

TEXAS MARINE



Department of TEXAS Marine Corps League

Harry Bruce • Commandant

WINTER Edition



February 2010



The "Texas Marine" is a quarterly newsletter published by the Department of Texas Marine Corps League and posted to the Internet at web site www.mcltexas.org.

Editor/Publisher - **BERNIE & JUANITA O'DELL**

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Commandant's Corner

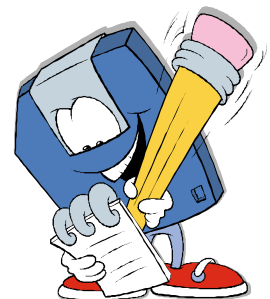
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Marines:

Dottie and I attended the Marine Corps Birthday Ball College Station that was hosted by the Texas A&M Navy. This was especially nice this year as we had the Navy Captain Operations as guest speaker. It is always a delightful who will be our future leaders in the Department of Navy/



in ROTC cadets. from Corpus Christi Flight experience to be among the Cadets Marine Corps.



Marine Jessie Harper and I attended the Commissioning Exercise at Texas A&M December 18th and I had the privilege and honor of receiving

a young Marine Officer's *first salute*. I can't put in words the wonderful and emotional feeling I experienced doing this.

I want to again welcome the Terrell Detachment into the Department of Texas

and I have already received good reports on some of their events.

We will be chartering a new Detachment in Stinnett, TX, in the very near future. Their charter application has already been forwarded to National and we are awaiting its approval. The Detachment will be known as the Hawthorn Detachment, named after two former Marines from the same family (uncle and a nephew).

Dottie and I will be traveling to Camp Pendleton to attend the Marine Expo West at which time we will also be attending the MCL Quin Conference consisting of all Detachments west of the Mississippi. We will then be attending the First Marine Division Anniversary celebration in Oceanside, CA. In all, we'll probably be gone a little better than two weeks.



Mark your calendars... the State Convention for the Department of Texas will be held in El Paso hosted by the Dean Hawkins Detachment June 3rd - 6th. Also the Fall Staff Meeting will be held in Granbury, TX, hosted by the Comanche Peak Detachment in October. More on both these meetings will be forthcoming.

MCL's National Convention will be held in Greensboro, NC, in August.

For more on this, go to mcl2010.org.

We would love to have many more of you attending these conventions. You are able to learn so much of the



inner workings of your Marine Corps League organization. And the camaraderie is unsurpassed by any other meeting.

In the latter part of March of 2010, I will be attending the Southern Division (OK, AR, and TX Departments) meeting in McAlester, OK. Y'all are certainly welcome to attend this event along with any others I've mentioned.

Dottie and I are excited to be joining MCL members on the MCL cruise leaving Galveston March 7th... and I want to give a big OOHRAH and thanks to Cherie Krockover and Barbara Hixson for all their hard work putting this event together.



Senior's Segment



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Happy New Year! You know its December in Texas when the wind chill temperature is below 18 degrees.

The Toys for Tots Campaign has ended. Eastex Detachment #779 had a successful year, although a very challenging one. The Salvation Army in Conroe, TX, accepted applications Tuesday thru Saturday every week during October up until October 27th. Needless to say, as Coordinator for Montgomery County and parts of four other counties,



the overflow of desperate family requests funneled into my household. In the end, Janet and I bagged toys for 103 needy families. Eastex Detachment members were outstanding and



helped deliver those toys throughout the local and rural areas right up until Christmas Day. Members had previously distributed some 80+ boxes everywhere. They periodically picked up donated toys from the communities and hauled them into the Salvation Army in Conroe, the Society of Samaritans in Magnolia, and Operation Rescue in Cleveland, TX. We provided three toys each to some 5,323 needy children. The need was greater this year because of loss of jobs and the large number of divorces.

On January 3rd, Janet and I hosted a Toys for Tots appreciation party at our residence on Lake Conroe, TX. The food and drinks were very good and Eastex Detachment members, who helped with the Toys for Tots program, didn't leave hungry.



Another gratifying experience was spending a day with others (mostly service veterans, Police Officers, and Custom Agents) on their days off, helping to build a *Home for a Hero* – in this case Navy Petty Officer II Anthony Thompson, a corpsman assigned to a Marine Unit in Iraq. During his second deployment, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive on April 20, 2007. He suffered a traumatic brain injury, an incomplete spinal cord injury, and a punctured right lung. After being transported to three separate Battalion Aid Stations, and Landstuhl, Germany, he was airlifted to the James A. Haley VA in Tampa, which specializes in brain and spinal cord injuries. He is married and has a two year old boy, A.J. His wife remains faithful to him all the way, unlike many other wives in similar circumstances.

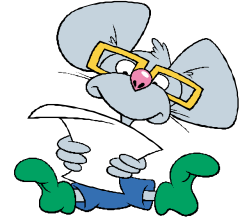
Galveston MCL Detachment member Bill Petch cooked breakfast each morning and arranged for the catering of other meals at the site – 14010 Lake Tahoe Court, Houston, TX (actually in Atascocita, TX). The monies raised will pay for the construction of the house and all the appliances and special equipment necessary for him. That first day about 85 volunteers showed up and pitched in to help. Local television stations 26



and 39 covered the event. *Homes for Our Troops* plans to build two more such homes in San Antonio, TX, next.

Junior's Journal

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At no time in my lifetime can I remember our country being in such turmoil over political agendas. It has become one of the major topics brought up wherever you go. Some people are down right mad, some are scared, some are misinformed, some are uninformed, and some are just plain stupid. It has gotten to the point that no one knows who is lying, who lied first, who lied last, or if anyone is telling the truth. I have seen where it has caused divisions of families, loss of friends, and disrespect of persons with whom you may have held a mutual bond.

With the vast means of communications that we have this cancerous discourse of political information follows you everywhere you go: television, newspapers, telephones, computers, all of which are being infected with disease that drives a wedge between homes, churches, work place, organizations, relationships and anything else that may affect people.

Over the past couple of years across the country there have been numerous complaints of politics rearing its infectious head in Detachments and argumentative political agendas, unsolicited, being shared with members via e-mails or during meetings. As you might have guessed already, this has caused friction, disputes,



and even grievances amongst members, officers, and Detachments. A good way to have a Detachment die is to allow this kind of cancerous infection take a hold on your Detachment.

We are Marines. Our mission is to help Marines, veteran Marines, wives, widows, and orphans of Marines. Nowhere does it say political agendas. Our Bylaws clearly state that there should be **no** political or sectarian debates. Stick to being a Marine - what you know best.

NO

Judge Advocate's Alerts

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Chapter Nine

of the National Administrative Procedures contains specific instructions for filing a grievance or to bring charges for disciplinary action. I am always amazed by League members, at all levels, who do not have the intestinal fortitude to use that provision to handle applicable problems. The tendency seems to be to just "tattle-tale" to a Department Officer, including the Commandant, and it immediately becomes the responsibility for Department to handle. For want of a better description I have termed it the "Tattle-Tale Syndrome." I have heard many times... "when is



Department going to do something about this or that." The facts are **the Department or National has no authority to do anything except give advice** unless the provisions of Section Nine have been followed. I have said this before but here it is again – with few exceptions, the authority and responsibility to govern and administer membership, finances, discipline and all other factors of a Detachment by the Detachment



are inherent in Bylaws and Administrative Procedures at all levels. The attempt to **push** these responsibilities to Department or National represents a failure of Detachment Officers to carry out the responsibilities of their office. The tools are available if needed. The "Tattle-Tale Syndrome" is not the Marine Corps Way and it is not the Marine Corps League way.



Chaplain's Comments

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In looking back

over the year 2009 of what the members of the Department of Texas have accomplished, I see many things that continue for 2010. The Detachments have served their communities in Toys for Tots, the Young Marines all around Texas, and needy families of Marines and sailors that may have some need for medical, housing, and food items. We have done well!

The Department has started a few new Detachments, assisted in getting a MODD Pack in the Department of Arkansas, and paid honors to too many members and Marines that have passed on to their rewards with their God. In 2010 we must continue the good deeds. When I have gone to the services for Marines killed in action in the Middle East the families express great thanks for us being there. We will continue to assist these families as time goes on and pray for them in their hour of sadness.



There is also a need in Texas to honor a group of veterans that slips by through no fault of their own. These are the homeless veterans all over Texas that pass away without any family or friends to honor them. Here in San Antonio, as

well as in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and El Paso, we make sure that these veterans get the honors they deserve for their past service. As the Chairman of the committee here in Bexar County I have attended many of these services and have accepted the flag for these veterans. We are fast approaching the services for the 100th homeless veteran and we are not looking forward to this. This means that someone had no one to care about them as they have lost contact with their families and that society has forgotten or has no sympathy for their plight.



This year when we go to El Paso for the Department Convention.

El Paso

We will be selecting those officers of both the Department and the

Pound. All of the Detachments should make an attempt to attend and insure that they are selecting the best people for these different positions. Also, we will be attending the National Convention in August that is being held in Greensboro, NC. Many Detachments will not be attending, but they need to register their allotted delegates so that the Department Commandant has needed votes for changes to the National Bylaws and election of National Officers. Even if your Detachment does not have anyone attending they should send in a registration form. Many times I have attended these Conventions and several Detachments have not sent in their needed registration for delegates.

VOTE

One of the functions that the Department Chaplain does is forward Death Notices to the National Chaplain. The Detachment Chaplains are to fill the form out as soon as they get notification of the death of a League member and send it to me. ***These are not to go to the Adjutant/Paymaster, Commandant, or some other officer - just the Chaplain.*** If you do not have these forms please notify me and I will insure that you get copies. You should get them from National upon their receipt of those sent in. If this is not happening let me know so that I can get it corrected.

As I close I ask that everyone say a prayer for Marine Rafael Ramos and his wife. I have been notified that his wife is seriously ill. Pray for her

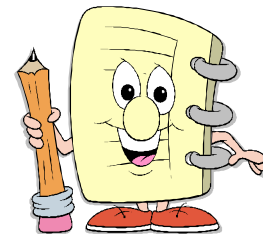
quick recovery and return to good health. Many of you know Marine John Rodriguez of the Alamo Detachment; he is the Legislative Officer for the Department. John is always full of joy when you talk to him and he needs your prayers also. His wife Nellie has been diagnosed with breast cancer and will be having surgery in January. I have talked to John and he is not the happy Marine that we all know.



Also, take time to remember the families of those KIA and pray for them and say a prayer for the end of hostilities around the world so that we can have peace worldwide.

VSO Observations

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Texas Online Veterans Portal E-Newsletter is somewhat new and is available to any MCL member or any veteran. It pertains to the veterans of the State of Texas and is available at www.texasonline.com.

Some of the highlights of the current newsletter dated December 2009 are:

Gov. Perry Announces Initiative to Reduce Federal Claims Backlog for Veterans in Waco and Houston

AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry announced his office will fund up to 12 new veterans counselors to expedite benefits claims for veterans. The Governor’s Office funding will allow the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to reduce the number of veterans’ claims pending at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regional offices in Waco and Houston.

“The backlog of claims at the VA is a national crisis, and it is especially bad in Texas. It is unacceptable that veterans have to wait extraordinary amounts of time to receive their federal benefits.”

The governor's office will be partnering with TVC to fund two new Claims Processing Assistance Teams (CPAT) to help address the backlog of more than 39,000 pending disability and health benefit claims in Texas.



The Waco regional office has over 18,000 pending claims with 35% pending for over four months while the Houston regional office has over 20,000 pending claims with 41% pending for over four months. CPAT will draw upon TVC's expertise in helping veterans manage claims, and will work closely with the VA in all areas of the claims process to reduce the backlog.

"On behalf of my fellow veterans, I would like to express my appreciation to Gov. Perry for enabling the Texas Veterans Commission to establish this special Claims Processing Assistance Team for Houston and Waco," TVC Chair Brigadier General Karen Rankin said. "Nothing is more important than ensuring Texas veterans do not experience delays in receiving much needed medical care and compensation for service connected disabilities."

Claims backlogs delay decisions on veterans' disability compensation and medical care, often causing physical and economic hardship for veterans and their families. For every month these claims are pending, TVC estimates a delay of nearly \$37 million in payments to Texas veterans.



Photo By John Baker
Gov. Rick Perry announces initiative to reduce backlog of VA claims in Houston and Waco as Gen. Karen Rankin, chair of the Texas Veterans Commission, looks on.

TVC has a successful track record in special initiatives with the VA. In 2008, TVC and the VA participated in a pilot project that significantly reduced delays in claims processing, leading the VA Central Office in Washington, D.C. to instruct regional offices nationwide to adopt TVC's claims processing methods as best practices.

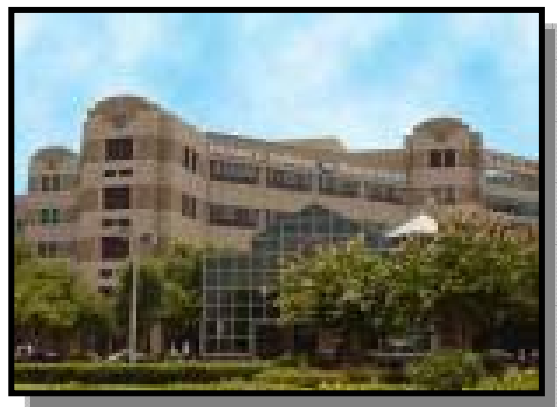
"The pilot project was a successful experience that

showed how TVC was able to team up with VA to assist more veterans and reduce the time they had to wait to receive certain benefits," said Jim Richman, TVC Director of Claims Representation and Counseling. "At TVC, we routinely help veterans who have been waiting three, four, and even five years to get benefits from the VA. This new funding means that Texas veterans will not have to wait that long to get what they need."

For more information, please visit <http://www.tvc.state.tx.us/>.

DeBakey VA Opens New Mental Health Units to Care for Special Needs of Returning Combat Troops and for Women Veterans

HOUSTON – The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) recently opened two new nursing units to provide specialized inpatient mental health services for returning combat troops and for women veterans.

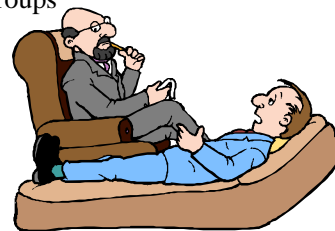


Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston

"This initiative is extremely important and will significantly enhance our ability to provide mental health care to these two groups of Veterans," said Adam C. Walmus, MEDVAMC director.

One of the new inpatient units focuses on the unique needs of our nation's newest veterans, the troops who have served in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq (OIF).

Combat veterans are at higher risk for psychiatric problems than military personnel serving in noncombat locations, and more frequent and more intense



combat is associated with higher risk. Many of the challenges facing these service members are stressors that have been identified and studied in veterans of previous wars. In response, VA has developed world class expertise in treating chronic mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anger management, substance abuse, and depressive disturbances.

The MEDVAMC also added a mental health inpatient unit with 10 beds especially for women veterans. By 2010, women veterans will make up more than 14 percent of the total veteran population. This new inpatient unit will respond to the distinctive mental health needs of this group and accommodate female veterans who do not feel comfortable in mixed-gender treatment settings.

Women are 20 times more likely than men to endure sexual assault or sexual harassment in the military, according to specialists who counsel such veterans. VA refers to these experiences as military sexual trauma or MST. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively impact a person's mental and physical health, even many years later. Some problems associated with MST include disturbing memories or nightmares, feelings of depression or numbness, problems with alcohol or other drugs, problems with anger or irritability, and difficulty feeling safe.

The MEDVAMC Mental Health Care Line offers full interdisciplinary assessments of all patients and provides on-site treatment and referrals as needed, medication management, individual and group therapy, PTSD education groups, PTSD and substance abuse dual diagnosis groups, an intensive day hospital program, a sexual trauma track, a trauma recovery program, applied research such as medication trial and psychotherapy, a specialized smoking cessation program, alumni peer support groups, and coordination and formal consultation with the outpatient clinics in Beaumont, Conroe, Galveston, and Lufkin and the Houston Vet Centers.

News Around the State...

December start for veteran tolling program approved

Vincent Morrison, Harris County Veterans Service Officer

Effective **December 18, 2009**, Harris County Toll



Road Authority will offer free tolls to disabled veterans and Purple Heart recipients, as well as recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The measure was approved by Harris County Commissioners Court on September 29, 2009.

The Toll Road Authority developed the program pursuant to the recently enacted state law which allows tolling agencies to grant discounted tolls to specified veterans. The full text of House Bill (H.B.) 3139 can be read at www.house.state.tx.us under the section entitled "Bills."

DV plates are issued by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, and the form can be found at http://www.txdmv.gov/whatyouneed/forms/license_plates.htm#military. Eligible are veterans with a 50% service-connected disability, or a 40% disability because of the amputation of a lower limb.

A disabled veteran does not need an EZ Tag to drive toll-free, but the tag is required for access to some toll roads in the Harris County system. Call the Harris County Toll Road Authority at 281-875-3279 or visit www.hctra.org for more information.

Gateway Energy honors U.S. military with special benefit

MONTEBELLO, N.Y. – Gateway Energy Services Corporation is honoring the men and women of the U.S. military who have given so much to our country by offering them a discount on their energy costs.

The Gateway Energy Military Discount Program will give a 5% discount on its monthly rate for natural gas and electricity to new and current customers who are active U.S. military and reserve personnel, honorably discharged U.S. veterans, and surviving spouses or parents of U.S. military personnel. Current customers on a fixed-rate plan can switch to a variable once their term expires in order to get the military benefit. All customers must show proof of eligibility: military ID or military discharge papers (DD form 214 or similar).

Customers new to Gateway are also eligible for special sign-up incentives, including a Visa Prepaid Card worth up to \$75. Current customers are also eligible for the incentive if they have one service and sign up for the other.

For more information, visit www.gesc.com/military.

Paralympic Military Program offers programs for service men and women

The Paralympic Military Program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, was developed to provide post rehabilitation support and mentoring to American service men and women who have sustained physical injuries such as traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, amputation, visual impairment/blindness, and stroke.

Our program will connect you with sports and physical activity opportunities through:

- **Military Medical Treatment Facilities:** The Paralympic Military Program has ongoing and regularly scheduled sport and recreation programs at the following medical treatment centers: Brooke Army Medical Center, National Naval Medical Center-Bethesda, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and the Naval Medical Center - San Diego.

- **Warrior Transition Units:** The Paralympic Military Program has a presence in a number of Warrior Transition Units (WTU) and Wounded Warrior Battalions (WWB) across the country.

- **Paralympic Sport Clubs:** Ongoing community-based sport opportunities are available to injured service members by more than 100 Paralympic Sport Clubs across the country. The clubs provide training, equipment, technical assistance, and ongoing physical activity and recreation programs to injured service members and veterans in their own hometown communities.

- **Mentorship:** Paralympic mentors are available to help with the journey through recovery and back to living an active life. These are athletes who've gone through similar experiences and have overcome their own physical disabilities to achieve excellence.

- **Military Sports Camps:** Camps offer service men and women the opportunity to try a variety of sports during a multi-day event held in one location. All skill levels are welcome and no prior sports experience is necessary in order to attend a camp. All expenses are paid for eligible service members.

- **High Performance:** Injured service members who demonstrate exceptional sport skills and the commitment necessary to pursue elite level competition are given guidance on securing the training, support, and coaching needed to



qualify for Team USA and achieve their Paralympic dreams.

For more information about the organization, please call (719) 866-3500 or email barbara.frank@usoc.org.

For Your Information



VA To Survey Veteran Households

*Submitted by Johnny Gothard,
Commandant*

*Department of Arkansas
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Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a national survey of veterans, active duty service members, activated National Guard and reserve members, and family members and survivors to learn if they are aware of VA services.



“By hearing directly from veterans and their family members, we gain valuable information to help us serve them better. We hope those who receive the survey will respond to it,” Secretary Shinseki said.

In addition to assessing awareness levels, the National Survey of Veterans will collect important health care, benefits, employment, and demographic information that VA will use to inform policy decisions and improve benefits. Recognizing a broader client base than just veterans, this is the first time VA has included others, such as veteran family members, in its survey population.



VA is mailing out survey “screeners” to more than 130,000 households to identify potential survey participants. The

screeener asks if anyone in the household is a member of one of the identified survey groups – veterans, family members and survivors, active duty, Guard or Reserve members. Eligible survey participants then may be requested to participate in a full-length survey.

Participants will be able to select a preferred survey method: through U.S. mail, telephone, or a password-protected Internet address. VA expects approximately 10,000 veterans to complete the full-length survey.



This is the sixth VA National Survey of Veterans since 1978. The information collected will help VA in its efforts to design and conduct outreach to veterans. In addition, it will provide a clearer picture of the veteran population’s characteristics to help evaluate existing programs and policies and measure their impact.

The data collection is expected to be finished by the end of February and the final report released by December 2010.



Room Rate: \$89 per double (2 bed) room

Uniform of the Day: MCL Covers

There will be a Devil Dog Growl following the regular meeting.



A G E N D A

Friday, March 19th

- 1630 - 2000 Registration (\$5 per member)
- 1630 - 2200 Hospitality Room
- 2000 - 2130 Executive Meeting (Division Staff & Department Commandants)

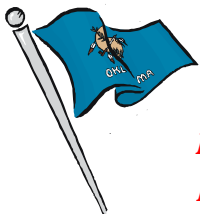
Saturday, March 20th

- 0800 - 0815 Colors
- 0815 - 0900 Regular Meeting
- 0900 - 0910 Break
- 0910 - 1000 Continuation of Meeting
- 1000 - 1010 Break
- 1010 - 1130 Continuation of Meeting
- 1130 - 1300 Lunch on your own
- 1300 - 1350 Continuation of Meeting
- 1350 - 1400 Break
- 1400 - 1450 Continuation of Meeting
- 1450 - 1500 Break
- 1500 - 1600 Meeting Conclusion & Adjournment

Division/District/Detachment Digest

SOUTHERN DIVISION
Ken Watterson, Vice Commandant

Submitted by Ken Henry, Asst. Vice Commandant
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Conference sponsored by:
Indian Nation Detachment and
Department of Oklahoma

Dates: March 19th - 20th, 2010

Location: Comfort Suites,
650 South George Nigh Expressway,
McAlester, OK 74501 • (918) 302-0001
(Ask for Marine Corps League rates when you call)

MINEOLA DETACHMENT

Mineola

Submitted by Bill Hamby, Jr. Past Commandant
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Fourth Quarter Report...

Detachment #1278’s recruitment of new members continued with three new members during October and November. Our monthly meeting attendance was down to an average of 23 members present this quarter, and our mid-week “breakfast fellowship” maintained an average 18 members present each week for the quarter.

The Detachment became more involved in the “Wall Project” now getting into the final phases of preparation. Giving exception of a few important elements, essentially all necessary equipment and material is at hand and ready to be

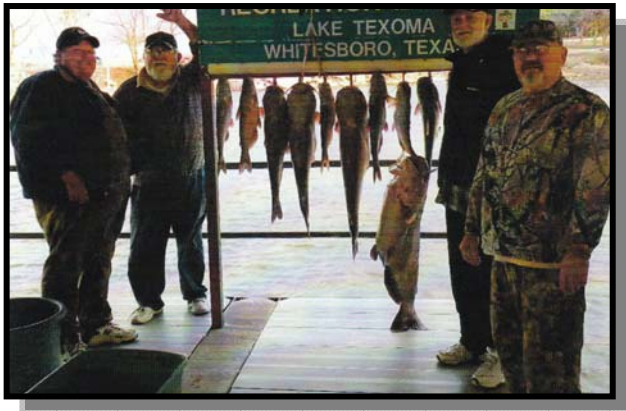


put in place. Plans for traffic control and parking are all in place. Schedule of events and programs are all but finalized and will be by October 20th, 2009.

◆ **October 3rd ...** Two members, Commandant Bill Hamby and Floyd Kent, attended the Terrell Charter presentation.

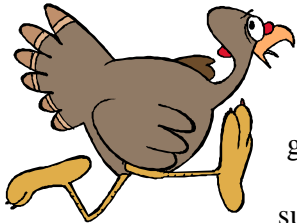
◆ **October 22nd - 25th ...** Two members, Commandant Bill Hamby and Paul Gates, Adjutant/Paymaster, attended the Department Fall Staff Meeting in Temple.

Approximately 11 members participated in a Detachment Fishing Trip to Lake Texoma.



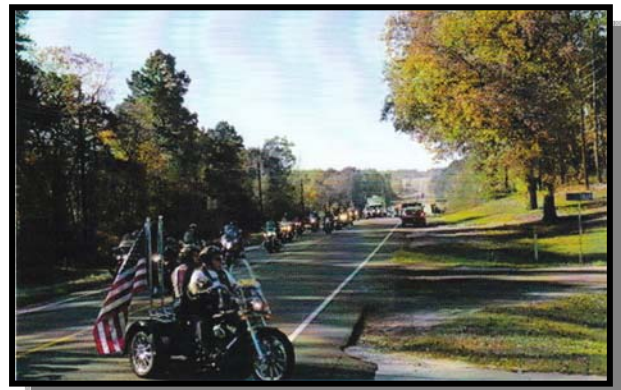
(L-R) Lee Roy Gilbreath, Jerry Penrod, John Lambert, Garry Thompson

◆ **October 31st ...** The Detachment hosted a “Turkey Shoot,” with approximately 15 members participating. We had approximately 25 guest shooters; however, the “Shoot” wasn’t as successful as 2008. Raffle tickets were sold for an AR-15 rifle with the drawing to be held at the 234th Birthday Ball on November 10th.



◆ **November 1st - 3rd ...** Final preparations for the arrival of the American Veteran’s Traveling Tribute (AVTT) and ‘Traveling Wall’ were made with a total of approximately 35 members participating in setting up tents, etc. during that time.

◆ **November 4th ...** A motorcade took place involving the Wood County Sheriff’s vehicles, approximately 45 members of the Patriot Guard Riders, vehicles transporting the AVTT Exhibit,



and the senior male and female veterans of Wood County - Mr. James O. Dear, age 93 (U.S. Army WWII Veteran), and Mrs. Edith Johnson, age 86 (U.S. Navy WWII Veteran). *(See photo below)*



Mr. Dear served in the North African and Italy campaigns, and Mrs. Johnson was a member of the first class of Waves to graduate from recruit training. She also had the honor of walking behind the casket of President Roosevelt during his funeral procession. Mrs. Johnson was dressed in her original Navy uniform of the 1940s.



The Motorcade visited each of the high schools in Wood County for a patriotic rally in honor of veterans. The AVTT Exhibit opened for visitors at noon on Thursday, November 5th, and remained open 24 hours a day through Sunday night, November 8th. Guest speakers included Department of Texas Sr. Vice Commandant Bob Quinn, Jr. Vice Commandant Ken Henry, State Representative Bryan Hughes, Mayor of Mineola Bo Whitus, and County Judge Bryan Jeanes. The comments received from various visitors and

dignitaries rendered the event a total success. There was an estimated 13,000 to 15,000 visitors during the four day period.

The cooperation and assistance rendered by the City of Mineola and the various civic clubs who provided volunteers to help in parking, crowd control, computer operators for 'The Wall,' transportation for disabled, etc., was overwhelming. We had an average of approximately 23 members working in various areas at any given time throughout the four day period.



◆ **November 10th ...** The Detachment hosted the 234th Birthday Ball at the American Legion Post 293. We had a total of 92 in attendance, including the band and the Marine Recruiting Station-Tyler Color Guard. The overall event was considered a success.



Color Guard at the Birthday Ball.



The Detachment entered a float in the Veteran's Day Parade in Mineola for the third straight year. Same as last year, the float consisted of the finished sculpture of the Iwo Jima Monument, along with two Marines in dress

blue uniforms. The Detachment was awarded 1st place (\$100) for the third year in a row.

◆ **November 11th ...** Miss Brooke Sims, age 10, was awarded first place for a poem she composed in recognition of Veterans Day. The contest was sponsored by one of the local civic groups. It wasn't enough that Miss Sims won first place, as she didn't feel the poem had served a purpose unless she was able to read it to veterans. Miss Sims was invited to the monthly meeting of the Mineola Detachment on November 17th, where she subsequently fulfilled her wish. She was allowed to read her poem to the Detachment:



Miss Sims, reading her poem.

SOLDIERS

*Talented with weapons that they use in war,
 Hopeful that they will defeat the enemy.
 Accomplishment of freedom.
 Nice enough to let people they don't even know
 have a safe life.
 Knowing that they could have lost their life,
 they fought for us.*

*Yearning for their nation to have freedom.
 Ovation they get when they come home.
 Unfaithful is not a word I would use to
 describe a soldier.*

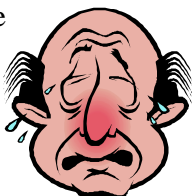
*Faithful to their nation.
 Obligated to fight for the people of the USA.
 Right minded when they fought for us.*

*Mighty man or woman.
 Yelling at the ones who do bad.*

*Fought for me in a battle.
 Rights to love the ones who died.
 Encouraging.
 Enough love for everyone in the world.
 Doing a wonderful, no magnificent deed,
 Obligation to save the nation.
 My hero, my life and my freedom.*

Thank you for my freedom dear soldiers!!!

As one can imagine, among the 25 old soldiers present that night, not all eyes were dry when this little 4' genius read her poem to us and then presented it to the Detachment.



At the closing of the Detachment meeting, Commandant Bill Hamby announced his resignation as Commandant effective November 30th, 2009.

Overall, the fourth quarter was exceptionally busy and yet rewarding, even in ways least expected. There have been many accomplishments during the past six months, sometimes very challenging, but nonetheless achievements resulting from team work and mutual desire for success. Thanks to the men of the Mineola Detachment.

Detachment Marine Corps League.

Thanks to all who supported the Toys for Tots 2009 Campaign.



Santa, Bernie, & Sgt. Casey E. Howell at the Christmas Parade & Stroll in Graham.



Sgt. Howell accepts toys from children @ a local church preschool.

**NORTH TEXAS DETACHMENT
 Graham**

*Submitted by Bernie O'Dell
 Young County Toys for Tots Coordinator
 (940) 549-3944 (H) • bernieodell@sbcglobal.net*

The Young County Toys for Tots 2009 Campaign was a great success due to the community support and the support of Marine Corps Recruiter Sgt. Casey E. Howell. More donations were received and more toys distributed during 2009 than ever before in the history of the Young County campaign, due to the Detachment combining forces with a fire department outside of Graham but still in the county, working with the Lion's Club and their Angel Tree project, Virginia's House (for CASA kids), MHMR, and several local churches. More than 1,400 children received the toys collected by the North Texas

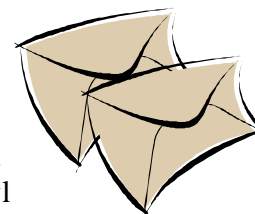
Devil Dog Doings



*Submitted by PDD Bob Ogg
 Pack Leader, Pack of Texas
 (903) 652-5601 (H)
robertogg@msn.com*

Woof, Woof to all Texas Dogs...

I have been informed by the Dog Robber that he has forwarded only two applications for advancement to PDD at the Supreme Growl



in Greensboro, North Carolina. Devil Dogs going up to PDD need to start early to insure there will be no glitch in their advancement. I have heard horror stories of Devil Dogs arriving at the Growl without the necessary paper work.

The following instructions were posted by the Chief Devil Dog: *“My preference would be that all candidates for advancement report by Sunday, 8 August, or Monday, 9 August. My preference aside, the Bylaws state that they must report no later than 1700 Tuesday, 10 August. Pass the word that all candidates must have advancement paperwork in Kennel hands no later than 1 July. A candidate stands a very slim chance of advancement approval if their papers do not arrive in that time frame. Now is the time to file those papers.”*

Vice Chief Devil Dog PDD Bernie O’Dell writes – “I would not want to be the last Dog in line at 1700 on the 10th. Get your application put together and to the Pack Dog Robber ASAP. Always keep a copy of the application. Hotel reservations and other information can be found on the National Web Page.”



While we are talking about advancement... Pups going up for Devil Dog – get your applications to the Pack Dog Robber as soon as possible. The Grand Growl in June is right around the corner.



There is **good news** that PDD Rafael Ramos’ wife Maria is doing much better and they are getting along just fine. A supreme Woof, Woof to all of you who provided help. Pound Dog Robbers are reminded that the year end report required by Section 801 of Pack Bylaws will be due 30 days prior to the Supreme Growl. It is not too early to start organizing the required data.



My tenure as Pack Leader will come to an end in June. It has been a blast. I cannot say enough about all those Dogs who provided

BLAST

support, help, and advice. I can truly say I could not have done without it. It epitomizes what being a Devil Dog is all about.

That’s about it Dogs. May all your fire hydrants not leak, and may the wind always be at your tail.



National News

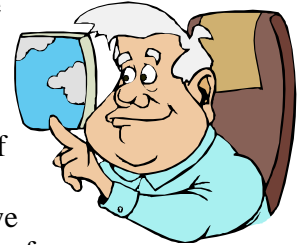


*Commandant’s
Communications*

Jim Laskey

Marines:

Oorah! Marines, it has been a busy time for your Commandant. I have had the pleasure of traveling around the country speaking with Leaguers. As a member of this great organization for 40 years, I can truly say we have the best membership of any veterans’ organization out there today. Our members continue in camaraderie and fellowship. Our Detachments continue to preserve our traditions and promote the interest of our United States Marine Corps.



We should all be very proud of our Marine Corps programs, such as the Marine Corps League Foundation. The members of this Foundation donate their time and energy voluntarily aiding and rendering assistance to all Marines, former Marines and to their widows and orphans. PNC Helen Hicks and her board work hard to provide lifesaving help to our veterans and families. Your Foundation continues to provide emergency financial assistance to our

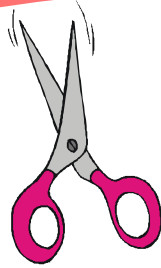


needy veterans and their families. If you contribute to the Federal Combined Campaign, please designate your contribution to the Marine Corps League Foundation.

I am equally proud of the Marines Helping Marines Program. Marine Ron Short and his board have made a difference to those wounded Marines and Corpsmen coming in from the war on terror front.

Just think about this: A medical evacuation begins when a Marine is wounded in the field. He is sent directly to a battalion aid station for stabilization.

Once there, his clothes will be cut off to provide for rapid treatment. A Marine needing further treatment will travel in a hospital robe to the next higher level for more extensive medical care. His uniforms and personal gear will be inventoried and maintained at his company supply area and will be forwarded to his final destination. The time between a Marine being wounded and the time he or she arrives at a final medical destination can be extensive.



Here is where your Marines Helping Marines Program will step in and assist this wounded Marine or Corpsman with items that are not readily available for re-issue through the supply system.

Our Marine Corps League teams work closely with the Marine Corps Liaisons in each of the military hospitals. Our Marine Corps League teams continue to provide financial and moral comfort to our wounded warriors and their families.

These Leaguers are outstanding. They volunteer numerous hours of their time to make a wounded Marine feel just a little bit better. This assistance is free of charge to our service men and women.

I would ask you to just take a minute and thank those members of these organizations for their hard work and continued assistance to our Marines. Both of these programs are equally exceptional.

This is what the Marine Corps League organization is all about. The members of the Marine Corps League have banded together to assist those who are now serving on active duty and those who have been honorably discharged from our Corps so that we may effectively promote the ideals of American freedom and democracy.

The members of the League, through your Marine Corps Foundation and Marines Helping Marines programs, are voluntarily aiding and rendering assistance to all Marines, former Marines, and to their widows and orphans.

But if these exceptional programs are to survive, they need our help. Please, if you are able, consider a monetary donation to continue the good work of these programs. As I finish out my second term as your National Commandant, I want to thank your National Executive Director Mike Blum, your Board of Trustees, and the many members of the Marine Corps League National Staff for all their exceptional hard work and commitment to this great organization. I would also like to thank our IT Director, Richard Blum, for his hard work and diligence in keeping us always up and running, and many hours monitoring our web site against "hackers" and those who would seek to shut down our web site or otherwise negatively affect our operation.



I cannot give enough thanks to Vic Voltaggio, Jim Tuohy, John Kovalcik, Dick Gore, Paul Hastings, Helen Hicks, and Jack Ryan for all their guidance and help during my term of office. We will continue to promote the reputation of the League as America's preeminent fraternal organization of Marines.

Thanks

I am looking forward to a great convention in North Carolina for 2010. Marine Dan Bracken has been hard at work putting together a spectacular convention. If you have not made your reservations, please do so. It promises to be a great time for all.

A new slate of officers will be elected this year. Please support Vic Voltaggio for National Commandant – you could not ask for a better applicant to lead this League to the next level. Marine Jim Tuohy is an excellent choice for Sr. Vice Commandant. Marine John

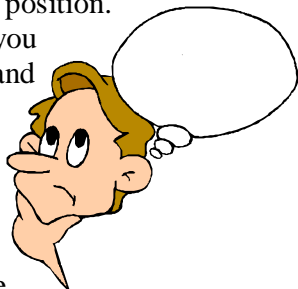


Kovalcik will be a natural for Jr. Vice Commandant.



There will be an opening for National Judge Advocate this year. When considering your choice for National Judge Advocate, keep in mind that this is a very important job within the League. Please consider each of the declared candidates' credentials carefully. Prior experience on all levels of the Marine Corps League is extremely important. Please select the best candidate for the good of the League for this position.

God Bless you and all you have done for our country and League. Please keep our Marines who are serving in harm's way in your thoughts and prayers and pray for their safe return. I ask you to please continue to support our United States Marine Corps and the programs that are so vital to its overall mission.



From the Front

By LCpl. Walter D.
Marino
Regimental Combat
Team 7



One Dog, One Marine, One Mission...

1/25/2010, Helmand Province, Afghanistan -

Worse than turbulence, their truck sways side to side and bumps up and down along a path in Afghanistan. What would be an intolerable ride for most is just something Lance Cpl. Paul N. Krist, a dog handler for 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, and his dog Max have accepted as part of the job.



Lance Cpl. Paul N. Krist enjoys a moment with his bomb-sniffing dog, Max, before exiting to search for homemade explosives. The two worked to assist RCP3's route clearance of many paths in southern Afghanistan.

Max, a black three-year-old Labrador, sits calmly on the floor next to his master Krist who is reading a book. Both are waiting patiently for their next opportunity to work. Suddenly, the back of the truck opens.

"Get out, we need you and the dog," says Cpl. Adam S. Rogers, combat engineer for 2nd CEB.

Springing to action, Max immediately starts sniffing the area for explosive material. As they continue down the road they discover why they were called.

A white van has been halted and surrounded by Marines discussing whether or not the bags found in its trunk are indeed HME (homemade explosives).

One of the bags is thrown on the ground that Max begins to sniff. After a few moments, it becomes evident to Krist that the bags do not contain bomb-making materials.

"Max lies down if it's HME," said Krist.

For Krist, getting to this point took training and a passion for helping others.

Originally a tank mechanic, Krist became a dog handler after learning the billet would likely lead to a deployment in Afghanistan. My Staff Sgt. told me I'd have a high chance of deploying as a dog handler, Krist said.

"I wanted to deploy," said Krist.

After arriving to IED detectors dog course, Krist was paired with Max, who quickly became his new best friend.

“When we got there, they gave us a sheet of paper that asked us what our hobbies were and what we did on our free time. It was supposed to help us pair up with the dogs. But, our tallest guy got the biggest dog, our meanest guy got the meanest dog, and I got Max,” said Krist, with a laugh.

From then on the two have constantly been perfecting their IED detection skills.



Krist works with his bomb-sniffing dog to check packages for homemade explosives. During their mission, 2nd CEB towed an Afghan National Police truck from a canal, and conducted route clearance on numerous routes in Afghanistan.

Their first find came early in Krist’s and Max’s deployment when they were still learning their area of operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

“I didn’t expect to find anything,” said Krist. “Then Max laid down and I was like, ‘Oh dang, I’m kind of close to this.’ So I backed up and gave him his toy; that’s what he gets for finding an IED, then he ran away and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines dug it out.”

Later, Krist learned they had uncovered two IEDs carrying 50 and 60 pounds of HME.

Although their discovery was an incredible feat that more than likely saved lives, Krist is not out for the recognition.

“When I came over here as a dog handler I wanted to find IEDs. Not to say that I did, but to use my dog for what we were trained for,” said the nineteen-year-old Krist.

With his dog and his M-4, Krist continues to hit the road time and time again, with 2nd CEB, to contribute to the fight against roadside bombs.



During a dismounted security halt, Lance Cpl. Krist prepares to release his bomb-sniffing dog to search the area for possible IEDs. During the mission, the two contributed to RCP3's route clearance of numerous routes in southern Afghanistan.

“I really enjoy what I do, and the guys I work with. They really care about their job and the safety of others,” said Krist. “My drive comes from knowing that we’re keeping people safe, and it’s not long before I go home. I hope I have a chance to do something this relevant in winning the war on my next deployment, and I hope Max can come, too.”

Can You Name This Marine?





The Marine pictured in the Fall Edition of the Newsletter was...

Tom Hixson



Marine South Expo
Marine Corps Base • Camp Lejeune, NC
April 21st - 22nd, 2010

Coming Attractions

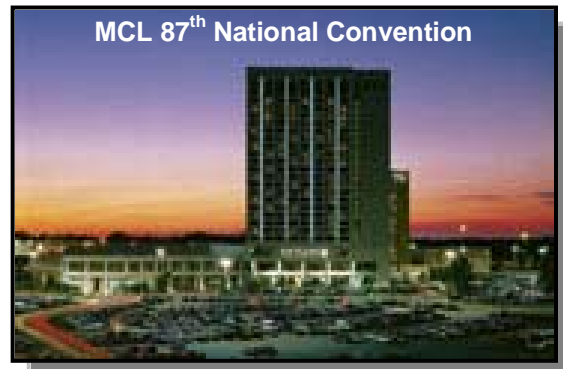


Department of Texas Annual Convention



Mid Winter National Staff Conference

Fairview Park Marriott
3111 Fairview Park Dr. • Falls Church, VA
(800) 992-4023 • February 11th - 13th, 2010



MCL 87th National Convention

The Sheraton Greensboro Hotel /
Koury Convention Center
3121 High Point Road @ I-40 • Greensboro, NC
(800) 242-6556 • August 8th - 14th, 2010



Southern Division Conference

Comfort Suites
650 South George Nigh Expressway
McAlester, OK • (918) 302-0001
March 19th - 20th, 2010



Department of Texas
Fall Staff Meeting
Granbury, TX
October 2010

The Visit

My dad, Angelo, was in the hospital in Tacoma, Washington. A former Marine and veteran of the Korean War, he was having his third knee replacement surgery.

A long and very painful operation was going to be made even worse because Dad was going through it alone. There was no one to hold his hand, no familiar soft voices to reassure him. His wife was ill and unable to accompany him or even visit during his weeklong stay. My sisters and brother lived in California, and I lived even farther away, in Indiana. There wasn't even anyone to drive him to the hospital, so he had arrived that morning by cab.

The thought of my dad lying there alone was more than I could stand. But what could I do from here?

I picked up the phone and called information for the Puyallup, Washington, Marine Corps Recruiting Station, where I joined the Marines ten years before. I thought that if I could talk to a Marine and explain the situation, maybe one of them would visit my dad.

I called the number. A man answered the phone and in a very confident voice said, "United States Marines, Sergeant Vanes. May I help you?"

Feeling just as certain, I replied, "Sergeant Vanes, you may find this request a little strange, but this is why I am calling..." I proceeded to tell him who I was and that my father was also a former Marine and 100 percent disabled from the Korean War. I explained that he was in the hospital, alone, without anyone to visit and asked if Sergeant Vanes would please go and see him.

Without hesitation, he answered, "Absolutely."

Then I asked, "If I send flowers to the recruiting station, would you deliver them to my dad when you go to the hospital?"

"Ma'am, I will be happy to take the flowers to your dad. I'll give you my address. You send them, and I will make sure that he receives them," he replied.

The next morning, I sent the flowers to Sergeant Vane's office just as we had planned. I went to work, and that evening, I returned home and phoned my dad to inquire about his surprise visitor.

If you have ever talked with a small child after that child has just seen Santa Claus, you will understand the glee I heard in my dad's voice. "I was just waking up when I thought I saw two Marines in their dress blue uniforms standing at the foot of my bed," he told me excitedly. "I thought I had died and gone to heaven. But they were really there!"

I began to laugh, partly at his excitement, but also because he didn't even mention his operation. He felt so honored: Two Marines he had never met took time out to visit an old Marine like him. He told me again and again how sharp they looked and how all the nurses thought he was so important. "But how did you ever get them to do that?" he asked me.

"It was easy. We are all Marines, Dad, past and present; it's the bond."

After hanging up with my dad, I called Sergeant Vanes to thank him for visiting my dad. And to thank him for the extra things he did to make it special: wearing his dress blue uniform, bringing another Marine along -- he even took a digital camera with him. He had pictures taken of the two Marines with my dad right beside his bed. That evening, he e-mailed them to me so I could see for myself that my dad was not alone and that he was going to be okay.

As for the flowers, they hardly mattered, but I was glad for the opportunity to express my feelings. The card read: "Daddy, I didn't want just anyone bringing you flowers... so I sent the World's Finest. Semper Fi."



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEADLINE

for **TEXAS MARINE SPRING** EDITION

will be

APRIL 15, 2010!

Please submit articles/photos to *Bernie & Juanita O'Dell*
@ 515 Hall St., Graham, TX 76450 or bernieodell@sbcglobal.net

