforts. While young William Clarke Quantrill was still teaching school in Stanton, Kansas he wrote his mother on January 26, 1860: They all sympathize for old J. Brown, who should have been hung years ago, indeed hanging was too good for him. May I never see a more contemptible people than those who sympathize for him. A murderer and a robber, made a martyr of, just think of it. Despite the bravery and admirable devotion to duty by the United States Marines in ridding the country of its first modern terrorist the county was soon engulfed in a tragic war of Northern aggression.

**Article by Paul R. Petersen**