



PINEYWOODS POOPSHEET

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 12

June 2008

MEMORIAL DAY 2008

Many of the members of Pineywoods Detachment were present for the annual observance of Memorial Day and the associated festivities, which took place May 26, 2008, at the Nacogdoches County Courthouse. The official ceremony was led by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3893 Commander Don Kirkley, who is a Marine and member of the Detachment. Those present paid homage to military men and women who gave their lives in service to the United States of America.



JUNE MEETING:

19th

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.”



Clockwise from top left: George Deckard, Jimmy Lee, and Will Lane place flags in front of the courthouse. George Deckard, Will Lane, and Buck Lee place more flags. Marines all, Ed Klein, Dennis Bradford, and Will Lane pose in front of Nacogdoches' Veterans Memorial Wall during Memorial Day observances at the county courthouse. Don Kirkley and Jimmy Lee hard at work.

Commandant
Senior Vice Commandant
Junior Vice Commandant
Judge Advocate
Adjutant
Paymaster
Chaplain
Sergeant-at-Arms
Junior Past Commandant

Dan Singletary
Dennis Bradford
Jimmy Lee
Phil Devlin
Will Lane
Rob Zurfluh
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Rich Barnhart
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The Detachment also maintains a **WEBSITE** at:
www.pineywoodsmarines.org

SSA COLA 2009

For years seniors have been getting by on Social Security benefits with a very small Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA). The Senior Citizens League (TSCCL) recently released a study that puts real numbers of the loss of buying power they are facing.

This study shows that, from 2000 through 2008 alone, Medicare Part B premiums have increased 112%, and that prescription drugs have increased 49%. Concurrently seniors are facing cost increases in basic groceries like milk and eggs. Meanwhile, their Social Security benefits have increased only 24%. The study shows they have lost 51% of their buying power just since 2000. Clearly, the Social Security COLA is not keeping up with inflation, which is what it was intended to do. One primary reason is that the current COLA is based on a market basket of goods typically purchased by younger

wage earners, called the Consumer Price Index for Wage Earners (CPI-W). As a result, Social Security beneficiaries received a 2.3% increase in benefits for 2008.

The government does track a Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers (CPI-E), which takes into account the spending habits of senior citizens. That index would have increased seniors benefits by 2.6% vice 2/3% this year. While that difference sounds tiny, it means thousands of dollars in extra benefits over your retirement. The effect of a larger COLA is cumulative like compound interest. A person retiring with an average benefit of \$1,055 in 2007 would receive \$2,000 more in the first ten years of retirement using the CPI-E vice the CPI-W and \$18,227 more over a 25-year retirement. A senior who retired with a benefit of \$460 in 1984 would have received almost \$11,200 more over the past 24 years if the COLA was based on the CPI-E. Legislation has been introduced by Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20) that would base the Social Security COLA on the CPI-E. If signed into law the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act (H.R.1953) would base the Social Security COLA on the CPI-E.

To see if your Member of Congress is one of the 16 who so far have supported the CPI-E or request he/she do refer to

[http://capwiz.com/usdr/issues/alert/?alertid=11399626 &queueid=\[capwiz:queue_id\]](http://capwiz.com/usdr/issues/alert/?alertid=11399626&queueid=[capwiz:queue_id]). Enter your zip code and complete your constitute data. If he/she is already sponsoring the bill you can send an automatic "Thank You" message. If he/she has not signed on to support the bill you can send an automatic message requesting to SO. [Source: TSCCL Action alert 20 May 08]

BEPROUDTEXAS.COM

COMING SOON...



VETERANS LAND BOARD LAUNCHES AIR ATTACK WITH "GUNNY"

R. Lee Ermey, iconic former Marine, movie and TV star, says Texas veterans benefits "best anywhere."

(See "Gunny" on page 4)

MARINE QUOTE: "We're not retreating, Hell! We're just attacking in a different direction!"
GEN. OLIVER SMITH, USMC



COLA 2009 UPDATE

On 14 MAY, the Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.bls.gov/cpi announced the APR 08 monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the metric used to calculate the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retired pay, VA disability compensation, survivor annuities, and Social Security. The CPI jumped 0.7% over March's value. The CPI-W for April is 210.698. That puts cumulative inflation at 3.5% above the 2007 third quarter average base index of 203.6. The COLA will be even higher if inflation goes up between now and 30 SEP. About one in every six Americans - millions of former feds, ex-military and people on Social Security - will get the JAN 09 COLA. It's automatic. Congress and the White House don't have to do anything to implement it. And, because Social Security is the dangerous third rail of American politics, Congress and the White

House know better than to touch it. The majority of federal retirees are under the old Civil Service Retirement System. They will get the full COLA regardless of their age. Retirees who are under the FERS retirement system get one percentage point less than the full COLA and they don't qualify for it until they are age 62 or older. MAY's consumer price indices will be released on 13 JUN 08. [Source: NARFE Legislative Update 629 dtd 16 May 08]

FROM BERNIE O'DELL Commandant Department of Texas

**“MARINES AND ASSOCIATES:
THE LAST TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS HAVE PASSED QUICKLY. I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. WE HAVE SEEN GROWTH AND SUCCESS IN MOST AREAS OF OUR DEPARTMENT AND DIVISION WITH NEW DETACHMENTS BEING STARTED AND SOME OLD ONES GETTING A MAKEOVER. THE DETACHMENTS ARE TRULY THE HEART OF OUR LEAGUE AND DEPARTMENT. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND IMPROVE.**

“IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO REPRESENT YOU ALL AT DETACHMENT, DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, AND NATIONAL EVENTS, AND TO SEE THE DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZED FOR ALL OF ITS EFFORTS.

“I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO BECOMING YOUR JUNIOR PAST COMMANDANT. I WISH THE NEW COMMANDANT EVERY SUCCESS AND OUR DEPARTMENT CONTINUED GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENTS.”



Pineywoods detachment “goodies are now available from two sources for those who want to wear our colors proudly. All manner of items are available from **Café Press** at <http://www.cafepress.com/pwm1189b>. These items are “printed” on the clothing or hat.

Embroidered clothing and hats, as well as backpacks and portable stadium seats and other goodies are available in Nacogdoches at **Unlimited Designs** on NW Stallings Drive, next to License to Laugh, the defensive driving folks. It is also possible to have the embroidery sewn on the MCL red uniform cover there. Pricing is reasonable, and Kim Cartwright and staff are most helpful. Keep it local!

"Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom."-- John Adams (Defense of the Constitutions, 1787)



NDAA 2009

Sometime in June, the full Senate will be considering Defense Authorization Bill (S.2787) amendments on a variety of issues close to the hearts of the military community. These include:

- **Tricare Fees:** Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE) will be offering their amendment that would establish principles in law that military people pay large in-kind premiums of sacrifice for their lifetime health care in addition to cash fees in retirement, and that their fees shouldn't rise in any year by a percentage that exceeds the percentage increase in their military compensation.
- **Concurrent Receipt:** Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) will offer one or more amendments to eliminate the VA disability offset to earned military retired pay.
- **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP):** Sen. Bill Nelson's (D-FL) amendment would end the deduction of VA survivor benefits from SBP for all survivors of servicemembers who died of service-connected causes.
- **GI Bill Transferability:** Sen. John Warner (R-VA) will offer an amendment to allow servicemembers who complete their initial obligations and commit to extended service the opportunity to transfer part (or in some cases all) of their GI Bill benefits to a spouse or child(ren).
- **Reserve Retirement Age:** Sen. Saxby Chambliss's (R-GA) amendment would allow three months' reduction in the reserve retirement age for every 90 days activated since Sept. 11, 2001.

When these amendments are finalized, veterans will be asked to e-mail and call their senators to support them. The House completed action on their Defense Authorization Bill (H.R.5658) in MAY. After the Senate approves its version (hopefully by the end of June), House and Senate leaders will have to negotiate resolutions to the differences in the two versions. This could be accomplished before Congress recesses for the election. However, recent history indicates we may not get a final defense bill until late NOV or DEC, via a post-election "lame duck" session of Congress. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 30 May 08]

("Gunny" from page 2)

Texas veterans, be warned: If you don't know about your benefits available through the Texas Veterans Land Board, "Gunny" is about to let you know. And you won't soon forget it. Texas Land Commissioner and Chairman of the Veterans Land Board Jerry Patterson announced the agency has teamed up with military and movie celebrity R. Lee Ermey, or "Gunny," to kick off the "Be Proud, Texas" campaign, a bold new statewide effort to inform Texas veterans of their benefits at the Veterans Land Board.

"If anything can get your attention, it's the voice of a Marine DI," said Patterson, a former Marine with over 20 years in the Corps. "Gunny is a respected and recognizable advocate for all veterans and I am very proud to have his help telling folks about the Veterans Land Board. Our goal is to get more veterans the benefits they've earned."

Today, many know Marine Gunnery Sergeant R. Lee Ermey from the popular History Channel program "Mail Call." But Ermey's role as a maniacal drill instructor in Stanley Kubrick's 1987 "Full Metal Jacket" made him an instant icon. Ermey had served as a real-life Marine Drill Instructor and was a consultant on Kubrick's film when he asked him to take the role.

"Listen up, Texas Veterans," Ermey barks in the 30-second PSA. "Who's got the best veterans benefits in America? You do!"

Filmed at Fort Sam Houston with the help of the Marine 4th Recon Battalion, the ads feature Gunny touting the impressive benefits at the VLB: Low interest home and land loans; clean, caring and affordable veterans nursing homes; and dignified veterans cemeteries. At the end of the spots, Ermey signs off, "Be proud to be a Texas veteran, 'cause Texas is proud of you!"

(Continued on page 5)

"Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

—Patrick Henry, to the Virginia Legislature, 23 March 1775



**VETERANS SERVICE
OFFICER**

By Dan Singletary

VA PTSD EVALUATION CRITERIA

Per 38 CFR DC 9440 the evaluation criteria for chronic adjustment disorder and General Rating Formula for mental disorders is:

- 100%: Total occupational and social impairment, due to such symptoms as: gross impairment in thought processes or communication; persistent delusions or hallucinations; grossly inappropriate behavior; persistent danger of hurting self or others; intermittent inability to perform activities of daily living (including maintenance of minimal personal hygiene); disorientation to time or place; memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or own name.
- 70%: Occupational and social impairment, with Deficiencies in most areas, such as work, school, family relations, judgment, thinking, or mood, due to

such symptoms as: suicidal ideation; obsessional rituals which interfere with routine activities; speech intermittently illogical, obscure, or irrelevant; near-continuous panic or depression affecting the ability to function independently, appropriately and effectively; impaired impulse control (such as unprovoked irritability with periods of violence); spatial disorientation; neglect of personal appearance and hygiene; difficulty in adapting to stressful circumstances (including work or a work like setting); inability to establish and maintain effective relationships.

- 50%: Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity due to such symptoms as: flattened affect; circumstantial, circumlocutory, or stereotyped speech; panic attacks more than once a week; difficulty in understanding complex commands; impairment of short- and long-term memory (e.g., retention of only highly learned material, forgetting to complete tasks); impaired judgment; impaired abstract thinking; disturbances of motivation and mood; difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective work and social relationships.
- 30%: Occupational and social impairment with occasional decrease in work efficiency and intermittent periods of inability to perform occupational tasks (although generally functioning satisfactorily, with routine behavior, self-care, and conversation normal), due to such symptoms as: depressed mood, anxiety, suspiciousness, panic attacks (weekly or less often),

(Continued on page 6)

("Gunny")

The Veterans Land Board's "Be Proud" PSAs are set to air statewide beginning in May, along with a coordinated mail out to Texas veterans and a new Web site, www.BeProudTexas.com. Patterson, who teams up with Gunny in one of the commercials, said Ermey was an enthusiastic volunteer. "When we told him there were Texas veterans missing out on their benefits and we wanted to change that, he jumped at the chance," Pat-

(Continued on page 7)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Detachment Meetings

2008

19 June
17 July
21 August
18 September
16 October
20 November
18 December

2009

15 January
19 February
19 March
16 April
21 May

2008 MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY

BALL

8 November 2008
Fredonia Hotel
Nacogdoches, Texas

Make your plans now to join us!

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.



ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

Clarification for tax filers who are using Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) vice Social Security numbers on their 1040 & 1040A tax forms for their spouse or children is provided in the below taken from the IRS website. Bottom line if your spouse does not have a SSN and you file jointly using his/her ITIN neither of you will receive a ECS payment. If you both have SSNs and your child does not you will receive your ECS payment but nothing for the child:

Q. I file using an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN). Can I still get a stimulus payment?

A. No. The law does not allow stimulus payments to people who file a return using an ITIN. A taxpayer must have a valid Social Security number to qualify for the stimulus payment. If married filing jointly, both taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number. And children must have valid Social Security numbers to be eligible as qualifying children.

Q. If I currently have an ITIN and file my return but later this year get an SSN, can I amend my return to get the payment or will I need to wait until I file my 2008 return to claim it?

A. You will need to wait until you file your 2008 income tax return to claim the economic stimulus payment. [New 4/14/08]

Q. I have an ITIN, but my spouse has a valid Social Security number. Can we get a payment?

A. If you and your spouse file a joint return, you will not get a stimulus payment. If your spouse files a separate return, your spouse may qualify for a payment, based on his or her income deductions and credits.

Q. If I have a spouse with an ITIN and therefore choose "married filing separately" status to qualify for the economic stimulus payment and later on amend my original return to "married filing jointly" status, will I need to return the stimulus payment?

A. No. [New 4/14/08]

Q. If I have a valid Social Security number and my child has an ITIN, do I get extra money for the child?

A. No. To qualify for the extra credit for qualifying children, not only do the taxpayer and spouse, if filing jointly, need valid Social Security numbers, but the qualifying child must also have a valid Social Security number.

Q. I adopted a child this year and my child has an ATIN (Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number). Will I receive the \$300 additional child payment?

A. An ATIN is issued by the IRS as a temporary taxpayer identification number for the child. Adoptive parents who do not yet have a Social Security number for their child will not get the advance payment. However, if they receive a Social Security number for the child before the end of 2008, they can claim the additional child payment on their 2008

tax return. [Source: IRS Website <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=181995,00.html> 20 May 08]

(PTSD continued from page 5)

chronic sleep impairment, mild memory loss (such as forgetting names, directions, recent events.

- 10%: Occupational and social impairment due to mild or transient symptoms which decrease work efficiency and ability to perform occupational tasks only during periods of significant stress, or; symptoms controlled by continuous medication.
- 0%: A mental condition has been formally diagnosed, but symptoms are not severe enough either to interfere with occupational and social functioning or to require continuous medication.

[Source: VFW VSO Scott H. Langhoff article 15 May 08]

One a related note, there has been some confusion concerning what is a decoration for Valor in combat to support PTSD claims filed due to combat. The

(Continued on page 7)

BALL PICTURES AVAILABLE

Pictures are available for those who attended the Marine Corps Birthday Ball in 2007, but did not buy a portrait or photo package. Precious Memories Photography has a website where pictures can be viewed. If one is desired, it can be purchased. The photo album expires June 24, 2008, so if you are interested, you only have a short time to place your order. After that time, you will need to contact them directly at (318) 755-2290, or write them at 219 Jefferson Street, Pelican, Louisiana 71063.

The album of photographs may be viewed at the following website:

<http://nacogdochesmarineball.photoherald.com/>



(PTSD continued from page 6)

decorations on the below list are the only decorations recognized for Valor in combat. If the Veteran has one of these decorations, he (or she) does not need a diagnosis of PTSD, as exposure to combat is conceded by the VA. They only need to complete VA form 21-0781 detailing stressful incidences to the best of their ability, and provide a "Stressor Statement" detailing the symptoms they're experiencing (see attached list). There can be other acceptable evidence in the form of official Unit Records, Diaries and Ship's Deck Logs on occasion.

- Air Force Cross
- Air Medal with "V" Device
- Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device
- Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device
- Combat Action Badge
- Combat Action Ribbon (Note: Prior to FEB 69, the Navy Achievement Medal with "V" Device was awarded.)
- Combat Aircrew Insignia
- Combat Infantry/Infantryman Badge
- Combat Medical Badge
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Distinguished Service Cross
- Joint Service Commendation Medal with "V" Device
- Medal of Honor
- Navy Commendation Medal with "V" Device
- Navy Cross
- Purple Heart, and/or
- Silver Star.

[Source: VFW VSO Scott H. Langhoff article 15 May 08]

("Gunny")

erson said. "Few men do as much for U.S. Armed Forces personnel and veterans as Gunny. He is a national treasure."

Texas has always taken care of her veterans. In 1836, the Texas General Land Office was formed, in part, to make sure veterans of the Texas Revolution were given land rights they were promised in exchange for their role in liberating Texas. In 1946, the Texas Veterans Land Board was created to do the same for Texan veterans of a different war who helped liberate the world.

Today, the Texas Veterans Land Board serves more than 1.7 million Texas veterans of all ages. The cornerstone of Texas veterans benefits is the VLB's ability to offer below market interest rate loans for land and home purchases, as

("Gunny")

well as for home improvements. These loans are available to any eligible Texas veteran and can be used more than once. In addition to low interest rates, additional discounts may apply to housing loans to make VLB loans an even better deal. The VLB's land loan program was created in 1946 to help returning World War II veterans. With these loans, Texas veterans may borrow up to \$80,000 for a 30-year, fixed rate loan on more than one acre of land.

The VLB's home loans allow Texas veterans to borrow up to \$325,000 with a 15 or 30 year fixed rate. For home improvements, the VLB allows Texas veterans to borrow up to \$25,000, with no down payment. Texas honors her senior veterans, too, with seven Texas State Veterans Homes that offer clean, caring and affordable, long-term care for Texas veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents. Each veterans home is designed to enhance the quality of life of each of its residents. Because the VA subsidizes much of the veterans cost to stay in a Texas State Veterans Home, daily out-of-pocket expenses are well below market average and include the cost of medications for veterans. Each home offers a secure Alzheimer's Unit. And each home has become a focal point for the veterans communities in the areas they serve. Texas State Veterans Homes are located in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen, and Temple. Texas also believes that veterans deserve a dignified place of rest in memory of their service to this nation. The Texas State Veterans Cemetery Program seeks to supplement four VA National Cemeteries in Texas by providing state-managed hallowed grounds for veterans close to family and friends. Texas veterans are interred free of charge at Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, and veterans are entitled to a free memorial headstone or marker, a memorial flag and full military honors.

For more information on Texas Veterans Land Board home, land and home improvement loans, Texas State Veterans Homes, or Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, call 1-800-252-VETS (1-800-252-8387), or visit the special "Be Proud, Texas" campaign Web site at BeProudTexas.com. [Texas Marine, May 2008]

Recruiting is important. DON'T FORGET TO INVITE SOMEONE TO VISIT WITH US AT OUR NEXT MEETING. Ask them to stay and become a member of our elite Detachment. If we find someone interested in the Marine Corps League, provide them with an application and ask them to fill it out, either as a regular or an associate member. Be aggressive! Our membership will not increase by magic, only by hard work.

Semper Fil

**ONCE A MARINE,
ALWAYS A MARINE!**



"The name of American, which belongs to you... must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism."
George Washington

"It is the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities which occur to him, for preserving documents relating to the history of our country."
Thomas Jefferson



Marine Corps History

12 June 1961: President John F. Kennedy signed a Presidential Proclamation calling for the American flag to be flown at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, "at all times during the day and night." Discussions between the Attorney General's office and Marine Corps officials earlier in 1961 on improving the visibility and appearance of the monument led to the proposal to fly the Flag continuously, which by law could only be done by Congressional legislation or by Presidential proclamation.

25 June 1950: Shortly before dawn, eight divisions of the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the Republic of Korea. Within three days, the South Korean capital city of Seoul had been captured. On 30 June, President Harry S. Truman ordered a naval blockade of the Korean coast and authorized the sending of U.S. ground troops to Korea. Two days later, General Douglas MacArthur, the Commander in Chief Far East, formally requested that a Marine regimental combat team be deployed to the Far East.

25 June 1966: In Vietnam, Operation Jay began about 30 kilometers northwest of Hue, and lasted nine days. The 2d Battalion, 4th Marines landed north of the North Vietnamese 812th Main Force Battalion, and the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines landed south of the enemy's position. Caught in between the two Marine units, the enemy suffered over 80 dead in nine days of fighting.

26 June 1918: BGen James G. Harbord, the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Brigade, notified American Expeditionary Force Headquarters that Belleau Wood was "now U.S. Marine Corps entirely." After 20 days of combat, and at a cost of over 4,000 casualties, the 4th Brigade of Marines had proven its fighting heart. The grateful Commander of the French Sixth Army would soon decree that in all official correspondence, Belleau Wood would henceforth bear the name, "Bois de la Brigade de Marine."

Life Membership Honor Roll

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

- Rich Barnhart
- Betty Benavides
- Dennis Bradford
- Strimple Coyle
- Roger Crone
- Phil Devlin
- Billy Duke
- Don Kirkley
- Dale Koonce
- Buck Lee
- James Lee
- Jack Noble
- Jack Sanderson
- Dan Singletary
- Joe Stewart

Semper Fil

CONSIDER LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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 JUNE

- David Alford**
Linda Campbell
Harley Holloway
Dale Koonce
Joe Rogers

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