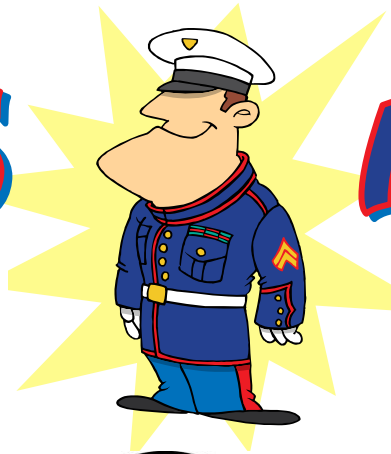


TEXAS

MARINE

**Robert "Bob" Ogg
Commandant**

**Department of TEXAS
Marine Corps League**



Edition



**May
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THE SOUTHERN

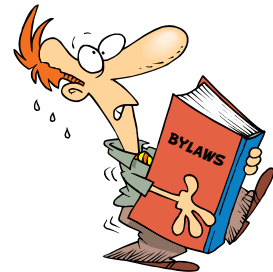
Division Conference in Paris was an ode to Murphy and his law. The ladies of the Auxiliary handled it beautifully. Improvise, adapt and overcome was their byword. After everything was said and done, the conference was a rounding success.



A big OORAH to John Henry Mashunkashey from Oklahoma who was selected as Division Marine of the Year. The Professional Development Program was excellent. Chuck Bones from Jacksonville gave a presentation that was top of the line. Everyone who attended the PDP sessions gained something. Another interesting announcement was Oklahoma has bid to host the 2016 National Convention in Tulsa.

A major point that I gave during my report at the Southern Division was the difficulties we have in communicating information down to Detachments and vice versa. I was

stunned during a conversation that I had with a duly elected Detachment Adjutant who had never heard of the Department newsletter and had no idea about the Department web page. I attribute it to what I call the autonomous



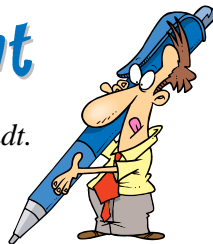
syndrome. Some Detachments want to do their own thing without any attachment or regard for Department or National. They do not attend Department conferences or even acknowledge that according to the bylaws they are a subordinate unit within the structure of the League and are subject to

the bylaws of the Department and National. Those who think they can operate outside of those bylaws are sadly mistaken. Does “*I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will enforce and uphold and will myself obey the laws of the League*” ring any bells? Go check the oath you took when you were installed.

The Heart of Texas Detachment is working hard on the Department Convention to be held in Waco the 5th – 8th of June. It looks like it will be a good one. I will see you there.

Senior's Segment

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I HAVE BEEN A LITTLE busy

these last couple of months attending the “Marine West Military Exposition” at Camp Pendleton, CA, and the Quin Conference in Oceanside, CA. We also attended the MCRD graduation



ceremony in San Diego. For those of you who have not been back to MCRD, Camp Pendleton, and Oceanside you are in for a shocker! Back in the “Old Corps” when we graduated we were dressed in our tropical uniform and only the Honor Marine wore dress blues and he was a PFC. In today’s class they wear dress blue trousers with tropical shirt and they are Lance Corporals.



At the Quin Conference National Commandant Jim Tuohy, National Jr. Vice Commandant Richard Gore, National Executive Director Mike Blum, and Past National Commandant John Tuohy were present and talked about recruiting and retention. Marine Blum talked a little bit on the web site that National is working on and said that it was being tried out to make sure everything was working.



I then returned to Texas and attended the Southern Division Conference in Paris hosted by the Department of Texas Auxiliary. They did a fantastic job. Even with the hotel changing name and owners at the last minute, everything went off without skipping a beat. Paris is a very historic town; they have an Eiffel Tower with a cowboy hat and they even have Jesus with Cowboy boots!

I also attended the welcome back ceremony for the “Vietnam Veterans” in Austin and the unveiling of the new Vietnam Memorial. While at the Southern Division and the Vietnam Ceremony I was asked if I was ready to run for Department Commandant and what I would do if elected. I know that we have to get the Detachments to work on recruiting and retention. First we have to work on *mutual communication*. We need two way communications. We need to hear from the Detachments on their needs from our Department Staff. Any suggestions, no matter how small, will be looked at. I



will task the District Vices to communicate with their Detachments. I will expect them to do whatever it takes to make sure that I and our Department Staff know if any Detachment needs anything, and make sure they get it.

Another thing that we have been hearing at most of our conventions on recruitment is that we need to get out in the community. When I attended the Vietnam Ceremony in Austin, I was looking around at all the veterans organizations that were there. They were in uniform with their covers on. I know that we had several members of the Marine Corps League there, but I only saw one other member from the League in uniform. We need to start wearing at least our covers to these types of events so other Marines know that there is a Marine Corps League out there.

Again I am asking for your support at the upcoming State Convention in Waco on June 5th – 8th, as I will be a candidate for Department Commandant, and I know that together we can make a difference in making the Department of Texas one of the best Departments in the Nation.



Junior's Journal

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AS MEMBERS

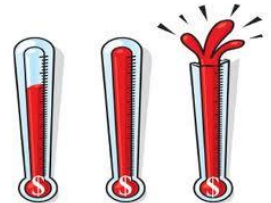
of the Department of Texas Marine Corps League, we share the common goals of increasing membership and retaining our current membership.

Having worked with several Detachments to implement techniques to accomplish these goals, I have learned that it is extremely important to avoid just being content. We Marines have never considered any mission to be



impossible. Our participating Detachment leaders have agreed that if each current member could recruit just one new member every year, we would double the size of each Detachment.

It is critical that our members mentor their new recruits until they can march and contribute to our League on their own. As a good Marine Corps Leaguer, please encourage your new recruit to become better even than you are at reaching membership objectives. Because I was fortunate in having several mentors who were of great help to me, I will forever make every effort to work towards increasing membership so I will not disappoint them. Remember, one member at a time.



My wife Marcia and I have just returned from a wonderful vacation to the Big Island of Hawaii. During our visit to the Island, we were guests of the Camp Tarawa Detachment #1255 and attended their Detachment meeting on Saturday, March 15th. Marcia and I were greeted as though we were family and the members' hospitality was gracious. We were made comfortable and felt honored to be there. Members of Detachment #1255 do not leave their island very often and I don't blame them. Why leave paradise?

Commandant Dale Ross treated us to a brief history of their Detachment. The Detachment received its Charter on October 5th, 2006, and has taken on the mission of keeping alive the history of the men of the 2nd and 5th Marine Divisions that trained at old Camp Tarawa on the Big Island during WW II from 1943–1945. I wish all of you could have been with us to retrace with them the strong history of our beloved Corps on their island.

As I visit



Camp Tarawa, Hawaii, during WWII

MCL Detachments, I find that all of us come from the same block of wood and I am so proud that God made me a United States Marine.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the State Convention in Waco.

Judge Advocate's Alerts



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GREETINGS FROM Nacogdoches!

I write this time with mixed feelings; you see, this is my final installment of the Judge Advocate's column for the award-winning *Texas Marine*. In June, at the Department Convention, I will step down after four years as Department of Texas Judge Advocate.

During my time as JA, I have traveled to all parts of this great state, and have visited with many of you to discuss questions about the Marine Corps League's By-Laws and Administrative Procedures. I have seen and learned much during my tenure.



Thinking about what I have gained from the hundreds of miles and countless hours behind the wheel, I must say that each of you contributed to my better understanding of the written word, to be sure; but the really memorable part of my tenure is you!

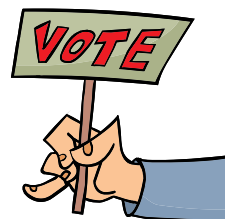


I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to thank you for your collective effort to make a difference in this world. I am amazed and inspired by your dedication and commitment to the programs of the

League. Through them, you afford the children of our communities a better Christmas, and our wounded veterans the support that can, and does, make life-after-service possible. Further, I applaud the opportunities you provide young people through our various programs and scholarships. As a volunteer group, I am especially thankful for your values and integrity.

I am thankful as well for the leadership, with whom it has been my honor to laugh, cuss, discuss, and cry during my four years. Together, we worked through issues, challenges, and even a problem or two. I can say without hesitation, that I am blessed to have had the benefit of their wisdom and guidance, without which my efforts would be useless. They are the most honorable people I know.

Finally, with the blessing of my best girl, Mary Frances, I will seek the office of Jr. Vice Commandant at the Convention in Waco. I ask that you consider my candidacy, and hope you will vote to support this effort.



Again, thank you for four wonderful years.

Semper Fi!

Chaplain's Comments

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THIS IS

a wonderful time of the year, spring, and with spring comes Easter.

2nd Corinthians 5:15 points out to us that Christ died so that we no longer live for ourselves, we live for something bigger. The admonition is to



reduce the selfishness in our lives – to become selfless.

How can selfishness in my own life be dealt with? The Easter story gives us the answer. Christ died that we might no longer live for ourselves. He gives us a new focus as we live for Him and His principles. As we take on that new focus, we make the world a better place.

Philippians 3:10-11 provides hope and an opportunity for us to focus on the power of the resurrection and the reality of embracing it in the

context of relationship: to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and to strive to that end in our own lives.

Have a wonderful springtime and enjoy God’s beauty. And remember to keep our troops in your prayers.



THE DOGWOOD TREE

Author Unknown

Many years ago, a dogwood tree grew on a hill outside Jerusalem. In those days, the dogwood tree was as tall and mighty as an oak, and this tree was the tallest of all the dogwoods, and extremely proud of its strength.

“Something wonderful is going to happen to me,” it said to anyone who would listen. “I’ll probably become the mast that holds the big sail on a grand ship, or the main timber supporting a great house.”

Unfortunately, the huge old dogwood was cut down to become the cross to which Jesus was nailed. The tree was horrified. All its dreams of glory were smashed, and it groaned in agony as two boards from its trunk were nailed together.

Jesus took pity on the tree, even as he carried it to Calvary. “You will never be put to such use again,” He told it. “From this day on, your shape will change, even as will the world. You will become slender and sway easily with the breeze. And instead of acorns, you will bear flowers in the shape of a cross... with two long and two short petals. In the center of the outer edge of each petal, there will be nail prints... brown with rust and red

with bloodstains to show the world how you have suffered.”

“Last of all, the center of your flowers will be marked as though with a crown of thorns to remind people forevermore, that you and I spent our last moments together.” And so it was. And so it is.

Veteran's Voice



Texas Veterans Newsletter is available to any MCL member or any Veteran. It pertains to the Veterans of the State of Texas and is available at www.tvc.state.tx.us.



Submitted by Juanita O’Dell, Editor
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SOME OF THE highlights since publication of the February 2014 newsletter are:



14 Facts About the Recently Updated Texas Service Dog Law for 2014

January 30, 2014...



Last summer, lawmakers updated some of Texas’ laws about service dogs. These updated laws took effect on January 1st, 2014. To help you understand the updated law and your rights, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities is sharing 14 facts about the service dog law.



Service dogs help people with disabilities. To be a service dog, a dog must be trained to do a job related to a person's disability.



Service dogs can pull a wheelchair, remind a person to take medication, alert a person who cannot hear, and much more.



You can train a dog to be a service dog yourself. You do not have to hire a special trainer, although you may wish to do so.



Only dogs can be service animals. Some other animals can help at home, but cannot go to all of the public places that service dogs can.



Service dogs may come with their owners to many places, including stores, restaurants, offices, schools, and on public transportation.



Restaurants and food stores must allow a service dog into customer areas if the dog is with its owner and under control.



Workers at public places shouldn't ask questions about your dog or disability, unless they need to make sure your dog is a service dog.



Workers may ask: "Do you need a dog because of a disability?" and "What type of work is it trained for?" if the answers are not obvious.



You must keep your service dog under control when it is in public. If your dog misbehaves, you may have to take it away.



You are not required to carry ID or paperwork to prove that your dog is a service dog, but it may be helpful to do so.



People who use service dogs have rights to access housing and must not be required to pay a pet deposit for their service dogs.



When a service dog in training is with a trainer, the dog may go to stores, restaurants, offices, schools, and on public transportation.



A person who violates the rights of a person with a service dog may have to pay a fine or do community service.



Some people pretend that *untrained* dogs are service dogs to gain privileges or avoid paying fees. These people are breaking the law.



Senate Votes to Restore Cuts to Military Retirement Pay

By Jon Harper, Stars and Stripes
February 12, 2014...

WASHINGTON - The Senate voted 95-3 on February 12th to repeal cuts that would have reduced military retirement pay by tens of thousands of dollars for enlisted and officers alike. The House passed the same bill February 11th by a vote of 326-90.

The legislation will now go to President Barack Obama.

The 1% reduction in the annual cost-of-living adjustment for current working-age military retirees, scheduled to go into effect in January 2016, was part of a bipartisan budget deal in December intended to reduce the federal budget deficit and partially restore some of the automatic budget cuts that were imposed on the Pentagon and other government agencies under sequestration. The COLA cut would have saved the government about \$6 billion over the next decade.

The cut elicited strong opposition from veterans' organizations, which pressured members



of Congress to repeal the measure. Defense Department leaders also came out against the reductions, although they've also called on Congress to enact legislation that would curb the growing cost of military compensation and benefits.



The Military Officers Association of America estimates the retirement cuts would cost a typical enlisted member who retires at 40 about \$83,000 over 20 years, and cost a typical retired officer more than \$124,000 over 20 years.

That's based on an estimated retirement package totaling about \$1 million over that span.

Some veterans groups still aren't satisfied with the repeal measure.

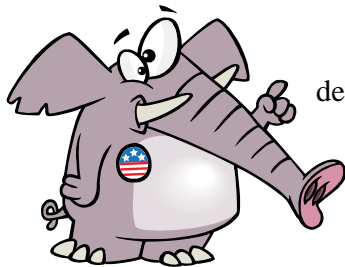
The Veterans of Foreign Wars praised the votes, but said the repeal doesn't go far enough.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States thanks all our supporters in the House of Representatives and Senate for taking quick action to repeal the 1% COLA



penalty on working-age military retirees," William Thien, the VFW's Commander-in-Chief, said in a statement. "The legislation does not, however, remove the penalty on future retirees who enter the military after January 1, 2014.

"The world will remain a very dangerous and unpredictable place even after America ends its involvement in Afghanistan, and future military retirees will be required to serve just as long and perhaps sacrifice even more than their predecessors. It is in that regard that the VFW will continue to fight for a full repeal of the COLA penalty, and we hope that this vote will continue that conversation."



Republican lawmakers offset the impact on the deficit of restoring COLA by adding cuts to Medicare that would take effect in 2024. Prominent Democrats have spoken out

against this aspect of the legislation.

"We are simply robbing one group of deserving people — Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security recipients — to pay for helping another group of deserving people, our military retirees. This is just a shell game, and it is irresponsible," Representative Adam Smith, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said in a press release.

But the Democrat-controlled Senate passed the bill overwhelmingly.

The U.S. Senate side of the Capitol.



Bush Summit Focuses on Providing Assistance to Vets

By Lauren Silverman, NPR News
February 20, 2014...



President George W. Bush assembled a variety of leaders at the Bush Institute to examine how Americans can better support "transitioning warriors and their families" in a post-9/11 world.

Transcript:

Steve Inskeep, Host:

George W. Bush made a rare public appearance February 19th in Texas. The one time Commander-in-Chief hosted a veterans summit. It was intended to promote assistance to military vets and their families.

Here's Lauren Silverman of our member station KERA.

Lauren Silverman, Byline: Former President George W. Bush says obstacles for veterans trying to re-enter the workforce can start with the job application.

President George W. Bush: “What’s a veteran supposed to put down? My last office was a Humvee?”

Silverman: In the past, Bush has honored veterans through sporting events, an annual 36-hole golf tournament, and a three-day, 100-kilometer bike ride. Speaking to a crowd of military veterans, CEOs and academics, Bush said those efforts aren’t enough.

Bush: What most veterans want is to have their service understood and appreciated for what it is: a formative experience in their lives and a source of skills and values that prepare them to succeed in civilian life.

Silverman: Over the last few years, the jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans has gone down. In January it was just below 8%. The national average was 6.6%.

To help bridge the gap, dozens of major companies – from Walmart and UPS to AT&T and Starbucks – have announced special hiring programs for veterans. The White House has also pushed assistance and awareness efforts. In fact, there are more than 40,000 groups with a mission of helping veterans.

Staff Sergeant Bobbie Dove: Even with all this around and knowing all the support, it’s still a bit nerve wracking of what the outcome really will be, individually for each one of us.

Silverman: Staff Sergeant Bobbie Dove lost his right leg and right arm in Afghanistan two years ago. He’s still on active duty, but has already heard horror stories about veterans being turned down for work.

Dove: It’s definitely a harsh reality. But knowing that there’s so many people and support makes it a lot easier.

Silverman: At the summit, Dove learned about an entrepreneurship boot camp specifically for veterans he wants to attend.

The transition back into civilian life takes a village; that’s what Major Justin Constantine likes to say. After serving in Iraq, he started his own

business, and like many returning from war, he still has issues with post-traumatic stress, as well as physical injuries that make it difficult to talk.

Major Justin Constantine: Because I was shot behind my ear and the bullet somehow didn’t hit my brain or my spinal cord but exploded out of my mouth and face, causing incredible damage.

Silverman: Constantine hopes research being done by the George W. Bush Institute will help erase the stigma sometimes attached to wounded warriors.

Constantine: It’s important for veterans to feel comfortable identifying who they are.

Silverman: And just as important, he says, for employers to value what veterans can bring to the table.

Investigation – Veterans’ Charity

By Becky Oliver, FOX 4 News
February 28, 2014...



DALLAS/FT. WORTH - The Texas Attorney General’s Office is now investigating after FOX 4 exposed a local charity raking in millions of dollars.

The Veterans Support Organization claims to help vets, but FOX 4 questioned where all that money is going.



You would think a charity helping veterans would be eager to talk about what they were doing, but when we started investigating the VSO, the charity bolted.

The charity certainly looks official with the fundraising vans, jackets, signs and slick brochures.

The workers even have a credit card machine.

They ask for your help so they can help veterans by providing a work and housing program and North Texas has delivered big time.

“One day last week, I made over \$700 just in donations alone, in one bucket in one day,” said a VSO representative collecting outside a gas station in Grand Prairie. “People will do anything for our veterans.”

He is right about that.

Records show the Veteran’s Support Organization brought in a whopping \$7 million nationally in fiscal 2012.

The charity is based out of Florida, but we tracked workers to a local office in Richland Hills. So where is all that money going?

“Are you tied to the Veterans Administration?” FOX 4 reporter Becky Oliver asked one of the VSO workers collecting money.

“Yes,” said the worker.

But that is not true.

FOX 4 confirmed there is no affiliation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The charity has only made a handful of local donations, totaling about \$6,000 in the past three years. And the rest of it? FOX 4 took a close up look at the group’s IRS 990.

It shows the VSO pays the group’s president, Richard VanHouten, a nice salary. It is listed as \$259,965, while \$175,000 goes to office expenses, \$501,000 to professional fees, \$141,000 to travel, \$2.4 million to work program labor and just \$46,000 to grants.

“It should be money that is going to the vets,” said James Smith, the past chair of the Texas Society of CPAs.



FOX 4 asked Smith to review the charity’s accounting.

“The purpose of the 990 is to provide financial details to documents that they are doing what they say they are going to do,” said Smith.

“But you are reading this as a professional and saying you cannot figure a lot of this out?” Oliver asked.

“I don’t understand how this whole thing works because of the lack of detail and the way the numbers are grouped.

So what does FOX 4 know about the VSO?

Charity Watch, a nonprofit watchdog service, gives the VSO an “F” rating. It says the program does not help unemployed vets obtain useful skills to help them obtain gainful employment; it simply turns vets into street solicitors.



Additionally, the VA’s National Advisory Committee has suspended the VSO because of ongoing state investigations.

FOX 4 tracked the VSO across the country and found **South Carolina** kicked out the charity, **Connecticut** suspended the VSO after members of Congress complained to the Federal Trade Commission, **Tennessee** hit the nonprofit with a \$2,000 fine, **Florida** slapped the company with a fine for hiring felons and misleading the public and **North Carolina** is now investigating.



“I cannot believe the number of people who were scammed and I helped scam,” said a former employee, who said the charity was bringing in about \$25,000 a week just in the DFW area, and yet, the housing program they promoted was a disaster.

“At any given time, there were no lights, no water, no gas. It was basically unlivable,” said the worker. “They had one in Arlington and Austin.”

FOX 4 went to the Arlington house and later tracked down the out-of-state owner. He said he was renting to the VSO but they pulled out and left him with unpaid bills.

Not one person FOX talked to out pushing the buckets was even a veteran, even though this charity claims it is a work program that helps put vets back to work.

FOX 4 also found many could not answer basic questions about the organization and housing program.

We only spotted the president, Richard VanHouten, one time back in December. FOX 4 never saw him in Texas again.

We called the Florida office several times and left messages. No one returned our calls.

We also called the Texas Attorney General's Office. Texas law requires a charity helping vets to post a bond and turn over financial information to the Secretary of State.

We checked. There is nothing on file.

So FOX headed to the Richland Hills office looking for a local manager. No one from the VSO was there, but FOX 4 did find the owner of the building, Don Bybee.

"Everything is gone," said Bybee.

Bybee says he thinks the group packed up and moved over the weekend.

"All their files, computer and all that stuff is missing," Bybee said.

All that is left is a lot of junk and a \$3,000 debt.

"They were always behind in their rent," Bybee said.

The VSO in Austin also shut down recently, but the charity's web site says the Houston office is still operating.

For more information about donating to charities helping veterans, log on to these web sites:

<http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=13135>

<http://dallas.bbb.org/article/veterans-charities-more-accountable-44413>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov/vso/>

GuideStar

<http://www.guidestar.org/>

Division/District/Detachment Digest

SOUTHERN DIVISION

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MARINES

I was glad to see so many of you at the Southern Division Conference in March and we have come a long way in a short time. It is now time for each Department to hold their annual convention and I look forward to seeing a number of you in Waco this June.

At the Southern Division Conference I started to hold office hours during the Commandants Council so that any member or Detachment could sit down to discuss any issues that they felt I should know about. Sometimes it can be as simple as miscommunication and sometimes the issues are more serious. When we can sit down face to face with all the records at hand it is easy to identify the true issues. I was pleased with the outcome at the Southern Division and plan to continue this practice at each Department convention.



In addition I have adopted the practice of presenting a Southern Division Vice Commandants report in a town hall format for each Division/ Department meeting so that I can report to the membership the status of the Marine Corps League and to allow for your input. There has been a lot said about better communications and this is one of the ways I feel I can improve our communications. I have also set up a facebook page and Southern Division group to help me better communicate about the Southern Division and the Marine Corps League.



DISTRICT 6

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TEXAS VIETNAM VETERANS MONUMENT DEDICATION CEREMONY

Forty-one years to the day after the last American troops were in Vietnam, the state of Texas welcomed its Vietnam Veterans home as the Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument was dedicated on March 29th. The date has been officially designated as “Texas Vietnam Veterans Day” by the Texas legislature.

The inscription on the new monument reads: “Honoring the men and women of Texas who served with courage and dignity in the Armed Forces of the United States of America during the Vietnam War. Entombed herein are the names of 3,417 Texans who gave their lives so that others might be free. Welcome Home.”



The monument was approved by the 79th Legislature in 2005 and was co-sponsored by Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa (D – USMC Vietnam Veteran) and Representative Wayne Smith (R).

The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument will stand as a permanent honor to all Texans who served in the Vietnam War – and it will also serve as a permanent memorial to the 3,417 Texans who never came home. This memorial will be made through The 3417 Project, which will individually honor each Texan who

died in the Vietnam War.

The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument 3417 Project created a set of two dog tags for every Texan who died in service to his country in Vietnam, each personalized and hand-embossed with the name, branch of service, rank, date of loss and hometown of the Texas hero. One tag is displayed in the Texas Vietnam Heroes Exhibit, and the other was dedicated for entombment in the Monument during the Groundbreaking Ceremony March 25th, 2013. As part of the 3417 Project, the Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument held a public Reading of the Names on March 24th, 2013, at the LBJ Presidential Library Lady Bird Auditorium in Austin.



Robert & Toni @ the Monument

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THE MARINES HAVE LANDED IN SAN ANTONIO

On Monday, February 3rd, 2014, San Antonio was visited by National MCL Commandant Jim Tuohy, National Executive Director Mike Blum, and Chief of Staff John Tuohy. They visited the Alamo Detachment #315 traditional Taco Breakfast served for the Wounded Warrior Regiment each week located at San Antonio

Military Medical Center (SAMMC).



L-R: Past Commandant Felix Conde, Jr., MCL Chief of Staff John Tuohy, Sr. Vice Frank Garrett, Wounded Warrior Regiment OIC LtCol Richard Riley, SNCOIC Blain Scott, Detachment Commandant Orlando Garza, National Commandant Jim Tuohy, Executive Director Michael Blum and (kneeling) Jr. Vice Mindy Messinger

National Commandant Tuohy and his staff were introduced and visited with the Marines currently going through the Wounded Warrior Regiment. Throughout the day the National Staff visited several facilities responsible for caring for Marines who have been injured in combat.

The tour took the staff on a quick inspection of the Wounded Warrior Barracks. Judith Markelz greets everyone who visits the Wounded Family Support Center (WFSC) enthusiastically. It's important for every wounded soldier to feel like they have a place to go where they can feel comfortable, "much like a home away from home," said Judith.



Wounded and Family Support Center – Judith Markelz in center

With an abundance of donations given to the center from all throughout the city of San Antonio, convalescing military members can take part in activities like movies, hunting trips and Spurs basketball games to name a few. The Center is run strictly by donations and with no assistance from the Government.

If you're interested in volunteering at the Wounded Family Support Center you might have to take a **number**... the minimal waiting time for someone to donate their time is two years. Next on the tour was the Center for the Intrepid (CFI) whose mission is to provide rehabilitation for casualties who have sustained amputations, burns, or functional limb loss, to provide education to DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs professionals on cutting edge rehabilitation modalities, and to promote research in the fields of orthopedics, prosthetics and physical/occupational rehabilitation. The facility is one of the nation's leading locations where service members come to rehabilitate.



Center for the Intrepid (CFI)

The entourage then visited the Soldier and Family Assistance Center before having chow on base then traveled to Audie Murphy Hospital. There they were giving a tour of the Spine Center and the Poly Trauma Rehabilitation Center. Program Manager Thomas Yackevicz gave an in depth tour of the Poly Trauma Center which is an important stage and process where wounded

service members will learn to become more self reliant. What some of us may take for granted can be a challenge when dealing with a loss of a limb, sight or mobility.



Audie Murphy Hospital, Spine Center

All in all the National Commandant Jim Tuohy, Executive Director Michael Blum, and Chief of Staff John Tuohy along with Detachment Commandant Orlando Garza, Sr. Vice Commandant Frank Garrett, Jr. Vice Commandant Mindy Messinger, Past Commandant Felix Conde, Jr. and Detachment Adjutant Robert Otto had a great visit and tour of the resources available to wounded Marines and the Marine Corps League in San Antonio.



Brooke Army Medical Center



A gift presented to National Commandant Jim Tuohy. (Artwork by Jr. Vice Mindy Messinger.)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Young Marines held a Young Marine Boot Camp during Spring Break in March. This boot camp was the combined efforts of the San Antonio Young Marines and the Hill Country Young Marines, graduating 39 new Young Marines. Key Note Speaker was Young Marine Deputy Director Joe Venable. Also present was former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Gene Overstreet.

The Military Order of the Devil Dogs held a successful BBQ Fundraiser March 22nd. The funds raised are to benefit the Children's Hospital of San Antonio.



Devil Dogs BBQ Fundraiser

April in San Antonio means **FIESTA** where many activities take place during the city-wide celebrations. Alamo Detachment takes a stand at the Fiesta event “*Marines at the Alamo.*” There the Marine Reserve band plays a concert for many onlookers and an unusually large number of Marines (past and present). Alamo Detachment uses this as a recruiting and fundraising opportunity. This year we are especially excited to use our new display 10’ x 10’ canopy purchased for the Detachment.



The following day we have our own Fiesta event “*BBQ for the Band,*” where we invite the visiting band to relax and enjoy good food and camaraderie with the Detachment, San Antonio Young Marines, Wounded Warrior Regiment and the I & I Marines in San Antonio.

**DEANE HAWKINS DETACHMENT
EL PASO**

Robert Way, *Commandant*
(915) 593-9370 (H) • rway@elp.rr.com

THE DEANE HAWKINS

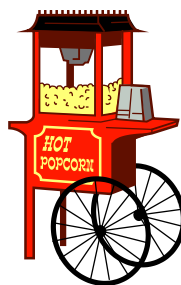
Detachment has been involved in the following activities this past quarter:

- In conjunction with the 19th Rifle Company Honor Detail, honors for five deceased Marines were provided.



Honor Firing Detail at Ft. Bliss National Cemetery

- The Detachment assisted the United American Veterans Organization in obtaining a new popcorn machine for the El Paso VA Clinic.



- Members of the Detachment worked with the El Paso Marine Recruiters in helping to provide some basic marksmanship training for the Marine poolies at the Young

Marines Air Rifle Range. Over 30 poolies participated in this training.



Marine poolies practice marksmanship @ El Paso Young Marine Air Rifle Range

- The Detachment, assisted by the Young Marines, participated in the MCL Rose Program to raise almost \$1,000.



Young Marines helping with MCL Rose Program

- Four Eagle Scout presentations were made.



Bob Way presents a Good Citizenship Certificate to Eagle Scout Ivan Martinez

- The Detachment participated and assisted the Military Order of World Wars in their Massing of the Colors on April 12th, 2014.
- The El Paso Young Marines participated in two Color Guards for the local semi-pro football team. One of the Color Guards was a joint Color Guard with the West Texas Young Marine Unit.

El Paso & West Texas joint Young Marine Color Guard presenting Colors @ semi-pro football game.



- The Young Marines also received a grant for over \$600 from the Friends of NRA for marksmanship training equipment. In the past five years this organization has given over \$14,000 in grant money to our Young Marines for their marksmanship program.



Marksmanship & training equipment El Paso Young Marines received from Friends of NRA Grant

The Detachment is now preparing to host the 4th annual MCL Youth Physical Fitness event scheduled for April 26th.



Devil Dog Doings

Robert "Bob" Ogg
Pack Leader, Pack of Texas
(903) 652-5601 (H)
robertogg@msn.com

WOOF! WOOF!

Texas Dogs:

The Pack Growl at Southern Division in Paris was a good one. We had our neighbors from the North (Oklahoma) and the East (Arkansas) in attendance. A tail wagging good time was had by all. The hospitality room sponsored by Pounds 199 and 268 provided drink and snacks for all. Camaraderie and sea stories abounded.

The question continues to come up concerning the special anniversary dog tag to be given out in West Virginia. Only PDDs will be allowed to attend the Supreme Growl. However, any dog of any degree can register at the dog house and receive the special tag. The tag must be signed for and only one per dog will be issued. Replacements will not be available. All extra tags will be destroyed.



Hopefully we will have a lot of pups going up for Devil Dog in Waco. If you are in that category, you need to get your paperwork to your Dog Robber ASAP. **Walk-ons without paper work will not be processed.**



There are some Detachments in the Department of Texas who do not have a single Devil Dog on the rolls. We are the **Fun and Honor Society** of the Marine Corps League. It is obvious that the word is just not getting around. If a Leaguer asks you what a Devil Dog is, take the time to explain it; don't just shrug your shoulders and say something ambivalent like – oh, we are the fun guys.

All the Pounds are up and running. Keep up the good work and keep your tails in the wind and your nose in the air.

Ron Tomonelli
Dog Robber, Kudliki Pound #199
(903) 786-8243 (H)
rttexoma@yahoo.com



WOOF! WOOF!

Kudliki Pound #199 Dogs were treated to a great place to hold our April Growl. PDD Randy Rigg arranged for us to have our Growl in Tyler at the Historic Aviation Memorial and Museum. We had some great scraps in the lobby overlooking the tarmac and several vintage airplanes.



Afterwards, we retired to the back of the Museum area to a well-equipped room for our Growl. Upon completing our Growl, Pound-keeper PDD Bob Ogg and Mad Dog PDD Randy Rigg



L-R: Museum volunteer, Randy Rigg, Bob Ogg

presented two Marine Corps books to one of the Museum's volunteers. They were very appreciative and these books will now be on display at the Museum.

The Dogs were then treated to a Flight Line Tour of the vintage planes and a walk-through of the museum. Not only do they have hundreds of model planes but uniforms and flight suits spanning all branches of the military's flight history.



Rick.

All the Dogs and their spouses seemed to have a great time. Thank you PDD Rigg. A Big WOOF! goes to our Pound Dog of the Year, DD Rick Poston. Keep up the good work,

Auxiliary Announcements

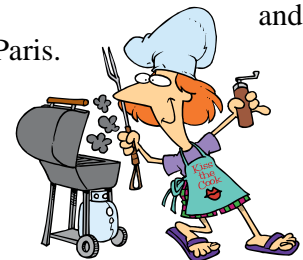
Karren Ogg
Southern Division MCL
Auxiliary Vice President
(903) 652-5601 (H)
karrenogg@outlook.com



GREETINGS!

The Southern Division Conference held in March 2014 in Paris, TX, was successful. We had a lot of obstacles to overcome, but, like all good Marines, we managed to overcome and get the job done. Everyone enjoyed the tour and shopping on the square in Paris.

The Friday night barbecue was excellent. Thank you to Mac, Lynn Brown and Sheila



McNIGHT for all that they provided. The Banquet was enjoyable. Thank you to PNC Helen Hicks for being our guest speaker.

Certificates were presented to Brenda Tomonelli, Luella Goley, Lynn Brown, Sheila McIntire, Dorcas Simpson, and Becky Semple. Many thanks to all the Auxiliary members, Dogs, Fleas, and sponsors who supported this Conference.

A great big thank you goes to the Department of Texas Commandant Bob Ogg for his support, help, and encouragement during all the planning, presentation, and follow through to make this successful.



Viola Trevino
 Southern Division MCL
 Auxiliary Assistant Vice
 President
 (361) 960-0143 (H)
 vtat47@yahoo.com



IN JANUARY I attended

opening ceremonies for the Marine West Expo in Camp Pendleton, CA. The Expo was hosted by Southern Division. Thanks to Esther Magee from Southwest Division for her help, Dorcas and George Simpson, Amado Trevino, Randy Rigg (all from the Department of Texas) and John Henry and Ahnawake Mashunkashey (from the Department of Oklahoma) for their support and attendance. On Friday the 31st we attended Graduation Ceremonies at MCRD in San Diego. It was a great experience. On Friday afternoon I attended the Quin Division meeting in Oceanside



Oceanside, CA

held by Southern Division Vice Commandant Randy Rigg. We enjoyed the good food and our stay in California.

In February I traveled to Laredo,

TX, for the Installation of Officers ceremonies of the Laredo Detachment. The following day I traveled to Zapata to pick up the Marine Corps League Auxiliary Zapata Unit charter.

In March I traveled to Paris, TX, to attend the Southern Division Conference hosted by the Department of Texas Marine Corps League Auxiliary. I would like to thank Karren Ogg and Brenda Tomonelli for their hard work and making the Southern Division Conference a success. I had



lots of fun and really enjoyed the town of Paris and its history. Our Marines had fun, too. We had very productive meetings - Karren Ogg and Dorcas Simpson thank you - and a fun filled MODD Flea Scratch. Thank you Brenda Tomonelli (Madam Big Flea). WOW, what a great fun Scratch!



L-R: Viola Trevino & Karren Ogg

I am looking forward to attending the 2014 Department of Texas Marine Corps League Convention this June in Waco. I will be seeking the office of President of the Department of Texas Marine Corps League Auxiliary. I would like to ask everyone for their support. I previously held this office in 2001-2003 and since then have learned a lot and gained much experience.

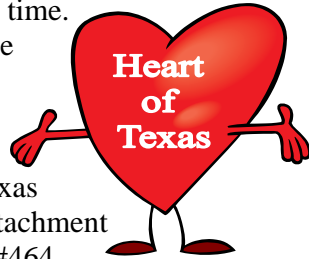


Dorcas Simpson
 Department of Texas MLC
 Auxiliary President
 (254) 666-4081 (H)
 georsimps2@aol.com

A BIG THANK YOU to all who sent

in ads for the Southern Division Conference in Paris, TX. This helped our Department of Texas Marine Corps League Auxiliary, because we were hosting it. We had a good time.

Now let's get ready for the Department of Texas Convention, June 5th – 8th in Waco, TX. This is hosted by the Heart of Texas Marine Corps League Detachment #975 and Auxiliary Unit #464.



All Auxiliary unit members: Remember **May 15th** is the deadline for all activity reports, Americanism, Child Welfare, Civics, Rehabilitation and VAVS. Please get with your Unit

President and she will send them to the Department of Texas Marine Corps League Auxiliary Committee chairperson for each of the activities. We will give out 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards in each category. I know you all work



hard volunteering in your community and helping with our beloved Marine Detachments and our Devil Dogs. We also help our Marine families and children in need.

If you have a person in your Unit that you think would be a deserving member for the Auxiliary Member of the Year Award 2014, for all their hard work for our Department and Unit ranks, please fill out a nomination form which the President of your Unit has. It has to be postmarked by **May 1, 2014**.

I am looking forward to seeing ladies from all seven Units in Texas and some from Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Be sure to be at our Operation Little Angel Friday morning, June 6th, at 9:00 a.m. Your Unit President has the wish list of what you need to bring. We are helping



Avance, a non-profit organization. They help children from birth to 4 years old whose families need financial and educational help.

This convention is our 30th year anniversary for the Department of Texas Marine Corps League Auxiliary. It was chartered August 12th, 1984. We are creating a memory board



(collage). Any member who has pictures from past years, please submit to Brenda Tomonelli. Her address is 110 Mac Lane, Pottsboro, TX, 75076. We really need pictures between 1984-2010.

Please note on the pictures the people and events in the pictures. **You will get your pictures back.**

Remember to *smile*, it makes you and the people around you feel good. We all have days we feel bad, but we can try and be nice to the people around us.

I hope you have a wonderful Easter.



Flea Fiddlings

Brenda Tomonelli
Department of Texas
MODDF Big Flea
(903) 786-8243 (H)
bestepmom@yahoo.com



THE FLEA SCRATCH

held in Paris at the Southern Division Conference was attended by 14 Mardi Gras costumed Fleas. These masked,



festooned Fleas proceeded to party Mardi Gras style in our purple/green/gold, feathered, bedecked Scratch. This Scratch was dedicated in memory of our beloved Past National Big Flea, Marie Williams.

Two new Crawlers were initiated and all Fleas proceeded to inflict Flea pestering and Flea-dazzlement on two new MODD Dogs. The Fleas feasted on King Cake, candy and cider and then infiltrated the MODD Growl to wrench some

bones from the Dogs.

Appreciation certificates were presented to Ann Danford for her great job of providing a new Flea Banner for the Hide, Dorcas Simpson for her generous gifts of candy/prizes, and Karren Ogg for her assistance to the Big Flea.

The costume contest was judged by Dorcas Simpson and Beverly Hill, and they presented prizes to:



1st Place – Toni Hurtado
**2nd Place – Mary
Frances Bradford**
3rd Place – Ann Danford

All Fleas were thrilled to present our donations to the Leatherneck Foundation representative, Helen Hicks, at the Banquet. The Fleas were also happy to welcome a new Flea, Linda Blair, from Arkansas, to our Hide as Arkansas is too small at this time to have their own Hide.

We are now preparing for our State Scratch in Waco in June. All Fleas, please plan on attending and help in presenting our first “Flea of the Year” award, and take your place as Flea Officers (only those present at the State Scratch are eligible for advancement in Hide office progression.) I will become Past Big Flea and will maintain the Scratchy Flea position if the Flea body sees fit.

We would also like to thank all the Fleas, Dogs, Leaguers, and Auxiliary members who did

such a great job in providing support to the MCLA in hosting the Southern Division Conference. We think it was a very successful endeavor.



See you in Waco.

Searching For Volunteers



Juanita O'Dell

Americanism Chairman

(940) 549-3944 (H) • juanitaodell@sbcglobal.net

AT EVERY STATE

Convention, after Detachment Americanism scrapbooks are turned in (by noon on Friday), someone has to judge the books. That leaves me with locating several



volunteers who will serve as judges, while I am on hand during this time to offer help/suggestions/etc. when required.

For the past several years I have had a team of ladies who have been willing to serve in that capacity. Now, either members of that group have joined the Auxiliary and attend the Flea Scratch at the same time as the judging, or they no longer attend the State Convention.

Therefore, I am seeking out individuals, *male and/or female*, who don't have to participate in a meeting on Friday of the Convention, after lunch, who would be able to help judge the scrapbooks.

So, if you would be available on Friday afternoon during the Convention in June in Waco and would like to learn more about how Americanism works, please contact me and join the judging group. The session usually takes 1½ - 2 hours, depending on the number of books submitted.

Thanks for your help.

Convention Delegate Registration



Bernie O'Dell
Convention Credentials Chairman
(940) 549-3944 (H) • (940) 550-5711 (C)
bernieodell@sbcglobal.net
(Article originally created by Al Kotrla)

THE FOLLOWING EXPLAINS

delegate registration for Department of Texas State Conventions:

- Detachments are authorized to register one delegate for each group of ten members in good standing as of June 1st. An additional delegate is also authorized for a group of less than ten that exceed the blocks of ten members. For example, a Detachment that has 54 members may register six delegates.
- Detachments will be permitted votes based on properly registered delegates. For example, a Detachment that has 54 members but only registers three delegates will be allowed only 30 votes.
- A Detachment with less than 15 members as of June 1st may **not register any delegates**. Each member of such Detachment, in good standing, may have one vote at the convention.
- Should a Detachment fail to register their delegates, each member at the convention from that Detachment, in good standing, may have one vote at the convention.
- Members are in good standing if their membership dues are current as of June 1st.
- Detachments must register their delegates on the standard form sent by the hosting Detachment for the convention. The delegate registration form will also be posted for printing on the Department web

1 PER 10

ZERO

site: <http://www.texasmcl.org>. (On the web site Home page, click on "Admin Docs/Forms" in the left hand column. Then select "Delegate Registration Form.") Registered delegates must be in good standing. Associate members and dual members **cannot be registered** as delegates and they may not be tallied for voting strength.

- The delegate registration form must be **completed** and **must be signed** by the Detachment



Commandant and Adjutant/Paymaster
The form should be sent with payment

to the hosting Detachment.

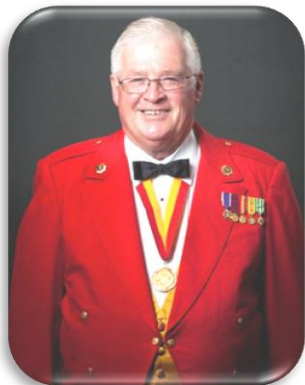
- At least one properly registered delegate attending the convention may vote the entire Detachment voting strength, providing the appropriate eligible number of authorized delegates are registered and paid for.
- The Detachment must pay \$5 for each registered delegate with **check payable to the convention's hosting Detachment**. (Members who submit individual registration for events and meals do not have to pay the \$5 again on that form if they are registered as delegates. On the individual registration form, the registered delegate may note "Paid Delegate" in the entry space and avoid making a second registration payment. Individual members are still responsible for payment to events and meals. Non-delegates should pay the \$5 fee on the individual form.)
- Members' good standing status will be determined from the National Headquarters roster dated as of March 31st and transmittals submitted and processed by the Department Paymaster subsequent to that listing. Members whose dues lapse in April and May will not be eligible for voting



unless a transmittal has been submitted and processed by the Department Paymaster.

Any questions regarding the process may be addressed to me *before the convention*. It is better to have issues resolved before the convention rather than do it there because we have a busy agenda at that time.

See you in Waco.



National News

Commandant
Jim Tuohy's
Communications

JTuohey@MCLeague.org
Semper Fi Article –
Mar/Apr 2014...

MARINE WEST MCRDSD HONOR

In my last column, I spoke about opportunities to recruit new members. In January, a contingent of us headed out to Camp Pendleton to attend the Marine West Military Expo. Marine Corps League and Auxiliary members from several states worked together assembling and passing out hundreds of bags with the Marine Corps League logo containing a mug and a copy of our latest *Semper Fi* magazine to everyone attending the show.



Inside the show tent, Marines staffed a recruiting table informing the active duty Marines and sailors as to what the Marine Corps League is, what we do, and how we support our active duty Marine Corps and our community. We offered these active duty Marines and FMF Corpsmen free six month honorary memberships, along with three issues of our magazine.

If they like what they see and read about our League, they have the opportunity to become new members. If they desire, they can be transferred to a Detachment of their choice. The National Jr. Vice Commandant oversees this program, which has been in place for several years and has proved successful. Just one more way of reaching out to Marines letting them know who we are, the many programs we have and, as League members, the great camaraderie we enjoy.

After the Expo closed, we headed down to MCRD San Diego on

Friday morning to attend the graduation ceremonies as a guest of Brig. Gen.

James W. Bierman, Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Western Recruiting region.

National Executive Director Mike Blum, Chief of Staff PNC John



Brig. Gen. Bierman

P. Tuohy and I met with the General and his staff, attended the raising of the Colors at 0800 and were guests of Brig. Gen. Bierman and his spouse for breakfast at his quarters.

After breakfast we headed over to the reviewing stands in preparation for the graduation of Fox Company, where I had the honor of being the Parade Reviewing Officer. Standing alongside the Sergeant Major as these new Marines passed in review brought chills up my spine. This was one of the proudest moments of my life, and I will always cherish it. I'm a firm believer that, "They still make them like they used to."

After the graduation, I had the opportunity to attend the Quin Conference and meet with many of the Marines in attendance. I want to recognize two Marines for their hard work and dedication to the League. Thanks to Virginia McDougall for always being there and doing whatever has to be done to make things flow smoothly; and to Bob Gilmore for his arranging the MCRD Graduation trip for us. Great job Marines – Thank You.

Before heading back home to get ready for our National Mid-Winter Conference, we made what I considered to be the most important and rewarding part of the trip. We stopped at the San Antonio

Military Medical Center (formerly Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC)). This is where our troops



San Antonio Military Medical Center

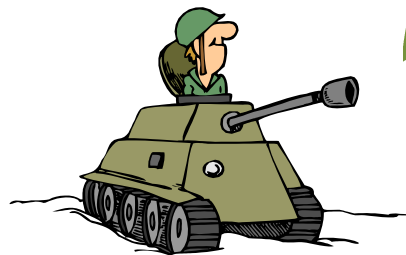
who have suffered burns and amputations from IEDs in combat or other types of tragedies are treated and rehabilitated.

We met with the Marines of the Alamo Detachment and the Marine Detachment Staff, who introduced us to several Marines recovering from wounds caused by IEDs in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. We had the opportunity to visit their living quarters, as well as tour the various rehabilitation and prosthesis units.

The medical personnel working with these veterans are caring and dedicated. Morale is great among these Marines, and the only desire most of them have is to hurry up and recover so they can get back to their units and their buddies. This is comradeship at its best – this is Marines taking care of Marines.



Remember, continue to keep our troops in your thoughts and prayers that they return home safely to their families.



From the Front

By David Francis, The Fiscal Times
February 27, 2014...

End Game in Afghanistan: Just 3,000 Vulnerable Troops



THE WHITE HOUSE has made yet another move in the ongoing game of poker with Afghan President Hamid Karzai Tuesday, with officials putting a new option on the table for American troop presence: 3,000 based at Bagram Air Force and Kabul. The newest offering, which sounds more like a decision, is the fourth time the Obama administration has tried to close a deal and extricate most U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Other attempts include:



Pres. Hamid Karzai

1. The 10,000-troop option would keep American troops in Kandahar, Kabul, Bagram and Jalalabad until the end of next year. Some 5,000 NATO and other international troops would be based in western and northern Afghanistan as part of a NATO mission called Resolute Support.

2. The second option is to leave somewhere between 10,000 and 3,000 troops in Kabul and Bagram until 2016. The troops would advise the Afghan military as needed.
3. The 3,000 troops option is number three, with military restricted to Kabul and Bagram, according to officials who spoke to *The Washington Post* on the condition of anonymity. Drones could leave the base,



but troops would not, and it's not clear how long they'd stay.

4. The final option is called the zero-option: complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces. Without U.S. forces in Afghanistan, allies like Italy and Germany would also exit, leaving no international military presence.

Which option is best depends on your perspective: the military wants to protect the gains it made there with 10,000 troops. The State Department wants troops to have the ability to leave their bases to supervise and protect development projects. The White House seemingly wants as few troops in Afghanistan as possible. And the American people simply want the war to end. Gallup determined last year that for the first time since the war began, the number of Americans who thought the war wasn't worth it equaled the number of Americans who did.

The repercussions of the older options have been analyzed, but the new option has not. Here are three questions that need to be answered to determine if the plan is viable.

1. **Can troops fight back?** In a country the size of Afghanistan, 3,000 troops is a small number. And it's already known where they would be stationed--Kabul and Bagram Air Base--and how many of them would be there. The troops are sitting ducks. Would they be able to defend

themselves if fired upon? Could they leave the base to pursue their attackers?

2. Is it worth putting their lives at risk?

American troops would simply be there as a show of force; they wouldn't really be doing anything to advance American interests or protect hundreds of billions of dollars worth of development projects.



Sen. John McCain

According to the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction,

few of these projects are likely to succeed anyway. Why put more American lives at risk if there's nothing to gain? This is the argument being made by Senator John McCain (R-AZ).

"If it's a smaller and smaller number, if you get below 10,000, plus 3,000 or 4,000 NATO troops, then it's not worth it because you can't carry out those missions that are necessary," McCain said. It has to be a large and capable force, which will make a difference to help them prevail over a continuing war. Otherwise it will turn out like Iraq has where the black flags of al Qaeda are now flying over the city of Fallujah."

3. Would these troops actually be spies?

Right now, the CIA, with the military's protection, handles human assets around Afghanistan. This would change under all Options but number one. Under the new option, the military would be in charge of collecting intelligence.

This kind of work requires a different kind of soldier, and DOD has long wanted to get in



Mohammad Daud Miraki

on the spy game. According to Mohammad Daud Miraki, an Afghan activist, writer

and politician, this is exactly what the Pentagon is trying to do.

“If they think the presence of 3,000 troops is enough to enhance Afghan forces – that doesn’t make sense,” Miraki said in an interview with *Russia Today*. “It’s very likely that they may have these 3,000 troops only for intelligence purposes, for a larger agenda that they have at hand, maybe [concerning] Russia, China, or some other purpose.”

Spain Agrees to Larger US Marine ‘Crisis’ Team at Base

March 11, 2014...

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Spain has approved plans to host an expanded US Marine Corps force that is designed to respond to crises in Africa and rescue American diplomats in emergencies, officers said Monday.

The “crisis response” task force (“Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response”) was created in the aftermath of the 2012 deadly attack on a US diplomatic post in the Libyan city of Benghazi, which left four Americans dead.

In April of 2013 hundreds of US Marines were sent to Spain, based at Moron Air Base in the southern region of the country. Fully staffed, the operation would be capable of being airborne within six hours of receiving word of threats.



According to officials, six V-22 Osprey aircraft and two C-130 refueling planes would be stationed at the base in Spain, with 225 personnel assigned to the aviation component of the unit. Another 225 Marines would be equipped and trained for combat

along with intelligence and communications specialists. The duties of the remaining 50 Marines were not reported.

The team would be responsible for providing protection for embassies and diplomatic compounds under attack or receiving threats, protecting US citizens, rescuing downed pilots and assisting other elements of the military in the event Americans need to be evacuated, the official said.

Originally, there were approximately 500 US Marines at the base in Spain.

Under the new agreement with Madrid, the US military presence at Moron Air Base will increase to 850 Marines, along with additional aircraft, Pentagon spokesman Colonel Steven Warren told reporters.

“Spain has agreed to allow the task force to temporarily base there for an additional year and to increase the number of Marines from 500 to 850,” Warren said, adding Washington was grateful to the Spanish government for the decision.

The rapid reaction force has already been called on several times since its creation, including for a mission to evacuate much of the US embassy staff in Juba when violence erupted in South Sudan.



Air traffic control tower at the Moron de la Frontera Air Base near Sevilla, Spain



Marine Corps History

Beginning of Korean War

The Inchon landings took place during the Korean War (1950-1953). The first troops stormed ashore at Inchon on September 15th, 1950.

ON 25 JUNE 1950 the Russian-trained North Korean People's Army (NKPA) attacked the Republic of Korea (ROK).

The United Nations immediately branded the North Koreans as aggressors, and requested the United States to dispatch military assistance to the South Korean Republic. Within a month, ROK and UN troops were holding on a small beachhead (about 90 by 60 miles) around the southeastern seaport of Pusan.



Gen. Clifton B. Cates

On 2 July 1950, Marine Commandant General Clifton B. Cates had cabled the Far East Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, volunteering Marines for combat duty. MacArthur enthusiastically accepted this offer and persuaded the Joint Chiefs of Staff to concur. The 5th Marines and MAG-33 received the assignment, and on 7 July, they became the

major elements of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. One week later, the brigade sailed for Korea.

On 2 August, the Marines arrived in Pusan. The brigade commander, Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, had been given the temporary

assignment of "plugging holes in the dike," reinforcing the defensive lines as weak spots opened up. While the ground troops were accomplishing this mission, MAG-33 had arrived in Japan, and by 3 August, two fighter-bomber squadrons were flying close air support missions from the decks of carriers. A night fighter squadron



Brig. Gen. Edward A. Craig

(VMF (N) -513) flew missions from Japan, and an observation squadron (VMO-6), with its helicopters and light planes, joined ground elements in Korea to provide direct support. Within the Pusan perimeter, the Marines became "trouble shooters" for hard-pressed Army troops. On three separate occasions, the brigade counter-attacked the enemy, stopped his attack, and eliminated the penetration. Several NKPA divisions were decimated. On 5 September, the brigade moved to Pusan in preparation for joining the 1st Marine Division which had recently arrived in Japan.

In one month, the brigade had killed and wounded an estimated 10,000 communists while executing three arduous counterattacks and traveling some 300 miles in the process. The enemy had been thrown back some 8,000 to 10,000 yards.

Clarence Hagan Vittitoe
Peoria, IL
Korean War Veteran of the United States Marine Corps



"I knew that if I joined the Corps and got a uniform like that, I'd get the pretty girls because they would think I was something special. I wanted to become a hero, too. I also guess I was a little patriotic and loved my country."

I got to Pendleton in March 1950 and the Korean War broke out in June while I was involved in infantry duties. I knew nothing about Korea, and I

didn't want to go to war, but if the Marines went, I wanted to go with them. I followed the war news by radio and newspaper, and, like MacArthur, I thought that it would be over in a hurry.

Marines with far better memories and writing skills have written all about the Korean War. They remember who, what, when, where, and why. I remember very little of what was going on during this time. From about the middle of June to the time we sailed for Korea was a time of confusion. We were receiving replacements daily. Also, some that had been TAD were returning to the company. One such was S/Sgt Charles Martin. I had been Platoon Guide since I'd joined 2nd Platoon, but when Martin returned from TAD, he being senior to me, became Platoon Guide and I became squad leader of 3rd squad.

Before the war, we didn't have a 3rd squad. When the Brigade started its build-up, we had Marines come out of the woodworks. Some came from guard units all over the western United States, and even some reserve units were called up for active duty. Some hadn't been in a line company for several years, and some had the wrong MOS. These Marines may have had to take positions under Marines of lower rank than themselves. This didn't last long since all Marines are infantrymen first. By the time we arrived in Korea, they were in the position their rank called for and able to handle the position well.

I'm not sure of the exact date we left for Korea. It was in the middle of July. We were aboard the USS *Henrico*. I have no idea how many troops it could



USS Henrico

hold, but it was a crowded troop transport filled with the men of the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade and their equipment. Only Navy and Marine personnel were onboard, and the cargo was our equipment. Our Commandant, General Clifton B. Cates, was at dock side to bid us God speed. This was the first time I had seen a Commandant or a four-star Marine

General. I think he was talking to me personally when he said, "Clean up that mess in Korea soon or I'll find out why." He never had to go to Korea.



My sea bag never got to Korea, either. I've always enjoyed blaming the Navy for this mix-up. My sea bag had all of my uniforms in it, but nothing of value that couldn't be replaced easily. I've always traveled light.

The *Henrico* was an older ship that had been used in the Spanish American War around the turn of the century. Shortly after leaving the port, we had to go into Oakland for repairs. As a Sergeant, I had no idea what repairs were needed. The Marines aboard claimed it was because there was a movie showing Burt Lancaster that the Captain wanted to see, but this might be stretching it just a little. I believe we were in Oakland for about 24 hours or so. I don't remember if we caught up with the other ships in the convoy, but we all arrived in Pusan about the same time.

There wasn't much to do on the trip over. We saw a few movies on the fantail or did calisthenics when we could find space topside--most anything rather than lay around all day. We had no duties, but Lt. Johnston and Gunny Lawson held several lectures on various subjects. I think it was more to have something to do than to impart something of use. They were about climate, terrain and the varmints we might run across. We knew almost nothing about the North Korean Army. Lt. Johnston had not been in World War II, but he was a very smart officer and could have given an interesting lecture on almost any subject. Gunny Lawson had been in several battles during World War II, and tried to explain what he could about an armed enemy - any armed enemy. I don't believe anyone can explain the horrors and fears of war. You have to live it to understand it.



I was soon to discover that the training I received in basic and advanced training in the Marine Corps would serve me well in Korea. We had been running over the hills and through the fields, up mock-ups and down cargo nets and attacking aggressors in a small village at Camp Pendleton all spring and summer. Only a few weeks before the war broke out, we had been on amphibious

maneuvers off the coast of Southern California. (I don't remember the name of the ship.) We were onboard ship for approximately a week and climbed off into an Amtrak vehicle. These were tracked vehicles with large engines on each side. The troop compartment heated to a high degree. After climbing in, we had to rendezvous with the other vehicles in our wave for about an hour (seemed like years). However, the bad part was when we started into the beach. They closed the hatch and the inside of the



craft became like a dark oven. We were glad to hit the beach and start up towards California Highway 101.

The claim at the time was that it was more dangerous crossing the highway than the enemy would have been on a defended beach. (This claim may not be true.)

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, the only trained infantry unit in the so-called Pusan Perimeter, landed in Pusan, Korea, about noon on August 1st, I believe. My first impression of the country was that it smelled just like China and it looked a lot like China. We got off the ship, where we were met by a Korean band that played the Marine Corps hymn off key. We then boarded a train that took us west. It was kind of like the passenger trains you see in the old western movies, and the seating was about the same. It was steam-powered, but I believe that it was narrower than our trains in the USA. It was preferable to walking, although not much faster. I have no idea how far we traveled before we disembarked and started walking. I also have no idea how far we hiked, but it wasn't too far. Then we spread out and dug in for the night.

My platoon leader was Lt. Johnston, a very ambitious Marine. Physically, he was about 5'9" and weighed in at about 120 pounds soaking wet. Gunny Lawson (a Staff NCO) had been a drill instructor and had also been in a couple of battles in World War II. These two men complemented each other.

That first day, they led us west of Pusan on the Masan Road. We saw plenty of Koreans along the way, and we assumed they were on our side. It was



Masan Road, Korea

still daylight when we dug in for the night. Lt. Johnston and Gunny Lawson were able to place us where we had a good field of fire if it became necessary during the night to fire at the enemy. We were told that there was no enemy in our vicinity, but that we were to stay alert. This was our first night in enemy territory and everyone was on edge. We were tense and nervous, including some of us who had seen action before. We were at a 50 percent watch - that is, one slept while one stood guard. After nightfall, tree stumps turned into the enemy and bushes took on the look of men. It only took one man to fire a rifle in this atmosphere and several others followed. Lt. Johnston and Gunny Lawson told us to stand down and tried to calm everyone. All calmed down, but I think everyone was glad when morning arrived. So ended our first night. After that, I believe everyone felt calmer. The fear stayed, but it was under control after that first night. As the weeks went by, we realized that you can only get used to the noise of combat. You can never get used to someone shooting at you. I saw my first dead enemy, as well as my first dead Korean War Marine, just a few days after landing.

Our first objective upon arriving in Korea, I believe, was along the Masan Road. Next was Chindong-ni, then Kosong, and then Sachon. Lt. Johnston was an officer and gentleman of the old school, but his vocabulary was taxed when he used the military map he carried. This was a map drawn by a Japanese engineer, and according to him, was all guesswork rather than exact measurements. The coordinates were so fouled up, Johnston was careful to call mortar fire well in advance of where he wanted it, and then bring it back to where it was needed.

The battle along the southern road to Sachon was continuous, so no particular battle stands out in my mind. When we were withdrawn from there, we trucked to the railroad. We rode the train for a while, then boarded trucks for a while, and finally hiked for a while. Then we arrived at the Maryang River (at least, I think that was the name of it). We had a bath and went swimming. It was very hot, and the high temperatures had a great effect on the troops of the Brigade. We withstood the heat in t-shirt and shorts, dungaree blouse and trousers, canvas leggings, socks, field shoes, and helmet with camouflage cover. It was hot and humid, and we were always thirsty. Several had heat prostration and had to be cared for until they were cooled down and able to continue

effectively. I don't know how you can train for either the heat or the thirst. You just have to live with it and do the best you can. Odd as it may seem, it helps to know that those with you are suffering along with you and take pride in the fact that if they can do it, you can do it better. At least the swim in the river was welcome relief from the heat.



The next day, we engaged in the first battle of No-name Ridge, also known as Obong-ni Ridge, Red Slash Hill, and a lot of other names that are unprintable. The hill was located just east of the Naktong River close to Miryang. It had a slash in the ground (not man-made and about 25 to 30 feet in places) that looked like red clay and went down the hill. We didn't pay a lot of attention to it; we just saw it and someone called it a red slash and others picked up on the name. The hill was situated in the northwest area of the Pusan Perimeter. If I remember right, there were three high peaks on it. The slash divided two of them. Able Company had the hill on the left of the slash and Baker Company had the one on the right. The third was higher, but some further distance closer to the river and a little higher. It was no problem for 2nd Battalion to take it after we had the first two.

Obong-ni Ridge had originally been held by Army troops, but they lost it when they couldn't hold it. The Army units we came into contact with in the perimeter were useless as combat troops. They knew it and the Marines knew it. They had been Constabulary and Parade units in Japan, and had little or no combat training at all. They had officers who had no training with combat units; therefore, the army didn't know what it was doing. Their morale was nil and the ones I observed were dispirited and useless as a fighting unit. If you want to scare a Marine unit of any size, just tell them, "Your flank is covered by the Army."

The objective at Red Slash Hill was to push the North Koreans back across the Naktong River and turn the hill back over to the Army to hold. We couldn't allow the North Koreans to hold it or even cross the Naktong River, because it would open the way for them to move into Pusan and push us out of Korea. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, tried the

morning of the 17th to take the hill, but was repulsed. Then, the 1st Battalion tried that afternoon. This one battle (which lasted more than one day) cost us almost half of our platoon, including Gunny Lawson. Gunny Lawson was hit on the 18th. Prior to that, S/Sgt. Charles Martin had been wounded on the 15th on the road to Sachon. When he was hit, I became platoon guide.

We started up the hill (Red Slash Hill) in the late afternoon. The North Koreans were on top of the hill, trying to keep us from getting there. While this was going on, the Koreans tried to flank us with four unprotected T-34 tanks. The tanks were taken care of by the recoilless rifles and bazookas. Only a few Marines were able to make it to the top, so we weren't able to hold it because the rest of us couldn't make it. Darkness was falling fast. So, we dug in on the slope of the hill and prepared for the counter-attack that we were sure would be coming. We were armed with M-1 rifles. Our weapons worked well and we had plenty of ammunition and grenades to meet the enemy attack.



That night, the gooks hit us hard. At about 0200, they attacked us with whistles, bugles, and lots of automatic gunfire. They screamed and hollered, with machineguns firing on full automatic. They knew where we were tied in with Baker Company because they had watched us the evening before as we dug in. They ran right through us, managing to drive a wedge between Able and Baker Companies. They split second platoon in the process. The battle raged for a couple of hours. Their intentions were to drive between the two companies, but they were a little off. With the help of flares from our 60mm mortar section, we were able to see enough to keep them from completely overrunning us and keep control of the area. We shot some North Koreans who were only inches away from us. We felt it was easier to shoot them than fight them hand-to-hand, if at all possible.

We were never pushed off the hill once we started up. We were only pushed back to a lower position on the slope. We were also split where the North Koreans rushed through. My foxhole was on the right side of 2nd platoon, where Able Company was tied in with Baker Company. When the North Koreans attacked, I drifted on right into Captain Fenton's

Baker Company's area. I had lost my helmet and ammunition belt along the way, although I still had a bandolier of ammunition around my neck. Otherwise, I was fine. A few of us then just joined up with Baker Company until things got straightened out and we were able to rejoin Able Company. Baker Company had been on a little higher ground than Able Company and was not pushed back. They held their position.

The loss of men and firepower affected us, but we had the use of air power, artillery and also of heavy mortars (81mm) from Weapons Company to help us. As it became daylight, we were able to fight back without shooting each other. Because it was still summer, sun up came early. As soon as we were able to see what was going on, we started pushing the North Koreans back. On the morning of 18 August, we pushed the North Koreans over the top of the hill, down the other side, and across the river. It is difficult to say how long it took. During the heat of battle, time is not measured in hours.



When the sun came out, we could see that there were bodies all around - those of Marines, as well as gooks. Among the dead was 2nd Lt. Thomas H. Johnston, platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Able Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. He was the platoon leader when I reported in to Able Company in California. He had trained us all during the spring and summer. We had just finished amphibious maneuvers off the coast of Southern California when the war in Korea started. He was a casualty of the battle for Obong-ni. Lt. Johnston was one of the finest and most ambitious officers I ever knew in the Corps. I don't want to imply that he was my friend--he wasn't. Sergeants were not friends with their platoon leaders in the Corps. He was the leader of 2nd platoon, and as such, he was respected and obeyed. He was killed the evening of 17 August, 1950, on Obong-ni Ridge charging up the hill to push the North Koreans off. I admired and respected him for what he was--my platoon leader. He was awarded the Silver Star (posthumously).

When it was possible to do so without too much danger, we (with help from some South Korean civilians) removed the body of Lt. Johnston, as well as those of our other dead, from the battle scene. Our

Corpsmen also tended to the wounded, moving them to an aid station in the rear regardless. By the time the fighting was over, we had lost about half our platoon in the two-day battle, but we ultimately gained our objective. We stood, kneeled, and from the prone position fired at the gooks trying to cross the Naktong River. It was a shoot out. We had excellent artillery, tank, and air support, too. Collectively, Marine power sent the North Koreans into retreat. While we fired at them, they tried to escape by wading across the Naktong. The enemy troops we were fighting were mostly young, good fighters, but they were ill-equipped. Where Marines always spread out, the North Koreans wanted to cling together. They had more automatic weapons than we did, and tried to spray an area. Marines had a different tactic, shooting at specific targets if possible.

Our loss of Lt. Johnston the afternoon before, and Gunny Lawson that night, obviously had a bad effect on the platoon. Although he wasn't able to do so until the 18th, our company commander, Capt. John Stevens, knowing we were in trouble, sent Lt. Frank Muetzel to us to replace Lt. Johnston. He also sent Gunny Sergeant Jessie Johnson to replace Gunny Lawson from the Weapons Platoon. Those of us who had been training in Camp Pendleton with the company before the war started knew both of them well, so there was no loss of trust in our leadership.

The Marines took Obong-ni on the 18th of August, and turned it back over to the Army. They were unable to hold it so the Marines had to go back and take it again. I'm not sure of the time element here, but I think we had to go back about the first of September. The Marines were not happy to have to go back to fight for the hill a second time. We had little respect for the Army or its leadership.

When we were pulled off of the battle line, we were sent back to Pusan about 3 September. We stayed at the "Bean Patch" near Pusan (I don't know why it was called that; I didn't see any beans), took another bath, and had our picture taken. We all thought that we were pretty tough Marines about that time. The pictures were taken by an official Marine Corps photographer. We also lay around in a warehouse waiting to receive new Marines to replace our dead and wounded. Those of us who had been around from the beginning were more mature and better fighters by now. Our officers could call in closer air cover and mortar fire. Both mortars and aircrafts had become more affected and better at

their job by now as well. Obviously, if you survive a tough battle, you're more hardened and better prepared for the fighting ahead. We dazzled the new guys with our exploits (pilots aren't the only ones who can do that, you know). We told sea stories and bragged a little. I got my picture taken on September 6, 1950--my 25th birthday. We wrote letters and received mail. Also, we got a third Company in the Battalion.

After a few days wait, we boarded the USS Henrico about 7 September 1950, headed for the coast at Inchon.



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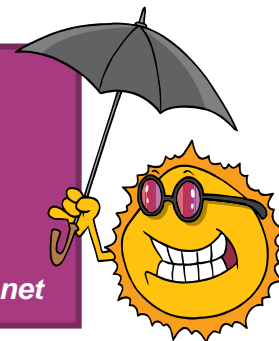
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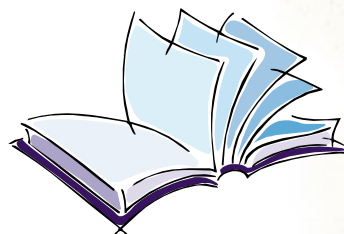
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