

TEXAS

MARINE



**Robert "Bob" Ogg
Commandant**

**Department of TEXAS
Marine Corps League**



WINTER Edition



**February
2014**



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

Editor/Publisher - BERNIE & JUANITA O'DELL

515 Hall Street ~ Graham, TX 76450 ~ (940) 549-3944 ~ juanitaodell@sbcglobal.net

Commandant

Robert "Bob" Ogg
robertogg@msn.com

Sr. Vice Commandant

Amado Trevino
atvt49@yahoo.com

Jr. Vice Commandant

Charles Ynman
cynman7672@aol.com

Judge Advocate

Dennis Bradford
padrebucky@yahoo.com

Adjutant/Paymaster

Polly Weidenkopf
pollyw247@att.net

Sergeant-At-Arms

Ron Tomonelli
rttexoma@yahoo.com

Chaplain

Alex Azar
azar.usmc@gmail.com

Jr. Past Commandant

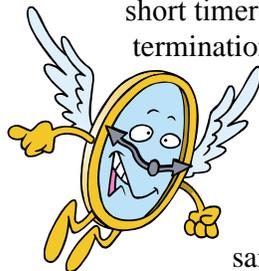
R.J. "Bob" Quinn
TheQuinns@aol.com

Commandant's Corner

Robert "Bob" Ogg, Department of Texas Commandant
(903) 652-5601 (H) • robertogg@msn.com

TIME FLIES WHEN

you are having fun. I have constructed my short timer's calendar for the termination of my tour in June.

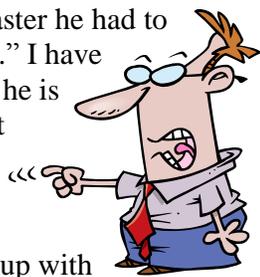


I look back with some satisfaction at the things that we have accomplished,



and view with exasperation the same-o same-o problems that we have been plagued with for the last two years. I still cannot understand when I hear someone state, "I just didn't get the word." I marvel at the dedication and hard work of some Detachment Commandants and District Vice Commandants, but hang my head in despair at the shady performance of some of the others. In the civilian world, you strive to be a good manager. In the Marine Corps League, as in the Marine Corps, you need to strive to be a good leader. There is a difference between management and leadership. The finger pointing syndrome is all too prevalent

with some – “I told my Paymaster he had to do that and he just didn’t do it.” I have news for that Commandant - he is responsible for everything that happens *or does not happen* in his Detachment. Lead, follow, or get out of the way.



National has finally come up with an incentive for our membership retention and recruiting problems. A **\$1,000 reward** is offered to the winning Detachment.



Maybe it will encourage some Detachment Commandants to find out where the “not paid” information is. The Jr. Vice Commandant has all of the details.

Texas is a big state; subsequently we have the Department divided into eight (8) Districts, with a District Vice Commandant for each who is a very important link to the Detachments. When elections are held in June, I implore each member to select a Vice Commandant who is up to the responsibilities and requirements of the office. If the District Vice Commandant does not do what he is supposed to do, all the Detachments in the District will suffer.

The Southern Division Conference will be held March 14th – 16th, 2014, in Paris. The last conference was held in Tulsa sponsored by Oklahoma and was an elaborate affair. This conference is sponsored by the Auxiliary - their first time to sponsor a conference. Although not as elaborate as Tulsa, the Auxiliary, and the city of Paris, are gearing up to show everyone a good time. Registration forms, schedule and hotel information is on the Department web site. Detachments should try to get their ads in as quickly as possible.



Senior's Segment

Amado Trevino
 Department of Texas
 Sr. Vice Commandant
 (361) 960-0143 (H)
 atvt49@yahoo.com



I HOPE EVERYBODY HAD

a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I would like to thank everybody who has been turning in their Activity Reports. I know that it's something that takes some time to complete. There are still some Detachments out there that are doing activities and not reporting them.

We are still having some minor problem with the way some reports are being filled out, but nothing that we can't fix. Some of you that are reporting Memorial Team activities are putting them on one line. Example: 6 funerals, 6 members for a total of 36 members and when you write them in at 36 the web site will give you 41 points, whereas if you were to put it as 6 members for each funeral on one line 6 times you would get 66 points. Same thing happens when you combine activities like attending convention days: some of you will put attended convention 4 days x 6 members on the line you put 24 members it will give you 34 points whereas if you were to put in 4 lines at 6 members per line you would get 64 points.



I received an e-mail from our Commandant where Marine Bill Hamby wants to make changes to the Department activity awards by adding other things to the reports. I personally think that

what he wants to add should be a separate report that the Detachment Adjutant or Paymaster should fill out and then award the Detachment that submitted them. As it is now, some Detachments are not even submitting Activity Reports.

Hope to see you at the Southern Division March 14th. Don't forget that in June I will need your support when I run for Commandant.

Junior's Journal

Charles Ynman
Department of Texas
Jr. Vice Commandant
(281) 496-7424 (H)
cynman7672@aol.com



IN COMBAT SUCCESS is not

achieved by one single member of a team, but by the strength of the Marines who surround that member. It is the same in the Marine Corps League, which is made up of single members, Detachments and the Department of Texas.

I have contacted many of you for your suggestions about how we can recruit new members into the Marine Corps League. Your ideas are varied and come not only from Detachment Commandants and District Vice Commandants, but also from individual members. These



members see the necessity to make efforts to recruit and are looking toward the League leadership to create programs.

National has recently announced that a Detachment will receive \$1,000 if they are the Detachment in the Nation that recruits the most **new members**. How can we enhance that promotion? Many Marines that we try to recruit tell us that they did not know the Marine Corps League existed. Why is the MCL the best kept secret? We need your help to come up with a program to not only increase the membership of a few Detachments, but also to develop a program that will help all our Texas Detachments.



The Marine Corps does a super job of advertising. The Marine Corps recruiting program is the most successful of all the services.

Where have we failed in the Detachments to match the success of the National recruiting program?

I challenge each Marine Corps League Officer and individual member to send me an e-mail with



your suggestion on how we can overcome the decrease in membership and also increase the retention of our present members. I assure you that all suggestions will be presented to the Board of Trustees, placed into discussion, and implemented where possible.

Your Department Officers believe that the most important members are those who wear the red cover. Please join us to show all Marines what the Marine Corps League is all about.

Judge Advocate's Alerts

Dennis Bradford
Department of Texas
Judge Advocate
(936) 569-8789 (H)
padrebucky@yahoo.com



HAPPY NEW YEAR and greetings

from Deep East Texas! We are just a few days into 2014. As we enter a period when some Detachments are preparing to elect officers for the coming year, and with the Department Convention just around the corner, it is a good time to think



about the position of Judge Advocate (JA), what the Judge Advocate does, and what is expected of the person elected to the office.

In a nutshell, the Judge Advocate is the keeper, protector, and counselor of the bylaws, policies, and procedures that govern a Detachment.

So, what does all that mean? The person who holds the office must be familiar with all Bylaws, Administrative Procedures, and *Robert's Rules of Order*, as well as any policies established by the League. It is not necessary to memorize them, but it should be possible to find specific information within a reasonable time. When called upon, the JA renders opinions and clarifications upon portions that come into question. It is the responsibility of the Judge Advocate to insure that the Detachment

abides by its own bylaws, as well as those of the Department and National.

Members are often surprised to find that each Detachment of the Marine Corps League is a business (remember the *incorporation* when the Detachment was first chartered?), and, therefore, is governed by both state and federal laws and regulations that apply. The Judge Advocate must also be knowledgeable of and guard that the Detachment abides by the laws governing operation of not-for-profit corporations within the state. The JA also audits procedures, signatures, and finances of the Detachment.

So, as you see, the Judge Advocate is an important part of every Detachment – one part



referee, one part lawyer, one part accountant, one part high-stakes negotiator. Their responsibility is to keep the Detachment and its members free of violations of all rules, regulations, and policies governing the Detachment, and, when necessary, render opinions and rulings on League and corporate regulations. During meetings, the JA advises and interprets parliamentary procedure. To say the least, the Judge Advocate has a full plate.

While the office is a challenge, I encourage you each to consider serving as Judge Advocate. The perspective on the Marine Corps League gained during your tenure is invaluable and rewarding.



Adjutant/Paymaster Postings

Polly Weidenkopf
Department of Texas
Adjutant/Paymaster
(972) 480-0309 (H)
pollyw247@att.net



I DO NOT HAVE

an article for this issue, but thought this fact might be of interest: the W.T. White High School MCJROTC has a new drill hall on the school campus. The building has been named the Master Gunnery Sergeant Polly Weidenkopf Drill Hall. It was dedicated on 14 November. To say the least, I was very surprised and most honored.

As many of you know, Polly is Executive Director of ReserveAid in Dallas and helps veterans every day. The following article shows how involved she gets in the duties of that position.

Proud War Veteran Gets Help Making Civilian Shift

by Byron Harris, wfaa.com
June 6, 2012...

DALLAS — The violence of war can stain a soldier's outlook, and color all the values humans should have for each other.

In Iraq, families have become terrorists, and children murderers.

"The first person that tried to kill me was an eight-year-old boy," said Iraq veteran Arthur Johnson. "And that was just a very tough thing to deal with."



But in the long journey Johnson made through Iraq, that first attempted murder by a child was just

part of the young soldier's burden. Greater still was the residue of the five improvised explosive device blasts he suffered, squeezing his brain.

"The final diagnosis was traumatic brain injury — PTSD — and the loss of hearing in my right ear," Johnson said. "And due to that, I ended up leaving the Army."

For a West Point graduate like Johnson, leaving the Army with PTSD was the same as failure. His colleagues had lost limbs; Johnson had no Purple Heart.

His military career was over, yet he did not feel like a civilian.

"I've met so many of these young people who have come back — particularly those who've graduated from the service academies — and they feel like their life is over," Polly Weidenkopf said.

She is Executive Director of ReserveAid, a non-profit agency that helps soldiers transition psychologically and financially back to civilian life.

With the encouragement of his advisers at the Veterans Administration and Weidenkopf, Arthur Johnson applied to dental school.

Acceptance was not a slam dunk. He had been turned down before because he had not taken all the prerequisites for dental school at West Point.

Despite that, his advisers encouraged him to personally visit the admissions officers at

Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas.

"They accepted me that day," Johnson said, "and that's just unheard of."

Even then, the path was not easy. Dental school is not cheap.

ReserveAid stepped in to help Johnson with the bills.

Since its beginning, ReserveAid has given nearly \$5 million to vets who need help, all sourced from private donations.

\$5 Million

"Polly has been an angel," Johnson said of Weidenkopf.

The matronly Weidenkopf admits to becoming an "extra mother" to a lot of the veterans she helps. Many connect with her when they find out she was a master gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps.

"These young people are very proud," she said.



"They don't want to ask for anything. They want to hang on, because they were taught to be tenacious and hang on until the end."

When the organ cranked up for dental school graduation ceremonies at Meyerson Concert Hall last month, there was no asking for anything; just giving.



Arthur Johnson was one of those who received his dental degree. His parents, on the ground floor of the auditorium, were there to applaud him.

Up in the cheap seats was his "extra mom."

After all the pomp and circumstance, Polly Weidenkopf waited in the atrium to give a hug to one of Texas' newest dentists.



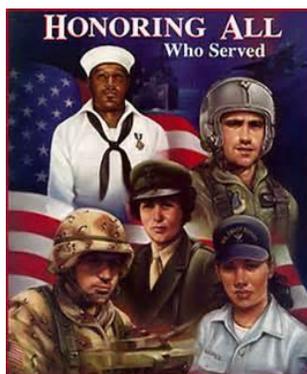
Chaplain's Comments

Alex Azar
Department of Texas Chaplain
(817) 219-9000 (C)
azar.usmc@gmail.com



I SINCERELY HOPE that everyone had a great Christmas holiday.

I ran across this article and thought I would



share it. Although it pertains to Veterans Day, for me every day is Veteran's Day! The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war." "And so, we observe

Veterans Day on this day that one war ended. We observe it because in every war there are those who dutifully and sacrificially serve at the behest of their leaders, for love of country, for love of family, and for loyalty to their friends. They serve and we observe and we say, "Thank you."

"And with our thanks, we make a commitment to make their sacrifices less and less necessary in our own generation by seeking and praying for the peace of the cities where God has scattered us on this earth. This sort of peace, from the Hebrew word, "Shalom," is indicative of total well being, embracing justice, charity, a spirit of wholeness, and the overall health of the city and its people. Shalom is not just the absence of war, but war is certainly the enemy of shalom."

"General MacArthur was right. Our veterans have laid down their destinies and fought for peace. The least we can do is pray and work for it."

(Not sure who the author is.)

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wishing everyone a very happy, healthy and safe 2014, and let us never forget our troops; keep them in your prayers.

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

SOME OF THE highlights since publication of the November 2013 newsletter are:



VA to Expand Benefits for Traumatic Brain Injury

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
December 16, 2013...

Adds Five Illnesses Related to Service-Connected TBI

WASHINGTON -- Some veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) who are diagnosed with any of

five other ailments will have an easier path to receive additional disability pay under new regulations developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The new regulation, which takes effect January 16th, 2014, impacts some veterans living with TBI who also have Parkinson's disease, certain types of dementia, depression, unprovoked seizures or certain diseases of the hypothalamus and pituitary glands.

"We decide veterans' disability claims based on the best science available," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "As scientific knowledge advances, VA will expand its programs to ensure veterans receive the care and benefits they've earned and deserve."

This regulation stems from a report of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM) regarding the association between TBI and the five diagnosable illnesses. The IOM report, *Gulf War and Health, Volume 7: Long-Term Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury*, found "sufficient evidence" to link moderate or severe levels of TBI with the five ailments.

The new regulations, printed in the *Federal Register*, say that if certain veterans with service-connected TBI also have one of the five illnesses, then the second illness will also be considered as service connected for the calculation of VA disability compensation.

Eligibility for expanded benefits will depend upon the severity of the TBI and the time between the injury causing the TBI and the onset of the second illness. However, veterans can still file a claim to establish direct service-connection for these ailments even if they do not meet the time and severity standards in the new regulation.

Veterans who have questions or who wish to file new disability claims may use the eBenefits web site, available at www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits.



Service members who are within 180 days of discharge may also file a pre-discharge claim for TBI online through the VA-DOD eBenefits portal at www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits.

The published final rule will be available December 17th at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Information about VA and DOD programs for brain injury and related research is available at www.dvbic.org.

Information about VA's programs for Gulf War Veterans is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/hazardous_exposures.asp.



Veterans Cemetery Announces \$4.9 Million Renovation Project

*By Andy Hogue
December 23, 2013 ...*

KILLEEN, Texas -- Honoring the men and women who served in our nation's military is the focus of the most ambitious renovation project in the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery's 10-year history.

Scheduled to begin in February, a \$4.9 million expansion project will involve the installation of concrete support sleeves for existing and future headstones, the addition of 4,000 new burial crypts, and the replacement of capstones on the columbaria (small buildings where ashes and remains are kept).

Resodding the turf, planting new landscape features such as bushes and trees, dedicating a special area for scattering of ashes, and repaving the surface of the memorial walkway are also in the plans for the estimated year-long project, funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This isn't only an aesthetic improvement project," said Eric Brown, Director of State Veterans Cemeteries for the Texas Veterans Land Board. "Our main goal is for this cemetery to stand the test of time. We're working hard to ensure that future generations may come here and continue the tradition of honoring those who served our country."

Located on a gently rolling hillscape in Killeen, the headstones often require straightening

and additional sod for support. The concrete sleeves will keep the headstones from shifting or tipping, Brown said.

Columbaria will undergo repairs to the capstones atop each unit. This will all be done without accessing the interred remains – only the capstones will be removed.

"A few months is a small portion of time to make these resting places lasting memorials for generations to come," Brown added. "We want to stress that in no way will the remains of our heroes be moved or even touched."

Honor is hard at work at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen. The cemetery is located on 174 acres previously part of Fort Hood and donated by the federal government. The construction of the cemetery was made possible through the coordination of area veterans groups, the city of Killeen, the federal government, and the VLB.

The initial phase of development included 7,620 gravesites on 31 acres. The cemetery will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place to more than 50,000 veterans and their family members.



El Paso VA Works Toward Ending Veteran Homelessness by 2015

By Crystal Price, KFox 14, December 31, 2013...

EL PASO, Texas -- The country has 24 months to end veteran homelessness if the nation is going to meet the president's goal.

Three years ago, President Barack Obama set a goal to end chronic homelessness among veterans by 2015.

Since then, homelessness among veterans nationwide has dropped by 24%.

According to the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless, 211 veterans were homeless last year in El Paso.

However, this year, that number has gone down to 158.



The Department of Veteran Affairs in El Paso has at least seven programs for homeless veterans, which include housing, help for the clinically mentally ill and even job programs, too.

Charm Mizer, the Homeless Program Coordinator at the VA, said they are doing everything they can to comply with the president's nationwide push to end chronic homelessness by 2015.

However, she said there are challenges along the way.

"A lot of times we have veterans who have been out on the street for years, and it's become a way of life," Mizer said. "It could be challenging for them to have to learn how to live on their own again in an apartment."

Mizer said the demographics are slightly changing as they are seeing more and more young veterans that are homeless.

"Unfortunately, a lot of the soldiers who are just getting out of the military didn't plan real well or for whatever reason are ending up in our shelters," Mizer said.

Kevin Jackson is a 58-year-old Vietnam veteran currently staying at a homeless shelter through the VA.

Jackson hit some tough economic times and has been homeless for seven years.

"I lost my apartment, then my mom got sick," Jackson said. "I stayed on the streets living under bridges and living in abandoned apartments and empty homes."

But thanks to some help from the VA, he is on his way to getting a new apartment through their housing program.

"It means a lot to me, you know they say there's nothing like having our own things," Jackson said.

But Mizer said the program has grown drastically. In the last few years, they have gone from two to 20 social workers who are working day and night to get veterans a better life.



"They shouldn't have to be living in shelters. They served our country, they've paid their dues and I feel really strongly about that," Mizer said.

"They need to be given a chance to live the life that they want to live."

For more information on the programs the Department of Veterans Affairs offers for homeless veterans, call the Homeless Program Coordinator at 915-564-6159.

Veterans can also call the National Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838.

Division/District/Detachment Digest

SOUTHERN DIVISION

Randy Rigg

Southern Division Nat'l. Vice Commandant

(903) 525-9521 (H) • (419) 345-8342 (C)

randyrigg@suddenlink.net

MARINES

If your Detachment has not seen a copy of the special recruiting incentive program from the



National Jr. Vice Commandant

please let me know and I will

send you a copy. This is an

excellent opportunity for a

Detachment to increase

membership and at the same time possibly their bank account.

I have been holding training during the first part of the year on the duties of the Jr. Vice Commandant and

reviewing the programs in place from National down to the

Detachment on recruiting and

membership. We have a lot of good

programs in place to recognize

members in their efforts in recruiting

and we need to make sure we take advantage of

them.

During the 2014 Southern Division Conference in Paris, TX, I will be presenting some new awards to those Detachments that have met the goals I

established on membership. While these goals may seem high to some there were a number of





Detachments that met them with no problem and they should be recognized for their efforts. In fact most of the effort should be just normal operation of a Detachment.

I look forward to a big turnout for the Southern Division Conference in Paris and there are going to be a lot of good activities going on that weekend. I know that each Department has been asked to provide training during the conference which will provide the membership with some of the best instructors the Division has to offer.

Jr. Vice Commandant, Department of Texas, Charles Ynman also joined the BVMCL to enjoy our evening!



Charles Ynman, DOT Jr. Vice Commandant & Teresa

**BRAZOS VALLEY DETACHMENT
BRYAN**

Submitted by Teresa Carpenter
Detachment Commandant
jarheadlady@aol.com

**COASTAL BEND DETACHMENT
CORPUS CHRISTI**

Submitted by Frank Alaniz
Sr. Vice Commandant
(361) 334-3146 (H) • gildrink@yahoo.com

THE WEEK OF THE

THE WEEK OF THE Birthday of our beloved Corps is very busy for all of us with appearances at Veterans Day events throughout our Detachments. But in true Marine Corps fashion we all find a spare moment or two to celebrate our Birthday! November 10th, 2013, was no different for the Brazos Valley Detachment of the Marine Corps League. Over 100 guests attended our quaint birthday celebration which is held each year at Messina Hof Winery in College Station. This year we had a special guest of honor, Gen. Mike Hagee, 33rd Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. Gen. Hagee spoke about the importance of celebrating the Corps birthday and the camaraderie that we all share as Marines.

The BVMCL was pleased to have General Hagee as our guest.



Gen. Hagee & Teresa

**THE FRED FABELA
FUNDRAISER BAR-B-QUE**

The members of the Coastal Bend Detachment and their families were given a challenge: “Give the Fred Fabela Bar-B-Que fundraiser a 110% effort.” In



typical Marine fashion they did not give 110%; that would be too little.

They and their families gave more like **150%**. No matter where one looked members of the Detachment and their hard working families were scurrying around making up plates, serving as drive up hosts and hostesses, and in the kitchen the unsung members of the Coastal Bend Auxiliary were doing a tremendous job of keeping things going.

Coordinating what appeared to be chaos was Chairman of the event Frank Alaniz. Outside at the bar-b-que pit I saw Sal Vera and some great

supporters whose names I missed, keeping the fires going and turning out some of the best bar-b-que I have ever tasted.

To me the highlight of the day was having the person we have all sorely missed for months on end, Fred Fabela, being in attendance for a while. The man continues to be an inspiration.



Irma & Fred Fabela

Fred and Irma have expressed their thanks to everyone who made the event a memorable one for them. I in turn thanked Fred and Irma for bringing the members and their families closer together at least for one day.

ON DECEMBER 7TH the members of the Detachment turned out in great numbers for the annual Toys for Tots Bikers Run on a cold, rainy morning. Bikers, as always, were very generous in dropping off toys and cash for the effort. Hats off to Marine A. D. Perez who has chaired this event since the start of the “Bikers Run.”



Ready for action...



**COMANCHE PEAK DETACHMENT
GRANBURY**

Submitted by Con Shuck, *Chaplain*
(817) 326-6132 (H) • gysee1369@yahoo.com

Local Marines Help See to Needs
Hood County News, November 13, 2013...

THE COMANCHE PEAK Marine Corps League Detachment #1297 heard that Mission Granbury’s pantry supplies were dwindling so they voted to do something about it. Representatives from the Marine Corps League recently dropped by the pantry at Mission Granbury with donation checks totaling \$1,200. The Marine Corps League donated \$1,000, with additional private donations of \$200 from some good folks at the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church.



L-R: Alex Azar, Con Shuck, Mission Granbury Executive Director April Mitchell, Shannon Teal, Ray Beard, Mission Granbury Board President Lance Terry and Mission Granbury's Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator Crystal Moore.

providing honors for a deceased Marine.



Firing Detail at Santa Teresa High School Veterans' Ceremony

**DEANE HAWKINS DETACHMENT
EL PASO**

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

THE DEANE HAWKINS

Detachment has remained very active this past three months.

Members of the Detachment helped the Socorro High School NJROTC organize and conduct the Annual Area #9 Stars and Stripes Drill meet in October.

It is also very active with the El Paso Young Marines, which now have an average of 65 young boys and girls presently in the program. They participated in the Veterans Parade and the El Paso Sun Carnival Parade. Additionally, they have been assigned a section of the 601 Highway for "Adopt a Highway."

They also helped the Marine Corps Reserve Unit with Toys for Tots.



The Detachment and the 19th Rifle Company have combined to form a Rifle Honor Detail for funerals and other special events. It held a Firing Detail at the Santa Teresa High School NJROTC for a Veterans Day Ceremony as well as

The Detachment also participated in the following activities:

- Fort Bliss Gala Ceremony on November 7th, 2013, in which Fort Bliss recognized veterans from the various veterans organizations for their contributions to the community. Bob Way was one of the veterans who was recognized.
- Participated in putting up and taking down the Avenue of Flags at the Fort Bliss National Cemetery on the 8th and 12th of November.
- Involved in helping the United American Veterans Organization to organize and run the El Paso Veterans Parade on November 9th.
- Participated in the Marine Corps Ball that was hosted by the 19th Rifles.
- Continues to provide coffee and snacks at the VA clinic.

Because of the government shut down this year, the Deane Hawkins Detachment was very actively involved in the Toys for Tots program and helped the Marine Corps Reserve Unit in El Paso deliver and pick up Toys for Tots boxes as well as helping to deliver toys to various organizations and schools in the El Paso Las Cruces area.



Detachment members separating toys for Toys for Tots.



Devil Dog Doings

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

WOOF! WOOF! Dogs:

Here's to a giant greyhound leaping, frolicking, barking, tail wagging, hind paw hiking into 2014. I challenge each dog to aspire to the next level. If you are not a DD, get your paper work in for advancement at the Grand Growl in Paris in March. (The Chief Devil Dog will be in Paris for the growl.) If you are not a PDD, get your paper work in for advancement at the Supreme Growl in West Virginia. If you are a PDD, I challenge you to recruit a new dog this year. If all of the above occurs, we will have a great year.



The Assistant Chief Devil Dog for Southern Division sent me a status report for the pounds in the pack. We need to get to work to reduce the number of "not paid." It is also alarming the number of pounds who have not filed their 990N or are late in filing. It's like going to the head, dogs -

the work is not complete until the paperwork is done. It is time to get off and on.

I have a male Boston terrier, who I think has an amenable attitude – if you can't eat it, or hump it, then just hike your hind paw and wet it down (or words to that effect). This doesn't relate to anything I have previously written, it's just -- *admirable*.



I will see you in Paris. In the mean time keep your nose up, your tail in the wind, and watch out for leaking fire hydrants.



Auxiliary Announcements



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

GREETINGS!

We are gearing up for the Southern Division Conference to be held in Paris March 14th – 16th, 2014. We really need you to send in your ads to Bernie O'Dell for the Conference Program Book. It will really help with planning.

Conference registration forms, ad forms, and hotel information is currently on the

Department web site. This is the first conference that will be sponsored by the Auxiliary and we want to do a bang-up job. Auxiliary members will be assigned to work the registration desk Thursday,



Friday, and Saturday. We are looking forward to seeing you in Paris (Texas, that is).



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

I WOULD LIKE TO thank the

Galveston County Detachment for all their hard work for a great Department Fall Staff Meeting. Thank you for making sure our auxiliary had everything we needed for the weekend.

Thank You

At our Saturday morning's joint meeting I presented a plaque to Marie Williams for all the work she has done for the Auxiliary for over 31 years. We dedicated our Saturday meeting to her. We learned at the end of our meeting that she had passed. She will be missed greatly.

Happy New Year to all! I hope all of you are well and have not gotten the flu that is going around.



We have a lot going on this year:

- Marine West Expo at Camp Pendleton, CA, January 29th – 30th. George and I are going; it will be our first.

- Mid-Winter Meeting – February 14th – 15th in Falls Church, VA.

- Southern Division Conference in Paris, TX, March 14th – 15th. This is hosted by the Department of Texas Auxiliary. Please place ads in the program book, having them printer ready and send to Bernie O'Dell at 515 Hall St., Graham, TX 76450 or e-mail to bernieodell@sbcglobal.net. Make your checks payable to the "Department of Texas MCLA."

- Department of Texas Convention - June 5th – 8th, Waco, TX, at the Clarion Hotel on South 4th Street.



I hope to see a lot of you

at Southern Division in March and Department of Texas Convention in June. We have lots of fun at our Flea Scratch, so all of you who would like to become a flea, don't miss out. Be there and join us.

Just think... in six weeks it will be Spring. Time sure goes by fast when you're having fun.

Remember a smile does not cost anything and it makes you and the people around you feel good. Be nice because we all have our days of hard times in life.



FLEA FIDDLINGS

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



THE FLEAS HAD A wonderful,

fun-filled, pirate-themed Scratch in Galveston in October. We had only one dog "walk the plank" and he got our undivided flea-infested attention!

We had 11 pestering fleas who dressed as pirates for the "Best Costume" Contest.

The winners were:



Past Big Flea Connie Chambers and new pledge Mary Francis Bradford were the judges. We were overjoyed to have all but two units represented by partying fleas.



“Pirate Fleas” (L-R): Viola Trevino, Johnnie Lopez, Dorcas Simpson, Karren Ogg, Barbara Hixson, & Toni Hurtado

The Hide is now in preparation for the Southern Division Conference which is being hosted by the Department of Texas MCLA (Fleas also). The theme will be Parisian-Mardi Gras as Paris, TX, is the location for the Southern Division Scratch. Regalia will be Eiffel Tower/ Mardi Gras inspired. Attire should be Flea vests/shirts and caps. Don't forget your ribbons and passports. If



you can devise a Parisian/French/Mardi Gras costume/mask, please do!!

We are very excited to welcome the

Auxiliary Units from Oklahoma and Arkansas to join in our Flea Scratch as prospective Eggs and Crawlers. All current paid up MCLA members are eligible to join our Hide and we would love to have Oklahoma and Arkansas represented and share in our Devil Dog pestering antics.



Please visit the National web site at www.nationalmoddfleas.org for more info regarding our purpose and charitable endeavors. Any interested prospective flea can contact me directly and we can proceed with adding more fun and partying and Devil Dog bitin' to your life.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all MCLA members and MODD Fleas to

support the Southern Division Conference by selling ads to your local businesses, fellow veterans organizations, and your own Units/Detachments to be placed in the program for the conference so we may provide the necessary welcome and support to our Southern Division Marines and Auxiliaries.

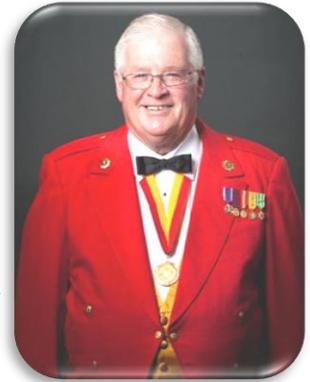


Hope to see you all in Paris – OOH LA LA!!!!

National News

Commandant
Jim Tuohy's
Communications

JTuhoy@MCLeague.org
Semper Fi Article –
Sep/Oct 2013...



WELCOME TO ANOTHER great

issue of our *Semper Fi* magazine. As I travel across the country visiting our Departments and Detachments, I receive many accolades about the magazine and the great variety of content that is published in it. Thanks to our National Executive Director and Editor Mike Blum and Bill Hudgins and the staff of Hammock Publishing for the fine job they do for everyone who receives this publication.

We completed another great Modern Day Marine Military Expo at Quantico in September. It began with a Young Marines/U.S. Marine Youth

Foundation Golf outing that was kicked off by General Gray. On

Tuesday, the ribbon was cut and the Expo officially opened. Those of you who visited saw some of the latest and greatest technology available to our Marines.

A special thanks to Neil Corley and a host of Marine Corps League members who volunteered



their time working the booths and passing out *Semper Fi* magazines and information on the Expo to the attendees. A special welcome back to our PNC, Vic Voltaggio, who was returning from his recovery from open heart surgery. Our National Sr. Vice John Kovalcik should be back in shape in another month or two as he recovers from his recent surgery.



In October I had the opportunity to visit the Department of Florida Fall Staff Meeting where we enjoyed an outstanding conference and plenty of friendship.

By the time most of you read this, we will have returned to Washington for the Marine Corps Birthday celebration. Commandant General James Amos placed a wreath at the Marine Corps War Memorial on the morning of 10 November and the President's Own and the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon performed. That evening we were guests at the Commandant's Ball, which is always a spectacular event with close to 3,000 guests in attendance.

On the morning of 11 November, Veterans



Day, we attended a breakfast at the White House and greeted the President and First Lady and

the Vice President and his wife. There were some 100 people in attendance, and it was an enjoyable morning.

From the White House we were taken by bus to Arlington National Cemetery for the Veterans Day Services, where the National Commanders and Commandant were invited to watch the President place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and then to join the President in his box while he gave his Veterans Day remarks.

At the conclusion of the program, our recently elected National Auxiliary President Jackie Hunter,



MCL National Executive Director Mike Blum and I placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which is always a very distinct honor.

Remember to keep all of our troops who are in harm's way in your prayers and thoughts until they are once again safely home with their families.

*Semper Fi Article –
Jan/Feb 2014...*

NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO RECRUIT

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season. After a whirlwind week in November in



Washington, we headed home to unpack and repack another suitcase and head out on a well-deserved vacation for a few weeks to Arizona.

In December, I joined General Gray, our 29th Commandant, for the Tree of Lights program at the Clubs of Quantico. This annual event supports the United States Marines Youth Foundation. The tree is illuminated while General Gray reads the scroll of honor. The scroll lists all who have generously donated to the Tree of Lights. Donations support the Youth Physical Fitness Program held in high schools throughout the country.

I received a letter from Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel extending his personal thanks to the Marine Corps League for the contributions that the League makes to support our service members, veterans and their families.

The Secretary states that he is committed to working with the Marine Corps League and other veterans' organizations to speak with one voice to express our nation's obligation to promote successful futures for those who have sacrificed so much to defend the freedoms we hold dear.



We owe it to these veterans who served, to also

ready to support them through education, employment, and wellness initiatives.

This is where the Marine Corps League has a commitment. Since we have Detachments and Departments in virtually every state, many close to Marine Corps bases and transition centers, our members need to focus their efforts in working with recruiters, and active-duty Marines, in placing our Marine Corps League membership brochures in recruiting offices as well as transition centers.

We need you Leaguers to work together and staff these transition facilities to get the word out to these young Marines and FMF Corpsmen about the League and the benefits of belonging to our organization as they transition back into the community.

Let's not forget our recruit depots: When our new Marines have just earned that Eagle, Globe

and Anchor and the title of "Marine." Be on board on

graduation day and greet these new Marines, tell them about the Marine Corps League and the benefits of becoming a member,

such as most Detachments offering free membership for active duty Marines. This is a plus over some of the other organizations that do not promote this benefit.

Our National Jr. Vice Commandant has announced a membership drive incentive. Detachments that recruit the most new members between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014 will receive \$1,000. These must be **new members only**, not reinstated members. The challenge is out. Are you up to it?

In closing, I want to extend wishes for a very Happy and prosperous New Year to everyone. Please remember to keep our troops in harm's way in your thoughts and prayers until they return home safely to their families.



\$1,000



From the Front

San Diego (AP)
October 11, 2013...



U.S. Marines of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion 5th Marines, patrol on February 7, 2005, as residents return to rebuild their lives after a full scale U.S. invasion to crush insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq. U.S. forces say that, despite lingering anger over the scale of destruction, their strict security measures since invading Fallujah in November 2004, in the most intense urban battle since the Vietnam War, now make the former insurgent stronghold in the "Sunni Triangle" one of the safest cities in Iraq. (Photo by Scott Peterson/Getty Images)

SHIRLEY PARRELLO knows that

her youngest boy believed in his mission in Iraq. But as she watches Iraqi government forces try to retake the hard-won city of Fallujah from al-Qaida-linked fighters, she can't help wondering if it was worth Marine Lance Cpl. Brian Parrello's sacrifice.



"I'm starting to feel that his death was in vain," the West Milford, NJ, woman said of her 19-year-old son, who died in an explosion there on January 1, 2005. "I'm hoping that I'm wrong. But things aren't looking good over there right now."

The 2004 image of two charred American

Marine LCpl. Brian Parrello

bodies hanging from a bridge as a jubilant crowd pelted them with shoes seared the city's name into the American psyche. The brutal house-to-house battle to tame the Iraqi insurgent stronghold west of Baghdad cemented its place in U.S. military history.

But while many are disheartened at Fallujah's recent fall to Islamist forces, others try to place it in the context of Iraq's history of internal struggle since the ouster of Dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. And they don't see the reversal as permanent.

"I'm very disappointed right now, very frustrated," says retired Marine Col. Mike Shupp, who commanded the regimental combat team that secured the city in late 2004. "But this is part of this long war, and this is just another fight, another battle in this long struggle against terrorism and oppression."



Ret. Marine Col. Mike Shupp

Former scout sniper Earl J. Catagnus, Jr. fought and bled in the taking of that ancient city on the banks of the Euphrates River. Now a military historian, Catagnus feels the battle has taken on an almost disproportionate importance in the American mind.



Earl J. Catagnus, Jr.

"If you watch 'NCIS' or anything that has a Marine... they always say, 'Oh, I was in Fallujah,'" says the Purple Heart recipient, who left the military as a staff sergeant in 2006 and is now an assistant professor of history at Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, PA. "For the new generation, it's because everybody keeps mentioning it. And that is the battle that really made a warrior a warrior."

"It's just for us as Americans, because we've elevated that battle to such high standards... that it becomes turned into the 'lost cause,' the Vietnam War syndrome."

In the annals of the Marine Corps, the battle for Fallujah looms large.

The fighting there began in April 2004 after four security contractors from Blackwater USA were killed and the desecrated bodies of two were hung from a bridge. The so-called second battle of Fallujah - code-named Operation Phantom Fury - came seven months later.

For several bloody weeks, the Marines went house to house in what has been called some of the heaviest urban combat involving the Corps since



Richard Lowry

the Battle of Hue City, Vietnam, in 1968. Historian Richard Lowry, who interviewed nearly 200 veterans of the Iraq battle, likens it to "a thousand SWAT teams going through the city, clearing criminals out."

"They entered darkened rooms, kicking down doors, never knowing if they would find an Iraqi family hunkered down in fear or an Islamist terrorist waiting to shoot them and kill them," says Lowry, author of the book "New Dawn: The Battles for Fallujah."

About 100 Americans died and another 1,000 were wounded during the major fighting there, Lowry says, adding that it's difficult to overstate Fallujah's importance in the Iraq war.

"Up until that time, the nation was spiraling into anarchy, totally out of control," says Lowry, a Vietnam-era submarine veteran. "The United States Marine Corps — with help from the Army and from the Iraqis — went into Fallujah and cleared the entire city and brought security to Anbar Province, allowing the Iraqis to hold their first successful election."

And that is why the al-Qaida takeover is such a bitter disappointment for many.

Former Marine Lance Cpl. Garrett Anderson's unit lost 51 members in the city. When he considers whether the fighting was in vain,



Marine LCpl. Garrett Anderson

it turns his stomach.

“As a war fighter and Marine veteran of that battle, I feel that our job was to destroy our enemy. That was accomplished at the time and is why our dead will never be in vain. We won the day and the battle,” said the 28-year-old, who now studies filmmaking in Portland, OR. “If Marines were in that city today there would be dead Qaida all over the streets again, but the reality is this is only the beginning of something most people who have been paying attention since the war began knew was going to end this way.”

On Tuesday, the site **duffelblog.com** posted a satirical column about two former Marines raising \$1,300 on Kickstarter to go back and retake the city in time for the battle’s tenth anniversary.

“We paid for that city and we’re keeping it!” one fictional commenter tells the site.

The piece had more than 30,000 Facebook likes by Wednesday.

Lowry says the U.S. “abandoned” the region’s Sunnis, paving the way for a Shiite-led government that has “gotten into bed with the Iranians.” He adds: “There is a polarization returning between the Shiites and the Sunnis... and it’s spreading.”

Catagnus and others say the situation is more nuanced than that.

A sergeant with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, at the time, Catagnus was gearing up to go out when insurgents detonated the improvised bomb about eight feet away. Despite a concussion and shrapnel wounds to his face, he never left the line.

While conceding that the battle helped change doctrine for urban warfare, he thinks Fallujah has become politicized — especially here at home.

“There’s a lot of fiery language around it,” he says. “I do not see this as the culmination of the failure of all of our efforts — yet.”

Roman Baca, who served in Fallujah for about eight months as a sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserves, says it’s hard for him to hear people question the military’s work there. During his time, his machine gun platoon spent many of its days patrolling local villages, delivering school supplies to students and food and water.



Roman Baca

The 39-year-old New York City man returned to Iraq last year to conduct a dance workshop. He’s most worried about what the outbreak of violence means for the Iraqis.

“You think of those kids in the villages that were so young who are now either teenagers or in their 20s,” he says. “What does it mean for them? What does it mean for the interpreters who were in danger then and are in danger again because they helped the Americans and their cause?”

For some veterans, the reversal of fortunes in Anbar, while unfortunate, is hardly surprising.

David R. Franco survived a roadside bomb blast outside Fallujah in 2005. The retired Marine suffers from back pain, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other ailments that send him to doctors and psychologists regularly.



David R. Franco

“To me, it was just a matter of time for it to happen again and for al-Qaida to go back in there,” said the 53-year-old veteran of Moorpark, CA, who retired as a sergeant major. “It’ll be a constant thing.” Still, Franco — whose son was also wounded in Iraq — says it was worth it.

So does Nick Popaditch.

On April 7, 2004, Popaditch’s tank was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade as he rolled through the city.



Ret. GSgt. Nick Popaditch

Shrapnel tore through his sinuses and destroyed his right eye — now strikingly replaced by a prosthetic bearing the Marine Corps logo.

The gunnery sergeant’s actions earned him a Silver Star and Purple Heart, but cost him his career. The San Diego-area man is studying to be a high school math teacher, and he refuses to second-guess the recent events in Iraq.

“There’s a lot of downtrodden people there who got a shot at a free life, at freedom,” says Popaditch, 46, who ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2012. “And if the bad guys come back

into control, that's not something I can control 8,000 miles away here. I'm just proud of the fact that when it came time to stand and fight for those things, those concepts of freedom, liberty, human rights... I'm glad my nation did it."

For his part, Shupp, the former colonel, is convinced that many of those holding sway in Fallujah aren't al-Qaida, but simply "armed thugs." Even before the U.S.-led invasion, many Iraqis considered the city a "crossroads of criminal activity," and his troops were never meant to be "an army of occupation."

"It's one of the lifetime struggles of good versus bad," says Shupp, who now works as a defense lobbyist in Washington, D.C. "And this is the time for Iraq to come forward. We gave them all the tools. We gave them the ability to fight these guys."

MARINE CORPS HISTORY

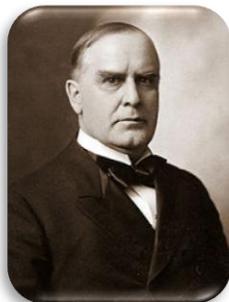
*The Spanish American War
"Remember the Maine!"*

15 FEBRUARY 1898



28 Marines and 232 seamen lost their lives when the battleship Maine was mysteriously sunk by an explosion in the harbor of Havana, Cuba. Though no definitive evidence linked the Spanish with the sinking, the cry went up, "Remember the Maine!," and by late April the U.S. and Spain were at war.

President McKinley could have selected no finer ship from the U.S. Naval fleet to display the Colors in Havana than the vessel he dispatched from Key West on January 25th.



President McKinley

The *U.S.S. Maine* was an impressive battleship. At 319 feet long and displacing 6,682 tons it was the largest ship ever to enter the harbor at Havana. Though only a second class battleship, the nine-year-old vessel was

among the most impressive of the U.S. Naval fleet. One of our country's first steel warships, the *Maine* was unique in the fleet due to the fact that it had been totally designed and built by Americans.

It was the largest ship ever actually constructed in a U.S. Navy yard. Painted the bright white of a peace-time U.S. Naval vessel, the impressive battleship boasted



U.S.S. Maine Battleship

four of the huge 10-inch breech-loading rifles in addition to its smaller battery armaments.



Capt. Charles D. Sigsbee

Most of Capt. Charles D. Sigsbee's 24 naval officers were graduates of The Academy at Annapolis. At least 20% of the 290 sailors they commanded were foreign born men who sought now to serve their adopted country.

A 40-man Marine guard brought the ship's total strength to 355 American servicemen. The leathernecks,

under the leadership of five non-coms, were commanded by 1st Lt. Albertus W. Catlin who had graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with the class of 1890. (Sixteen years later as a major, Catlin would earn the Medal of Honor in the engagement at Vera Cruz, Mexico.) Nearly a fourth of the Marines were foreign-born, American immigrants.



1st Lt. Albertus W. Catlin

Upon arrival in Havana on Tuesday, January 25th, the *U.S.S. Maine* anchored at Bouy #4, a space reserved for war ships. Despite this, the potential for the unrest in Cuba to turn violent, and the *Maine's* impressive array of military power, the mission was a peaceful one. Capt. Sigsbee informed his crew that there would be no shore liberty while in Cuba, but for the most part the men were content to spend a brief time riding peacefully at anchor under the tropical



sun of the Caribbean. After this short visit they would return to New Orleans... in time for Mardi Gras.

The Spanish welcomed, though somewhat nervously, the arrival of the *Maine*, and sent a case of sherry to the

officer's mess along with an invitation to a bull fight at the "plaza de toros." Capt. Sigsbee and a few of his officers dutifully accepted the invite, attending in civilian attire. On his visit ashore the commander of the *Maine* was at one point handed an anti-American propaganda pamphlet by someone in the crowd. Scrawled across it was the message, "Watch out for your ship."

Beyond the scrawled message however, there was little more to indicate that the crew of the *Maine* was facing any undue danger. None-the-less, as a matter of prudence, Sigsbee ordered Lt. Catlin to keep his Marines at a careful state of alert.

The *Maine*, simply by her presence, seemed to have a reassuring effect upon the American Foreign Minister. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee noted this in a communication to President McKinley and requested that when the *Maine's* tenure in Havana expired, another Naval vessel be dispatched to replace her. By Tuesday, February 15th, the *Maine* had been at anchor for three weeks without incident. Though Lt. Catlin dutifully kept his Marines at a high state of alert, the crew of the *Maine's* biggest problem became boredom.

By the artificial light in his cabin that evening, Capt. Sigsbee was writing a letter to his family when Marine fifer C.H. Newton began playing "Taps" to signal the end of the day. "I laid down my pen to

listen to the notes of the bugle, which were singularly beautiful in the oppressive stillness of the night," he wrote.

"The Marine bugler, Newton, who was rather

given to fanciful effects, was evidently doing his best. During his pauses the echoes floated back to the ship with singular distinctness, repeating the strains of the bugle fully and exactly." It was a dark, moonless



Gen. Fitzhugh Lee

night as the *Maine* sat idly on the smooth waters of the Caribbean harbor, anchored at peace between the Spanish cruiser *Alfonso XII* and the American passenger ship *City of Washington*.

It was ten minutes after nine when Newton blew his haunting version of "Taps," and when the last note had sounded, all was quiet. Newton returned below deck where most of the enlisted men were billeted. In his cabin, Capt. Sigsbee picked up his pen to finish his letter. On deck, Lt. John Hood was finishing the day with a fine cigar. As he relished the smoke he noticed someone walking to the starboard side of the ship. Approaching, Hood recognized the familiar face of Lt. John Blandon as the latter leaned against the railing to peer off at the lights of Havana. It was 9:40 p.m.

"You asleep?" Hood asked with a slight laugh.

"No, I'm on watch," Blandon answered.

And then, the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded!



Capt. Sigsbee in the Captain's Cabin aboard the *Maine*

"I was enclosing my letter in its envelope when the explosion came," Capt. Sigsbee later testified. "It was a bursting, rending, and crashing roar of immense volume, largely metallic in character. It was followed by heavy, ominous metallic sounds. There was a trembling and lurching motion of the vessel, a list to port. The electric lights went out. Then there was intense blackness and smoke.

"The situation could not be mistaken. The *Maine* was blown up and sinking. For a moment the instinct of self preservation took charge of me, but this was immediately dominated by the habit of command."

Marine Pvt. William Anthony was on the



Explosion of the *U.S.S. Maine*

weather deck when the *Maine* literally erupted.

Being Captain Sigsbee's orderly, his first concern was for his captain. Though the darkness of the harbor was now awash with flame, the passageways inside the ship had been plunged into total darkness, save for flames here and there that flickered amid a heavy pall of smoke. With no concern for his own safety, Anthony searched the passageways until he found his captain, moving towards the deck of the listing and rapidly sinking battleship. In the dim flicker of the flames, Anthony calmly saluted his captain and reported, "Sir, I have to inform you that the ship has blown up and is sinking." Both men then quickly proceeded to the weather deck, where Capt. Sigsbee directed Lt. Cmdr. Richard Wainwright to immediately post sentries around the ship. The first inclination was that the *Maine* was under attack.

Lt. Catlin later testified that he heard the sound like the "crack of a pistol and (then) the second (was) a roar that engulfed the ship's entire forward section." Indeed the entire forward section of the *Maine* had broken almost entirely in half.

On the weather deck the officers began to organize the survivors. All but two officers survived the explosion, their quarters being located aft on the battleship. The enlisted seamen and Marines were quartered below deck, most of them in the forward section where the explosion had occurred and just two decks above the powder magazines. Lt. Hood had witnessed the explosion from his vantage point on the deck with Lt. Blandon. He later described the scene. *"The whole starboard of the deck, with its sleeping berth, burst out and flew into space, as a crater of flame came through, carrying with it missiles and objects of all kinds, steel, wood, and human. (After the explosion) all was still except for the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, and the crackling of flame in the wreckage."*

Lt. Blandon foggily remembered an explosion from the port side, followed by *"a perfect rain of missiles of all descriptions, from huge pieces of cement to blocks of wood, steel railings, fragments of gratings, and all the debris that would be detachable in an explosion."* A block of cement struck Blandon in the head, but he recovered quickly and joined Lt. Hood on the poop deck, now ankle-deep in water, to begin lowering boats.

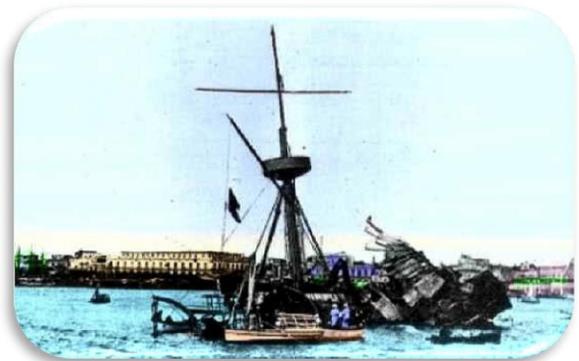
There were no Marine guards for Lt. Cmdr. Wainwright to post about the ship per his captain's orders. Nearly three-fourths of the Marines were killed in the explosion. The *U.S.S. Maine* was beyond hope, almost severed at the bow, and sinking badly.

Reluctantly, Captain Sigsbee ordered the few survivors on the decks to abandon ship. As the waters of the harbor continued to reach out to claim the body of the American battleship, Sigsbee directed its evacuation. When no one else was left alive, the captain was the last to depart.

By the time gigs from the nearby *City of Washington* and *Alfonso XII* could be dispatched to the scene of the disaster, little of the *Maine* remained above water. Through the darkness of the night the small boats searched the debris-covered waters of the harbor for survivors, Captain Sigsbee standing in one of them calling into the blackness: *"If there is anyone living on board, for God's sake say so!"* His desperate cries met only silence.

As morning dawned across the harbor, only 103 members of the crew of the *U.S.S. Maine* had survived. Two of the ship's 26 officers went down with the ship, along with 222 sailors and 28 Marines. Of the 103 survivors, 59 were wounded, eight of them so severely that they later died as a result of their wounds. Total losses for the once proud battleship reached 260 dead or missing, a casualty rate of 75%. Among the missing was Fifer Newton whose last, memorable rendition of "Taps" had been played not only for his comrades now at rest in the deep, but for himself. In a sense it had been his own haunting eulogy.

Across the waters of the harbor, little remained of the 319 foot battleship. Only a small pile of twisted metal and the protruding mast of the *U.S.S. Maine*, still proudly "displaying the Colors."



Remains of the U.S.S. Maine after the explosion

In the hours after the explosion aboard the *Maine*, the small gigs from the American passenger steamer and the Spanish warship *Alphonso XII* had given good account of themselves in braving the darkness, fires and secondary explosions of the sinking American battleship in search of survivors.

Having witnessed this first hand, Capt. Sigsbee was reluctant to immediately blame the Spanish. In his first telegram to Washington he reported details of the event, then closed with the observation that “Public opinion should be suspended until further report.”

There would indeed be further reports, both officially and unofficially. Two days after the explosion the Navy created the “Sampson Board,” an official inquiry into the cause of the disaster. On February 21st the Naval Court of Inquiry began their 4-week investigation in Havana. Simultaneously, the Spanish began their own inquiry into the matter.

It would not be an easy process. Capt. Sigsbee remembered “a bursting, rending, and crashing roar of immense volume... followed by heavy, ominous metallic sounds.”

Lt. Blandon remembered a single explosion on the port side, followed by “a perfect rain of missiles of all descriptions.” Lt. Hood, who had been next to Blandon to witness the explosion first hand remembered the explosion on the starboard side.

Marine Lt. Catlin reported what he thought to be *two* explosions, the first sounding like the “crack of a pistol and the second a roar that engulfed the ship’s entire forward section.” Some survivors heard one explosion, others a deep rumble followed by one loud explosion, still others a series of explosions. Reaching any kind of reasonable determination as to what caused the destruction of the *Maine* would be a challenge not only to the official Board of Inquiry, but to historians for the following century.



Back in the United States there were few questions about what had caused the *Maine* to suddenly explode in the darkness of night, killing 260 American men. Two days after the incident the headline in the *New York World* read: “MAINE EXPLOSION CAUSED BY BOMB OR TORPEDO?”

The *New York Journal* was more specific: “THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY.” Artists created renditions showing how Spanish saboteurs had fastened an underwater mine to the hull of the *Maine*, then detonated it from shore. Randolph Hearst



Randolph Hearst

offered a \$50,000 reward for “Conviction of the Criminals” and announced that “Naval Officers (were) Unanimous That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.”

On March 6th the Spanish government requested the recall of U.S. Cuban Consul Fitzhugh Lee. In the United States citizens gathered solemnly at Capitol Hill and outside the White House to mourn the loss of 260 lives. Tensions continued to mount while the Navy conducted its official inquiry. In a Broadway bar in New York City a patron lifted his glass and said, “Gentlemen, Remember the *Maine!*” A reporter from the *Journal* happened to be in the bar and wrote about the incident. When it was published America had a new slogan... “Remember The *Maine.*” Spaniards were burned in effigy in cities and towns across America and soon the slogan became a war cry:

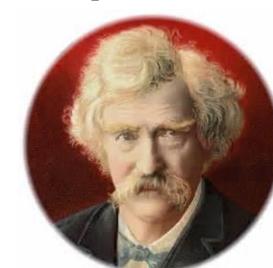
“Remember the *Maine*, and To Hell with Spain!”

To be sure there were cooler heads, even as the tensions mounted. Amid the cries of the firebrands and the war hawks, U.S. Speaker of the House Thomas B. Reed said, “A war will make a large market for gravestones.”

Popular author Samuel



Thomas B. Reed



Mark Twain

Clemmens (Mark Twain) continued to speak out against any possible war,

urging the United States not to become embroiled in the affairs of distant nations.

Ten days after the explosion, Under Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt cabled Commodore George Dewey with the U.S. Pacific fleet in Hong Kong.

“Keep in full coal,” the communiqué stated. “In the event of declaration of war with Spain, your duty will be to see that the Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic coast and then offensive operations in Philippine Islands.” Itching for a fight and convinced of the truth of his earlier remarks about the glory of war to the Naval War College, Roosevelt went so far as to refer to President McKinley as a “milquetoast.”

McKinley, who had served in the Civil War and participated at the tragic battle at Antietam in the earliest days of that war, told one visitor to the White House: “I have been through one war; I have seen the dead piled up; and I do not want to see another.”

But the makings of war could not be avoided. As a matter of preparedness, President McKinley requested a \$50 million war fund. On March 8th the U.S. Congress stunned Spanish observers when it unanimously approved the request. In San Francisco



on the western coast, the battleship *Oregon* was dispatched for the Caribbean. On March 14th the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera began steaming for the Cape Verde Islands. Throughout the period the yellow journalism of competing newspapers inflamed the public with more and more stories. (During the period the *New York Journal* printed an unprecedented eight pages each day related to the *U.S.S. Maine* disaster.)

Late in March the Spanish concluded its official inquiry and delivered the findings to the U.S. government on March 25th. On the same day the Spanish government informed Washington that their investigators had determined the *Maine* had been destroyed by “internal combustion,” the President announced the results of his recently received Sampson Inquiry. When he announced to the American public that the Naval Board of Inquiry had



Theodore Roosevelt

determined that the *Maine* was destroyed “by an external explosion (presumably a mine),” the war cries hit a feverish pitch. (Later investigations showed it was a buildup of coal dust that caused the blow-up - not a Cuban mine.)

Two days later President McKinley sent these findings to Spain. He also issued Spain his final terms:

- Declare an armistice
- End the reconcentration policy in Cuba initiated by General Weyler
- Begin the process of granting Cuba independence

Meanwhile, Navy Secretary John Davis Long ordered the peacetime white hulls of American warships to be painted with a dull battle gray. A song titled “My Sweetheart Went Down with the *Maine*” became the tune of the day. Marine Private William Anthony, who had braved the explosions and fire of the *Maine* to seek out his captain, was brought home to a hero’s welcome. Honored by both the Navy and Marines, he was promoted to sergeant and hailed as the first true hero of the war that was still looking for an excuse to happen.



Navy Secretary John Long

The Spanish responded with some concessions, but stopped far short of granting Cuban independence. From without, the President received pressure from the Ambassadors of England, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Russia to avoid war with Spain. On April 6th the Pope indicated to the President that he would enter negotiations with Spain, requesting that the President delay any actions pending the outcome. The cry from within for

retaliation and U.S. support for the “freedom fighters” of Cuba continued to push the United States towards war. On April 4th the *New York Journal* dedicated an edition to the war brewing in Cuba and called upon the U.S. to intervene.

The press run was one million copies.

Finally, bowing to the rapidly deteriorating events in Cuba and the overwhelming cries for war at home, President McKinley asked Congress on April



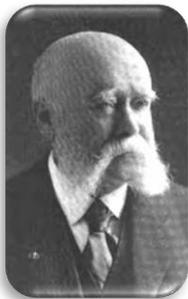
11th to authorize American intervention to end the revolution in Cuba. Five days later the road to war was cleared in Congress when an amendment offered by Colorado Congressman Henry Teller was ratified.



Congressman Henry Teller

On April 20th, while Congress still debated the request for war, President McKinley signed a Joint Resolution for war with Spain, an ultimatum that was promptly forwarded to Madrid with a call for Cuban independence. The Spanish Minister to the United States promptly demanded his passport and, with his staff, left Washington for Canada.

The following day McKinley received his answer from Madrid... General



Gen. Steward Woodford

Steward Woodford, the U.S. Minister to Spain, was handed his passport and told to leave the country. The Spanish government considered McKinley's ultimatum a declaration of war. With diplomatic relations suspended, President McKinley ordered a blockade of Cuba while the Spanish forces in Santiago began mining Guantanamo Bay.

The U.S. Naval fleet departed

Key West, Florida, on April 22nd, to carry out the President's order for a blockade of Cuba. The American Navy was well prepared for war, especially against the aging Spanish fleet. But the Spanish had at least 80,000 soldiers stationed in Cuba that would require a ground war. The U.S. Army, with only 25,706 enlisted men and 2,116 officers, was not prepared for war. On April 23rd the U.S. President issued a call for 125,000 volunteers. After months of patriotic fervor generated by tales of Spanish sabotage and atrocity, the recruiting stations were immediately swamped with eager young American would-be soldiers.



On April 25th, 1898, the war that had been looking for an excuse to happen finally became

official. The U.S. Congress passed a resolution declaring the United States to be at war with Spain. The Naval blockade of Cuba already underway, Congress made the declaration of war effective as of April 21st, thereby legitimizing military actions undertaken in the previous four days.

Under Admiral William Sampson, who had



Admiral William Sampson

earlier headed up the inquiry into the cause of the explosion on the *U.S.S. Maine*, the blockade of Cuba was already successfully underway. On the same day that war was declared, American ships bombarded the Spanish at Matanzas, Cuba. Back home Marine Sergeant William Anthony struggled

with his new role as an American hero. On a horrible night in Havana harbor he had, as the public would loudly proclaim, been a brave and daring young leatherneck. Anthony didn't think about his *heroics* too often, instead his nights and his nightmares were filled with the agonizing cries of his fellow Marines and sailors as they perished in a moment of terror. Those nightmares, and the pressures of an adoring public that could never understand the true horror of war, pushed him to drink. He may have been the first "hero" of the *Splendid Little War* but he would not be the LAST.



Sgt. William Anthony

By the time the brief war ended, William Anthony would be discharged from service and overcome by his past as well as his present. Despondent and unemployed, his body was found in Central Park on November 24th, 1899. He committed suicide at the age of 46. For the politicians who fought their wars from comfortable desks, there might be something *SPLENDID* in war. For the young men who fight in the field, *WAR IS HELL*.



Coming Attractions



Department of Texas Convention
Clarion Inn
801 S. 4th St. • Waco, TX 76706
June 5th – 8th, 2014



Mid-Winter National Staff Conference
Fairview Park Marriott
311 Fairview Park Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22042
(703) 849-9400 • **February 14th – 15th, 2014**



MCL National Convention - 2014
Embassy Suites Hotel
300 Court St. • Charleston, WV 25301
(304) 347-8700 • **August 3rd – 9th, 2014**



Southern Division Conference
Ramada Paris
3560 NE Loop 286 & Pine Mill Rd.
Paris, TX 75460
(903) 785-5545 • **March 14th – 15th, 2014**



Modern Day Marine
MCB • Quantico, VA
September 23rd – 25th, 2014



Marine South
MCB • Camp Lejeune, NC
April 9th – 10th, 2014



MCL National Convention - 2015
Scottsdale Plaza Resort
7200 N. Scottsdale Rd. • Scottsdale, AZ 85253
(480) 922-3302 • **August 9th – 15th, 2015**

DEADLINE

for
Texas Marine
Spring Edition
will be
April 15th



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



STATE CONVENTION AWARDS DEADLINES

AMERICANISM SCRAPBOOKS

Juanita O'Dell, Americanism Chairman
(940) 549-3944 (H)
juanitaodell@sbcglobal.net

Detachment Americanism scrap-
books should be turned in at the
MCL Registration Desk

**NO LATER THAN
NOON ON FRIDAY,
JUNE 6TH!** at the Convention.



Books should include all activities (from June 1st through May 31st ONLY) that the Detachment participated in or supported to further patriotism in their local, state, or national communities.

The "Americanism Questionnaire and Criteria" form (that must be in the front of the scrapbook and signed by the Detachment Commandant AND Detachment Americanism Chairman) as well as the instruction sheet can be downloaded from the Department web site.

Any questions can be directed to me via phone or e-mail.

CAM POSEY SCHOLARSHIPS

Helen F. Hicks, Chairman
Cam Posey Scholarship Committee
(972) 272-6384 (H)
corpsma@aol.com



MAY 1ST

is the DEADLINE for applications for the Cam Posey Scholarships to be in the hands of the committee chairman.

Applications are available on the Department web site. They must be filled out completely and must be accompanied with all relevant documentation.

Please mail the applications to Helen at 600 Freeman Dr., Garland, TX 75040-7759.

DETACHMENT ACTIVITY REPORTS

Amado Trevino, Chairman
Awards & Activities Committee
(361) 852-3900 (H)
atvt49@yahoo.com



APRIL 30TH

is the DEADLINE for submission of your Activity Reports. Mail those to me at 3337 Casa De Amigos Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78411 or e-mail them to me at atvt49@yahoo.com.



MARINE OF THE YEAR

Bernie O'Dell, Chairman
Marine of the Year Society
(940) 549-3944 (H)
bernieodell@sbcglobal.net



Texas MCL members are reminded that nominations for Department Marine of the Year *must be received no later than*

MAY 1ST.

There are many Marines within the Department who should be nominated for the award, and it is an honor to every individual nominated that they are so well regarded. Although only one nominee will be selected for the MOY award, all those who are nominated will be recognized at the awards ceremony.

Letters of nomination may be submitted to any member of the Society or sent directly to the Marine of the Year Chairman, Bernie O'Dell, 515 Hall St., Graham, TX 76450.



PACK DOG OF THE YEAR



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

Nominations for Pack Dog of the Year should be sent to Bob Ogg by

MAY 1ST.

They can be mailed to 840 FM 1503, Deport, TX 75435 or e-mailed to Bob at robertogg@msn.com.



VAVS BERNARD JOSEPH SHEELER AWARD

Amado Trevino, Chmn.
Awards & Activities
Committee
(361) 852-3900 (H)
atvt49@yahoo.com



The Bernard Joseph Sheeler Award was created in the year 2000 to recognize our members for their devotion to our veterans. The deadline for nominations in the form of a letter need to be sent in no later than

APRIL 30TH!

to Amado Trevino, Awards Chairman, to 3337 Casa De Amigos Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78411.

He will then help evaluate the submissions with the Co-Chairman of this committee, George Simpson.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MEMBERS:

Please submit the required documentation for those deserving Detachments & individuals, and GOOD LUCK to all!



SOUTHERN DIVISION CONFERENCE MARCH 14TH – 15TH, 2014 PARIS, TEXAS



HOTEL: Ramada Paris, 3560 NE Loop 286 & Pine Mill Road, Paris, TX 75460
(903) 785-5545. **Call for Reservations at our special rate.**
Visit www.ramada.com to view hotel accommodations.
Rates: \$70 per night with free breakfast

Make sure to mention that your reservations are for the MCL Southern Division Conference

TOUR OF PARIS ON FRIDAY:

A tour bus will take those interested to see the Eiffel Tower, the Jesus statue, and historic Paris Square that includes famous Jaxx gourmet burgers and more than 20 draft beers, specializing in Texas beers.



FRIDAY NIGHT:

An old-fashioned BBQ cooked at the Hotel parking lot on the Sgt. Jay M. Hoskins Detachment's custom cooker. Drinks and sides will be furnished.

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET:

Served by the Hotel restaurant in the Hotel Banquet Room.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS FOR ALL EVENTS IS MARCH 1ST.



ADS FOR PROGRAM:

Back/Inside Cover	\$150		Quarter Page	\$25
Full Page	100		Business Card	15
Half Page	50		Name/Single Line	10

Make checks payable to "**Marine Corps League Auxiliary**" and mail ad, along with check, to: Bernie O'Dell, 515 Hall St., Graham, TX 76450
(Ad itself can be e-mailed to bernieodell@sbcglobal.net.)

DEADLINE FOR ADS IS MARCH 1ST.

Further information is available on the Department web site: www.texasmcl.org.