

The TEXAS MARINE



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December 2000
Editor: Bernie O'Dell

DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
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COMMANDANT'S CORNER

Al Kotrla, Dept. of Texas Commandant

I have a variety of subjects to write about this quarter – some good, some bad, and some “just stuff.”

District Conferences: I have received some outstanding communications from District 2 Vice Commandant Bob Welch. Bob has been working diligently with existing detachments and with trying to start up new detachments. He also arranged his district conference, hosted by Bluebonnet Detachment. They had eighteen Marines from almost all of the detachments attend the Saturday morning

breakfast meeting. Bob tells me they had a lively meeting that lasted almost four hours and discussed many issues about the League. I don't have space to go into everything they discussed but know they addressed some very interesting things and we should get a good run down at our staff meeting in Oklahoma City in March. Bob is also working at organizing at least three new detachments in his district and is trying to get Panola County Detachment healthy again. We can be very proud of the work he and the Marines of his district are doing. I haven't heard from other district vice commandants, but I hope everyone is doing something with their respective districts.

Toys for Tots: By the time this gets printed and distributed I'm sure everyone will have wrapped up their Toys for Tots campaigns. I recently forwarded a message from Tim Miller about Toys for Tots to all detachments. I'm sure he will address the issues in his newsletter contribution, but I will only say that the activity report he asks for is our way of collecting success stories, not only to be forwarded to the National Toys for Tots Chairman, but for our own use as well. When anyone asks what the Marine Corps

League does, we can tell them one thing we do is “Toys for Tots” and be able to give good answers about what we really do. So make sure you give Tom the information about your campaigns.

New Detachments: As mentioned above, we are trying to charter some new detachments. Looks like things may have slowed down some with the holidays and I don't expect much to move until after the first of the year. Some detachments we are trying to charter are “Longhorn Detachment” (in Johnson County), Gainesville, Weatherford, and Matagorda County. Everybody but Gainesville has starter kits. There are also some “come and go” interests for detachments in Bryan/College Station, Beaumont, and Tyler. Texarkana continues to elude us for some reason, but we're still trying. I've also just got a “nibble” for a “Compaq Computer” detachment. Seems they have something like 70 former Marines working at the Houston company. If anyone can lend a hand with getting these detachments chartered, or



any other detachment for that matter, contact your district vice commandant or give me a call.

Fundraising: I regret to say I have hit nothing but dead ends on the proposal we talked about for fundraising at our Fall Staff Meeting, and I have heard nothing better from anyone else who had some possibilities for fundraising. I am just at a loss on how we can raise funds and no one else seems to have an idea either. I am becoming more and more of a believer in the proposal that we raise our dues for the department, even though I'd avoid that if we could. As most of you know, of the dues we collect from members each year, \$12 goes to National and only \$3 goes to the department. That \$3 per member doesn't go far these days and if we're to maintain the budgeted items we currently support we'll have to pay for them somehow. Standby ...

Officer Installations: We're into that time of the year when detachments are electing and will be installing officers. I remind detachments that our administrative procedures direct that an installing officer be requested from the Department Commandant. If at all possible, either I or one of the other department officers will install officers. If not, there are other provisions that can work. One thing we need to do this year is get the corporate charter document for our records and forwarded to National Headquarters. Let's do our best to get this thing properly put to rest.



AND GOD SAID "NO"

I asked God to take away my pride and God said, "No." He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give up.

I asked God to cure my dying friend and God said "No." He said, "His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary."

I asked God to grant me patience and God said, "No." He said, "Patience is a byproduct of tribulation. It isn't granted, it's earned."

I asked God to give me happiness and God said, "No." He said that He gives blessings. Happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain and God said, "No."

He said, "Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to Me."

I asked God to make my spirit grow and God said, "No." He said that I must grow on my own, but He will prune me to make me fruitful.

I asked God if He loved me and God said, "Yes." He gave His only Son who died for me, and I will be in Heaven someday because I believe.

I asked God to help me love others as much as He loves me and God said, "Ah... finally you understand."



Historian Headlines

Bob Welch, Dept. of Texas Historian

7 December 1933:

Navy Department creates
Fleet Marine Force

26 December 1943:

1st Marine Division
lands on Cape
Gloucester, New
Britain

20 December 1991:

Soviet Union disbanded
and replaced by Commonwealth of Independent
States

9 December 1992:

Marines land in Somalia to rescue foreigners





MCL Auxiliary Announcements

Jacquie Stephens
Dept. of Texas President
Email: shawneecreek@texoma.net

Dear Auxiliary Members:

I wish to thank all the ladies in attendance for the Fall Staff Meeting held in Ft. Worth on October 14th. The Southern Division will be holding a conference March 8-10, 2001, in Oklahoma City. The Department of Texas Auxiliary voted during the Fall Staff Meeting to NOT hold a Spring Staff Meeting since the conference is being held out of state.

Officers are not required to travel out of state nor do I expect you to. We may hold an informal meeting if enough officers attend the Conference. More on this subject will be published as the date nears. There will be a Southern Division workshop on filling out year-end forms and all auxiliary members are welcome.

I'm getting reports that some of our units are dragging their feet on turning in transmittals. They are due August 31st of each year. We want all members to be counted. If you have paid and not received your membership card, please contact me either by phone or email.

Hope to see you all in the Spring.

As the Holiday Season approaches, one of my greatest pleasures is the opportunity to express my heartfelt greetings to those whose friendship is treasured and meaningful. As this year comes to a close, I reflect back on the many accomplishments our Department of Texas has achieved this past year and how much I have personally learned from members of our Auxiliary.



I am extremely proud for all the outstanding work being performed by Department of Texas members in our communities and the sacrifices you have made in the name of "The Marine Corps League and The Marine Corps League Auxiliary." I am also very proud to be a part of this distinguished organization and am looking forward to a challenging New Year with much excitement and enthusiasm.

In the spirit of the Season, it is my pleasure to extend my Best Wishes to you and your families for a very Happy and Safe holiday season.

VAVS VENTURES

Ken Henry, Dept. of Texas VAVS Rep

For the VAVS report I thought I would give everyone an update on John Evans. Those of you who went to John and Cynde's house during the Fall Staff Conference in Ft. Worth would probably agree you left there feeling like you had participated in what the Marine Corps was all about – Marines for Marines. Everyone walked away with a sense of pride for being there to make life just a little better for a Marine who is terminally ill. After everyone had gone home from the conference John told me that he was not just another Marine - he had finally received his welcome home.

John is now on the Hospice program. His situation has worsened. If you were to see him today you would think nothing has changed. He proudly displays the gifts bestowed on him by his fellow Marines. Don't go to his house unless you want to see each and every item and hear its story.

I want all who went to know that he remembers you being there and takes the greatest pride in naming each and every one who was in the pictures. Thank you Marines, you made the rest of his life.



Detachment Digest

* **Big D Detachment, Dallas** *Submitted by Bob Welch*

The Big D Detachment helped commemorate and honor fallen Marines with the dedication of a memorial plaque during a Marine Memorial Dedication Ceremony on November 10, 2000, at the Dallas/Ft. Worth National Cemetery. Funds were donated by Leaguers and interested persons. The impressive memorial is first in a line of several memorials set along a meandering pathway dedicated to the fallen Marines of all wars.



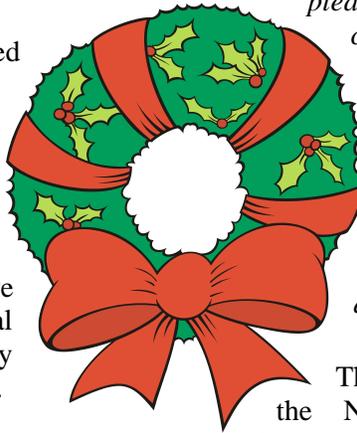
Left to Right:
Big D Commandant
Ken Watterson
Neil "Buzz" Fanion
John Huffines
Ducky Wilkinson

* **Bluebonnet Detachment** **Ft. Worth**

Once upon a time a small band of brothers happened upon a forlorn bronze plaque lost beneath tall grass and debris. The little plaque was guarded by a magnificent live oak tree that stood as a silent sentinel nearby. The little plaque announced that it was intended as a reminder of other brothers who were lost and should not be forgotten. Unfortunately, no one had seen the little plaque for many years and it's voice could not be heard although many people strolled casually by day after day.

The plaque cried out to the brothers for help. It desired a place where it could shout it's urgent

message. The brothers heard it's plea. They knew all too well that it's message could easily have been for them had circumstances been otherwise. The brothers sought assistance, for they were few. They were pleased and gratified that others shared their concern and quickly helped them move the little plaque. They built a place of honor and gave the plaque several companions to help voice its message. It now stands proudly for all to see and the beautiful oak tree smiles down upon it. The little plaque has rediscovered it's voice and truly achieved the status it deserves.



The above was taken from the program for the National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony presented by the Bluebonnet Detachment, #817, MCL, and the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden on September 15, 2000.

It describes the discovery and improvement of a 1972 brass plaque encouraging the remembrance of US POWs and MIAs. Plans were made to lift it onto a pedestal, but with the support of the Parks and Community Service Board and the Botanic Garden, the plaque's rededication turned into a new and improved memorial. The original plaque now sits atop a brick pillar on a concrete patio, flanked by the names of the 27 men with ties to North Texas who are missing in action. A park bench faces the memorial, encouraging visitors to reflect.

* **Williamson County Detachment,** **Georgetown**

Submitted by Clifton Williams, Commandant

Our detachment has now had it's second Birthday Ball and both of them on the day of the Corps' founding. It probably will not always be that way, but I like it that way because the Corps was founded on 10 November 1775 and because I was sworn into the Corps on the 10th of November 1954 at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, into a Reserve Unit. I didn't know what was going on and for several years wondered if every time someone was sworn into the Corps they had a big party!

The Williamson County Detachment is a very involved detachment for its 35 members. We have started periodical visits to the VA Hospital in Temple, hosted the Southern Division Conference in Round Rock last March, and in 2001 our detachment will sponsor an Iwo Jima Day Ceremony in San Gabriel Park in Georgetown. Veterans of Iwo Jima, WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, etc. will be recognized, regardless of their branch of service. We will be inviting the local high school bands and other veteran organizations in the area. Anyone who would like to join us is welcome!

❁ **District Two Holds First Annual Meeting**

*Submitted by Bob Welch,
District 2 Vice Commandant*

Marines from the halls of Waco to the shores of Lake Texoma (and detachments in between) converged on Ft. Worth for a First Annual District Two breakfast meeting, sponsored by Ft. Worth's Bluebonnet Detachment. In doing so, history was made, because ***never in recent times have as many leaguers of representative detachments met under one roof to discuss anything!***

Bob Welch, District Two Vice Commandant representing the Department of Texas, reminded the group of the League's mission and the importance of participation in Marine Corps League programs. After the floor was open for discussion, topics discussed were detachment fundraising techniques, implementing the Young Marine Program, retention of membership, signing on new members, and ways of improving the Toys for Tots program.

An excellent video depicting Bluebonnet's creation and implementation of a permanent memorial honoring area POWs and MIAs was shown, demonstrating what an individual detachment is capable of accomplishing with a "can do" attitude.

Department of Texas Commandant Al Kotrla suggested such meetings be held statewide in an

effort to unify individual detachments while offering a sense of Marine Corps League purpose and true sense of Marine family. It is hoped that a different host site within District Two will be offered each year.



PDD Tom Miller, Pack Leader

The past six months have been an interesting experience, at best. We are again moving toward a much stronger Pack. Some of the things we have accomplished are:

- ⊖ Pack of Texas Bylaws
- ⊖ Pack Dog of the Year Award
- ⊖ Establishing a Pack Ship's Store
- ⊖ Ridding the Growl of those water cannons

When the next Growl of the Pack is convened in Oklahoma City (I hear they have imported trees and fireplugs), we will be initiating enough Mongrels to Pups and advancing Pups to Devil Dogs so Oklahoma may establish their own Pack. I hope that we have enough Dogs in attendance to do this properly.

Now on to the real stuff. The Pack of Texas has two Pounds that are not in compliance with the rules. These are the Pound in Laredo (Boss Dogs) and the Pound in Tarrant County (Tarrant Dogs). These two Pounds have not mailed in their installation reports and should be severely beaten, or at least hosed down for their inactivity. Surely you have elected Dogs to lead you through the muck, but we have to know who they are.



Now that we have elected a new President of these United States, let's move on to a better world. May I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and hope that you will all get the bones you asked for.

*Submitted by PCDD Clifton Williams
Vice Chief Devil Dog, Southern Division*

Well, here it is the end of the first year of the new century and the earth is still round and turning out in space, where I think some of our pounds might be.

Your elections and installations should have been completed by now but at last count I am still missing two – Laredo and Tarrant Counties. Some irregularities have been noted; i.e., maybe someone did not read up on their Bylaws and observe that to be a Pound Keeper or Dog Robber, the individual must be either a Pedigree or a Devil Dog and that only Pedigrees or Devil Dogs can hold elected offices. It pays, if you are acquainted with the Bylaws, to refresh every now and then, especially when the new changes to the Bylaws are passed at the Supreme Growl. Also be advised that the Pack of Texas Worthy Pack Leader has appointed the Worthy Pack Smart Dog to get a set of Bylaws for the Pack, and I take my hat off to Big Steve who has put together a big set. I have not read all of them, but from what I have seen, he did a real good job.

Now, all you Dogs out there, get your tails wagging again, keep your ears perked up, and listen. We are all going to Oklahoma City for the Southern Division Conference in March 2001 and the Worthy Pack Leader has promised to hold a growl up there as the Devil Dogs up in Okie Land (the little piece of a lost county north of the Red River) do not have enuff Dogs up there to have a Pack. So PDD Tom Miller will hold a Pack Growl up there. Now ain't that nice of ole' Tom. Woof Woof Tom!

One last item to remember – Mongrels do not ask to become members of the Order, nor is it automatic

when a League member has a year in the League. The member has to be recommended by someone and (according to the Order's Bylaws) must have a letter from the member's detachment Commandant stating that this mongrel is worthy to become a Pup in the Military Order of the Devil Dogs.

I hope all you Dogs have a Merry Christmas and a very rewarding New Year and that very soon we will have an honorable PRESIDENT!



Devil Dog of the Year ...

All submissions for Devil Dog of the Year should be sent to Chairman of the Devil Dog of the Year Award Committee, A. C. Deck. Activities from May 1, 2000, to April 30, 2001, should be considered when coming up with your nomination. Written nominations should include any and all reasons why you think your particular Dog should receive this honor and should be submitted no later than **May 15, 2001**, to: P.O. Box 209, Crystal City, TX 78839. All nominees will be scrutinized by several very important flea scratchers, with the decision being rendered prior to the Laredo Growl.

Notices

** Death Notices ...*

Death Notices need to be sent in **PROMPTLY** on the passing of a member. When notices are forwarded in a timely manner, it allows for sympathy cards to be sent to the next of kin indicated on the notice. Sending a sympathy card to a member's kin two to three months after a funeral is insensitive and will not be done. Death Notices should not be held until they can be included in mail with routine transmittals, and they must be sent to the Department of Texas **CHAPLAIN – not to the Adjutant/Paymaster. DO NOT SEND DEATH NOTICES TO THE ADJUTANT/PAYMASTER!**



* *Marine of the Year ...*

Over time, we seem to have lost track of the names of Marines who were selected as Marine of the Year for the Department of Texas. We are trying to recover those names; therefore, we are asking that *anyone* who knows the names of those Marines selected for this honor in the past please send the information to Commandant Al Kotrla at his home address (509 Catalpa St., Angleton, TX 77515-4801) or to his email address (Kotrla@mastnet.net). This is an important piece of our history that we should make every effort to preserve. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.



Quin Division Conference
Albuquerque, NM - January 12-14

National Mid-Winter Staff Conference
Falls Church, VA - February 7-11

Southern Division Conference
Oklahoma City, OK - March 8-11
(Dept. of Texas Spring Staff Meeting
on afternoon of March 9th)

Department of Texas Convention
Laredo, TX - June 7-10

National Convention
Dearborn, MI - August 6-10

Dept. of Texas Fall Staff Meeting
Zapata, TX - October 18-21

* *Booklets "Hot Off the Press" ...*

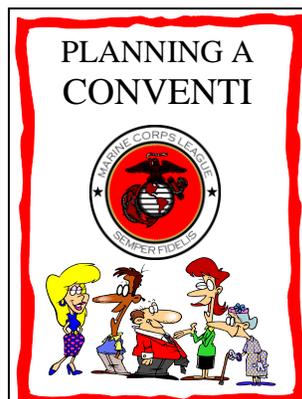
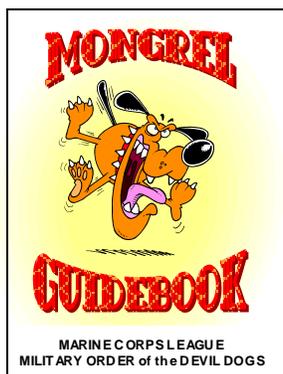
Each booklet has color illustrations, is 8½" x 5½" in size, and provides simple guidelines for the intended task. \$2 per booklet covers the cost of printing.



For more information or to order booklets, contact Bernie O'Dell @ 515 Hall St., Graham, TX 76450, 940-549-3944, bernie@wf.net.

Available to Pound Keepers –
"The Mongrel Guidebook"

Available to Detachments interested in sponsoring a convention or staff meeting –
"Planning a Convention"



Deadlines ...

* *The next "Texas Marine" Newsletter* will go to press after the Southern Division Conference in Oklahoma City. Deadline for submission of articles will be **March 15th**.

* *Cam Posey Memorial Scholarship* applications must be submitted by **May 1st**. (The application will be available for download from the Internet soon!)

* *Devil Dog Applications for Advancement:* for the Grand Growl in Oklahoma City - must be received by **Feb. 1st**; for the Grand Growl in Laredo - must be received by **May 1st**.