



PINEYWOODS POOPSHEET December 2007

Happenings Behind the Pine Curtain

“Stay Connected, Stay Involved, and Make a Difference
Through *Your* Marine Corps League”

Pineywoods Detachment 1189
Marine Corps League

Volume 1, Issue 6 October 2007

December 2007

232nd BIRTHDAY BALL!



Members and guests of Marine Corps League Pineywoods Detachment 1189 sponsored the Birthday Ball held at VFW Post 3893 in Nacogdoches, celebrating the 232nd anniversary of the birth of the United States Marine Corps. Above left: Betty and MGySgt. Benny Benavides share a moment during the Marine Corps Birthday Ball. Above right: Sgt. and Mrs. Ted Morgan observe the festivities along with Joe Stewart. The Ball was Betty, Benny, Ted, and Joe are Detachment members.



Above left: State Representative Jim McReynolds spoke about the history of the Marine Corps as well as his own Marine memories, while Commandant Crone and District Judge Ed Klein looked on. Above right: Bag Piper Richard (Rick) Zurfluh made a splash with everyone in his authentic Tartans and excellent performance of “Taps.”

The 2007 Marine Corps Birthday Ball, celebrating the 232nd Anniversary of the creation of the Corps by the Second Continental Congress, was held 8 November at the VFW hall. This year’s speaker and Guest of Honor was State Representative Jim McReynolds. In addition to the speaker and dinner, the Detachment presented several awards to both community members and Detachment members for their past efforts.

Although not a veteran, Ronnie Bowser was presented the Distinguished Service Medal-Bronze for providing dinner to Disabled American Veterans before their monthly meeting, and for his continuing coordination of the Toys-for-Tots program in Nacogdoches and Angelina counties.

Longtime Nacogdoches residents Gean B. Hale and Edwin W. Gaston were recognized with the Distinguished Citizen Award, and Charles Boyd received a Certificate of Recognition for his patriotic display of “Old Glory.” Both Gaston and Boyd received posthumous recognition.

(Continued on page 2)



December Meeting:
At the DAV hall

20th

The Author is unknown:

“A veteran, whether active duty, retired, national guard, or reserve, is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to ‘The United States of America,’ for an amount ‘up to and including my life.’ That is honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.”

[Togetherweserved Newsletter, August 2007]

2007-2008 Officers

- Commandant—**
Roger Crone
- Sr. Vice-Commandant—**
Dan Singletary
- Jr. Vice-Commandant—**
Dennis Bradford
- Paymaster—**
Harley Holloway
- Adjutant—**
Will Lane
- Judge Advocate—**
Phil Devlin
- Chaplain—**
Billy Duke
- Sgt.-at-Arms—**
Bennie Benavides

Chaplain's Corner by Billy Duke

It was a difficult month for the Detachment. Several of our friends and colleagues have suffered health set-backs.

Benny Benavides has been in and out of the hospital many times throughout the month with continuing problems. His lovely wife Betty has also been "under the weather" during that time, as well. We were glad that they felt up to attending the Birthday Ball.

Bryan Hatten had major surgery, but is doing better. He remains in the hospital at Nacogdoches Medical Center. Stop by and say "Hello."

Our Chaplain and Brother, Billy Duke is ill and has been "out of pocket" with Shingles. Helen reported that he is doing better.

Neither Bryan nor Billy were able to attend the Ball, but we look forward to their presence among us soon.

We offer all of them our best wishes for a speedy recovery, and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.



Above: Dale Koonce at the 2005 Air show

MARINE QUOTE: "I have just returned from visiting the Marines at the front, and there is not a finer fighting organization in the world!" GEN. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, U.S. ARMY

(Continued from page 1)

Sheri Bludworth of Lowe's and Cheryl Ball of Lazyman's Tools received Certificates of Appreciation for their support of the detachment's fund raising efforts.

The Detachment recognized several of its own. Billy Duke received the Distinguished Citizen Medal-Bronze for his support of veterans at the Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic in Lufkin, his ongoing support of programs at the VFW, and for his "Can-Do" spirit and involvement with the Pineywoods Detachment.

Dan Singletary received an Individual Meritorious Commendation-Bronze for his efforts as County Veterans Service Officer, as well as his fundraising work for the Detachment.

Commandant Roger Crone selected Dennis Bradford as the Detachment Marine of the Year.

Veterans Service Officer By Dan Singletary

VA DISABILITY/COMPENSATION SYSTEM

On 6 November, the Department of Defense and Veterans Administration signed an agreement for a pilot program to begin this month to evaluate a single physical examination that would be used by DoD to determine the medical fitness of injured personnel to remain in uniform and by VA for awarding disability compensation. The Department of Veterans Affairs is commencing a study to determine the appropriate level and duration of transition payments that should be paid to all eligible veterans who are participating in a rehabilitation program. It also intends to solicit outside bids to be able to award one contract to conduct two important technical studies that will assist decisions to be made regarding the updating of our military disability system. Full details about the competitive solicitation for the studies will be available on www.fedbizopps.gov. The studies are part of the recommendations of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, co-chaired by former Sen. Bob Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. The studies will:

- * Create a schedule for rating disabilities based upon current concepts of medicine

(Continued on page 3)

TRICARE SHINGLES VACCINE

Following a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation on 19 October 2007, Tricare now covers Zostavax, the vaccine designed to prevent shingles for beneficiaries 60 and older. Shingles is a painful viral disease that affects more than one million Americans every year. More than half of those cases happen in people age 60 or older. Shingles is caused by the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox in children. It remains in the body for decades, sleeping in nerve cells along the spinal column. A shingles rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts between two and four weeks. It is painful and can be accompanied by fever, headache, chills and upset stomach. The CDC recommends a single dose of shingles vaccine for everyone age 60 and older. In a shingles prevention study done by the Veterans Administration Cooperative Trial, run by Dr. Michael Oxman out of the University of California, San Diego, Zostavax was more than 50% effective in reducing the incidence of shingles and more than 60% effective in reducing some of its associated symptoms. Even in people who suffer from the disease, most of those who were vaccinated experienced less pain. Tricare covers all immunizations recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and formally endorsed and adopted by the CDC. For more information on shingles and the vaccine refer to the CDC Web site, www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-shingles.pdf.

[Source: Tricare News Release No.07-89 dtd 13 Nov 07]

WE HAVE A WINNER!



The smiling gentleman in the center of the picture above is Charles Gordon, winner of the Pineywoods Detachment "Rifle Raffle." Pictured left to right are Carl Stanford of Lazyman Tools, Gordon, and Dennis Bradford. We thank Cheryl Ball and all the folks at Lazyman Tools and J&J Pawn, everyone who bought tickets, and all our members who sold them. The raffle was a success.

Compensation System (Continued)

independently taken into account in various disability programs of the Federal and State governments and other countries;

- * Examine the effect of an injury or combination of injuries on a veteran's loss of earnings, such as inability to work in certain occupations, and on a veteran's quality of life, such as activities of independent living, recreational and community activities, and personal relationships, including the inability to participate in favorite activities, social problems related to disfigurement or cognitive difficulties, and the need to spend increased amounts of time performing activities of daily living; and

- * Address measurement of the effect of an injury or combination of injuries on a veteran's psychological state, loss of physical integrity, and social inadaptability.

The study will make recommendations concerning the following:

- * The appropriate injuries or combination of injuries to include in the schedule;
- * The appropriate level of compensation for loss of quality of life;
- * The appropriate standard or standards for determining whether an injury or combination of injuries has caused a loss in a veteran's quality of life;
- * The appropriate level of compensation for loss of earnings; and
- * The appropriate standard or standards for determining whether an injury or combination of injuries has caused a veteran loss of earnings

[Source: VA Media Relations 8 Nov 07]

(Compensation System [Continued from page 2])

and disability, taking into account loss of quality of life and loss of earnings resulting from specific injuries or combination of injuries.

- * Examine the nature of injuries and combination of injuries for which disability compensation is payable under various disability programs of the Federal and State governments and other countries;

- * Examine the extent to which quality of life and loss of earnings are

Of Interest to Veterans

Of interest to veterans is the Deep East Texas Economic Opportunities Conference 2007 (DETCOC 2007) at the Lufkin Pitser Garrison Civic Center in Lufkin, Texas.

There will be a Veterans to Business Conference on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. to provide Veterans information on benefits available to them and how to apply for them.

Additionally, there will be a Texas Veterans Land Board presentation that night from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Detachment Meetings

2007

20 December

2008

17 January

21 February

Nomination of Officers

20 March

Election of Officers

17 April

Installation of Officers

15 May

19 June

17 July

21 August

Toys For Tots

Collection of toys at Wal-Mart

December 14 and 15

Marine Corps League

38th Annual Texas State Convention

1st weekend in June 2008

(tentative)

Corpus Christi, TX

As more information becomes available about these and additional events it will appear in future issues of your newsletter. If you have events of interest to the Detachment, contact the editor.

VETERANS DAY PARADE



On 10 November, Nacogdoches County held its annual downtown Veterans Day Parade. Many citizens turned out to pay their respect to the communities veterans from the nations wars. While some veterans opted to ride on floats representing local organizations, many more watched the festivities from the city sidewalks. As always, almost all veterans who rode the floats or who formed the color guards wore a hat other than the Marine Corps League, especially when they are officers in those groups.

Above left, Detachment members District Judge Ed Klein at the far left, and Will Lane third from right, walk as part of the Veterans Color Guard.



Above right, at the front of the Veterans of Foreign Wars float stand left-to-right, members Buck Lee and Don Kirkley. Kirkley is also VFW Post 3893 Commander.

Center, gentlemen of the Military Order of the Purple Heart pass proudly by the cameraman.

Lower left, retired Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel and World War Two veteran Paul Pearson stands proudly in the bed of the MCL prime mover driven by Dennis Bradford, while Mrs. Cecile Pearson waves at the crowd.

Lower right, Commandant Roger Crone watches as piper Richard Zurfluh entertains the citizens of Nacogdoches with the Marine Corps Hymn.

[Photos courtesy of Rich Barnhart.]



IT'S "TOYS FOR TOTS" TIME!

For the past several years a charity that collects and distributes toys to needy children has been busily growing in the East Texas area. Local man, Ronnie Bowser got involved with Toys For Tots "four or five years ago," and has been increasing the number of toys distributed each year. Last year, approximately 4500 toys were given to children in the region.

Toys For Tots is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve, which donates toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them gifts for Christmas. The program was founded in 1947 by Major Bill Hendricks, after he attempted to donate a doll his wife made to charity for Christmas. He quickly discovered there was no such program.

Hendricks' wife suggested that he start one, so he did. He and several of his Marine buddies collected and delivered about 5000 toys in Los Angeles that year. Their efforts were so successful that in 1948, Toys For Tots was launched as a national campaign. The program has run every year since.



Ronnie Bowser



Above, an early Toys For Tots publicity photo.

The mission of the program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November, and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community where the campaign is conducted. Toys collected in East Texas, stay in East Texas!

To that end, the Toys For Tots Foundation was created as a 501.c (3) charity to fund, raise funds for, and support the program. The familiar logo of the train with the name Toys For Tots on the side of the cars was designed by famous cartoonist and entertainment innovator, Walt Disney of Walt Disney Studios.

Toy For Tots partners with Disney's Worldwide Outreach Program, and some notable achievements include Out-

standing Non-Profit Organization of the Year-2003 (DMANPF), Best Children's Charity of 2003 (*Readers Digest*), one of the Top Ten Charities of 2003 on *Forbes* "Gold Star" list, consistently ranked higher on the Philanthropy 400 between 2001 and 2006, and received a 4-Star rating from the Charity Navigator in 2005 and 2006

Bowser, the East Texas Coordinator for Nacogdoches and Angelina Counties, said, "This year, collection efforts will culminate with a Radio Toy Drive over Clear Channel Radio stations on 14 and 15 December. Locally, Danny Merrill and KYKX 105.1 FM will participate, and toys will be collected at the Wal-Mart stores in both Nacogdoches and Lufkin. Anyone wishing to donate a new, unwrapped toy can leave it there. We hope everyone will donate just one toy."

Marines giving out toys frequently wear their full "Dress Blues" uniform as shown in the photos. Nationally, approximately 19.2 million toys were distributed in 2006!



Above, 1stSgt John Catalinie gives out toys at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, New Orleans, Louisiana in December 2006. [Photo by Navy PO1 Shaun Graham, *Navy Times*]

**Pineywoods Detachment 1189
Marine Corps League**

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**Submission deadline: 5th/month

A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.

In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.

Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.

A lone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,

Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,

"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!

Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..

To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.

No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas

'Gram always remembers."
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam

And now it is my turn and so, here I am.
I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.

I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother..

Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said,
"harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?"

It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.

Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

Merry Christmas!



**"Once a Marine,
Always a Marine!"
Semper Fidelis!**



Marine Corps History

4 December 1950: LtCol Raymond G. Davis led his battalion into Hagaru-Ri, Korea after four days of intense fighting in the mountain passes against a numerically superior hostile force. His battalion, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, helped clear the way for the 5th and 7th Marines, and LtCol Davis was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

6 December 1928: A small detail of Marines under Captain Maurice G. Holmes defeated Nicaraguan bandits near Chuyelite. GySgt Charles Williams was mortally wounded during the fighting. Capt Holmes was later awarded the Navy Cross for gallantry, and a posthumous award was given to GySgt Williams.

8 December 1941: Japanese aircraft attacked Wake Island within hours of the fateful attack on Pearl Harbor. Marines of the 1st Defense Battalion and Marine Fighting Squadron 211 resisted Japanese invasion attempts for over two weeks before finally succumbing to an overwhelming force.

(Entries courtesy: US Marine Corps History Web Pages)

Life Membership Honor Roll

The following Detachment members are Life Members of the Marine Corps League.

Betty Benavides
Bennie Benavides
Dennis Bradford
Strimple Coyle
Roger Crone
Phil Devlin
Don Kirkley
Dale Koonce
Buck Lee
James Lee
Jack Noble

Jack Sanderson
Dan Singletary
Joe Stewart

Semper Fi!



CONSIDER LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership Dues

National Marine Corps League Website

Age Grp	Current	As of 01/01/09
0-35	\$400	\$500
36-40	\$350	\$400
41-50	\$350	\$400
51-60	\$250	\$300
61-over	\$125	\$150

To become a Life Member, you must already be a "Member in Good Standing." That means becoming a member and paying your initial dues first. Yes, according to the Bylaws, you could join the League, pay your dues, and then pay your Life Membership Dues all in the same day.

BIRTHDAYS

The following Detachment members have a birthday to celebrate in December.

**Cynthia Devlin
Richard Shawver
Rowdy Yates**

Happy birthday and many happy returns!

Also, apologies to any we have missed.