



# PINEYWOODS POOPSHEET

FEBRUARY 2008

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 8

February 2008

## Wise Words!

The following remarks are reprinted from our November newsletter, which in turn were reprinted from *Texas Marine*, the Department newsletter. The words are in keeping with remarks made by Commandant Roger Crone, and Junior Vice-Commandant Dennis Bradford at January’s meeting.

*“The purpose of the Marine Corps League, as written in our National Charter, is to join together in camaraderie and fellowship, for the purpose of preserving the traditions and promoting the interests of the United States Marine Corps. I’m sure we’ve all heard that at one time or another, but what does it mean? Let me paraphrase that for a clearer understanding – to get together with other Marines, have fun together (oorah!), make sure our glory is not forgotten, and take care of our fellow Marines. Pretty simple and LOTS of fun, huh?... Some of the ways we can do this are having each other over for a steak night or a backyard BBQ, having poker games, getting together for an afternoon matinee and watching a vintage movie about Marines, going to the rifle range together, participating in parades and ceremonies, visiting hospitalized veterans and on and on... Our organization is about much more than a monthly meeting. That meeting is simply a time for the Detachment to take care of its business matters.*”

*“Along those lines, I will be conducting training for our elected and appointed officers. We will all know our job, and our fellow officers’ jobs, and be able to lead the Detachment with skill and efficiency. Now for some who are thinking, “that is more work than I wanna do,” I ask: what work? Remember the days when we were miles and miles away from home, pulling long duty in some steamy jungle or some dusty desert or some cold mountain top? That was the work. Now we can join together and just enjoy being Marines!”*

Good words. Let’s think about how we in Pineywoods Detachment can improve our participation and fun! Pot luck dinners, mud runs, and golf tournaments are all excellent ideas, and the mud run and tournament can be used to raise funds as well. Buzz Perez also suggests additional ways to have fun. I like old movies, especially about the Corps, and I’m up for Steak Night, Bar-B-Que, and would love to “bust a few caps at the range!” And remember, we want to have events the entire family can join. Many of these activities can be shared with them as well as with other friends and neighbors. Spread the good news. The Marines have landed! I’m sure family and friends wonder what it is we do when we get together. Let’s show them how great it is to be Marines. Maybe a picnic meeting at Pecan Park by SFA, or some other place, to consume quantities of food would be a good start. Think about what we can do and let’s make it happen. We can do anything. After all, **we are Marines!**



February Meeting:

# 21st

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

## TRICARE EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS UPDATE

Tricare for Life (TFL) beneficiaries can soon print a copy of their Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from the convenience of their own homes. Starting in JAN 08, the only paper EOB’s that beneficiaries will receive are monthly summaries. The exception to this is if a claim includes services that are rejected, and those services have appeal rights; or if the EOB is mailed with a payment to the beneficiary. In February, beneficiaries will have the option to receive an electronic notification every time a claim processes. Beneficiaries can then log on to the secure web site at [www.TRICARE4U.com](http://www.TRICARE4U.com), to view and print their EOB. The EOB will be available online and beneficiaries will have the ability to access EOB’s for any claim processed during the last 27 months. Once a beneficiary signs up for this option, they will not receive a monthly paper summary. TFL beneficiaries will receive letters notifying them of the changes, either with their current EOB’s or any other correspondence. If there are any questions about the registration process beneficiaries can call 1-866-773-0404. Those requiring a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) can call 1-866-773-0405. [Source: TMA News Release 9 Jan 08 ]

**Chaplain's Corner** by Billy Duke

The news from our Chaplain, Billy Duke, is that he continues to suffer from the lingering effects of Shingles. While he occasionally gets out, he stays pretty close to home. Our best wishes are for his speedy recovery as we miss his quiet dignity and friendly hand at our meetings.

Likewise, Bryan Hatten has been in and out of the hospital following his surgery. Recovery is slow, but the last word is that he is improving and hopes to return to a more active role soon.

**SOCIAL SECURITY RETIREMENT AGE UPDATE**

About half of the soon-to-be-62-year-olds are expected to do just what their parents generally did: file for Social Security benefits at the youngest possible age, in exchange for a smaller benefit than they'd get if they waited to retire at 66. Many are relying on conventional wisdom that suggests they're better off filing for Social Security as soon as possible. Yet if they follow that advice, millions of the oldest boomers may be about to make a colossal error — one that would be magnified by their record-setting longevity. Over time, taking benefits early could mean a smaller payout, hefty taxes on their retirement savings and a heightened risk of outliving their money. In fact, the roughly 50% of the oldest baby boomers who the Social Security Administration estimates will tap their benefits starting this year will absorb a permanent 25% cut in benefits. Up to three-quarters of them are expected to file for benefits before age 66, their full retirement age. How much their benefits will shrink depends on how close they are to full retirement age once they begin to take those benefits.

Those who wait till after age 66 will enjoy an 8% annual increase in benefits until age 70. After that, there's no advantage to delaying benefits. Yet on the most fateful financial decision most of them will make, only about 5% of retirees wait until after they've reached full retirement age to claim benefits, and it's a trend that's likely to persist, says Stephen Goss, chief actuary for the Social Security Administration.

Many retirees who plan to start taking their benefits early assume it won't make much difference over time. In reality, boomers who live the longest stand to lose the most by taking benefits early, according to an analysis by the American Academy of Actuaries. Retirees who file for Social Security at age 62 and live into their mid-90s could lose nearly \$150,000 in benefits, says Ron Gebhardt, senior pension fellow with the academy. Factors that could hurt boomers who take early Social Security benefits at age 62:

1. Longevity
- There's a 41% chance that a 62-year-old woman today will live to

90; a 62-year-old man has a 29% chance. For a married couple, there's a 58% chance that one of them will live to 90 and a 29% chance that one will reach 95.

- The Social Security Administration projects that the average retiree's "break-even" age for Social Security benefits is 77. A retiree who dies before then would have fared better by taking benefits at 62. Those who live past 77 would earn more by delaying benefits.

- Retirees who take reduced benefits at 62 and live to 90 would lose \$39,000 in benefits; those who live to 95 would give up \$54,000, the SSA says.

Some financial analysts say your losses would be far greater than the SSA's projections. If, for example, you include the annual cost-of-living increases that boost Social Security checks, Gebhardt's estimate of how much you'd lose by taking benefits early far exceeds the SSA's; \$83,000 for those who take benefits at 62 and live to age 90 and nearly \$149,000 for those who live to 95. Gebhardt sets the break-even age a bit higher than the SSA does. That's because he takes into account interest earned by those who take benefits starting at 62. Even so, by including the annual cost-of-living increases, he calculates even more value in delaying benefits. The reason? The cost-of-living adjustments will apply to a larger sum. Thanks to compounding, "those cost-of-living adjustments will be huge, especially if you live long in retirement," says James Mahaney, a retirement specialist at Prudential Financial. Even if you're convinced you won't live so long, taking your benefits early could hurt your spouse. When a married beneficiary dies, the survivor can continue receiving his or her own benefit or the deceased spouse's benefit, whichever is more. So spouses who take their benefits early don't just shrink their own payouts; they also reduce the amount the surviving spouse will be eligible for.

**2. Taxes.**

Analysts generally urge retirees to delay withdrawing money from their 401(k), IRA and other retirement savings accounts as long as possible. That way, the thinking goes, the tax-deferred investments can grow and compound. But that advice, Mahaney says, ignores the punishing effect of taxes on Social Security benefits. If all your income comes from Social Security, your benefits usually aren't taxable. But retirees with other income, including withdrawals from most retirement plans, could owe taxes on a huge chunk — 50% to 85% — of their benefits. The tax was originally designed to target wealthy seniors. But because the income thresholds weren't indexed to inflation, the tax has spread to middle-income retirees. Married couples with \$32,000 in combined income face taxes on half their Social Security benefits. Couples with a combined income of at least \$44,000 could owe taxes on 85% of their benefits. For the purposes of the tax, combined income includes half of a retiree's Social Security benefits, wages from a job, pensions and withdrawals from most retirement plans. Retirees can avoid this by using their retirement savings to pay living costs in the early years of retirement, Mahaney says, and then taking their Social Security benefits later.

**3. Risk of outliving your full benefit**

Unless Congress acts, by 2017 Social Security will start paying out more in benefits than it receives in tax revenue. By 2027, it will have to tap its trust fund to pay benefits. And by 2041, Social Security will be able to pay only about 75% of promised benefits, according to the agency's report to Congress. But the 79 million people born from 1946 through 1964 represent an extraordinarily potent voting bloc. Reducing their benefits "would be a huge political burden," Prudential's Mahaney says. He thinks lawmakers are more likely to raise payroll taxes on workers than reduce benefits for retirees.

[Source: USA Today Sandra Block article 14 Jan 08]

**MARINE QUOTE: "Sometimes it is entirely appropriate to kill a fly with a sledge-hammer!" MAJ. I.L. HOLDREDGE USMC 2/19/2002**

# FUNERAL HONORS UPDATE

As with the military itself, our armed forces' final farewell to comrades is steeped in tradition and ceremony.

1. Prominent in a military funeral is the flag-draped casket. The blue field of the flag is placed at the head of the casket, over the left shoulder of the deceased. The custom began in the Napoleonic Wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when a flag was used to cover the dead as they were taken from the battlefield on a caisson.
2. One will notice, during a military funeral that the horses that pull the caisson which bears the body of the veteran are all saddled, but the horses on the left have riders, while the horses on the right do not. This custom evolved from the days when horse-drawn caissons were the primary means of moving artillery ammunition and cannon, and the riderless horses carried provisions.
3. The single riderless horse that follows the caisson with boots reversed in the stirrups is called the "caparisoned horse" in reference to its ornamental coverings, which have a detailed protocol all to themselves. By tradition in military funeral honors, a caparisoned horse follows the casket of an Army or Marine Corps officer who was a colonel or above, or the casket of a president, by virtue of having been the nation's military commander in chief. The custom is believed to date back to the time of Genghis Khan, when a horse was sacrificed to serve the fallen warrior in the next world. The caparisoned horse later came to symbolize a warrior who would ride no more. Abraham Lincoln, who was killed in 1865, was the first U.S. president to be honored with a caparisoned horse at his funeral.
4. Graveside military honors include the firing of three volleys each by seven service members. This commonly is confused with an entirely separate honor, the 21-gun salute. But the number of individual gun firings in both honors evolved the same way.
  - a. The three volleys came from an old battlefield custom. The two warring sides would cease hostilities to clear their dead from the battlefield, and the firing of three volleys meant that the dead had been properly cared for and the side was ready to resume the battle.
  - b. The 21-gun salute traces its roots to the Anglo-Saxon empire, when seven guns constituted a recognized naval salute, as most naval vessels had seven guns. Because gunpowder in those days could be more easily stored on land than at sea, guns on land could fire three rounds for every one that could be fired by a ship at sea.
  - c. Later, as gunpowder and storage methods improved, salutes at sea also began using 21 guns. The United States at first used one round for each state, attaining the 21-gun salute by 1818. The nation reduced its salute to 21 guns in 1841, and formally adopted the 21-gun salute at the suggestion of the British in 1875.
5. A U.S. presidential death also involves other ceremonial gun salutes and military traditions. On the day after the death of the president, a former president or president-elect -- unless this day falls on a Sunday or holiday, in which case the honor will rendered the following day -- the commanders of Army installations with the necessary personnel and material traditionally order that one gun be fired every half hour, beginning at reveille and ending at retreat.
6. On the day of burial, a 21-minute gun salute traditionally is fired starting at noon at all military installations with the necessary personnel and material. Guns will be fired at one-minute intervals. Also on the day of burial, those installations will fire a 50-gun salute -- one round for each state -- at five-second intervals immediately following lowering of the flag.

*(Continued on page 4)*

Below: Private Thomas L. Bradford,  
848th Platoon, 5th Battalion, MCRD  
San Diego, California, 1942  
The "Memphis Rebels"



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Detachment Meetings

- 2008
- 21 February  
Nomination of Officers
  - 20 March  
Election of Officers
  - 17 April  
Installation of Officers
  - 15 May
  - 19 June
  - 17 July
  - 21 August
  - September
  - October
  - November

### Marine Corps League

#### **38th Annual Texas State Convention**

1st weekend in June 2008  
(tentative)  
Corpus Christi, TX

2008 National Convention

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.

(Continued from HONORS page 3)

7. The playing of "Ruffles and Flourishes" announces the arrival of a flag officer or other dignitary of honor. Drums play the ruffles, and bugles play the flourishes – one flourish for each star of the flag officer's rank or as appropriate for the honoree's position or title. Four flourishes is the highest honor. When played for a president, "Ruffles and Flourishes" is followed by "Hail to the Chief," which is believed to have been written in England in 1810 or 1811 by James Sanderson for a play by Sir Walter Scott called "The Lady of the Lake." The play began to be performed in the United States in 1812, the song became popular, and it became a favorite of bands at festive events. It evolved to be used as a greeting for important visitors, and eventually for the president, though no record exists of when it was first put to that use.

8. The bugle call "Taps" originated in the Civil War with the Army of the Potomac. Union Army Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield didn't like the bugle call that signaled soldiers in the camp to put out the lights and go to sleep, and worked out the melody of "Taps" with his brigade bugler, Pvt. Oliver Wilcox Norton. The call later came into another use as a figurative call to the sleep of death for soldiers. Another military honor dates back only to the 20th century. The missing-man formation usually is a four-aircraft formation with the No. 3 aircraft either missing or performing a pull-up maneuver and leaving the formation to signify a lost comrade in arms. While this can change slightly from service-to-service, and -- based on preferences of family members, below is the standard sequence of events for a military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery:

- The caisson or hearse arrives at grave site, everyone presents arms.
- Casket team secures the casket, NCOIC, OIC and chaplain salute.
- Chaplain leads the way to grave site, followed by casket team.
- Casket team sets down the casket and secures the flag.
- The NCOIC ensures the flag is stretched out and level, and centered over the casket.
- NCOIC backs away and the chaplain, military or civilian, will perform the service.
- At conclusion of interment service and before benediction, a gun salute is fired for those eligible ( i.e. general officers).
- Chaplain concludes his service and backs away, NCOIC steps up to the casket.
- The NCOIC presents arms to initiate the rifle volley.
- Rifle volley complete, bugler plays "Taps."
- Casket-team leader starts to fold the flag.
- Flag fold complete, and the flag is passed to the NCOIC, OIC.
- Casket team leaves grave site.
- NCOIC, OIC either presents the flag to the next of kin, or if there is a military chaplain on site he will present the flag to the chaplain, and then the chaplain will present to the next of kin.
- Arlington Lady presents card of condolences to the next of kin.
- The only person remaining at the grave is one soldier, the vigil. His mission is to watch over the body until it is interred into the ground. [Source: [http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben\\_funeralhonors.asp](http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_funeralhonors.asp) Jul 07 ]

"People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf." **GEORGE ORWELL**

## Veterans Service Officer

By Dan Singletary

WASHINGTON (January 31, 2008) - Over a million eligible veterans will see their mileage reimbursement more than double starting tomorrow, for travel to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities.

"This increase helps veterans -- especially those living in rural areas -- offset some of the gasoline costs as they travel to VA's world-class health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Increasing the mileage reimbursement is one more step by VA to help veterans access the health care they deserve."

The 2008 appropriations act provided funding for VA to increase the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile. The increase goes into effect on Feb. 1. After little more than a month on the job, Secretary Peake used his authority to establish the first increase in the mileage reimbursement in 30 years, fulfilling a pledge he made during his Senate confirmation hearing last month.

While increasing the payment, VA, as mandated by law, also equally increased the deductible amounts applied to certain mileage reimbursements. The new deductibles are \$7.77 for a one way trip, \$15.54 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$46.62 per calendar month. However, these deductibles can be waived if they cause a financial hardship to the veteran.

"Uncommon valor was a common virtue." Fleet Admiral Chester



## MAJOR SAMUEL NICHOLAS, CONTINENTAL MARINES, First Commandant, 28 November 1775 - August 1783



Major Samuel Nicholas, first Commandant of the Marine Corps by tradition as the senior ranking officer in the Continental Marines, was born in Philadelphia in 1744. He received the first commission, as captain, issued in the Continental Naval Service, eighteen days after the Continental Congress resolved on 10 November 1775, "***That two battalions of Marines be raised consisting of one Colonel, two Lieutenant-Colonels, two Majors, and other officers, as usual in other regiments; that they consist of an equal number of Privates with other battalions; that particular care be taken that no persons be appointed to offices, or enlisted into said battalions, but such as are good seamen, or so acquainted with maritime affairs as to be able to serve by sea when required; that they be enlisted and commissioned to serve for and during the present war with Great Britain and the Colonies, unless dismissed by order of Congress; that they be distinguished by the names of the First and Second Battalion of Marines.***"

Captain Nicholas no sooner received official confirmation of his appointment to office than he established recruiting headquarters at Tun's Tavern, Philadelphia. By January 1776, having recruited a sufficient number of Marines to man the vessels that comprised the Continental Navy in the waters of Philadelphia, Capt Nicholas assumed command of Marine Detachment on board the *Alfred*. With Commodore Hopkins in command, *Alfred* sailed from Philadelphia on the morning of 4 January 1776. The following month witnessed the baptismal fire of the Marines.

John Murray, Lord Dunmore, with the British force under his command, had collected a store of arms and provisions at New Providence, in the Bahamas, and had done a great deal of injury along the Colonial coast, particularly the shore of Virginia. Commodore Hopkins had been ordered to proceed to Abaco in the Bahamas, and from there to operate against the forces of Lord Dunmore. Here the Commodore decided to make an attack on New Providence, capture the enemy's stores and cripple his supplies. Captain Nicholas was placed in command of the landing party, which consisted of about 250 Marines and sailors. This, the first landing party ever by Continental Marines, was a complete success. On 6 April 1776, the Marines participated in the first naval battle between an American squadron and the British, when His Majesty's Ship *Glasgow* blundered across the path of the squadron.

On 25 June 1776, Congress placed Captain Nicholas "***at the head of the Marines with the rank of Major.***" Accordingly, Commodore Hopkins was advised to send Major Nicholas to Philadelphia, with dispatches for the Continental Congress. With notification of his promotion he was ordered to report to the Marine Committee. The Committee detached him from *Alfred* and ordered him to remain in the city, "***to discipline four companies of Marines and prepare them for service as Marine guards for the frigates on the stocks.***" Having recruited and thoroughly organized four companies, he requested arms and equipment for them.

In December 1776, he wrote Congress, "***The enemy having overrun the Jerseys, and our army being greatly reduced, I was ordered to march with three of the companies to be under the command of His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief.***" This was the first example of a battalion of Marines about to serve as an actual fighting unit under the direct command of Army authority. The Marines did not, however, engage in the attack on Trenton, which followed General George Washington's crossing of the Delaware. They accomplished the most arduous task of ferrying the Continentals across the river.

After the first Battle of Trenton, the battalion of Marines under the command of Major Nicholas participated in battle with a detachment of General Charles, Lord Cornwallis' main army at Princeton. During the ensuing months Major Nicholas' battalion served both as infantry and artillery, participating in several skirmishes.

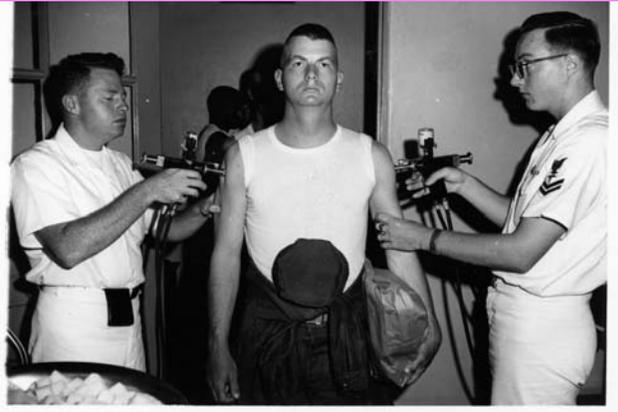
Following the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British in June 1778, Marine Barracks were reestablished and recruiting renewed. From then until the close of the war, Major Nicholas' duties at Philadelphia were somewhat similar to those of later Commandants. Moreover, he was actively in charge of recruiting, and at times acted as Muster Master of the Navy.

On 20 November 1779, he wrote Congress requesting that he be put in charge of the Marine Detachment on board *America*, then in process of construction, but Congress was adamant that Major Nicholas remain in Philadelphia. After the Continental Marines and Navy were disbanded following the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, Major Nicholas returned to civilian life. He died during a Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia on 27 August 1790, and was buried there in Friends Graveyard at Arch Street Friends Meeting House.

**Pineywoods Detachment 1189  
Marine Corps League**

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\*\*Submission deadline: 20th/month



Above: Inoculations at MCRD San Diego, California, 1967



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



## Marine Corps History

**15 February 1998:** One hundred years ago this date, 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.

**23 February 1945:** Four days after the initial landings on Iwo Jima, 1stLt Harold G. Schrier led 40 men from Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, up Mt. Suribachi to secure the crest and raise the small American flag that battalion commander LtCol Chandler Johnson had given Schrier. Within an hour, the patrol reached the rim of the crater. After a short fire-fight with Japanese defenders emerging from several caves, the small American flag was attached to an iron pipe and raised over the island.

**28 February 1991:** Operation Desert Storm ended when the cease-fire declared by President George Bush went into effect. I Marine Expeditionary Force has a strength of more than 92,000 making Operation Desert Storm the largest Marine Corps operation in history. A total of 24 Marines were killed in action during the Gulf War. (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
  - Dennis Bradford
  - Billy Duke
  - 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

#### Life Membership Dues

National Marine Corps League Website

<u>Age Grp</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>As of 01/01/09</u>
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 February.

**Steve Lee**

**Happy birthday and many happy returns!**  
Also, apologies to any we have missed.