



# Bunker News



**A MULTIPLE  
AWARD WINNING  
NEWSLETTER!**

**DECEMBER 2024**

## OFFICERS

### Commandant

Joe Filice  
863-245-3540

### Sr. Vice Commandant

David H. Matthews  
941-323-1509

### Jr. Vice Commandant

Dave Hildebrand  
610-804-9299

### Judge Advocate

Denny Palmer  
815-979-7465

### Pay Master

Ron Kosey  
941-812-3426

### Adjutant

Bob Fields  
941-504-3693

### Sergeant at Arms

Matt Richards  
941-524-8690

### Chaplain

Ron Schneider  
941-749-5799

### Historian

John D'Alusio  
941-209-8873

### Jr. Past Commandant

Jim Grote  
941-807-2490

Submit Bunker News input to

**Bob Fields, Editor** at  
RMFields0117@Gmail.com

**DESOTO DETACHMENT 588, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA, MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**

Website: [MCL588.Org](http://MCL588.Org)

It was touch and go there for a while but, we have officially survived both the hurricane season and the quadrennial manure typhoon that has become our general election season. We will wrap up the detachment elections this month with our final round of nominations and voting at the general membership meeting. The four, elected positions are Commandant, Senior Vice Commandant, Junior Vice Commandant and Judge Advocate. Appointed positions are Adjutant, Paymaster, Sergeant at Arms, Chaplain, Historian and Bar Manager. The final position is Junior Past Commandant but that is usually quite easy to fill! The elected positions must be filled by Marines but the appointed positions are open to all members. Our appointed positions are actually the most critical ones for running the Bunker. I'm very grateful for those who have accepted nominations. We were hoping that younger members would become involved and two stepped up who were both younger and Young! Thankfully, several board members have agreed to stay on but, don't let that discourage you from throwing your hat in the proverbial ring.



Toys for Tots is going strong. Many thanks to all who have pitched in, especially Jayson and Kevin. The last report, which will probably have changed significantly by the time you read this, is that the first weekend of distribution our volunteers distributed 960 toys, 320 books and 640 stocking stuffers to 320 children! In addition, two agency orders have been filled and total distribution stands at 1,266 toys to 422 children. There are several Toys for Tots events coming up where Marines are needed in uniform to meet and greet. No baby kissing is required. Blues and Whites are preferred but Red/Black will work. If you are available, please sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/39mwpz6m> Until next year, Merry Chrismahanukwanzivus.

Semper Fi,  
Joe



**Merry Christmas**  
**and have a**  
**Great New Year!**

*Graphic displays courtesy of Kim Cartano*

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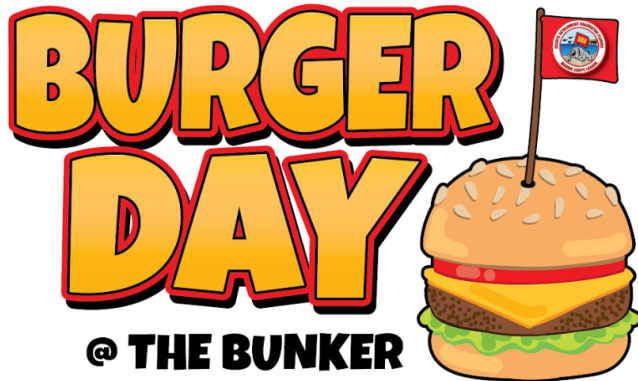
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**Marine Corps League**  
**Desoto Detachment 588**  
**Events for DECEMBER 2024**

*Open to all Members, Veterans and Guests for all Special Events*

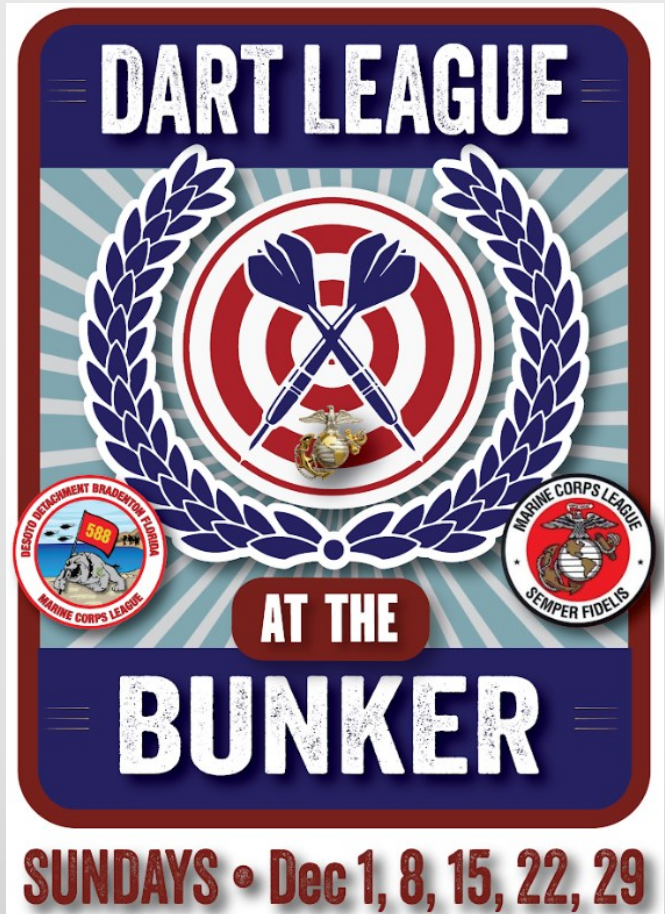


**WEDNESDAYS AT 12 noon**  
**Dec 4, 11, 18**

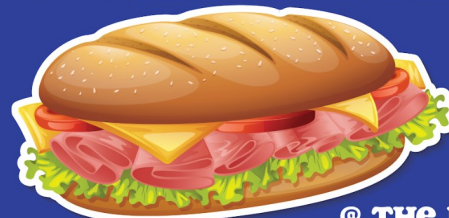


*with hot daws*

**SATURDAYS AT 3 PM**  
**Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28**



**sandwiches**



**@ THE BUNKER**

**THURSDAYS AT 12 noon**  
**DECEMBER 5, 12, 19, 26**

*Graphic displays courtesy of Kim Cartano*



## Marine Corps League

### Desoto Detachment 588

### Events for NOVEMBER 2024

*Open to all Members, Veterans and Guests for all Special Events*



December 9, 2024 - 6:00 pm at the Bunker



**December 30, 2024 at 5:30 pm**



## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP



## MEETING

@ THE BUNKER

**DECEMBER 16, 2024**  
**AT 6:30 PM**

Remember, the hatches (doors) are secured (locked) at exactly 1930 by the Sergeant at Arms, and no one gains entry after the click of the lock.

Please arrive early and enjoy a beverage, swap tall tales and enjoy the company of our membership.

GREAT EVENTS,  
BE THERE FOR ALL THE FUN!  
MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT.  
PLEASE COME TO THE MEETINGS.  
SEE YOU AT THE BUNKER!

*Graphic displays courtesy of Kim Cartano*

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# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOVEMBER 2024



**MARINES, Michael Lewis, Fred Henderson and Matt Hamper are sworn in as new members.**



**Toni Chase is awarded the Distinguished Citizen Medal (Silver) for her outstanding work with the 2023 Toys for Tots Campaign.**



**Associate Members Lauri Oberti, Rich Oberti, Steven Andrews, Shaun Staehlin are sworn in.**



**Eric Smith accepts an award on behalf of the Pat Neal Development company.**



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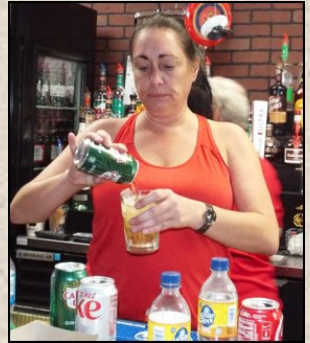
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# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOVEMBER 2024



Walter Ridgeway receives a Certificate of Appreciation for his many years of service on the Detachment Honor Guard.



Clockwise (anti-cyclonically) from top left: Toni Chase, Art Diehardt, Maggie Richards and Collette "Coco" Quinehan receive Certificates of Appreciation for their support and work on the 2024 Golf Outing. (Joan Palmer and George Parham were not in attendance, but also received a Certificate of Appreciation).



Dave Hildebrand won the drawing for the Mega-bucks "Spooky" poster.



**MARINE CORPS BALL 2024****249th BIRTHDAY OF OUR MARINE CORPS**

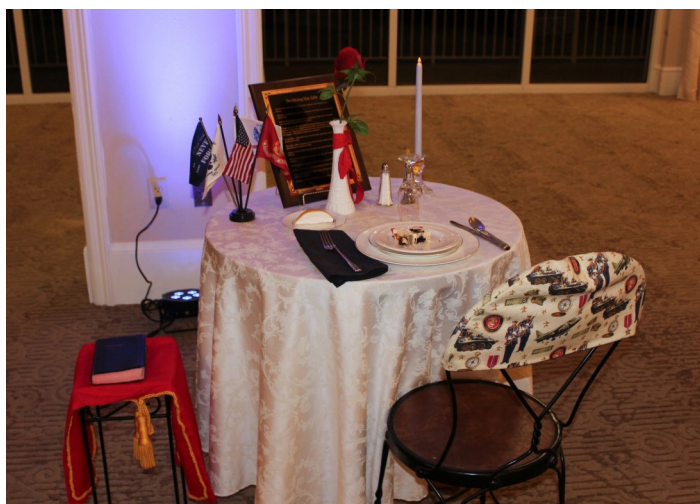
**THE OLDEST MARINE PRESENT, LTCOL EARL JACOBSON, AGE 95 AND HIS WIFE BONNIE. THIRTEEN OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY ATTENDED THE BALL TO SEE HIM IN HIS UNIFORM AND CELEBRATE HIS SERVICE.**



**PRESENTATION OF COLORS BY MEMBERS OF THE DETACHMENT HONOR GUARD.**



**WHILE WE CAN CELEBRATE  
OUR CORPS BIRTHDAY, WE  
NEVER, EVER FORGET THOSE  
WHO CANNOT BE WITH US TO  
DO SO. POW/MIA's WILL NOT  
BE FORGOTTEN.**



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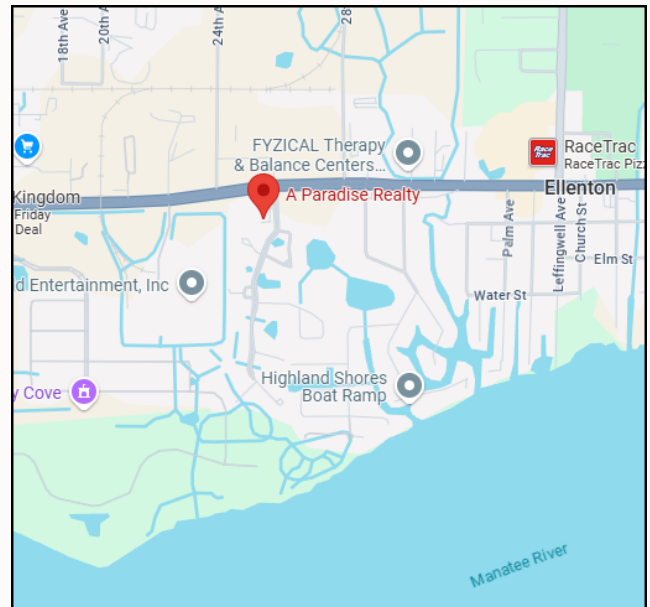


## GO TO THE BUNKER!

You will see a Yeti Cooler filled with “*goodies*”.

Buy some raffle tickets for this prize. The winning ticket will be drawn at the “A Paradise Realty” Toys for Tots Support Event on December 13th. The event goes from 6 PM to 9 PM. There will be beverages and snack food. A Paradise Realty has held this event for years at their location on Anna Maria Island.

Unfortunately a lady named Helena sort of severely damaged things on the island, so it is at their Ellenton location this year. Bring some bucks, as you will be able to buy more raffle tickets there right up until the drawing.



**A Paradise Realty is located at 945 25th Drive East, Ellenton, Florida.**



To learn more,  
contribute or  
volunteer, visit  
[www.thetun.org](http://www.thetun.org)



**T**he Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to rebuild and re-establish The Tun. The foundation needs to raise **\$19 million** to complete the project. When completed, it will serve as a functioning tavern reminiscent of the colonial Philadelphia mariners' tavern that it was, serving period-influenced refreshments, food, and entertainment and offering an educational experience through exhibits, historical documents, and special events. The new location will be approximately 250 yards from the original site, in the heart of Philadelphia's "Old City" district.

Many organizations whose history began at The Tun, such as the United States Marines (1775), Pennsylvania, Freemasons (1731), St. Andrew's Society (1747), Society of St. George (1729), The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick (1771), United States Navy (1775) are involved in reestablishing The Tun in Philadelphia to support veteran causes, Shriner's Hospitals, educational scholarships, and qualified charities. **The Tun™ is scheduled to open in November 2025**, coinciding with the Navy and Marine Corps 250th Homecoming Celebration in Philadelphia. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for November 2024.



## EVEN THE PUPPY HELPS WITH TOYS FOR TOTS



## SANTA's ELVES

## MEMBERSHIP NOTICE:

**Section 7050. Life Members.** Effective 1 September 2021 the Life Membership fee shall be as established by the National Board of Trustees and shall be posted on the National Website.

The National Board of Trustees has the fiduciary responsibility for the operation and budget requirements of the Marine Corps League. The last time fees were adjusted was 19 years ago. The National Board of Trustees voted and approved the following:

Effective 1 July 2023, the Life Membership Fees will increase as per the following chart:

\$1000.00 – 35 years of age and lower

\$ 800.00 – 36-50 years of age

\$ 600.00 – 51-64 years of age

\$ 400.00 – 65-84 years of age

\$ 100.00 – 85 years of age

and higher

The above Fees are only avail-

able if the member's annual dues

have been paid and the member is in good standing.

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## VETERANS SERVICES

Goodwill was one of the first organizations to respond to the multitude of challenges faced by veterans, their families, and the families of those who serve on active duty.

Goodwill Manasota's Veterans Services Program focuses on providing comprehensive case management and vocational services that assist with employment and barriers to employment, while helping veterans navigate the wide array of available programs.

We are proud to have a wide variety of community partners and alliances with other local organizations committed to serving those who have served for us.

**Call TODAY for this  
FREE service!  
941.355.2721 x.451**



### DD 214s

Marines who have been discharged, separated, or retired on or before 31 December 1998:

National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Dr., St. Louis, MO

63138

(314) 801-0800; Fax: (314) 801-9195

<https://nrd.gov/resource/detail/8432677/>

[The+U.S.+National+Archives+%26+Records+Administration;](https://www.archives.gov/st-louis)

[www.archives.gov/st-louis](https://www.archives.gov/st-louis)

Marines discharged/retired/separated on or after 1 January 1999:

Commandant of the Marine Corps (MMRP)-10

2008 Elliot Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-5030

(800) 268-3710; [smb.manpower.mmrp-10@usmc.mil](mailto:smb.manpower.mmrp-10@usmc.mil)



**When you are in the Grocery Store and you see that guy or gal wearing a USMC ball cap, make sure you say "Semper Fi" to them and invite them to the Marine Corps League. It's the right thing to do.**

**Come to the bunker and support your Marine Corps League Detachment. If you haven't noticed, the Bunker has been busier lately. Many of our members who haven't been in for quite awhile are coming back.**





On November 10th, the 249th Birthday of our Marine Corps, a celebration luncheon was held at Marina Jacks in Sarasota.

Representing Desoto Detachment were MARINES David Matthews, Doug Riggs, Art Diehardt, Bob Fields, Debbie Fields, Joe Filice and David Doak.

**SEMPER FIDELIS**

NOVEMBER 25th at the Sarasota National Cemetery, our Detachment Honor Guard rendered final military honors to a deceased veteran. Pictured are Joe Filice, Denny Palmer, Bob Fields, and John D'Alusio. Also present but not in the photo was Glenn Weik.

Our Honor Guard does not turn down the opportunity to render final honors to veterans, regardless of which service branch.



We can sure use some new folks to step up and participate in the Honor Guard. We can accept Marines and Associate Members, Male or Female. Those of us who have stood on the yellow footprints have the manual of arms ingrained in our DNA. We can teach those who have not been on those footprints. Help our detachment do the right thing. We do the final honors, but we also do other events in the community that are not funerals. So step up and give it a shot. Talk to any detachment officer or honor guard member about it. Semper Fidelis!

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# The USMC in “Operation Just Cause”

By John D’Alusio – Historian, DeSoto Detachment 588

The involvement of the USMC in Panama goes back many years. The first Marines came to Panama (which was then part of Columbia) in 1856 to protect Gold Rush fortune hunters on their way from the east coast of the USA to California via the Panamanian isthmus.

The Corps had sporadic visits to the isthmus, typically to restore law and order, until 1900. Then the United States decided it was going to complete a canal that the French had started and failed to finish. In 1903, Panama seceded from Columbia mainly due to political manipulation by the US.

Upon Panama declaring independence from Columbia, Major John Lejeune was placed in charge of a force of Marines to land on the isthmus. They were deployed so the US could acquire a right to the canal under favorable terms. They wound up staying until 1911, with their primary objective to safeguard the workers and canal from any efforts by the locals to disrupt the Herculean construction process.

The Marines were in Panama to stay. Over the decades their manpower fluctuated, with the greatest strength being in WW II. During that conflict their strength rose to two battalions of Marines (1,600 men) who guarded the Canal Zone from possible sabotage.

During the 1970’s, the Marine detachment shrunk to 130 at Rodman Naval Station, located on the western shore of the Canal near Panama City. Their stated mission was to protect local Naval installations, while a US Army force was to protect the Canal itself.

Relations between the US and Panama were not always calm. The Panamanian political leaders were not enamored of the Canal being under US control. However, in 1977 the US and Panama signed the Panama Canal Treaty, which involved the US turning over the Canal to Panama in the year 2000. It was hoped that this would help cement cooperation between the two countries.

Regrettably, General Omar Torrijos who had negotiated and signed the Treaty on behalf of Panama, died in a plane crash in 1981. His demise opened the door for General Manuel Noriega to take control, using titular politicians to enact his corrupt agenda. In 1983, Noriega became the officer in charge of the Panamanian National Guard. He then combined the National Guard with the Navy and Air Force to create the PDF (Panamanian Defense Force).

The total strength of the PDF was about a division of troops (15,000). However, it could only field a regiment sized force (3,000-3,500) of combat ready troops who were trained by the US Army. At this time, Panama possessed less than 50 combat aircraft and only a dozen small naval vessels.

Although Noriega had cooperated with the US, his involvement in the drug trade ultimately queered that relationship. In 1988, two Federal Grand Juries indicted Noriega on charges of racketeering and drug trafficking. Panamanian puppet president Eric Arturo Delvalle decided to try to depose Noriega. Instead, Noriega canned Delvalle. Civil disorder resulted threatening American lives and property. This included incursions into US Naval installations.

The unrest prompted the US to send reinforcement to the Canal Zone. The Marines were ordered to send in a small contingent to augment the security force already there. Unbelievably, this was only a platoon sized force from Fleet Anti-Terrorist Security Team (FAST). These Marines were highly trained in close-quarter battle techniques.

Major Ed Kieth, the commanding Marine officer, decided to use the new platoon at the Naval Station Tank Farm where fuel was stored in 37 underground tanks. There was no physical security perimeter. Heavy jungle bordered the immediate area, limiting the defenders’ visibility to a few yards for any hostile approaching force.

Soon after its deployment to defend the Tank Farm, the Marines found evidence of reconnaissance night forays by intruders. Then freshly dug fighting holes were found. Marines caught sight of black clad men with rifles and night vision sights around the Tank Farm perimeter. This was reported up the chain of command.

Soon, on 31 March 1988, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic (FMFLant) ordered a section of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) to deploy to Panama, with the balance of the brigade on high alert. This initial reinforcement group involved 300 additional Marines, while the US

The 300 Marines, the heart of which was a reinforced rifle company, were considered a force to pave the way for the entire MEB being deployed.

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Additional Marine reinforcements began to arrive on 6 April, under the command of Colonel Bill Conley. Another rifle company (Company I) comprised this group, reinforced by two 81MM mortars, a surveillance team, a target acquisition platoon, a counter-intelligence team, and a squad of engineers. However, on 9 April, all US forces were combined under the newly created Joint Task Force Panama (JTF Panama).

The new Marine force was unsurprisingly assigned to defense of the fuel tank farm to augment the original defenders. Captain Joe Valore deployed his rifle company, in concert with the original defenders, around the tank farm, dividing it into two zones. He assigned one full platoon to each of the zones, with another in reserve, electing to push forward strong patrols, especially at night. However, he first had to change the standing order that no Marine carry a live round in the chamber of his rifle. Colonel Conley gave his permission for the Marines to have a live round in the chamber as well as a full magazine in each rifle.

In the early morning hours of 10 April, two platoons from Company I discovered unknown intruders attempting infiltrate the tank farm. The patrol split in two to attempt to surround the hostiles. Unfortunately, one of the Marine groups popped a flare, which the other Marines took as a rifle report and tragically began firing their M-16's at the other Marine contingent. As a result, Marine Corporal Ricardo Villahermosa was hit by friendly fire, and expired on 12 April.

At dusk on 12 April, battlefield sensors (on loan from the Army) the Marines had deployed indicated that there were approximately 40 intruders approaching the tank farm. The hostiles began firing at the Marine positions. This resulted in the two 81mm mortars being alerted to a fire mission. First, they fired three dozen illumination rounds. The intruders continued to advance. Thus, the mortarmen were given order for live fire. They quickly launched eight rounds from each mortar for a total of 16 HE projectiles. Then a Mark 19 40mm chain gun was unleashed on the intruders' positions. Unsurprisingly, incoming fire from the hostiles stopped. The Marines were ordered to cease fire. Using night vision devices, the Marines watched as wounded attackers received medical treatment, while others, both wounded and dead, were evacuated.

At dawn, the Marines swept the battle area. They didn't find much. There was evidence that bodies had been dragged through the brush, and foreign made battle dressings were discovered amongst the enemy positions.

US Army General Loeffke in command was concerned that the Marines had needlessly opened fire (despite the fact they did it in retaliation to incoming fire) and ordered a urinalysis from every Marine who participated in the action. All came back negative. Then the Marines were subject to intense debriefings.

Noriega used his propaganda machine to plant stories claiming that the Marines were in drug induced hallucinations and had fired at shadows. The Marines closed ranks and stood their ground. The controversy passed.

Captain Valore's Marines were then relieved from tank farm guard duty by an Army battalion. On 14 April, elements of this detachment were involved in a firefight with a cadre of hostiles. It emphasized the fact that Noriega's troops were taking the offensive against the tank farm. But their objective may have actually been the Marines and Army troops rather than the tank farm itself.

Things went quiet until 19 July when an incursion at the tank farm of 20 hostiles was discovered by electronic surveillance. The Marines, in conjunction with an Army unit, endeavored to capture the intruders. However, the enemy was able to slither out of the envelopment in groups of twos and threes.

The area was fairly becalmed until 31 October, when there was another firefight at the tank farm that generally mimicked April clash. Once again, after the action concluded, the Marines (M/3/8) were subjected to intense debriefings to determine if any grunts had exceeded orders. It was as if the command believed the Marines attracted hostile intrusions. The Marine force guarding the tank farm was reduced to two platoons, one on active patrol and the other in reserve.

Marines were restricted from hunting out the enemy. They were told to remain in their defensive positions and not fire unless they were first fired upon. This was problematic and morale busting, as Marines would often acquire a target with night vision electronics and be unable to take the intruder out without challenging him. Of course, if they did this, they ceded the advantage to the hostile. This engendered a "bunker mentality" among the grunts.

The new Marine Commander, Colonel Tom Roberts, studied the situation and ordered the fixed defensive positions of the Marines to be razed. He returned the Marines to fluid patrols around the tank farm reasoning that if intruders didn't know where the defenders were situated, they would be less likely to attack. He was correct. There was a marked drop in the number of intruder incidents at the tank farm.

The area remained mostly peaceful as the Panamanian general election, set for 7 May, approached. Noriega backed a puppet ticket, which lost to the opposition. He sent his street goons into the fray. They attacked winning VP Guillermo Ford in the street and began beating him with sticks leaving Ford in a bloody heap. However, within days of the outcome of the election, more Army and Marine reinforcements arrived.

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The Marine reinforcements, arriving in Panama on 12 May, came from Company A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Amphibious Infantry (LAI) Battalion equipped with amphib light armored vehicles (LAV-25s). These were very fast and maneuverable eight wheeled units that had a main battery of a 25mm (1") "Bushmaster" chain gun augmented by a 7.62 M60 machine gun. The Panamanians began referring to these vehicles as *tankquitos* (little tanks). They were excellent ordnance for low-intensity conflicts like the one in Panama.

The LAVs appeared everywhere and anywhere in Marine convoys. They even "swam" the Canal to secure US housing and other facilities at Fort Amador.

On 7 August, one of the Marine LAVs was detained by Panamanian Defense Forces. A full platoon of LAVs came to the rescue covered by Army helicopters from the air.

On 3 October, a coup was launched by Panamanian Major Moises Giroldi against Noriega. It ultimately failed when Noriega was rescued by troops airlifted into the capital. The Marines had established a defensive perimeter two clicks west of the tank farm. No Panamanian Defense Force troops attempted to break the perimeter, but a multitude of Panamanian civilians, attempting to exit the trouble areas, approached the Marine position *en masse*.

The crowd began pressing against the Marines, but the grunts held. The Marines knew that if they had to open fire, civilians would be slaughtered. The Marines put on their "war faces" and stared down the crowd, who eventually dispersed. Restraint and common sense served the Marines well that day.

At this point, the US government had had enough of Manuel Noriega and the unrest in the Canal Zone. It was decided to arrest Noriega and depose him. Army Lt. General Carl Stiner was sent in with the XVIII Airborne Corps. The Marines in country were designated Task Force Semper Fi, with Colonel Charles Richardson commanding.

On 16 December Marine Lt. Robert Paz and three Army officers drove to Panama City to have dinner. They became lost and bumped up against a PDF checkpoint. The Panamanian checkpoint soldiers were carrying AK-47s. They attempted to drag the occupants out of the car, but the driver quickly backed the vehicle up, did a 180, and started to speed away. At least one PDF soldier opened fire with his rifle and hit Lt. Paz. He died as a result of the wound.

Navy Lt. Adam Curtis and his wife Bonnie had witnessed the incident involving Lt. Paz, having been stopped at the same check point. They were forcibly removed from the vehicle. Lt. Curtis was beaten and his wife threatened before they were eventually released.

These incidents propelled the Joint Chiefs of Staff to recommend to the President to implement Plan 90-2 (Operation Just Cause, the dethroning of Noriega). Marine Commandant Al Gray militated for committing the 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, which was already embarked on board a transport ship. The Joint Chiefs told Gray that there were already 24,000 troops earmarked for the invasion, and the 11<sup>th</sup> MEU was unnecessary. H-Hour was set for 20 December at 0100.

In Panama, Colonel Richardson explained to his Marines that Lt. Paz did not die in vain and readied them for combat. He had been given his mission for the Marines force and patiently outlines each unit's objective. He stressed the use of the most minimum amount of force needed to secure the objectives. He ordered his officers to avoid damage to historical sites and public works, and to give the PDF a chance to surrender before engaging them.

A half hour before the scheduled amphib landings, Marine Captain Charles Gaskins received a report that Panamanian V-300 armored vehicles were on the move in the vicinity of Rodman Naval Base. Ten minutes later 13 Marine LAVs moved out toward a PDF local HQ. As the Marines approached the PDF, they were subject to small arms fire. Three of the LAVs opened up with their M-60 machine guns.

When they reached the station, Corporal Garreth Isaak forced the door open with buckshot rounds from an M-203 grenade launcher. Once inside the building, the Marines were fired upon by PDF members armed with AK-47s. Isaak was fatally hit. But his fellow Marines cleared the building with grenades and automatic weapon fire. As it turned out, Corporal Isaak was the only US Marine killed in combat in Panama during the hostilities.

Captain Gaskins with his task force approached a roadblock consisting of two gasoline tanker trucks sitting across the Pan-American Highway. Approximately 20-30 PDF soldiers manned the position. Gaskins radioed his superior, Lt. Col. Franks, and requested permission to open fire. It was granted. The 25mm chain guns of the LAVs opened fire and shredded the two trucks, which fortunately were empty of fuel. The defenders hightailed it out of the roadblock area as soon as the chain guns opened fire.

Gaskins' unit then reached a PDF station building. He used the FAST Marines (close quarter combat experts) to secure the building, which they did efficiently and without casualties. They became the choice for clearing buildings after that demonstration.

A small detachment of Marines (25 grunts reinforced by a squad of Army engineers) was ordered to secure the Bridge of the Americas near the Miraflores lock. They completed their assignment flawlessly.

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A squad of 8 Marines were detailed to guard the US Embassy. This was commanded by Staff Sgt. Mike Pellow. This small security guard detachment was under siege in the early morning hours of 20 December. Fortunately, they had a semblance of support from two marine LAVs that were positioned on streets near the embassy. But the eight grunts in the embassy compound were essentially on their own through the night. At 0122, three RPG's were fired at the front of the embassy compound by PDF soldiers. A few minutes later, three more RPG rounds were fired at the back of the embassy. Despite the 6 RPG rounds, there was no general attack on the compound and all eight Marines made it safely to morning.

Captain Gaskins was given another "hot" objective. He was told to assault and secure the HQ of the Panamanian 10<sup>th</sup> Military Zone in the city of Chorrera (population 80,000 and Panama's third largest city). On the way there, his small force encountered a roadblock consisting of two buses with PDF soldiers behind them. The Marines began taking small arms fire upon their approach to the roadblock. Captain Gaskins ordered his lead element of two LAVs to launch an immediate attack, which they did. The sight of the two *tankquitos* roaring down the highway with their 25mm guns blazing away was enough to quickly dissipate the defenders and the buses, which were quickly driven off.

When Gaskins' Marines approached the PDF HQ compound, they were a bit intimidated. There were four buildings surrounded by a 6' concrete wall. Gaskins called for close air support, which was granted. Two A-& Corsairs peppered the compound with 20mm fire. Gaskins immediately ordered an all-out attack. By the time the smoke had cleared from the air attack, the Marines burst into the compound. Ten days earlier, it was reported that approximately 270 PDF soldiers manned the compound. The only thing Gaskins' Marines found were a few snipers. They were quickly dispensed with, and the HQ was in Marine hands.

By mid-day on 20 December, there was wholesale surrender by the PDF. They could see the writing on the wall, and had no desire to die for Noriega, who they knew was about to be permanently deposed.

On 23 December, Colonel Richardson detailed Major Neller to assault and capture a building in the seaport of Vaca Monte where 100 "Anti-Terrorist Unit" PDF soldiers loyal to Noriega were said to be held up in a defensive position. When the Marines arrived at the port, they discovered numerous foreign maritime seamen who were looters. They included Cubans, Germans, Peruvians, and Nicaraguans, all helping themselves to contraband. The Marines stopped the trucks and threw the materials on the ground. They then detained the looters.

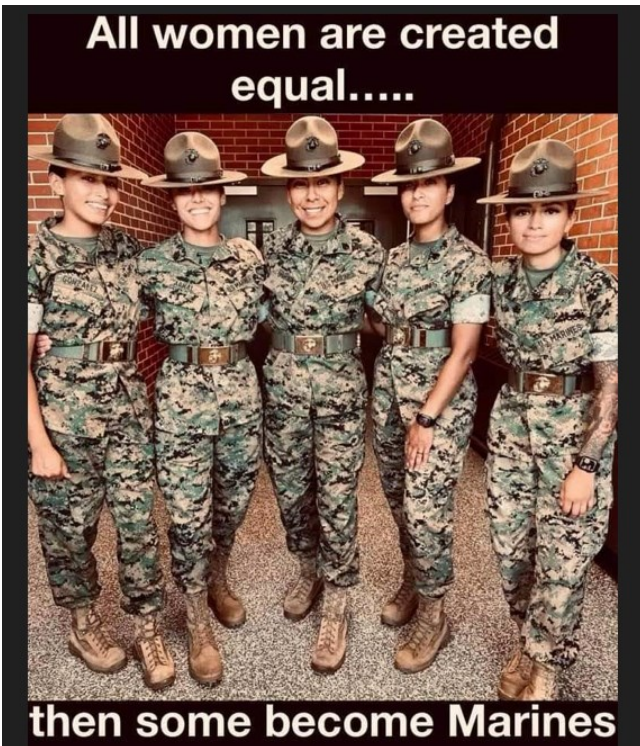
When the Marines approached the building where the 100-man contingent of the PDF was said to be defending, they found no one around. The group had bugged out well in advance of the arrival of the Marines.

The operation against Monte Vaca was the last major Marine operation. By 24 December, the fight, such as it was, was all but over. Noriega, giving in to the inevitable, sought refuge in the Papal Nunciatura.

The total number of Marines "in country" during the Panamanian unrest and invasion never exceeded 927, but they punched far above their numbers and materially assisted in the military operation responsible for toppling the Noriega dictatorship.



Noriega being escorted onto a US Airforce aircraft by DEA personnel



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## SEMPER FI STORE

The uniform for Marine Corps League Members and Associate Members consists of the Red Cover with emblem. For Members it is the Red Cover with EGA. For Associate Members it is the Red Cover with the Sunburst Associate Member emblem. These can be purchased at the "Semper Fi" Store.

[HTTPS://THE-SEMPER-FI-STORE\\_MYSHOPIFY.COM](https://the-semp-fi-store-myshopify.com)

OR JUST GOOGLE

*MARINE CORPS LEAGUE SEMPER FI STORE*

			
Detachment Cover	Women's Cover	Regular Cap Ornament	Associate Cap Ornament
<b>\$ 35<sup>00</sup></b>	<b>\$ 35<sup>00</sup></b>	<b>\$ 7<sup>00</sup></b>	<b>\$ 7<sup>00</sup></b>





# TOYS FOR TOTS

Please join us for an afternoon of food,  
fun and laughter!

December 21st 2024  
11:00am-3:00pm

50/50  
Raffle!

Raffle  
Prizes!

4950 Peridia Blvd. East  
Bradenton, FL 34203

Please bring a NEW, UNWRAPPED TOY

\$25 per person  
Includes;  
Hors Deouvres

Silent  
Auction!

# Membership cards now have no expiration date. Order replacement card online.

Marines,

1. We are now printing our membership cards in house, so by leaving off the expiration date cards are good for life, we no longer have to print for existing members, only for new members, transfers and new life members. That cuts our card printing down to around 10,000 or less every year from around 30,000.
2. Anyone who wishes to order a replacement card or just wants the new plastic card can order from our website: [www.mclnational.org](http://www.mclnational.org).
3. We are currently trying to get the company to list the expiration dates in the portal with the members name and info.
4. All Detachment paymasters have access to the portal to verify anyone of their members. If they have been delinquent for a long period of time their name will drop off the portal page.
5. If you have a visiting member from out of area, the fastest way to verify (if you need to) is to contact his/her Detachment paymaster or Commandant.
6. We are now using an old but tried and true way of mailing out membership cards, they are going directly to the Detachment paymasters, this avoids having to deal with returns due to bad addresses. Hand them out at your meetings, it will also get members at your meetings, contact them and let them know you have their card, if they want it they can go to a meeting and have it presented to them.

Thanks for your support,

Semper Fi

Dennis Tobin

National Commandant

**Bar Manners:** It certainly isn't mandatory, but when a member wins a large pot on dice or pull tab cards, it is an accepted practice to **tip the bartender VERY generously, and to buy the bar a round of drinks.**

**People who win big money and just leave a drink chip or small tip are frowned upon by all and called names that I can't put in print, but we all think those names.**





## Free Entrance to National Parks

Explore the outdoors. You can use your [Veteran ID Card \(VIC\)](#) to gain free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including [national parks](#), wildlife refuges, and forests. Gold Star Families and Veterans can [enjoy a variety of activities like camping, hiking, biking, and much more.](#)

### Bunker Announcements :

- **NO CHILDREN are allowed to sit at the bar.** *(For legal purposes, this means anyone under the age of 18, though the label may also apply to a few unnamed grunts).* Minors must sit at tables or high tops only.
- **Guests are permitted 3 visits to The Bunker.** *Upon the 3rd visit, they will be required to submit a membership application before returning.*
- Non-members will be assessed an additional **\$1.00 surcharge** on drinks.
- When playing the dice, **3 of a kind gets a free drink** of the kind already purchased, **4 of a kind gets 2 free drinks** of the kind already purchased. Five of a kind receives the monetary amount based on the roll sequence.
- When you are going to use free drink chips to pay for your drinks, **let the bartender know before they tally your “cash out” on the computer.** If you produce the chips after they produce the “cash out” total, it causes issues. Be considerate of your volunteer bartenders and **TIP THEM WELL.**
- **THE BUNKER IS OPEN TILL 2100 ON FRIDAY NIGHTS AGAIN!**

# Support your Detachment.

### LOCAL AGENCY THAT CAN HELP VETERANS IN NEED

**Supportive Service for Veteran Families (SSVF)**. Administered by ***Turning Points*** in Bradenton. Contact them at 941-747-1509. They are located at **701 17th Avenue West, Bradenton Florida 34205**. Services available include: *Outreach Services, Case Management Services, Assistance Obtaining VA benefits, Assistance obtaining other Public Benefits, Rental Assistance, Utility-Fee Payment Assistance, Child Care and other Qualifying Services, and Transportation.*

If you have service connected disabilities and hold a VA Card indicating that, you can go to the Myakka State Park Rangers Office, off of State Road 72, and be issued a pass.



## MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Marine Corps League is to promote the interest and to preserve traditions of the United States Marine Corps; strengthen the fraternity of Marines and their families; serve Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who wear or who have worn the Eagle, Globe and Anchor; and foster the ideals of Americanism and patriotic volunteerism.

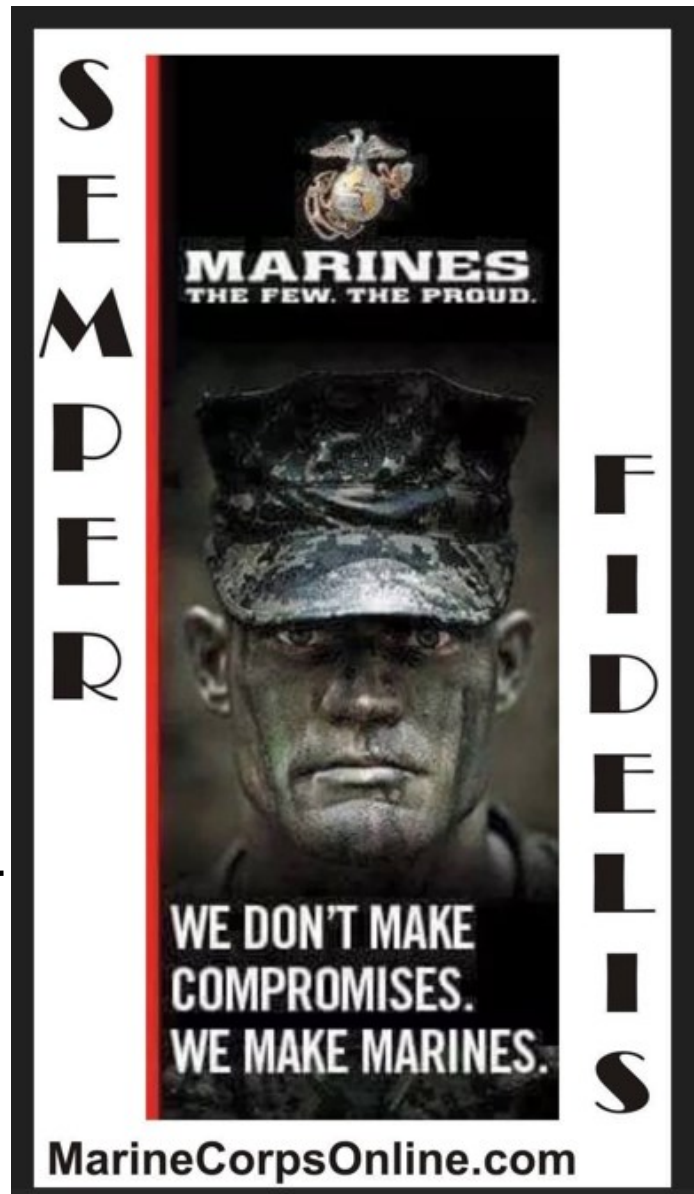
Dedicated to supporting our local veterans and enriching our community, DeSoto Detachment #588 is the local arm of the Marine Corps League, serving the greater Bradenton/Sarasota area. Annual initiatives include Honor Guard and honors services for fallen service members, Toys for Tots drive, charity golf tournament, USMC Ball, scholarships and support for Young Marines, and other community initiatives that support or honor US Marines and their families.





### Marine Corps Rule # 2

***MARINES MAY OCCASIONALLY BICKER & FIGHT WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH MEMBERS OF OTHER SERVICE BRANCHES, BUT WHEN THE STUFF HITS THE FAN, MARINES WILL STAND WITH EACH OTHER AND THE MEMBERS OF OTHER SERVICE BRANCHES.***



## How may I get copies or information from my official military records or for those of a family member or military person I am researching?

Write:

National Personnel Records Center  
Military Personnel Records  
9700 Page Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

The fax request number is (314) 801-9195. The Center will respond in writing by U.S. Mail. Or visit the National Personnel Records Center online at:<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.

Or you may also call at: 314-801-0800.

## How do I find out what medals and awards for which I am eligible?

Write:

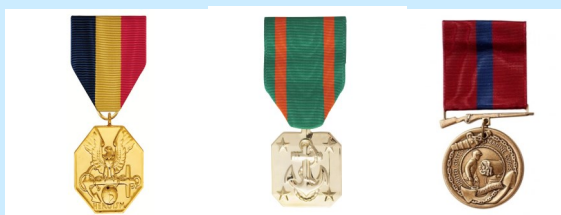
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps  
Military Awards Branch (Code MMMA)  
2008 Elliot Road  
Quantico, VA 22134-5030

**Members and Associate Members, male or female, consider joining our Honor Guard.**

**We can teach you everything you need to know.**

### Where to write for your medals (no cost to you):

Navy Personnel Command  
Liaison Office Room 5409  
9700 Page Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100



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**Condoms do not  
guarantee safe sex.  
A friend of mine  
was wearing one  
when he was shot  
by the woman's  
husband.**



Confidential crisis chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net**  
or text to **838255**

#### RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

The presence of these signs requires immediate attention.

Call us if you experience any of these warning signs.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

© 2/17 VHA

**Our Detachment has a new website that is now up and running.  
Please visit it at: [MCL588.org](http://MCL588.org). The website will host  
announcements, photos, archived newsletters, etc. So go right  
now and put [MCL588.Org](http://MCL588.Org) into your browser.**

STOLEN VALOR.....Don't imposters know it is very easy to verify valorous claims in these days of Google and other search engines? There are a lot of fakers out there claiming to be something that they are not.

It is very easy to ascertain heroic status, both in the United States and the United Kingdom.  
Don't be a faker. If you earned it, wear it with pride, whether you rate one ribbon or a hundred ribbons.  
if you didn't earn it go crawl back in your hole with the other worms.

For more information about these worms,

Go to:

<http://www.stolenvalor.com/index.cfm>

Or

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Victoria\\_Cross\\_recipients\\_by\\_campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Victoria_Cross_recipients_by_campaign)

IT'S OUR DUTY TO EXPOSE IMPOSTERS,  
BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.



If you, or someone you know needs help, support is available 24/7. Service members and their families can call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647, or chat at [militaryonesource.mil](https://militaryonesource.mil). Service members, veterans, and their loved ones can also call the Military and Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat at [veteranscrisisline.net](https://veteranscrisisline.net), or text to 838255.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to anyone at 1-800-273-8255.

#### MARINE CORPS ASSOCIATION

715 Broadway St., Quantico, VA 22134  
(866) 622-1775, ext. 100, Fax: (703) 640-0162  
[mca@mca-marines.org](mailto:mca@mca-marines.org)

- **Leatherneck Magazine**  
(888) 237-7683; Fax: (703) 640-0823  
[leatherneck@mca-marines.org](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org)
- **Marine Corps Gazette**  
(800) 336-0291, ext. 144; Fax: (703) 630-9147  
[gazette@mca-marines.org](mailto:gazette@mca-marines.org)

#### THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

##### ARMED FORCES DAY

For those who currently wear the uniform

##### VETERANS DAY

For those who used to wear the uniform

##### MEMORIAL DAY

For those who never made it out of the uniform



If you need help with benefits claims, contact the  
Manatee County Veteran's Service Office at

**(941) 745-3795**

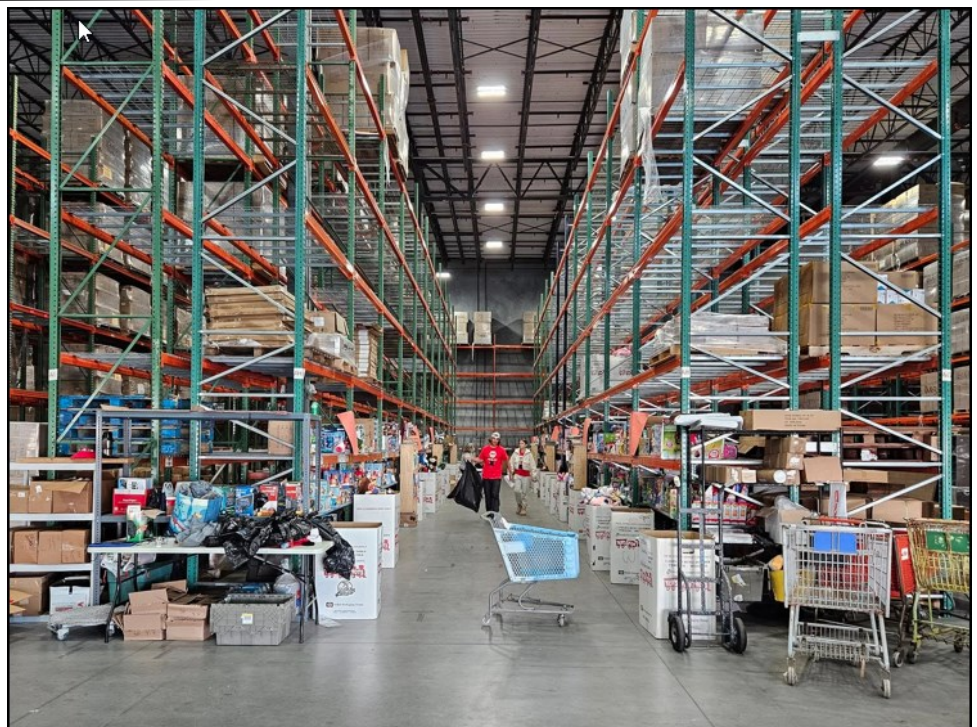
## VETERAN'S SERVICES

Here in Manatee County, we appreciate our Veterans for their service and sacrifice and are happy to assist. You will always be treated with respect, courtesy, and compassion while at our office. Again, thank you for your service and we hope to hear from you in the near future.

Our office is committed to providing you professional assistance and guidance throughout your entire VA claim process. There is absolutely **no fee or cost** for our services or for the submission of a claim for VA benefits.

**These have been paid in full  
by your service.**

**If you know of  
members who are sick  
or in distress, please  
call our Chaplain,  
Ron Schneider  
941-749-5799**



**THE TOYS FOR TOTS WAREHOUSE IS IN FULL SWING. WE HAVE PLENTY OF WAREHOUSE SPACE WHICH ALLOWS US TO REDUCE HANDLING OF THE TOYS AND EXPEDITES THE DISTRIBUTION TO FAMILIES.**

**Desoto Detachment #588, 5225 26th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207 (941) 301-4598**

**MEETINGS ARE THIRD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 1830 Website: MCL588.Org**



# SCUTTLEBUTT

## The Word



- ⇒ When is the last time you invited a potential member to the Bunker or to a MCL Meeting? Invite that guy or gal down the street that has the USMC decal on their car.
- ⇒ See JOE INTOPPA to become a celebrity poker dealer for Bar Poker. Little to no experience required.
- ⇒ Send your photos, articles or announcements to Editor Bob Fields for inclusion in the Bunker News. Send to RMFields0117@gmail.com by the 25th of the month.
- ⇒ The Bunker is now open on Sundays 1100-1800 & Friday's until 2100.
- ⇒ HONOR GUARD PRACTICE COME JOIN IN, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS WELCOME. See any member for details.

***Remember to always tip your***  
***VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS***  
***at the Bunker very generously.***

***They are unpaid and giving up their***  
***time to keep***  
***the Bunker Running.***

**Bar Manners:** It certainly isn't mandatory, but when a member wins a large pot on dice or pull tab cards, it is an accepted practice to tip the bartender VERY generously, and to buy the bar a round of drinks.  
People who win big money and just leave a drink chip or small tip are frowned upon by all and called names that I can't put in print.



# MARINE CORPS HISTORY IN DECEMBER

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

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

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

**9 December 1992:** Marines of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations capable) landed in Somalia kicking off Operation Restore Hope, the largest humanitarian relief operation of its kind.

**10 December 1995:** In Bosnia, 22 Marines from Marine Corps Security Force Company, Naples, Italy were among the first American troops to arrive. They provided the security for Allied Forces Southern Europe headquartered at Sarajevo. About 2,500 NATO troops would be in place by 19 December taking on the task of peace enforcement in former Yugoslavia from the U.N.

**15 December 1948:** The Secretary of the Navy signed a "Memorandum of Agreement" with the State Department which laid the basis for the modern Marine Security Guard program at U.S. embassies throughout the world.

**19 December 1972:** The Marine detachment of the USS TICONDEROGA provided shipboard security for three U.S. astronauts, Eugene Cernan, Ronald Evans, Harrison Schmitt, and their Apollo-17 space capsule. The astronauts had successfully completed a (then) record lunar stay of more than 75 hours.

**20 December 1989:** Operation Just Cause was launched in Panama to protect American lives, restore the democratic process, preserve the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaty, and apprehend dictator General Manuel Antonio Noriega. One Marine, Corporal Garreth C. Isaak, was killed and three other were wounded during the operation.

**23 December 1941:** Japanese forces launched a predawn landing on Wake Island and Wilkes Island, while their carriers launched air strikes against Wilkes, Wake, and Peale islands in support of the landing force. After nearly 12 hours of desperate fighting, the three islands were surrendered.



**26 December 1957:** Twenty helicopters from Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 162, were rushed to Ceylon onboard the USS PRINCETON where Marines participated in the rescue and evacuation of flood victims.



## PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

**JOHN D. KELLY**

**Born: JULY 8, 1928**

**Died: MAY 28, 1952**

**Hometown: HOMESTEAD, PENNSYLVANIA**



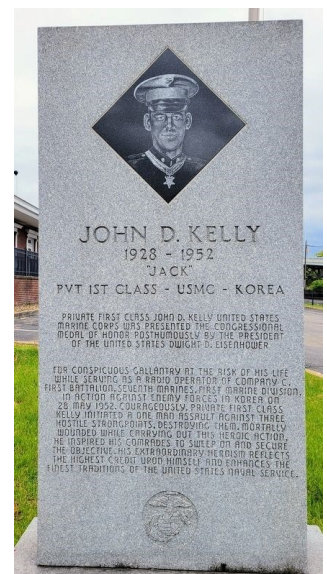
The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the **MEDAL OF HONOR** posthumously to

## PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOHN D. KELLY UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Radio Operator of Company C, First Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces in Korea on 28 May 1952. With his platoon pinned down by a numerically superior enemy force employing intense mortar, artillery, small-arms and grenade fire, Private First Class Kelly requested permission to leave his radio in the care of another man and to participate in an assault on enemy key positions. Fearlessly charging forward in the face of a murderous hail of machine-gun fire and hand grenades, he initiated a daring attack against a hostile strongpoint and personally neutralized the position, killing two of the enemy. Unyielding in the face of heavy odds, he continued forward and singlehandedly assaulted a machine-gun bunker. Although painfully wounded, he bravely charged the bunker and destroyed it, killing three of the enemy. Courageously continuing his one-man assault, he again stormed forward in a valiant attempt to wipe out a third bunker and boldly delivered point-blank fire into the aperture of the hostile emplacement. Mortally wounded by enemy fire while carrying out his heroic action, Private First Class Kelly, by his great personal valor and aggressive fighting spirit, inspired his comrades to sweep on, overrun and secure the objective. His extraordinary heroism in the face of almost certain death reflects the highest credit upon himself and enhances the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

/S/ DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER



**Desoto Detachment #588, 5225 26th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207 (941) 301-4598**

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Marine Corps League Application for Membership



Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Enlistment/Commissioning: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Discharge/Retirement/Separation: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Application--- New ☐ Renewal ☐ Membership Type--- Regular ☐ Associate ☐ Dual ☐

Have you ever been convicted of a Felony? YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes is checked, I agree to waive my rights under the Privacy Act and disclose the nature of the felony conviction for consideration of membership in the Marine Corps League.

I hereby apply for membership in the DESOTO (588) Detachment, Marine Corps League and enclose \$35.00 for one year's membership.

I hereby certify that I am currently serving or have served honorably in the United States Marine Corps, "ON ACTIVE DUTY," for not less than ninety(90) days and earned the Eagle, Globe and Anchor;\*or have served or am currently serving in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and have earned no less than ninety (90) Reserve Retirement Credit Points; or that I have served or am currently serving as a U.S. Navy FMF Sailor who has earned the FMF Device or FMF Ribbon. If discharged, I am in receipt of a DD Form 214 or a Certificate of Discharge indicating "Honorable Service". ("Honorable Service" will be defined by the last DD Form 214 or Certificate of Discharge that the applicant received). General Discharge under Honorable Conditions is acceptable. By signature on this application, I hereby agree to provide proof of honorable service/discharge upon request. I understand the DD Form 214 may contain information such as military awards, training, and character of service.

### OATH OF MEMBERSHIP-REGULAR/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, In the Presence of Almighty God, do solemnly swear, that I will uphold and defend the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America and the Bylaws and Administrative Procedures of the Marine Corps League. That I take this obligation willingly and in good faith and that I will follow the directions and guidance of elected and appointed officers of the League. That I will participate and support the missions and activities of the Marine Corps League, and that I promise to govern my conduct in such a manner that I will never bring discredit upon myself, Members of the League, or the Marine Corps League, so help me God.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor (Where Applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

Please locate a Detachment using the locator on The Marine Corps League National website. Upon completion submit this form and attach a copy of your last DD-214 (Service 2 or Marine 4)\*, as well as any applicable fees as defined by the Detachment. If you desire to join as a Member At Large, please go to The Marine Corps League National website and apply using the online form.

\*Regular Member applicants only

\_\_\_\_ Rev.

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