



# The Gipper

Marine Corps League  
President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597  
Semper Fidelis

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## AUGUST 2019



### COMMANDANT

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### 2019 MCL National Convention Billings, Montana

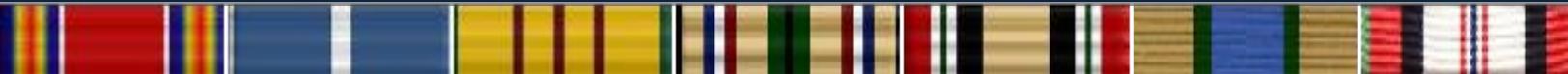
#### Marines, Corpsmen and Associate members,

We arrived on Saturday at around 3pm, a day before the start of the convention, and checked out the convention schedule. While we were waiting in line to get registered, we overheard that there were 88 Devil Dogs that would be upgraded to the level of Pedigree Devil Dog at the Supreme Growl – and I was one of them.

On Sunday we got our bearings and planned our days. If you've ever attended a National Convention you know how much goes on during a short week's time frame. This convention had a daily packed schedule starting at 0630 with breakfast, meetings, more meetings, presentations of rules and dedications, election of officers, reports from National staff members, Toys for Tots, VAVS reports, Young Marines liaisons, Dept Commandant's Council meetings, reports from Standing Committees, Administrative review committees, Scouting and Awards committees, etc. and ending at 1700 with brew and dining. Because most of the main room meetings were National oriented, we focused on the topics that addressed our Detachment.

On Monday we were up at 0630 for breakfast and 0730 for 0800 for Colors. After Colors we broke off into our designated platoons and it was a study day. We reviewed Taps and Flag edict the first half of the day and then lunch. After lunch it was Marine Corps History which was pretty intense when you haven't done any of this in over 50 years, but it was very interesting and educational.

On Tuesday we started off the morning like the day before and then after Colors we started our review on Marine Corps League history. The rest of the day our studies included our 11 General Orders and a review of Monday and Tuesday's information.



On Wednesday we had a platoon exam which consisted of 10 stations where we asked questions from the previous day's studies. On completing all 10 stations we were elevated to the level of Pedigree Devil Dog and received our Gold collars.

Thursday was nominations for National Board of Directors and Friday we voted. All and all it was well worth the time spent and very educational and I highly recommend attending a National Convention. I'm sure you will enjoy it.

I was joined by Dick Jennings Commandant for the State of California, Rudy Cordero, Ben Pfister and Fausto Galvan.

The highlight of my trip was during the MODD's Supreme Growl where I was the only member to receive an upgrade to the level of Pedigree Devil Dog from our Detachment.

Semper Fi,

Harry Hodges  
Commandant



**SR. VICE COMMANDANT**  
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**Fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Associate Members,**

This month marks the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Persian Gulf War. On 7 August 1991, the 41st President of the United States, President H. W. Bush ordered U.S. military aircraft and troops to Saudi Arabia as part of a multinational force to defend that nation against possible Iraqi invasion. One week later the Marine Corps announced the commitment of 45,000 troops to the Persian Gulf area as part of Operation Desert Shield which would become the largest deployment of U.S. forces since the Vietnam War.

The war officially ended 6 months later after a brilliantly planned and executed 100 hour ground campaign against the Iraqi Army. One of the first major ground engagements of the war took place in and around the Saudi Arabian city of Khafji, from 29 January to 1 February 1991 and marked the culmination the air campaign over Kuwait and Iraq, which had begun on 17 January 1991.

For those not familiar with the battle, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had tried to draw Coalition troops into a major ground battle by firing scud missiles into Israeli and shelling oilfields in Saudi Arabia. None of which worked. On the 29th of January, Saddam sent three armored divisions into Saudi Arabia from Kuwait. Monitoring their advance where a dozen Observation Post (O.P.s) close to the Saudi border, manned by U.S.



Army Special Forces and the U. S. Marine Corps Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) teams which were to report on the advancing Iraqis' and call in air strikes and artillery fire on the column. Unfortunately for the Iraqis, most of the attacking force was destroyed by our beloved Marine Corps and the U. S. Army S.F. teams, which were assisted by Coalition aircraft.

One Iraqi Armor unit did make it to the Saudi Arabian city of Khafji on the night of 29-30 January. Between 30 January and 1 February, two Saudi Arabian National Guard battalions and two Kuwaiti tank companies aided by Coalition aircraft and artillery launched an attack to recapture the city which they did on 1 February. The cost was 43 Coalition servicemen dead and 52 wounded. Iraqi Army fatalities numbered 60 dead and 300 wounded while over 300 were captured.

So why am I telling you about The Battle of Khafji which is a historic chapter in Marine Corps history? Because I recently had the opportunity to have dinner with a humble brother Marine, LtCol (Ret) Douglas R. Kleinsmith, who is a Veteran of that battle. LtCol (Ret) Kleinsmith spent 20 years on active duty in the Marine Corps as an Artillery Officer and currently lives in the Washington D.C. area. Today he works for a local tech company and in his spare time provides civil-war battlefield tours to tourist.

At the time of the battle he was a young Captain of Marines. Captain Kleinsmith was assigned to ANGLICO and his air-ground liaison team consisted of himself, Cpl John D Calhoun, Cpl Steve F. Foss and Cpl Edward E. Simons Jr. Their job was to call in air strikes from Air Force A-10 (Warthogs), Marines Corps F/A 18s, Cobra Attack helicopters, and mortar and artillery fire.

On the 29th January 1991, during darkness, the Iraqi Armour Divisions crossed the Kuwaiti border into Saudi Arabia and advanced towards the O.P.s. Coalition airstrikes and artillery fire were called in on the column from the teams manning the O.P.s. Taking losses the Iraqi column continued to its movement towards Khafji while passing around the O.P.s. The Iraqis maneuvered through the desert passing around half a dozen O.P.s until it came upon O.P. 7, where Captain Kleinsmith and his team were located.

With the approaching column, Cpt Kleinsmith continued to call for fire with the U.S. Army Special Forces and Marine 3d Force Reconnaissance teams located in the area. An OV-10 Bronco arrived over the battlefield and worked with Kleinsmith as the airborne forward air controller. He found it difficult to control airstrikes because the location of friendly forces was unclear. Looking north of the border, Cpt Kleinsmith directed an Intruder section (Grumman A-6 medium attack aircraft) and a Harrier section (McDonnell Douglas AV-8B close-support attack aircraft) in a strike against Iraqi artillery positions while a flight of Cobra gunships circled above. He thought the Cobras would prevent his team from being overrun as O.P 8 had been. But as the Cobras circled overhead, the soldiers and Marines listened as Iraqi vehicles moved in the darkness around O.P. 7.

Cpt Kleinsmith had been kept informed as the other teams in his area had withdrawn through Khafji. At the same time the Cobras circling overhead returned to base because of low fuel, Cpt Kleinsmith and the other leaders decided it was time to leave O.P. 7. Kleinsmith led the teams south into a sabkhas (salt flat- marsh). He counted on the heavy Iraqi Armor not following them in. They departed at 02:30 as Iraqi artillery fire tracked them. The group remained in radio contact with the OV-10, which was now free to place air strikes around and on top of O.P. 7. As they continued driving they encountered the remnants of the Saudi Arabian National Guard screening force camps. The Saudis had departed in such haste that they had left tea boiling on fires outside their tents. Finally, around 03:30, Cpt Kleinsmith ordered a halt. He was worried that they



would receive friendly fire if they attempted to join up with a Saudi Arabian unit in the dark. Men and vehicles remained in the salt marshes until daylight and making contact with the Saudis. Cpt Kleinsmith and his men remained with the Saudi's and supported their efforts as they recaptured Khafji.

Doug and his men were recognized for their valor by their chain of command. Doug received the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device. He also received the Saudi Arabian "Nuth al-Ma'rkak" which is their combat action ribbon, a medal Doug is very proud of. It was an honor to meet Doug and to learn his story. As Marines we are all part of the Marines Corps legacy filled with valor and honor. Doug Kleinsmith's story is just one small piece of that honorable legacy.

1st picture - Doug Kleinsmith and his men prior to the battle-

*Tben-Capt Douglas R. Kleinsmith poses with his air-ground liaison team. Capt Kleinsmith is on the left, and to the right are Cpl John D. Calboun, Cpl Steve F. Foss, and Cpl Edward E. Simons Jr. On the night of 29-30 January 1991, Kleinsmith's team was cut off from Coalition forces by the Iraqi advance. They evaded the enemy by maneuvering through the sabkhas (salt marshes) and returned to Coalition lines.*

Photo courtesy of LtCol Douglas R. Kleinsmith





Left picture- Doug Kleinsmith teaching Civil War History  
Right Picture- LtCol (Ret) Doug Kleinsmith's USMC shadowbox



Left picture -The Saudi Arabian "Nuth al-Ma'rkat" Medal their equivalent of the Combat Action Ribbon.



## EVENTS DIRECTOR Ken 'Doc' Honaker

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### Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,

July ended with the annual Ventura County Veterans Stand Down at the Ventura ANG Armory. As in the past after delivering donated clothing on Wednesday, I spent Friday helping in Medical. The Stand Down staff was very appreciative of the clothing from the VA Sepulveda clothing room, bagged by the Clothing Room staff which includes our own Fausto Galvan, as well as clothing purchased with funds provided by MCL 597. As previously noted, the participants at the Stand Down do not have to be homeless, though a good number of them were. I spoke with one Afghan Vet who takes care of his elderly mother and took the opportunity to attend to take care of some minor legal issues. I chatted with Miss Olive, a WWII female Army vet who volunteers each year, enjoys connecting with the "young folks" who have followed her time in the service.

Coming up is the Wings Over Camarillo air and car show 17 & 18 of August at the Camarillo Airport. We will NOT host a booth, though I know other Vet organizations may be present. I've spoken with a number of WWII Vets that set up to visit and sign autographs.

The Veterans Job Fair and Expo at Oxnard College is set for 24 August. The 597 will be there with a booth and will present Colors. Our booth will be inside because I didn't think us old guys would like to hang out in the heat outside. The inside space does not allow for setting up Big Red, but we will be obvious with our tablecloth and signage.

Simi Valley Days is also coming up during the second weekend of September. I have not heard about a 597 booth or Color Guard request but will pass on the word when I hear anything.

Coming up in October will be the Thousand Oaks Street Fair on Sunday 20 October. If you attend the festivities, stop by and visit us at our Big Red booth.

Of note, as mentioned at our August general meeting, Urgent Care Simi Valley paired up with the VA Medical system so Veterans with VA ID can be seen at the Urgent Care and Sleep Lab, 1950 E. Los Angeles Avenue, Simi Valley, CA. Their hours of operations are Monday - Friday 9AM-8PM, Saturday 9AM-6PM and Sunday 10AM-6PM. You can call them at 805-306-1440. Thank you Ben Pfister for giving us the heads up for this service.

Semper Fi  
Doc Honaker  
Events Director



**JR. PAST COMMANDANT &  
COMMANDANT**  
**Dept. of California**  
**R. A. "Dick" Jennings**  
[califcommandant@gmail.com](mailto:califcommandant@gmail.com)  
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**Marines, Corpsmen and Associate Members,**

Pictures of the California contingent at the 96th Annual Marine Corps League National Convention in Billings, Montana from August 4-9, 2019.



From Left to Right: Todd Rehfuss (Chief of Staff, Department of California), Ben Pfister (President Ronald Reagan Det. 597), Harry Hodges (Commandant, President Ronald Reagan Det. 597), Rudy Cordero (President Ronald Reagan Det. 597), Dick Jennings (Commandant, Department of California), Juan Pascacio (Jr. Vice-Commandant, Department of California), Fausto Galvan (Sgt-at-Arms, President Ronald Reagan Det. 597), Jim Loorya (Senior Vice-Commandant, Department of California)



The State Commandant and Detachment Commandant in Billings, Montana. Dick Jennings, State Commandant, Harry Hodges, Detachment Commandant and newly appointed State Department Chief of Staff, Todd Rehfuss as they go through PDD installation at the MCL National Convention in Billings, Montana.



Harry Hodges, Commandant Det 597, accepting the national newsletter award.

Semper Fi,

Dick Jennings

Jr. Past Commandant

President Ronald Reagan Det. 597

Commandant

Department of California

Marine Corps League



## JUDGE ADVOCATE

**John Miller**

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**JULY 2019**

### **Marines, FMF Corpsmen and Associates,**

The National Convention is over in Billings, Montana and several members of The President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597 attended the event. I am sure we will hear more about the new bylaws and events that the National Organization has planned for in the coming year. Our Detachment continues to render military honors to our fallen Veterans and strives to be an example for the rest of the community.

On 31 July 2019, there was a 50th year anniversary of the slaying of Los Angeles Police Officer Robert Cote. Our Color Guard presented the military tribute to Officer Cote's family at San Fernando Mission Cemetery. Officer Cote was an Army Veteran of the Viet Nam War. His son Robert Jr. is a retired Officer from the Cypress, CA Police Department; his son Matt is currently a Deputy Sheriff with the San Bernardino Sheriff's Office, and his youngest son, Mike, is a Sergeant in The United States Marine Corps. It was a proud moment to be part of the ceremony that honored the legacy of this Veteran who served in two different uniforms to protect our country and community. We must always remember those who have fallen for freedoms sake and strive to honor them whenever we can.

Our Detachment is gaining a tremendous amount of respect and honors in our surrounding communities and we must always continue to gain the support of those we live and work with. August is another month filled with events that shaped our Nation and our Corps. Here are just a few of the many August events that made history both here and abroad.

### **Marine Corps History**

- |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 3, 2005  | 14 Marines from Ohio Reserve Unit are killed in roadside bombing in Iraq                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| August 4, 1790  | George Washington establishes the US Coast Guard                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| August 5, 1953  | Korean POW's are released by North Korea at Panmunjom.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| August 5, 1962  | Marilyn Monroe found dead                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| August 6, 1914  | Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia and Serbia declares war on Germany.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| August 6, 1945  | Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| August 7, 1942  | First US offense of World War II begins with the landing of the 1 <sup>st</sup> MarDiv on Guadalcanal. Japanese general stated that Guadalcanal was no longer merely a name of an island... It was the name of the graveyard of the Japanese Imperial Army. |
| August 10, 1969 | Leno and Rosemary LaBianca are murdered by Manson and his followers just one day after killing 5 others at the Sharon Tate estate in Los Angeles.                                                                                                           |
| August 17, 1942 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Raider Battalion land on Makin Island by submarine and capture and destroy a Japanese radio station.                                                                                                                                        |
| August 18, 1959 | Admiral William "Bull" Halsey dies                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



August 19, 1918

Brigadier General John LeJeune becomes the first Marine to command an Army Division in World War I.

August 20, 2006

Photographer Joe Rosenthal dies in California. He took the iconic flag raising photograph on Iwo Jima in 1945.

August 21, 1968

Marine PFC James Anderson, Jr, is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He is the first African American to be so honored. The award was accepted by his parents at a ceremony at Marine Barracks, 8<sup>th</sup> and I in Washington, DC.

August 24, 1814

Captain Samuel Miller and 100 Marines from 8<sup>th</sup> and I, fight the British in battle of Bladensburg. They are forced to retreat with 8 killed and 14 wounded. The British later burn the White House to the ground.

August 17, 1790

Major Samuel Nichols, 1<sup>st</sup> Commandant dies in Philadelphia, Pa.

August 29, 1968

During Operation Mameluke Thrust, Viet Cong insurgents ambush and kill 12 Marines from Delta Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines in Happy Valley, s/w of Da Nang.

It's Your History Honor It.  
Semper Fidelis,  
John Miller  
Judge Advocate



Service for LAPD Officer Robert Cote-Larry Fisher, Commandant Harry Hodges, Advocate John Miller and Dave Opher (with US Army flag).



8-10-1969 Top photo, John Miller Advocate (LAPD) at Manson murder residence.  
8-10-2019 John Miller Advocate Same place 50 years later ( LaBianca Home)



Larry Fisher presents flag to Robert Cote Jr with grandson Mike Cote, USMC in background.



**ADJUTANT**

**John Coley**

w4simi@yahoo.com



**From the Desk of the Adjutant**

**Marines, Corpsman and Associate Members,**

The Detachment had five members "lassoed into Billings Montana" for the 96th National Convention of the MCL, held 4-10 August: Dept. of CA Commandant Dick Jennings, Harry Hodges, Rudy Cordero, Fausto Galvan and Ben Pfister. Our Commandant, Harry Hodges, was elevated to Pedigreed "Devil Dog" of the MODD on Wednesday. I am sure we will get some updates from the convention in this issue of the Gipper and at our next general meeting on 05 September.



Another highlight of the convention was when our Det. 597 was awarded 3rd Place in the National Newsletter Competition for the second consecutive year. Congratulations to our Editor Rich Farra who has earned the award 3 times of the 4 years he entered the contest, and to the contributors of interesting articles and pictures for the “The Gipper.”

Lastly, please get your recommendations in for our Detachment awards ASAP! These awards will be presented during the Birthday Celebration at the Junkyard on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November. The Awards Committee needs your submissions as quickly as possible to determine who the recipients are for Marine of the Year, Associate of the Year, and Commandant’s Recognition Awards. This form will also be used for awards that will be given as the occasion merits. Forms will be passed out at the September meeting and will be available again at the October meeting. The award recognition time frame is from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

Semper Fidelis,

John Coley  
Adjutant



## **THE DOG ROBBER HOWLS**

**Pound 325, Ventura County Devil Dogs  
California Pack 2012 Pound of the Year**

**DD Ben Pfister  
Pound Keeper**

[benpdet597@gmail.com](mailto:benpdet597@gmail.com)

818-208-1095



### **Woof Devil Dogs, Marines and Associate members,**

I just returned from the MCL National Convention and Devil Dogs Supreme Growl in Billings, Montana. Everyone attending seemed to have enjoyed themselves. Commandant Harry Hodges was elevated to the degree of Pedigree Devil Dog during the MODD Supreme Growl. Harry and Rudy Cordero became life members in the MODD as well.

Our next Growl will be held at the Junk Yard Restaurant in Simi Valley on 10 Sept. Please remember that if you would like to join the MODD, you have to be a regular member in good standing for at least one year and let the commandant know you are interested.

Woof  
PDD Ben Pfister  
Pound Keeper



## CHAPLAIN Bradley Cantley

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### The Chaplain's Corner

#### Fellow Marines, veterans and friends:

A short and simple prayer to those in need: "Supreme Commandant (Father God), I pray for healing for all on this list. Thank you Jesus, Amen". Newly added will be highlighted in sky blue, but only the first time when I send an update. *If you have recovered nicely please let me know if you wish to be removed, or need an update on your condition. Also if I missed anyone please let me know.*

#### Below are those brave men and women who need our prayers:

**Anthony Hernandez's mother**—had successful surgery, pray for healing and strength.

**Thomas Hernandez's girlfriend**—Has passed away, pray for his strength and healing.

**Drew Haydon's daughter**—Kayleigh needs healing and strength.

**Brad Cantley**—I am out of the hospital need prayer for a quick recovery. Thanks

**Dick Jennings's wife Edna**—Needs strength and healing.

**John Miller's daughter**—Has recovered and is healing nicely

**Gary Sinise**—our guest speaker (a honorary Marine) needs prayer for his sister-in-law who has cancer.

**Ken Mask**—Needs some strong prayer in all aspects of his health and strength.

**Don Joy**—please pray for healing.

**Hank Noorda**—Is at home, and recovering

**Bill Trammell**—Pray for continued healing.

**Conrad Wright**—needs prayer for healing and recovery

**Conrad Wright's wife**—also needs prayer for an injury

**Julie Stranges**—needs prayer and healing

**Maria Avila**—Has cancer needs strength and healing

**Robert Nelson**—Pray for healing

**Ericka Silva**—Still under treatment

**Thomas Hernandez**—Strength

**Blanca Hernandez**—Healing

**Jim Lieberknecht**—Stay strong.

**Mike Maxwell**—Still under treatments, and healing

**Sue Honaker**—need prayer for healing.

**RED (Remember Everyone Deployed)**—Let us keep those Marines and other service members in our prayers as they might be in harm's way, or just away for training. "We ask our Supreme Commandant to watch over them and keep them safe. Bring them back home as soon as You are able too. Amen"

May our Lord and Savior keep watch over us, and to continue to watch over us. May He protect us, keep us healthy, and to keep us safe. - Semper Fi, Chaplain Brad



## HISTORIAN

**John Miller**

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## A Local Hero – Donald R. Joy

Courage is the 1<sup>st</sup> of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all the others. - **Sir Winston Churchill Prime Minister of Great Briton during World War 2**

Sometimes you don't have to look very far to find a hero, they just pop up all around you. That is the exact definition of our own Detachment leader and friend, Don Joy. Don was born up north in rainy Seattle and where he never saw a sunny day. After high school, he went off to the University of Washington, and admits he had more fun versus studying in college where he had a less than desired grade point average. He knew his less than stellar GPA would make him eligible for the draft and not get his choice of branch of service, so in taking great initiative, he went down to the local recruitment center and tried to join the Air Force. He failed the eyesight test and was turned down. He then went next door to the Navy recruiter and told him he would only join the Navy if he was guaranteed submarine duty. At 6'3" he was way over the height requirement and was turned down again. Observing all of the work and disappointment this young man was going through, an astute and very friendly Marine Corps recruiter overheard his second turn down and whispered to Don, "Follow me, I won't turn you down."

One week later he was at MCRD, San Diego and earned his EGA to become a United States Marine. Don says he never got to thank that recruiter, because he set him on his true path in life - Service to his nation, family and community.

Immediately after ITR, Don was sent directly to Da Nang, Republic of Viet Nam. He was an 0311 assigned to the Magnificent Bastards of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 4<sup>th</sup> Marines. Just a brief history of 2/4, the battalion was formed in 1914 during the European part of World War I. In 1916, President Wilson sent 2/4 to the Dominican Republic to quell local factions during that country's civil war. In 1927 the unit was dispatched to China and became the Corps famous detachment, "The China Marines." During World War II the Battalion was the first ashore on Guam and the retaking of that Island from the Japanese. On 1 January 1946, the unit was relieved of all World War II duties and sailed back to California.

In May 1965 the battalion was called upon for service in Viet Nam. The unit was involved in the first major battle between US Marines and the NVA during Operation Starlite in August 1965. As we all know this unit had a storied history in Viet Nam and had several epic battles including the major battle of Dai Do in April 1968. But this battle was after Don joined the unit. His TAOR (Tactical Area of Responsibility) was in and around the Marine Corps helicopter base at Phu Bai. He was a second platoon fire team leader and immediately out on patrols into Elephant Valley and the surrounding areas. Just a personal note here if I may. I was assigned to Charlie 1/9 and later Alpha 1/1 during this time and had been in country since 1965. I was due to be recycled home in the spring of 1966, so I just want to thank Don for taking my place when he landed in Viet Nam in the merry, merry month of May 1966.



Don obtained the rank of Sergeant (E-5) and was sent home to Seattle. He bitterly recalls getting off of the plane in his winter greens and confronted by anti-war protesters who spat on him and called him a baby killer. Don was exposed to chemical agents (Agent Orange) during his service in Viet Nam and suffered from anger issues and PTSD. After his leave and temporary duty in San Francisco, he went to Camp Pendleton (San Mateo) with the reserve 23rd Marines. He spent a month TDY and met a fellow Marine who lived in Simi Valley. He would go on liberty with this friend and in the winter of 1968/1969, he met his future wife Carol. Due to the fact that he had less than one month to go on his enlistment, he was given "an early out" and returned home to Seattle. But Simi Valley and Carol called out to him and he returned and on September 13, 1969, he married Carol in Trinity Lutheran Church on Alamo Street in Simi Valley.

Over the years Don became a father 4 times, each one a daughter. (Donna, Christina and twins Elisa and Elizabeth) Don worked hard to raise and support his family. After the Marine Corps, he applied to the Ventura County Sheriff's Department, but was turned down due to several medical conditions. Don turned to outdoor work and became a bricklayer. In the 1984 earthquake his shop was badly damaged, and Don was forced to find other work. He found his true calling and became a computer designer for military housing. His wonderful wife Carol passed away in 2008, the same year that Don retired. Over the many years, Don suffered many medical conditions that made life very difficult for him. He never gave up and remembered that he had children to raise and grandchildren to enjoy. His medical issues increased and eventually he contracted diabetes that curtailed most of his physical abilities. Don never gave in to the conditions and managed to resolve many of them.

In early 2000, he heard about the Marine Corps League in Simi Valley and met Paul Mole. A short time later, Paul obtained the charter for our Detachment and the rest is history. Don says that he regrets not joining the Detachment at its birth, but he said he wasn't ready for it at that time. His wife Carol was very active in the volunteer group at the President Ronald Reagan Library and she told Don that the MCL was planning a Birthday Ball, at the library in November 2006. Then and there, Don decided to become more active in his community and joined the Detachment in 2006. He became the Junior Vice Commandant under Commandant Mark Shuster and attended the first Detachment ball at the Reagan Library.

So Don has been what most people would call the average American. I say he is way more than that. He grew up without any blemish on his character, and he joined the United States Marine Corps at the height of our involvement in the war in Viet Nam. He served proudly in one of our Corps most decorated units, he obtained the rank of sergeant (Okay he wasn't perfect). He made many friends and settled in Simi Valley and married his wonderful wife Carol. Together they raised their 4 daughters to become meaningful citizens and blessed him with 9 grandchildren.

Don suffered through many physical injuries caused by Agent Orange and other chemicals during his combat service. He endured insults from the very people he had sworn to protect. Yet he never gave in to all these conditions and went on with in life in an exemplarily manner. No one can take away the honor he earned and the respect he gained by living a good and decent life. I am drawn to the line in the movie "Saving Private Ryan" when the Veteran is at the cemetery and he turns to his wife and says, "Tell me I was a good man." She answered, "Yes you are a good man."

So with complete honesty and true respect: Donald R. Joy you are a good and brave man who lived a wonderful and fulfilled life. I thank you for all you have done, for our country, our Corps, our community and our Marine Corps Detachment here in Simi Valley.



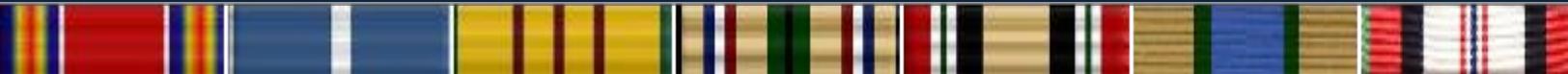
Success is to be measured NOT so much by the position that one has reached in life...as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Booker T Washington

Don in 2019

1966 Viet Nam



Semper Fi,  
John Miller  
Historian



## **PAYMASTER'S CORNER**

**ANDY DOBRZYNSKI**

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**My fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,**

I am pictured below accepting a Certificate Celebrating 15 Years of Membership of the Detachment in the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Presenting the certificate is Kathi Van Etten, President/CEO of the chamber. I actually look good in the picture don't you agree.

Andy Dobrzynski  
Paymaster





**William Trammell**  
**Vice President Los Angeles Chapter #8**  
**Montford Point Marines Association**  
 wmtrammell@twc.com

**Marines:**

The Montford Point Marine Association Chapter 8 held its monthly meeting on 27 July at 1100 at the American Legion Post 46 at 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230. Our next meeting will be on 24 August at 1100 at the American Legion Post 46.

Some members of Chapter 8 proudly ventured to northern California to acknowledge and present Mr. Joseph Alexander and Mr. Murphy, two original Montford Point Marines, with their Congressional Gold Medals - our Nation's highest civilian honor. This honor was made possible by former President Barack Obama who signed legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to all of the African-American Marines who went through recruit training at Montford Point from 1942 to 1949. Montford Point Marines were the first African Americans who were allowed to join the United States Marine Corps and entered a segregated "Boot Camp" at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Fewer than 2,000 of the nearly 20,000 Montford Point Marines have been identified to date.

On August 2, Mr. Mike Johnson, National Western Region Vice President, and I travelled to Hayward, California for a presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to Mr. Joseph Alexander, a 94 year old Marine Veteran who fought in the Pacific Theater/Marshal Islands against the Japanese. His family said they discovered his military history inadvertently when they were working with the Veterans Administration to get his medical benefits. They said he was a very proud Marine and spoke very little of his military service or his Montford Point Marine lineage. His CGM presentation ceremony was well attended by representatives of the City of Hayward, Mayor's office, City Council, the local press, Channel 2 News; as well as a very large contingent from the USMC - Recruiting Station Commanding Officer, Marine Corps League, American Legion Post 911 - and other interested civilians.

National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc.  
 ~ Western Region ~  
 Presents the  
**CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY**

*Mr. Joseph Alexander*



When: Friday August 2, 2019  
 Where: Howard Veterans Memorial Building  
 22737 Main Street  
 Hayward, California  
 Time: 1:00 p.m.

~ Sponsored By ~  
 American Legion, Hayward Veterans Post 870  
 American Veterans, Hayward Post 911

On Nov. 23, 2011, President Barack Obama signed into law the legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines. This award recognizes the contributions of the Montford Point Marines to the Marine Corps and the United States of America from 1942 to 1949, during a time of hardship and segregation.  
 The Congressional Gold Medal is an award bestowed by the United States Congress. The Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom are the highest civilian awards in the United States.

Original by: Gilbert T. Taylor  
 NMPMA, Inc. Website  
 For more information about America's first black Marines, please visit their website at  
<http://www.montfordpointmarines.org>

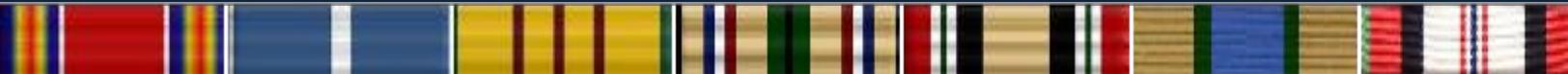




On Saturday August 3 Mr. Johnson and I visited Vallejo, California to present the Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) to Mr. Willie Murphy. Mr. Murphy joined the Marine Corps in 1943 and served until 1945. He passed away in August 1978, so the Congressional Gold Medal was presented to his daughters and other family members who attended the ceremony. The CGM ceremony was held at the Solid Rock Cathedral of Faith at 611 Amador Street, Vallejo, CA 90450.

The National Montford Point Marines Association, Inc. (NMPMA) will be conducting their 54th National Convention, August 28 – 31, 2019 in Charlotte, North Carolina. The NMPMA, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Veterans service organization establish in August 1965 to perpetuate the legacy of the first African Americans who entered the Marine Corps.

During our 54th National Convention, we will be focusing on the Montford Point Marine Museum and advocacy for Veteran services. We want to include in the museum's mission statement that it will educate the public on Marine Corps history, and more specifically that it becomes a lasting tribute to our heroes - the Montford Point Marines. For more information, please visit [www.montfordpointmarines.org](http://www.montfordpointmarines.org) to experience firsthand the pride we take in supporting our cause and preserving the legacy of the WWII Veterans of Montford Point Camp.



## ***Events & Special Projects For 2019***

- August 17, 2019 NMPMA SD Chapter Business Meeting @10 AM***
- August 17, 2019 NMPMA NEC Teleconference Call @11:00 AM***
- August 19, 2019 Next Dimension University Commencement @5 PM LA CA***
- August 24, 2019 NMPMA LA Chapter Board/Business Meeting at 11:00 A.M.***
- August 28, 2019 CGM Ceremony OMPs Mr. Willie Murphy and Mr. Harold F. Evans' Family @ NMPMA NC.***
- August 28-31, 2019 NMPMA 54<sup>th</sup> National Convention (Charlotte) NC***

- September 07, 2019 NMPMA OC Chapter Business Meeting @11 AM***
- September 14, 2019 MCRD Museum Salute @5 PM SD CA.***
- September 21, 2019 NMPMA SD Chapter Business Meeting @10 AM***
- September 21, 2019 NMPMA NEC Teleconference Call @11:00 AM***
- September 28, 2019 NMPMA LA Chapter Board/Business meeting at 11:00 A. M.***

As the Event & Special Projects for 2019 depicts that we are very busy, and this is an exciting time to be involved within the Western Region.

The next meeting of Chapter 8 will be on 24 August 2019. Our meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. We meet at the American Legion Post 46 at 11:00-14:00 at 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230. You can contact me at (805) 512-2215.

Semper Fidelis

William Trammell  
Vice President  
Los Angeles Chapter #8  
MPMA



**Fausto Galvan**  
**Executive Officer**  
**Santa Clarita Valley Young Marines**

[Fausto\\_galvan0471@yahoo.com](mailto:Fausto_galvan0471@yahoo.com)

818-259-2119

The SCVYM are attending a code talkers' ceremony in Window Rock, Arizona and will return in September.

Below are pictures from the National Convention.





**Deborah "Debbie" Sands**  
**DAR Vice Regent, Rancho Simi Chapter**  
**Detachment 597 Associate Member**

Rancho Simi Chapter NSDAR is off for the summer...gearing up again September 14. Before we went "dark," our chapter welcomed Kristine Wood, member of Irvine Ranch Chapter and DAR "National Service for Veterans" Chair.

Kristine was our speaker on May 4, on "How A 3,000 Mile Motorcycle Ride is Healing Veterans." Through a wonderful PowerPoint presentation, Kris shared her experiences riding her own Harley Davidson across the U.S. for the 3,000 mile journey from Southern California to Washington, DC. She shared amazing stories of her travels with 600 Vietnam veterans, who make up the majority of the riders. I truly wish all of you could



hear her speak. She and her husband have participated in this ride for years and Kris was asked by some of the Veterans to write a book. From all her experiences, she finally finished "Run For The Wall," complete with incredible photos and stories told to her by the Veteran riders. I purchased an extra book to donate to the Detachment. Pictured below is Kris accepting a Certificate of Appreciation from me for her fantastic, poignant presentation.



### **Birthdays for the month of September**

Stanley Taylor*	2
Cindy Merager	5
Fausto Galvan*	6
Benjamin L. Pfister*	6
Jeffrey Cagnacci	11
Glen Griswold*	11
Charles G. Shoemaker*	12
Velia Josie Sandi	14
Thomas F. King, Jr.*	16
Pedro G. Plascencia*	16
Robert Perry	19
Brian Barber, Sr	24
William M. Trammell, Jr.*	29
Conrad Wright, Sr.	29
James C. Webb	30

\*Life Member



## Matt E. Valenzuela Past Commandant

[mattval@aol.com](mailto:mattval@aol.com)

310-768-2847 Office

310-308-7015 Mobile



## Pastor Stan and Grace Taylor

Marines, Corpsmen and Associate members.

Pastor Stan got married in a standing-room-only wedding. The Church was packed and if you got there late, parking on the streets was two or three blocks away. Same with the reception. Everything was well planned; everyone had more than enough to eat and the cake was oh-so-good!

See pictures below.

Semper Fi

Matt Valenzuela





## **Bradley Cantley**

[bradleycantley@gmail.com](mailto:bradleycantley@gmail.com)

Cell: 805-813-3571



### **Personal Message-unedited**

“Hello, my fellow Marines, associates, and friends of the league, I would like to present an interesting question and/or statement to everyone. As prior service members we had fought for the rights of Americans-to also show the world what it is like to be free. We had fought in a variety of wars to ensure our safety for our beloved United States and her allies. To protect a way of life that people will be safe, free, and live their lives without fear with us fighting the evil that was present so many years ago to present. Unfortunately to me it seems we are now allowing that same evil to be prevalent in our society today. We have ANTIFA jerk offs who terrorize others who don’t agree with them, political correctness train, all the slinging of crap from the media (both sides) and anything else you can fill in. The red flag law needs to also be reviewed and changed to actually help others. And not give politicians to take away our rights. So now I present this question: Why as Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, and Coasties have we allowed this evil to manifest within the United States? Shouldn’t we stand up again to this wave of evil so it not totally destroy our democracy? Of course talk is cheap but I think this will indeed be a serious issue we should address as an individual, citizen, leaguer, and as an American.”

Semper Fi  
Brad Cantley  
Chaplain



## MANAGING EDITOR

### RICHARD FARRA

[richfarra@gmail.com](mailto:richfarra@gmail.com)

818-470-3258 Mobile

## Groundhog Day

After hearing I was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the MCL National Newsletter Contest again I felt like Bill Murray in the movie Groundhog Day, or even acting out Einstein's definition of chaos. This makes three third place awards in four years, I took a leave of absence in 2017, I've run into a logistical problem. National wants three more notable pieces to give us a chance at the big leagues, they include membership growth data and state of affairs, State and National news, and Veteran and community outreach articles.

These newsletter awards give our Detachment notoriety, we are put front and center at the National conventions and at the Dept of CA. I've worked on the newsletter for almost a decade trying to refine it to make a difference for you - our members. So when you see me standing up and taking pictures at the general meetings and/or 597 events and putting board members on the spot to pony up with articles, it's for you. If you don't see a board member's article, it's because they didn't take the time to write an article for you.

I'm trying my best for you, but I can only do so much.

Richard Farra  
Managing Editor

### **What do you envision for the future of our Detachment? Our Commandant wants to hear your thoughts, he listens so we can get better. Please email him a "DEAR COMMANDANT" letter with your constructive thoughts.**

We need your ideas to make our detachment better. If you have ideas and/or gripes about our general meetings, events or whatsoever. Your Commandant wants to hear about them.

Like a shark, we must keep moving forward or we will die. We need your input to move forward and grow. For example, Dick Jennings suggested and executed on his idea for a Veterans Center to help Veterans transition from active duty to civilian life. His idea is getting the attention of those in local government and businesses to bring this dream to reality. Share your ideas and let's make them happen.

We want our members to share their thoughts, concerns and compliments to the Commandant. If there is something not done to one's expectations, please submit your ideas on how to resolve these issues and concerns. All correspondence will be kept confidential unless specified otherwise. Email me your ideas and thoughts to me, Richard Farra, Managing Editor, at [richfarra@gmail.com](mailto:richfarra@gmail.com) and I will forward them to the Commandant anonymously for his feedback and include them in the Gipper.



## **Guest Speaker at the August General Meeting Keith Mashburn, Mayor of Simi Valley**



Our guest speaker at the August general meeting was Keith Washburn. Mayor of Simi Valley. He spoke of his background as a fireman of 31 years in Ventura, arson investigator, working with the County Supervisor, six years in City Council and currently the Mayor of Simi Valley.

He avoided talking about some of the “in the news politics” and focused on the positive things going on within the city.



## 2019-2020 BOARD MEMBERS AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

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Chaplain	Bradley Cantley	805-813-3571	bradleycantley@gmail.com
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Color Guard Vice Commander	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	Faustogalvan14@gmail.com
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Director of Speakers	Robert Martinez	805-368-7001	Thebugler597@yahoo.com
Fundraising Chairman	Harry Hodges	805-515-1401	<a href="mailto:Hodges1951@gmail.com">Hodges1951@gmail.com</a>
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Toys For Tots Chairman	John Mitchell	805-379-9664	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Mitchell.is18@statefarm.com">Kathleen.Mitchell.is18@statefarm.com</a>
Fundraising Coordinator	Debbie Sands	818-535-4738	dsandsconsulting@aol.com
Director of Associates	Valeria Galvan	818-302-9816	ValeriaHGalvan@yahoo.com
<b>Department of California Staff</b>			
Commandant	Richard A. Jennings	805-328-9817	<a href="mailto:califcommandant@gmail.com">califcommandant@gmail.com</a>
<b>MODD</b>			
MODD Pound Keeper	Ben Pfister	805-208-1095	benpdet597@gmail.com
VAVS MODD Dept. of CA Pack - Watch Dog	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	fausto_galvan471@yahoo.com



## ATTENTION ON DECK

**EMAIL ADDRESSES:** If you did NOT receive this newsletter via email, it means your email isn't on the detachment roster. Please email Dick Jennings with your new email address to: [mcl597commandant@gmail.com](mailto:mcl597commandant@gmail.com).

**DD214 REPLACEMENT AND MILITARY MEDALS & AWARDS:** Are you in need of a replacement DD214? Are you missing awards or medals and would like to get your records updated? Would you like to get the military records of a deceased next of kin? Please visit [www.archives.gov/veterans/](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/) to fill out the eVetRecs online system or download the SF180 form.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS AND NEW MEMBERS:** Members more than 6 months past due will no longer receive the newsletter and will be removed from the roster prior to publication. MCL National HQ requires a new application if a member is more than 12 months past due. To bring your dues up to date, contact the Paymaster. Renewal dues are \$40 per year, and due in September. New member dues are \$45. All new applicants for regular membership must be prepared to show proof of Honorable military service with a DD214.

### **MCL Det. #597 GENERAL MEETINGS**

1st Thursday of each month  
Simi Valley Elks Lodge #2492  
1561 Kuehner Drive  
Simi Valley, CA 93065  
Meet and Greet 1800  
Dinner 1800-1859  
Meeting 1900

### **BOARD MEETINGS**

3rd Wednesday of each month – start time 1600  
US Bank Building  
1445 East Los Angeles Avenue, Room 302  
Simi Valley, CA 93065