



River Cities News

River Cities Detachment #1090
Marine Corps League, Inc.
Evansville, Indiana

Volume 15, Issue 3

March 2018

Commandant's Corner

Bob Reutter, Commandant

It seems that every month in this newsletter column I speak about the commitment to being a Marine. Now it is time to put the rubber to the road so to speak and about a more substantial demonstration of how much commitment each of the Marines of the River Cities Detachment actually has. For those of you who attend our monthly meetings at the VFW on Wabash Ave. you know we have a building fund. 25% of everything we make in our fund raisers goes into the building fund. In February several of us went to talk to the Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) about various vacant properties that are held by the City of Evansville. We are starting to explore the possibility of purchasing a piece of ground to build a home for the River Cities Detachment 1090. We don't have enough funds to buy land, build a structure and maintain it. Utilities, taxes, maintenance and insurance are some of the ongoing costs associated with having our own place.

In addition to the looking at building our own place, we are also looking into leasing an existing structure so that we don't have that large initial outlay of funds. The people at the DMD had several suggestions that we are also investigating along those lines. The advantage of leasing is that we have a much shorter period of absolute commitment should anything change with our membership.

We currently have around 100 members of the detachment. My question to you is: how many of you are willing to **pledge \$30-\$50 each month**, so we will have a permanent home for our Marines? The detachment will be sending out a letter to each member of the detachment in a separate mailing to determine the level of commitment of our Marines. We are talking about a structure with street level access for all our members, a small kitchen and bar area,

tables and chairs for meetings, meals and other gatherings for and about Marines

When that letter reaches you think about what you can do to help support your tri-county Marines. When we have compiled the results, I will let everyone know if we have the support to pursue the issue any further.

Semper Fi

Humor in (Marine) Uniform

Chesty Puller-isms

"Old breed? New breed? Doesn't matter as long as its Marine breed!"

"Don't forget that you're First Marines! Not all the Communists in hell can overrun you!"

"You don't hurt 'em if you don't hit 'em."

"The mail service has been excellent out here, and in my opinion this is all that the Air Force has accomplished during the war."

"Hit Hard, hit fast, hit often."

"Where the hell do you put the bayonet?" (Said at a flamethrower demonstration.)

"All right, they're on our left, they're on our right, they're behind us, they're in front of us. They can't get away this time."

"Great. Now we can shoot the bastards from every direction."

"There are not enough chinamen in the world to stop a fully armed Marine regiment from going where ever they want to go."

"Son, when the Marine Corps wants you to have a wife, you will be issued one." (Response to a young Marine asking permission to be married.)

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Marine Corps History

Gary Burk

The following is an excerpt from "The Battle History of the U.S. Marines"

KHE SANH, Vietnam (*continued*)

Cushman deployed the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, and a light battalion of ARVIN Rangers to the combat base, the absolute most Lownds could keep supplied by air. Replacing his lost ammo during the monsoon season was going to be rough enough.

This was the situation in late January 1968 as the Allied forces drifted toward the annual Tet holiday and the usual cease-fire announcement by the Viet Cong: The 26th Marines, now 6,600 waited expectantly for the main attack to develop. Both Westmoreland and President Johnson were convinced that Khe Sanh would be Vo Nguyen Giap's main effort.

Westmoreland would later insist that the elaborate enemy Tet Offensive that materialized throughout South Vietnam had only been a smokescreen to distract Americans away from the real target, Khe Sanh.

Giap, of course, would forever insist that he had suckered the Americans north, away from the cities, with his thinly veiled threats to create "another Dien Bien Phu." The truth may have resided between both poles, but few could deny that Hanoi had pulled off a master stroke of surprise with their vast offensive of January 30, 1968

The NVA/Viet Cong Tet Offensive struck simultaneously in the dead of night and nowhere with such terrifying suddenness as downtown Saigon. Thousands of enemy troops seemed to pop out of thin air.

Some appeared with huge anti-aircraft guns they had towed by hand for hundreds of miles, night after

night, to place into action around Tan Son Nhut Airfield. A well-rehearsed team of VC sappers broke into Marines, before falling to a vicious counterattack. The U.S. ambassador went into hiding.

Hundreds of towns and villages across South Vietnam—in thirty-six of the nation's forty-eight provinces—reported large-scale enemy attacks. Hue seemed to have fallen to a particularly heavy attack. The country was in an uproar.

At Da Nang, enemy forces that had infiltrated close to the air base launched an assault against Eye Corps headquarters. In the free-for-all battle, a combination of Marine MPs, Vietnamese Rangers, and a nearby Combined Action Platoon succeeded in blunting the attack.

The 1st Marine Division was more concerned by reports that the 2nd NVA Division had infiltrated the area and was heading for Da Nang.

The division's recon Marines picked up movement in the foothills near An Hoa, investigated warily, and soon reported the entire NVA division streaming northeast toward Da Nang.

Circling south of the city in his helicopter, Lieutenant General Cushman was startled to see 200 NVA advancing in broad daylight. Cushman tracked them from a distance, all the while vectoring two infantry battalions toward an intercept point.

As III MAF honcho, Cushman at that point commanded more troops of more services and nations than any Marine in history. But for a brief moment he was a battalion commander back in Guam, where he had received the Navy Cross. His airborne coordination led to a series of sharp battles that staggered, and then reversed, the NVA advance on Da Nang.

MCLA Southern Belles Unit 441

Dani Cook, President



I hope all had a wonderful love filled Valentine's Day.

Not only are we coming up on Spring, we are gearing up for the Annual Bowling Fundraiser that will be in April. Anyone willing to help us obtain prizes for our bowlers as well as our silent auction, lane sponsors and most important BOWLERS, please see any Auxiliary Member to obtain forms. We always have a great time at this event. It is our biggest Fundraiser that we

do. It helps us to maintain our VA Clinic Program as well as our adopted Fulton Ave. Boys & Girls Club events. These programs benefit Veterans and Children. It remains near and dear to our hearts.

Our next meeting will be on March 26, 2018 at 6:30 pm up at AmVets #84 on the corner of Barker Ave and Broadway Ave. Please keep trying to recruit new members. Hope to see everyone there as well as some new faces.

**TENTH ANNUAL
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE AUXILIARY
BOWLING TOURNAMENT
HOSTED BY**

WHEN

Saturday, April 7, 2018

11:30 am - 3: 00 pm

Register by April 2, 2018

WHERE

**Franklin Lanes
1801 Franklin St.
Evansville, IN**



EVENT OPEN TO ALL AGES

NINE-PIN NO TAP - THREE GAMES - MIXED TEAMS

DOOR PRIZES - CHANCE AUCTION

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CONTACT

Dani Cook - 812- 468- 1395

Paula Landers - 812-483-5114

TEAM REGISTRATION

\$60 for a team of 4

**includes 3 games of bowling
and shoe rental**

SCHEDULE

11:30

Check-in

12:00

Bowling Tournament

3:00

Awards Ceremony

PRIZES

First Place Team - \$200

Second Place Team - \$100

Third Place Team - \$50

High Series Male - \$25

High Series Female - \$25

Youth: Ages 16 and under

Individual prizes for High Series

*Cash prizes are based on 40 bowlers,
we reserve the right to lower
prize money based on number of
bowlers. In case of a tie, prize
money will be combined*

A Soldier's Son Visits Iwo Jima

Scott Hanson

The following story is the third (and final) installment in a series from a story written by a man whose father was in the Army occupation force that followed the Marines onto the island of Iwo Jima. We met Scott while we were working in our food booth at Harbor Freight. He sent us the story and pictures that I have relayed below. – Bob Reutter



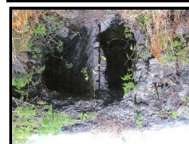
Mt. Suribachi is located at the extreme south end of Iwo Jima. My father told me that when he arrived on the island that he came ashore at night. His landing craft docked on the west side of the island. He had pictured the volcano as being on the north end. He said he spent the entire ten months of his deployment there "being turned around".

Standing on top of Suribachi you can look over into the crater on the south side. I was slightly tempted to walk part-way down but there was sulfur and steam coming out of the ground and I quickly changed my mind. That was another reason that the mountain was hard to take - the entire assault had to come up the north side. Remember that the Japanese had two years to prepare for exactly what was going to happen. There were 22,000 defenders on the island at the beginning of the battle. Over 21,000 were killed. A huge percentage of the Japanese dead are still entombed on the island. The final Marine actions were to locate and destroy the entrances to the tunnels and caves.

I think that the single most surprising thing to be about this visit was to walk the actual invasion beaches. They were coded...the area directly below Mt. Suribachi was Green Beach. Then, moving northward away from the mountain was Red Beach One, Red Beach Two, Yellow Beach One, Yellow Beach Two, Blue Beach One and Blue Beach Two. However, from the bottom of the mountain (Green Beach) to the farthest northern zone (Blue Beach Two) was not over one and a half to maybe two miles. I walked the entire distance and after that short of a distance I was totally exhausted. I was carrying nothing more than a backpack weighing maybe thirty pounds.

I quickly found out that the beach is not "sand". It's volcanic ash. It has the appearance of sand but it is unconsolidated. Walking in it is like walking in quicksand. The best description I can give of what it's like is for anyone who has lived or worked on a farm and has walked in a bin of

grain. Corn, wheat or oats give way beneath your feet and you'll sink in it with every step. That is exactly what it was like trying to walk down that beach. I could only imagine what it was like for those Marines. It's hard to walk - running would have been nearly impossible. It wouldn't be possible to dig a hole (once again imagine a grain bin) and because of the previous shelling there was no vegetation or cover anywhere. When you compound this landscape with carrying their rifles, packs, ammunition and every conceivable implement of an invasion force it's a miracle that any of them survived that assault. The constant firing coming from Suribachi which was directly above them plus the hidden bunkers inland made it a killing field. Numbers change with time and research but probably somewhere between six and eight hundred Marines died on this beach. By the time the island was declared "secure" after six weeks there were 6281 Marines killed and over 13,000 wounded.



There are still many bunkers and gun emplacements visible throughout the island. As you can see in this next picture they were extremely well camouflaged and hard to find. This particular bunker is completely fabricated from poured concrete (you can see the re-bar embedded in the concrete). It's almost indistinguishable from the surrounding material. Any vegetation added to its concealment and it would take a direct hit from a large shell to destroy it prior to the invasion. The majority of these bunkers were taken by direct assault and often using flamethrowers. If you Google "Herschel Williams Medal Of Honor" you can read one amazing example of attacking these sites. Mr. Williams came to realize that to breathe underground that there had to be a ventilation pipe somewhere. He would locate these pipes, place the nozzle of his flamethrower into the opening and put fire down into the bunker.



When I climbed into this particular bunker the original Japanese machine gun is still mounted in place. It was placed where it would fire to the east onto the landing beaches and was perhaps 200-300 yards inland. The Ma-

Marines in the News

Bob Reutter

When hell freezes over: How the Corps plans to win a cold weather fight in Russia or North Korea

In the past year the Corps has upped the ante in its preparation for a major cold weather confrontation with a power like Russia or North Korea — a fight likely to prove more physically taxing and hellish than the Middle Eastern climes the Corps is accustomed to. To make matters worse, the Corps is behind the curve and is playing catch up with other Arctic allies and -potential adversaries. “We haven’t been in the cold-weather business for a while,” Marine Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller said in January at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “Some of the risks and threats there, there is a possibility we are going to be there.” The extreme cold in Russian and North Korea is a nightmare for tactical planners. The Marine Corps hasn’t fought on an icy battlefield since the Korean War’s Chosin Reservoir campaign nearly 70 years ago. But now Marines are again preparing for that kind of conflict, most likely with Russia or North Korea.

In Norway, two rotations of roughly 300 Marines have deployed in the past year to foster cold weather fighting and survivability skills. Marines now routinely conduct winter training at the mountain warfare center in Bridgeport, -California. And in January the 2nd Marine Air Wing put its aircraft — including AV-8B Harriers, RQ-21 drones, EA-6B Prowlers, MV-22 Ospreys, CH-53E Super Stallions, UH-1Y Venoms, AH-1W Super Cobras and the C-130J Super Hercules — through extreme cold weather training at Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin, in an exercise dubbed Ullr Shield.

Marines can expect a fight in the cold to result in higher casualties than similar operations in temperate climates or even the scorching deserts of the Middle East. The cold and snow, compounded with mountainous terrain, makes cold -weather conflict a tedious affair, -requiring more planning and closer attention to details. Neller was visiting Marines in Norway in December when he made a controversial comment about a looming “big ass fight” that the Marine Corps must prepare for. “I was trying to make the Marines make sure they understood that, when they train, they have to keep in the back of their mind to be physically, mentally, and always their spirit has to be steeled and ready for serious conflict that is going to test them beyond anything they have ever done,” Neller later said.

MAINTAINING LETHALITY

Marines must confront the day-to-day challenges of freezing weather while still maintaining the agility, mobility and lethality that is required for effective combat operations.

The cold impacts propellants in everything from ammu-

nition to rockets. It burns at a slower rate, which means weapons like your standard issue rifle, the AT-4 and the M-203 grenade launcher will see decreased effectiveness and range. It’s a lesson learned from the 1950 Chosin Reservoir campaign.

“The greatest degradation to firepower occurred due to ammunition failure. Some ammunition burned at an uneven rate and 3.5-inch rocket launcher ammunition tended to crack open when the temperature fell below -20 degrees Fahrenheit,” reads a statement from an old Marine Corps document titled “In Every Clime and Place: USMC Cold Weather Doctrine.”

Marines at Chosin found their mortar and machine gun rounds proved less effective in the cold. Accuracy was thrown off by bouncing base plates. Marines learned to use straw and sticks under the weapons system to keep the them from bouncing after rounds were fired. Standard CLP lubrication won’t cut it either for weapons cleaning. In the cold, Marines need to use lubricant arctic weather, or LAW, which is rated to -65 F. If there is no LAW, its recommended to fire the weapon dry. At Chosin Reservoir, Marines learned to fire the weapon dry, as it heated the Marines added lubrication. But as the fighting died down, the Marines had to wipe the weapon dry again, otherwise it could freeze and crack the gun, McClowski said.

CHOSIN RESERVOIR

The Corps learned how to survive and fight in extreme cold at the Korean war’s battle of Chosin Reservoir. Prior to that, Marines had little to no experience fighting in -extreme cold weather climates. The fight at Chosin made the Corps what it is today. Before Chosin, small groups of Marines used to partake in expeditions up to the North Pole and in World War Two, the 6th Marine Regiment conducted some cold weather training in Iceland. But the Marines had never trained as an institution to fight in cold weather environments, McClowski said. Heading into the fight at Chosin, Marines were ill-prepared for the daunting task of not only fighting but just learning how to physically survive in the harsh environment. To make matters worse, Marine Corps equipment was not up to the task. Marines at Chosin were issued cold weather parkas and snow pack boots, but these clothing items were never designed for sustained fighting in cold weather. Sweat and condensation from the parkas and boots resulted in many cases of frostbite.

In total, over 7,000 Marines were classified as cold weather casualties at Chosin Reservoir, some had to have their limbs removed from frostbite, McClowski said. “Doing all the right things...caring for your weapon, caring for your equipment, caring for your body, matter greatly in extreme cold weather environments.”

[illegible]

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Any member of the Marine Corps League who is in good standing may become a Life Member, upon proper payment of the fee, as is required herein. A Life Member shall be subject to payment of no further dues of a Detachment, or National, such member shall have all the privileges, rights, and benefits enjoyed as a member so long as that Life Member shall live.

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A Soldier's Son Visits Iwo Jima Continued from pg 4

rines would have had no choice but to come across the unprotected beaches to take this position.

One report I read said "more people visit the top of Mt. Everest every year than make it to the top of Mt. Suribachi". Another report said that "Iwo Jima and the American base at Diego Garcia are the two most difficult places to access on earth". As I mentioned earlier, the Japanese make it as difficult for Americans as they can. Another example is this - when we left the island we were required to fill out a customs form and declare anything we were removing from the island. This is just something they do "because they can". There is no reason for it since there are no shops or facilities there to obtain anything. If anyone was going to try to remove souvenirs they would be found going through the metal detectors at airport. But there was one trick they saved for last.

Anyone that took material from the beach had to "declare" it on this customs form. The catch was that if you wrote down "sand" it was confiscated from you. You had to declare that you were taking "volcanic ash" and then they'd allow it to go through. Fortunately, my Lt. Colonel friend had done his homework and tipped me off. I brought home two big sandwich bags and a couple of Gatorade bottles of "volcanic ash".

For you Marines that are reading this letter I have something special to tell you. Sometime in the

past someone had driven a piece of 2-inch pipe into the ground near the site of the flag-raising. It stands up perhaps three feet and then there is a cross-piece on top about two feet wide. Over the years different people have left mementos of various kinds on this structure. Very few people are allowed there now. In years past most of the people who have had access to this area has been Marines. They have made pilgrimages to a place that you have heard about since you were in basic training. On this makeshift memorial are dozens of dog-tags, name strips and other Marine gear. Someone had left a boonie hat there. The first picture shows a Marine at this memorial and the second shows some of the items left by this and other Marines. The last picture shows you what I left.



MCLA Southern Belles Unit 441 continued from pg 2

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..... 12 TILE



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members who have gone on to guard
the streets of Heaven.



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04/2021

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*In Memory of
Marine Tommy Collins
And Deceased
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MCLA Fundraiser
See pg 7 for details

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Semper Ji

March 2018

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Newsletter Articles, Ads, and Pictures for April 2018 are due NO LATER THAN March 22, 2018				1 MCLA Southern Belles VA Clinic 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.	2	3
4	5 MODD No Growl	6 Det. 1090 Breakfast Libby's and Mom's Cafe 0800	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Det. 1090 Breakfast Libby's and Mom's Cafe 0800	14	15	16	17 Happy St. Patrick's Day!
18	19	20 Det. 1090 Breakfast Libby's and Mom's Cafe 0800	21	22	23	24
25	26 MCLA Southern Belles Unit #441 AmVets 84 6:30 p.m.	27 Det. 1090 Breakfast Libby's and Mom's Cafe 0800	28 MCL River Cities Det. #1090 VFW 1114 1900	29	30	31