



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 2, Issue 1

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BERNIE O'DELL TURNS OVER GAVEL HARRY BRUCE STATE TOP MARINE

At the 2008 Marine Corps League Department of Texas Convention in Corpus Christi, State Commandant Bernie O'Dell ended his thirty-month stint in office. He said with a smile, “I’m looking forward to being your Junior Past-Commandant.”

The new State Commandant is Harry Bruce, last year’s Senior Vice Commandant. He is a life member of Eastex Detachment in Conroe, and a longtime member of the League. He was installed by the former Department of Texas and National Commandant Helen Hicks.

The convention was informative, stimulating, and fun. There were suggestions regarding various aspects of detachment life, from administration to finances, from recruiting to retention, which will prove useful in the coming year.

This year, the convention was attended by Dan Singletary and Dennis Bradford. Hopefully, a larger contingent can attend next year. Make your plans soon.

State Commandant Bruce embarks on a year filled with promise, and feels a sense of excitement at the possibilities for growth as he assumes command of the Department. He visited our Detachment in the past and we hope he will return soon. We wish him success in his new position. *Semper Fi!*



Former National Commandant Helen Hicks presented the gavel to incoming Department of Texas Commandant Harry Bruce at the 2008 Department of Texas State Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas.



JULY MEETING:

17th

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.”

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
Ken Rains
Rich Barnhart
Roger Crone

dan.singletary@co.nacogdoches.tx.us

padrebucky@yahoo.com

leejamf@yahoo.com

philip_devlin@msn.com

ww_lane@yahoo.com

xhm3z@yahoo.com

MCLDet1189@hotmail.com

rbarnhart@SFASU.edu

rlcrone_49@juno.com



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Submission deadline is the 20th of each month and may be mailed or e-mailed to:

P. O. Box 633781
Nacogdoches, Texas 75963-3781
Phone: 936-559-5571
MCLDet1189@hotmail.com
Editor: Dennis Bradford

The Detachment also maintains a **WEBSITE** at:
www.pineywoodsmarines.org
Web Sergeant: Rich Barnhart

MARINE COUPLE RETURNS FROM IRAQ

On 1 June 2008, Cpl. Chris and Sgt. Monique Williams received a warm "Welcome Home!" from family and friends at Nacogdoches Community Church on North Stallings Drive. Pastor Jamie Altman was joined by Marine Corps League members Dan Singletary, Dennis Bradford, Rob Zurfluh, and Bagpiper Rick Zurfluh.

The Pineywoods Marines posted the colors, and Piper Zurfluh regaled all present with *Grand Old Flag*, *Amazing Grace*, and the *Marine Corps Hymn*. Additional inspirational music was provided by the church's Music Leader Tammy VanShoubrock.

Chris is the son of Bobby and Shelly Williams of Garrison, and the young Marines recently returned from tours in Iraq. "We are going to Quantico for and R&R tour," Chris said.

Monique added, "We really appreciate your being here." Commandant Singletary thanked them both for their service to the nation. *Semper Fi*, Marines!



MARINE QUOTE: "They're on our right, they're on our left, they're in front of us, they're behind us; they can't get away from us this time."

Chesty Puller, USMC, Chosin Reservoir, Korean War

"Where liberty dwells, there is my country." Benjamin Franklin 1783



STATE CONVENTION

Pineywoods Detachment Receives Meritorious Unit Citation

The 2008 State convention, this year held in Corpus Christi, was attended by Commandant Dan Singletary and Senior Vice Commandant Dennis Bradford. The meeting was complete with a surprise or two.

The Pineywoods Detachment was honored with the Department Meritorious Unit Citation for effort "above and beyond" what is required of any detachment.

Moreover, Bradford was appointed State District 2 Vice Commandant, with an area which stretches from Dallas and North Texas to the East including Mineola and Longview.

Way to go Pineywoods! We are starting to make our mark on the Marine Corps League's Department of Texas. It would not have been possible without each member of the Detachment. Here's to a bigger and better 2009!



Top: Dennis Bradford and Dan Singletary dressed for the final event of the Department of Texas State Convention, the formal banquet. Middle: Left to right, State Sr. Vice Commandant-elect, Bob Quinn and Commandant-elect Harry Bruce present the Meritorious Detachment certificate to Dan Singletary. Bottom: Department of Texas officers for 2008-2009 are sworn at the end of the banquet.



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)



LUFKIN MARINES START A YOUNG MARINES UNIT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

Lufkin resident and former active duty Marine Matt Schmidt, along with a handful of local Marines, is in the process of forming a unit of Young Marines of the Marine Corps League at Lufkin High School. Young Marines stresses a drug-free lifestyle and discipline with the goal to keep young men and women off the streets, free of drugs, and out of trouble.

The program is supported by the federal government, the Marine Corps, and the League. All money collected by the Detachment goes to the National MCL and there it is used to provide initial uniform issue, printed materials including books, and summer programs and activities available to the students in the program.

As more information about the new unit is re-

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not, of our own initiative, take any additional action on this issue." AL amyloidosis was added to the list because it was very similar to a type of cancer linked to herbicide exposure and "it made sense to make a service connection," Brown said.

In the past, it has taken about six months between approval of a new illness for service-connected status and new regulations being issued that allow claims to be processed, he said. Part of the reason veterans exposed to the herbicides are angry is that their cases were more extreme than those of most people exposed in non-military situations.

The Zumwalt report quotes Dr. James R. Clary: "When we (military scientists) initiated the herbicide program in the 1960s, we were aware of the potential for damage due to dioxin contamination in the herbicide. We were even aware that the 'military' formulation had a higher dioxin concentration than the 'civilian' version due to the lower cost and speed of manufacture. However, because the material was to be used on the 'enemy,' none of us were overly concerned.

"We never considered a scenario in which our own personnel would become contaminated with the herbicide. And if we had, we would have expected our own government to give assistance to veterans so contaminated." Although there are no lack of studies on hypertension's relation to herbicide exposure, Brown said, there also has been nothing definitive -- either way. "This could change, of course," Brown added. "We had a similar situation with pro state cancer. ... There were new developments and new scientific studies and we had to reconsider that position. This is not static."

KAUFMAN COUNTY DETACHMENT JOINS THE RANKS



Left: Southern Division Vice Commandant Larry Smith presents the detachment charter to Lonny Cool, Kaufman County Detachment Commandant.

Right: Department of Texas Junior Vice Commandant Ken Henry administers the League oath to the new members of the Kaufman County Detachment.



Left: Department of Texas Adjutant/Paymaster Polly Weidenkopf pins each of the new members.

A year in the making, Charter ceremonies were conducted in the city of Crandall on Saturday 14 June 2008. The League was well represented with many from the Southern Division, the Department of Texas, and several other detachments in attendance, including Senior Vice Commandant and District 2 Vice Commandant Dennis Bradford from Pineywoods Detachment.

Kaufman County men and women proved excellent hosts as the food was good and the refreshments cold. Commandant Cool and his staff are to be commended for their hospitality and *esprit de corps*. We wish them the best. Semper Fi!

"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

The Veterans Administration will not grant disability claims for hypertension related to Agent Orange or other herbicide exposure, according to Veterans Affairs Secretary James Peake, who decided existing research doesn't clearly establish a link between the two. "The science didn't support it," Mark Brown, director of VA's Environmental Agents Service, said Tuesday. However, Peake agreed to allow AL amyloidosis -- a rare incurable disease that can lead to organ failure and death -- as a service-connected illness related to herbicide exposure, Brown said.

El Paso-area veterans advocates said they weren't surprised by the denial of hypertension because it is a relatively widespread condition. "I can tell you very simply (why Peake denied the hypertension claims), it's one word and it's five letters long -- money," said Jeri Elena Mark, an El Paso advocate who also suffers from hypertension and was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, where she served on a Hawk missile crew. "I think it's a load of bull."

Mark and other veterans advocates point to numerous studies they say support the connection, including a long-term study of a 1976 accident in Italy referred to by Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt in a 1990 report commissioned by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Zumwalt's report also mentions hypertension developed by agricultural workers exposed to herbicides.

The study of the accident in Italy, updated earlier this year in an American Journal of Epidemiology article, lists hypertension as a contributing cause to deaths of people exposed to dioxins, which are used in the herbicides.

Brown, a toxicologist, said Peake's decision was based on a broad review of existing research done by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, which veterans advocates have criticized for a lack

of objectivity. However, Brown said the review -- which Congress requires every two years, the most recent of which was released about a year ago -- examined about 25 studies, and was "very exhaustively thorough."

The Institute of Medicine does not make recommendations to the VA on policy, said Christine Stencil, an institute spokeswoman. "There are scientific studies of adequate quality that have yielded information that points to a possible statistical link or plausible biological means, by which exposure to Agent Orange, the herbicides, the dioxins that contaminated them could result in the increased risk of developing hypertension," Stencil said. "But at the same time, it's not clear-cut. There are contradictory results from other studies."

On June 10, Peake sent a letter notifying the veterans affairs committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate that he would not allow the "service-connected" status for hypertension. "It's ambiguous," Brown said, "which is, in some ways, the worst situation."

Brown said recommendations from the team Peake formed to look at the issue didn't mention cost. He also points to type 2 diabetes, an illness he said is very costly to treat and fairly common, which was recently added to the list.

"I would argue that, really, the decision was driven by the science," Brown said.

When the Institute of Medicine released its review in July 2007 with a finding of "limited or suggestive evidence" linking hypertension to herbicide exposure, the VA was required by law to determine whether it should be listed as "service-connected," according to an internal agency document obtained by the El Paso Times. The document, called a "fast letter" and distributed to all VA regional offices and centers, states that a decision was expected by Sept. 1.

Veterans who served during certain time periods in Vietnam, in vessels off the shore of Vietnam, and in Korea along the Demilitarized Zone would have been eligible for the benefit if Peake had approved it, according to the document.

It concludes that, if the service connection is not warranted, "we will

(Continued on page 4)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Detachment 2008 MEETINGS

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

2009 MEETINGS

15 January
19 February
***Nomination of Officers**
19 March
***Election of Officers**
16 April
***Installation of Officers**
21 May
18 June
16 July
20 August

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE NATIONAL CONVENTION

Rosen Centre Hotel
10-16 August 2008
Orlando, Florida

Semper Fi! Charity Golf Scramble

4 October 2008

2008 MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY BALL

8 November 2008
Fredonia Hotel
Nacogdoches, Texas

Make your plans now to join us!



"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

4 July 1801: President Thomas Jefferson reviewed the Marines, led by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, LtCol William W. Burrows and the Marine Band, on the White House grounds. The smartly uniformed Marines performed drills and fired various salutes in observance of the new nation's 25th anniversary.

7 July 1941: The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was activated at Quantico, Virginia. Within a year of activation, the Wing would participate in the Marine Corps offensive at Guadalcanal. That bitter campaign would be the first in a series of legendary battles in which the Wing would add luster to its reputation. The 1stMAW would earn five Presidential Unit Citations for gallantry in campaigns spanning World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

26 July 1947: The National Security Act of 1947 became effective, reaffirming the status of the Marine Corps as a separate military service within the Department of the Navy. The Act Provided for Fleet Marine Forces, and confirmed the Corps' mission of seizing and defending advanced bases, as well as land operation incident to naval campaigns.

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 JULY

Tony Alexander
Strimple Coyle
Billy Duke
Will Lane
Ken Rains
Jack Sanderson

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