



Bunker News



*A MULTIPLE
AWARD WINNING
NEWSLETTER!*

APRIL 2024

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DESOTO DETACHMENT 588, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA, MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Website: MCL588.Org

April Fools!

Historians debate about the origins of April Fools. One theory dates back to 1592 when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. Under the Julian calendar, the new year was celebrated at the vernal equinox, which was around the beginning of April. Those who continued to celebrate the new year in April were considered April Fools (actually, April fish because they were easily caught) .

Locally, those who didn't get the word won't be identified by paper fish stuck to their backs but by the credit card they present to the bartender. The Bunker is now Cash Only. We are not alone in this as several other local veterans organizations have taken the same route. I'm not sure if the most appropriate quote is, "no plan survives first contact with the enemy" or "no good deed goes unpunished" but in any case, the board will be watching to make sure that the result of the change is positive for the Bunker, our volunteers and members. In addition to trousers, your pre-Bunker checklist should now include 'Cash' and 'Challenge Coin'.

Our Saint Paddy's Day celebration succeeded beyond expectations and beyond the supply of corned beef! Many thanks to Joe Intoppa, Ron Darden and Keri for their efforts. Why just 'Keri'? The place is overrun with Ron's and Joe's but there is no doubt about Keri! Thanks also to Maggie who arranged for the corned beef and was one of the people who didn't get a sandwich.

Astute observers will notice that the sliding glass door is no longer held together with chewing gum and baling wire. Thanks to Chris Reynolds and Bruce Fisher for donating a new door and to Chris, Bruce and Glenn Weik for installing it.

Our Honor Guard recently assisted the Marine Reserves providing full military honors for a Marine veteran. We are resuming our **Honor Guard practices on the last Monday of the month**, for any who are interested in joining the honor guard. Prior experience is not needed.

Until next month.

Semper Fi





Marine Corps League

Desoto Detachment 588

Event Calendar for APRIL 2024

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



4/1	12:00 PM	BUNKER BEGINS "CASH ONLY", NO CREDIT OR DEBIT CARDS ACCEPTED.
4/3	12:00 PM	BURGER DAY @ THE BUNKER!
4/3	12:00 PM	RAFFLE TICKETS FOR HONEY B DERRINGER ON SALE @ THE BUNKER!
4/5	6:00 PM	KARAOKE @ THE BUNKER!
4/6	3:00 PM	BAR POKER @ THE BUNKER!
4/8	6:15 PM	E-BOARD MEETING @ THE BUNKER!
4/10	12:00 PM	BURGER DAY @ THE BUNKER!
4/12	6:00 PM	KARAOKE @ THE BUNKER!
4/13	3:00 PM	BAR POKER @ THE BUNKER!
4/15	6:30 PM	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING @ THE BUNKER!
4/17	12:00 PM	BURGER DAY @ THE BUNKER!
4/19	6:00 PM	KARAOKE @ THE BUNKER!
4/20	3:00 PM	BAR POKER @ THE BUNKER!
4/24	12:00 PM	BURGER DAY @ THE BUNKER!
4/26	6:00 PM	KARAOKE @ THE BUNKER!
4/27	3:00 PM	BAR POKER @ THE BUNKER!
4/30	ALL DAY	ONLY 274 MORE DAYS UNTIL KANSAS DAY, START PLANNING NOW!

**PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS AT THE BUNKER
FOR THE MARINE CORPS BALL . SEE THE
FLYER IN THIS NEWSLETTER.
DON'T BE LEFT OUT.**

Tuesday morning on March 12th @ 10:30 am, at Sarasota National Cemetery, Myself and many friends said goodbye to Cathie (Martel). The honor guard of 588 served as pallbearers. They helped make it very special. At the site was the most beautiful memorial wreath given by the 588. We listened to a lovely eulogy from my son Keith and his family (very nice) after which we all returned to the Bunker, where we were joined by many loving friends for a great buffet and memories. I wish to thank all for making this an up-lifting day. Thank you. Tom





The Bunker for many years was successfully run as an all cash organization. With the increase in operating costs and the fact we pay an average of 3% on every credit/debit card used, along with a fee for all cash backs, it has been decided as of April 1, 2024 we will revert back to being a cash only business. At that time credit / debit cards will no longer be accepted. This may initially be inconvenient for some, however we would prefer to cut overhead than be forced to raise prices. I'm certain we all share the same goal which is to see our organization succeed.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MARCH 2024



Marine Eli Pfeifer was sworn in as a new member of the Desoto Detachment. He was a door gunner on a helicopter in Vietnam.

We also had three new Associate members sworn in to the Desoto Detachment:

- ♦ Russ Otto (*former Army Paratrooper*)
- ♦ Jayson Gilliam (*New Toys for Tots Coordinator*)
- ♦ Kimberly Cartano (*Excellent Baker and supporter of Veterans Causes*)



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MARCH 2024



John Olexa contemplating how many 50/50 tickets to buy. Whatever his decision, it was correct, as he won the \$81.00 drawing. The IRS will be paying him a visit.



The winning ticket for the shotgun raffle drawing was held (*I didn't win again*). The winner was Vince Esposito. Here he is pictured at Buccaneer pawn Shop picking up his prize.





249th. MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY BALL

Saturday, November 9, 2024

TARA COUNTRY CLUB

6602 Drewry's Bluff

Bradenton, FL

Directions: East on S.R.70 (53rd. Ave.) Right on Tara Blvd. (last traffic light before I-75)

First right after traffic light on Drewry's Bluff. Country Club is on left ½ mile.



All invited to attend an evening of Tradition, Ceremony, Dinner, Music and Dancing

Dress: Formal or Semi-Formal, all Military Uniforms Welcome

Cocktails 6PM - 7PM

Ceremony 7PM - 7:30PM

Dinner & Dancing 7:30PM – 11:00PM

Boneless Short Ribs with Demi Glaze & Fried Onion Haystack

Bourbon Glaze Salmon

Chicken Marsala

Vegetarian

*Dinners include Garden Salad, Chive Whipped Potatoes, Vegetable Bouquet, Dinner Rolls
& Birthday Cake*

Detach bottom portion & return by November 1

\$60.00 per person

Please send payment or in person.

Marine Corps League Desoto Detachment #588

5225 26th. St. West- Bradenton, FL 34207

Phone: (941) 301- 4598

Amount of payment _____ (Please write Birthday Ball in memo field on check)

First & Last Name of each attendee and Dinner Choice – Phone Contact _____

1 (_____) Check one choice - B ____ C ____ F ____ V ____

2 (_____) Check one choice - B ____ C ____ F ____ V ____

3 (_____) Check one choice - B ____ C ____ F ____ V ____

4 (_____) Check one choice - B ____ C ____ F ____ V ____

Tables are set for 10 people – (table requests - please write one table name for all people to be seated at your table)

Goodwill
MANASOTA



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

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

Al Gray, beloved former Marine Corps commandant, dies at age 95



Editor's Note: When I was stationed at Headquarters of the Marine Corps as a Captain, General Gray would leave his entourage of staffers and just go walking around the building as if he owned it (I guess he did own it). You just never knew where or when he would pop in and just sit down and ask you how things were going. Rest in Peace Sir.

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.

VIETNAM



VETERAN



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



The 588 Loses a Friend

By John D'Alusio

On 7 March, Don Broeckel passed away after a short illness. Don, a Navy vet, was the owner of Take Aim Gun Range in Sarasota, and a friend to the 588. Many of our gun raffle weapons in the past were sourced from Take Aim. Bob Fields and I both dealt with Don in this regard, and we respected his integrity and honesty. Additionally, Take Aim is the unofficial indoor range of our Pistol team and firearm owners in the 588. Don and his crew were always welcoming and glad to see our group.

Don was born in Ohio in 1939, and like so many from the Buckeye State, eventually made his way to the west coast of Florida. He was fixture in the in the local business community, and a respected citizen. Most people would not have guessed Don was 84. His routine physical activities would have been stressful for a man 20 years his junior.

Don was a devoted family man. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Janet, daughter Lois, son Michael, and four grandchildren. Our sincere condolences go out to the entire family.

Don's daughter Lois Smith will now be the CEO of Take Aim, and we will look forward to seeing her every time we use the range.

A Celebration of Life will be 1 PM, April 6, 2024, at DAV Chapter 18, 111 63rd Avenue East, Bradenton, FL 34203. Brown & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory 26th Street Chapel, 5624 26th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34207, is in charge of arrangements. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in his name may be made to a charity of your choice.

"Requiesce in pace," Don.



The Invasion of Okinawa- 1 April, 1945

By John D'Alusio – Historian, DeSoto Detachment 588

WW II was grinding to an end. The Germans were all but defeated in the European theater (they would formally surrender on 8 May), and the Japanese were being pressed from all sides. The last great land battle of the war was the invasion of Okinawa (considered a prefecture of Japan), code-named *Operation Iceberg*, which began on 1 April, 1945, which was Easter Sunday and April Fool's Day, 79 years ago.

Okinawa was located only 375 miles southwest of Kyushu, part of the Japanese home islands. The Imperial Japanese forces recognized that if Okinawa fell, the next invasion would be that of Japan itself. The Japanese also knew that airfields would be built and B-29 Super Fortresses would be quickly deployed to Okinawa after the island was captured. These giant heavy bombers were already decimating Japanese cities and the remaining war industry. If they were stationed on Okinawa with strong fighter escort, there would be no viable air defense against them. The Japanese approached the invasion accordingly.

At this late stage in the Pacific war, the Imperial Japanese Navy had been virtually swept from the seas. Its once vaunted carrier based Naval Air Arm had ceased to exist, and the surface battle fleet sat at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. The Imperial Japanese Army still had a large presence on mainland China, but their once vast holdings in the Pacific (which they called "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere") were largely eradicated.

The Japanese had resorted to suicide plane attacks to halt the US offensive, but they were still hoarding over 5,000 planes for the defense of the home islands. However, they were prepared to send over a thousand *kamikaze* pilots to their death to attack the US invasion fleet off Okinawa. Additionally, a strong Army defense force of over 60,000 men of the 32nd Army were stationed on Okinawa to contest the invasion. The Japanese commander was the shrewd Lt. General Mitsuru Ushijima.

The invasion was a combined force of the USMC and the Army. It was designated the 10th Army, and the American commander was Lt. General Simon Bolivar Buckner. The 1st and 6th Marine Divisions were committed to the invasion force along with 7th, 27th, and 96th Army divisions. In the past, the Japanese defenses were arrayed to throw the invaders back into the sea at the beach head. Iwo Jima had been invaded on 19 February, and it was a cauldron of horror with 6,700 US Marines killed, and 20,000 wounded before the island was secured. The same tactics were expected from General Ushijima on Okinawa.

A vast Naval fleet laid down a hellacious bombardment on the landing beaches for several days. At 0830 on 1 April, the landing craft headed toward the beaches on the northwest side of the island as the Naval barrage ceased. The invaders had thoughts of the hell of Tarawa, Peleliu, Saipan, and Iwo Jima awaiting their landing. "The shit is going to hit the fan now," was a common refrain.

The first landing craft hit the beaches to be confronted with...virtually nothing. "The landing is unopposed," cried out several Marines. "The hell you say," was the answer from unbelieving American servicemen. "No, it's straight dope. I ain't seen no casualties. Most of the Nips musta hauled ass. Just a coupla mortar shells hittin' the water, that's all. It beats anything I ever saw."

To everyone's amazement and relief, the Marines and Army units hitting the beach went in standing up. There was no machine gun fire, artillery shells exploding, or mortars raking the beach. Total casualties of the entire landing force of over 50,000 men were 28 killed, 27 missing, and 104 wounded, and virtually all of these occurred when the units pushed inland from the beaches and quickly captured two airfields.

The surge inland was so quick that the Marines were on Yonan Airfield when they spied a plane coming in for a landing. “Damn,” one Marine cried out, “It’s got meatballs on the wings. It’s a damn Jap Zero.” The fighter made a smooth landing, and the pilot wiggled out of his parachute pack and climbed down to the tarmac. He began walking toward the Marines with a smile on his face, before suddenly freezing and reaching for his pistol. A dozen rifle shots followed as the pilot slumped to the runway, riddled with .30-06 projectiles and a look of indescribable horror on his face. A Marine said ruefully, “There’s always one poor bastard who doesn’t get the word.” The incident was emblematic of how quickly the airfield had been overrun.

The Marines and Army invaders heaved a heavy sigh of relief. But it occurred to more than a few of them that if the vaunted Japanese 32nd Army defenders weren’t guarding the invasion beach, then where were they? They knew the stay of execution had to be only temporary. They were correct.

At this stage of the conflict, General Ushijima knew there was no possible way for Japan to win the Battle of Okinawa. Therefore, he would base his troops in an in-depth defensive position across a narrow part of the island. This formidable position became known as *The Shuri Line*. His plan was to make the battle an attritional hell for the invaders, while hoping the *kamikaze* attacks would emasculate the US Fleet. Between bleeding the Marines and Army invaders dry, and the shipping attacks, Ushijima reasoned he could hold out for several months before the inevitable occurred, but in the process the US would suffer unimaginable casualties.

The 6th Marine Division was ordered north to sweep the island to the tip. One regiment was on each coast while the third was in the middle. Marine armor in the form of M4 Sherman tanks accompanied the grunts. Other than the odd sniper round here and there, no sign of any unified defense was found. “Where the hell are the Nips?” was a common question the Marines asked themselves as they proceeded north.

On 8 April, the Marines and their armor reached the Motobu Peninsula. Here they discovered why they had met no opposition in their trek north. On the peninsula were approximately 2,000 Japanese soldiers under the command of Colonel Udo. They were holed up in 1,200 foot high Mount Yaetake in a labyrinth of caves, ridges, cliffs, gorges, steep hills and rocky corridors. They were prepared to fight to the death.

The 6th Marines moved in and began blasting the Japanese positions with the 75mm cannons of the Shermans, as well as with mortars, artillery, and machine guns. By 13 April, when it was announced that FDR had died, they had driven the Japanese defenders back onto the crest of Mount Yaetake. A pincer movement was employed but the Yaetake attacks became a weeklong nightmare against a deadly phantom enemy. Naval gunfire was called in to smash the Japanese, but every time the Marines started to advance, Nambu machine guns opened up on them.

Finally, on 17 April, the Japanese defense line was smashed by a frontal attack allowing the flanks to be rolled up. The Marines finally burst into Colonel Udo HQ to be met with a mimeographed note in English greeting men of the 3rd Amphibious Corps, 6th Marine Division, and 15th and 29th Marine regiments. It suggested their horror had only begun and that President Roosevelt had succumbed due to stress because of the ineluctable defeat of the Okinawa invasion force and US Fleet by Japan.

While the 6th Marine Division pounded north and tangled with Colonel Udo’s regiment, the 1st Marine Division was basically in reserve in the center of the island. They were enjoying a respite that gave them a false sense of security. One ditty a Marine penned underscored that they were living *la dolce vita*:

Oh, don’t you worry, Mother, your son is safe out here.

No Japs on Okinawa, no sake, booze, or beer.

Your sons can’t find no Nips, so we’re going back on ships.

But don’t you worry, Mother, because we’re going on another.

It was a fool's paradise. The Army's 24th Corps (7th, 27th, 96th Divisions) had smacked up against *The Shuri Line* and were stopped cold by the 32nd Japanese Army defenders and their mutually supporting defensive positions, most of which were underground. The 1st Marine Division was ordered south to try their hand at breaking *The Shuri Line*, the key to which was the seemingly impregnable Kakuzu Ridge.

General Ushijima was heartened by the success of his defensive position across the waist of the island. His aggressive subordinate, General Cho, argued for a counter-offensive against the reeling invaders. Colonel Yahara pleaded with General Ushijima to refrain from any offensive action. Better to let the Americans smash themselves against *The Shuri Line* than waste any manpower on an action that could not ultimately be successful. General Ushijima unwisely chose to listen to Cho's advice and ordered an attack for the night of 12-13 April.

Colonel Yahara was so taken aback by the attack order that he did something unthinkable in the Japanese Army. He went to the commanders of the 62nd and 24th Divisions (both generals) and persuaded them to send only two battalions each instead of three on the attack. This was court martial territory for Yahara, but he did so anyway.

At 1900 on 12 April, the heaviest artillery barrage of the war by the Japanese fell on the American lines. It was followed by 1,600 Japanese infantry bursting out of their subterranean defensive positions and assaulting the Army's lines. It was a dramatic failure. As Yahara suspected, most of the attackers were killed or wounded while achieving nothing.

General Ushijima recognized that Colonel Yahara had been correct, but General Cho still tried to convince him to take the offensive. They knew the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions were about to be engaged against *The Shuri Line*. Cho argued now was the time to smash the US Army units to their front because they had already been worn down via their fruitless assaults on the Japanese defensive positions. Colonel Yahara once again recommended that no offensive action be taken especially in light of the recent failure.

Unwisely, Ushijima again gave into Cho. Another offensive was scheduled for 4 May, and this one would involve not only a frontal assault on US Army units, but also an attempted "end-around" by barges from Naha behind *The Shuri Line* depositing a Japanese battalion in the rear of the Marine lines of the 1st Division.

The seaborne "end-around" quickly came to grief. The barges didn't go far enough north and landed on a section of the beach strongly defended by B/1/1. It was a slaughter. Marine armor (Shermans and amtracks) were called in and the Japanese were ground into dust.

Meanwhile, the Japanese 24th Division launched a frontal assault against the Army units opposite of them on *The Shuri Line*. Naval air and gunfire was called in. The 1st Marine Division pivoted and headed south and made impressive gains against the Japanese defensive positions. By the time the counter offensive by the Japanese ended, 6,200 of the attackers were dead. A loss equivalent to two regiments was an unmitigated catastrophe to the defenders. General Ushijima apologized to Colonel Yahara and promised not to engage in any more useless offensive action. General Cho became quiet and stoic and no longer attempted to influence Ushijima on tactics.

On the American side, an end-around of their own was being suggested to General Buckner. Army Major General Andrew Bruce suggested to Buckner that there should be a landing on Minotoga Beach in the rear of *The Shuri Line*. The 2nd Marine Division was in reserve and available for this operation, but Buckner demurred. He was worried about logistics and being able to properly supply another full Marine Division while the five Divisions of the 10th Army forces were still fully engaged in combat.

At this point, Admiral Chester Nimitz (Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area) was becoming impatient. The persistent *kamikaze* attacks were hitting the Fleet hard. He told Buckner, "You need to hurry this up. I'm losing 2.5 ships a day to these cursed suicide attacks. Get this offensive moving or I'll find someone who can."

Taking the meeting with Nimitz to heart, Buckner scheduled another large offensive operation for 11 May. He had four Divisions on the line. From east to west they were 96th, 77th, 1st Marine, and 6th Marine. Of the objectives, the two before the Marine Divisions (Wana Draw for the 1st and Sugar Loaf Hill for the 6th) were the toughest. Sugar Loaf was one of the most formidable defensive positions the Japanese constructed in the entire war.

The assault on Sugar Loaf Hill began by the 2/22 assisted by Sherman tanks. The armor was quickly decimated. Of the 150 Marines who assaulted Sugar Loaf, only 40 made it to the top. They were exhausted and ammo was short. Major Henry Courtney, the Battalion's XO, asked for volunteers. A unit of 26 more Marines was formed. These men carried extra ammunition and grenades and at dusk made their way quietly up to the precipice of Sugar Loaf where the 40 Marines were dug in as best as possible.

The Japanese viciously counter attacked. Soon the Marines had less than 20 effectives. Then ammunition started running out. Three Sherman Tanks came rumbling up, only to be knocked out by Japanese 47mm anti-tank guns (The Shermans were vulnerable from sides to this weapon). The Marines were forced to abandon the hill.

Frontal attacks the following day failed. Fortunately a chink in the defense was found between Half Moon Hill (located just to the west) and Sugar Loaf Hill. General Lem Shepard decided to attack this gap with two full battalions that would occupy the defense on Half Moon Hill while also hitting Sugar Loaf Hill. Deprived of the interlocking fire from Half Moon Hill, Sugar Loaf was taken and *The Shuri Line* was finally in danger of being broken.

The 1st Marine Division was hammering the Japanese in Wana Draw and broke through after a three day see-saw battle. Flamethrower Sherman Tanks were sent in, protected by gunned Shermans and Marine infantry. They systematically began burning the Japanese defenders alive in their positions.

With Sugar Loaf Hill and Wana Draw taken, General Ushijima's line was buckling. On the other side of the line Conical Hill was being attacked by the 96th Division. This was the key to the eastern terminus of *The Shuri Line*. On 13 May, the Army took the crest of this hill, and refused to be dislodged despite repeated counterattacks by the Japanese. This spelled disaster for Ushijima's defensive position. On the night of 22 May, General Ushijima had no option but to order a retreat by the 32nd Army.

The monsoon season shielded the Japanese withdrawal under heavy rain. However, a spotter plane from the battleship *New York* spotted the retreat and signaled the fleet the location of the Japanese forces. In less than 15 minutes the guns of the US Fleet were on target. Fifty Marine F4U Corsairs then made an appearance, strafing and rocketing the columns of Japanese soldiers. An estimate of 800 retreating defenders were killed in this attack, but the bulk of the Japanese soldiers successfully escaped from the now fractured *Shuri Line*.

On 29 May, *The Shuri Line* was completely in American hands. Old Glory was raised above Shuri Castle, signaling the imminent demise of the 32nd Army and the Japanese hold on Okinawa.

As May transitioned to June, it was clear to all, including General Ushijima, that the end was nigh. Buckner finally agreed to an end-around, but the 2nd Marine Division had been withdrawn as a floating reserve, so on 4 June, he used the exhausted 6th Marine Division to hit the Oroku Peninsula behind Ushijima's position. Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Division along with the 7th, 27th and 96th Army Divisions drove south to catch Ushijima's troops in a pincer movement.

On 15 June, General Buckner was killed by an artillery shell while near the front lines. He was the highest ranking American military commander killed during the war. Command of the 10th Army passed to Marine General Roy Geiger. On 21 June, a patrol from the 6th Marine Division reached the end of the island and stared at the Pacific Ocean. The Battle of Okinawa was finally over, with Generals Ushijima and Cho dead from *hara kiri*.

Okinawa was the last land battle of WW II. The 10th Army suffered approximately 12,000 dead and 37,000 wounded. The Marines of the III Amphibious Corps had a total of 16,507 casualties, with 2,779 of those killed and 13,609 wounded. The Japanese 32nd Army of over 60,000 was annihilated.



Editors Note: For some additional reading about the battle of Okinawa, read ***With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*** by Eugene Sledge

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 available if the member's annual dues have been paid and the member is in good standing.



Compass Points - More on General Gray

March 21, 2024

General Al Gray sunk his roots deep in the history of the Marine Corps and deep in the history of war. Those deep roots gave him the strength to grow and to change. He expected others to grow and to change as well and he expected the same of the Marine Corps. Gray was a gruff and always motivating leader, never leaving anything as it was -- or anyone.

In his article, "*Transforming the Marines for an Uncertain Future*" General Charles Wilhelm summarized the impact Gray had on the Marine Corps.

Transforming the Marines for an Uncertain Future By Charles Wilhelm

... Nine months later, in July 1987, Gen. Alfred Mason Gray was installed as the twenty-ninth commandant of the Marine Corps. Gray was among the senior leaders who embraced the tenets of Goldwater-Nichols. This tough-talking, tobacco-chewing New Jersey native's gruff demeanor failed to disguise a razor-sharp intellect.

He immediately set about the task of refocusing the Marine Corps on its traditional core competencies. Measures of merit for leaders changed dramatically, and while the Corps' emphasis on physical fitness and a sharp personal appearance was undiminished, highly shined shoes and shaved heads took a back seat to the study of military history and critical thinking about the nature of war and the qualities needed by the men and women who would fight them. The twenty-ninth commandant's mantra was encapsulated in a pamphlet-sized publication, simply titled "Warfighting." Sure, there were quips, but for the most part, they were good-natured. Warfighting? Isn't that like "food eating" and "water drinking"? The response was direct and uncompromising. Eating and drinking are physical acts that sustain life, while warfighting is, first and foremost, an intellectual activity that often ends it. While Warfighting redefined the character of war, a companion concept, "Maneuver Warfare," emerged as an offshoot of that epistle. Drawing on lessons learned from Genghis Khan, the German Blitzkrieg, and Israeli operations in the Middle East, maneuver warfare redefined how the Marine Corps would fight on future battlefields. Dismissing the last man standing tenants of the attrition models prevalent in the two world wars and previous conflicts, maneuver warfare was and is a philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions that create a turbulent, quickly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope. Reduced to its simplest terms, Marines would both outfight and outthink their adversaries. Under this concept, massed forces gave way to massed capabilities, an operational approach best executed by versatile combined arms teams. Accordingly, Gray retained and enhanced the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) organizational model that had served the Corps well in multiple "climes and places."

Emphasizing the virtues of maneuver warfare and the aggregate utility of MAGTFs, Gray vigorously supported the activities of the geographic combatant commanders carrying out their responsibilities defined under the Goldwater-Nichols act. His direction to MAGTF commanders was forceful and direct. They were enjoined to be the combatant commanders' "force of choice" for initial responses to unexpected, fast-breaking combat and non-combat contingencies. Active players rather than passive spectators, they were counseled not to wait to be asked to undertake these tasks. Rather they were directed to step up to the plate and offer their forces and capabilities along with rapidly conceived plans for their employment.

Attuned to and supportive of joint force concepts and doctrine, Marines were expected to study the capabilities and operational techniques of the other services and joint commands, with particular emphasis on those of the Special Operations Command created by the 1987 Nunn-Cohen Amendment. Under Joint Force Doctrine, forces from the respective services were expected to be complementary, not duplicative. In the case of the Marine Corps, this led some critics to assert that the nation did not require two land armies—a valid position, as the United States already had the best army in the world, a fact fully appreciated by Marines.

Continued to next page

Still, when the occasion demanded, it proved useful for the nation to have at its disposal a force capable of rapidly reconfiguring itself, with minimal augmentation, to perform many of the functions of a second army. The Gulf War, the last conflict in which the United States achieved all of its strategic objectives, serves as a case in point. President George H.W. Bush and Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf found it beneficial to have a force adept at operating with coalition partners and capable of breaching an extensive barrier system while mounting a frontal attack on Iraqi forces. The Marines played a key role in supporting the brilliant Army-led flanking main attack through Saudi Arabia that unhinged the Iraqi Republican Guards. Simultaneously, the presence of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade offshore on amphibious ships posed an additional threat to Iraq, requiring the diversion of four combat divisions . . .

-- Charles Wilhelm

It's Thursday



Happy Field Day!!



To learn more,
contribute or
volunteer, visit
www.thetun.org



The 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.

COLD WAR RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Attn: AHRC-PDP-A, Dept. 480

1600 Spearhead Division Ave.

Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408

Fax: (888) 276-9472 or (502) 613-9510

<https://www.hrc.army.mil>

Search "Cold War Certificate"



**DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**

SAVE THE DATE

**June 6--9
2024
DOF MCL
CONVENTION**



Hilton Melbourne Rialto

**Mark your calendars,
make your plans to attend the
Department of Florida MCL
2024 Convention**

**Convention Packet scheduled to
be distributed
FEBRUARY 2024**

Well, what do you know? Glenn is at it again. He is bringing us another raffle beginning on Wednesday April 3rd at high noon. This time it is a Bond Arms Honey B, 9mm Derringer. This pistol has a 3" barrel, Resin Grip, Fixed Sights, single action, and the frame is made of stainless steel. This is the perfect pocket or purse carry piece. It has a trigger guard for safety (otherwise you might shoot your kneecap off.) With the trigger guard and single action hammer it is a very safe carry weapon.



There will only be 100 tickets sold at \$10.00 each.

Wednesday April 3rd @ High Noon in the Bunker, be there, get your tickets.



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.**
- **FINALLY, 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.

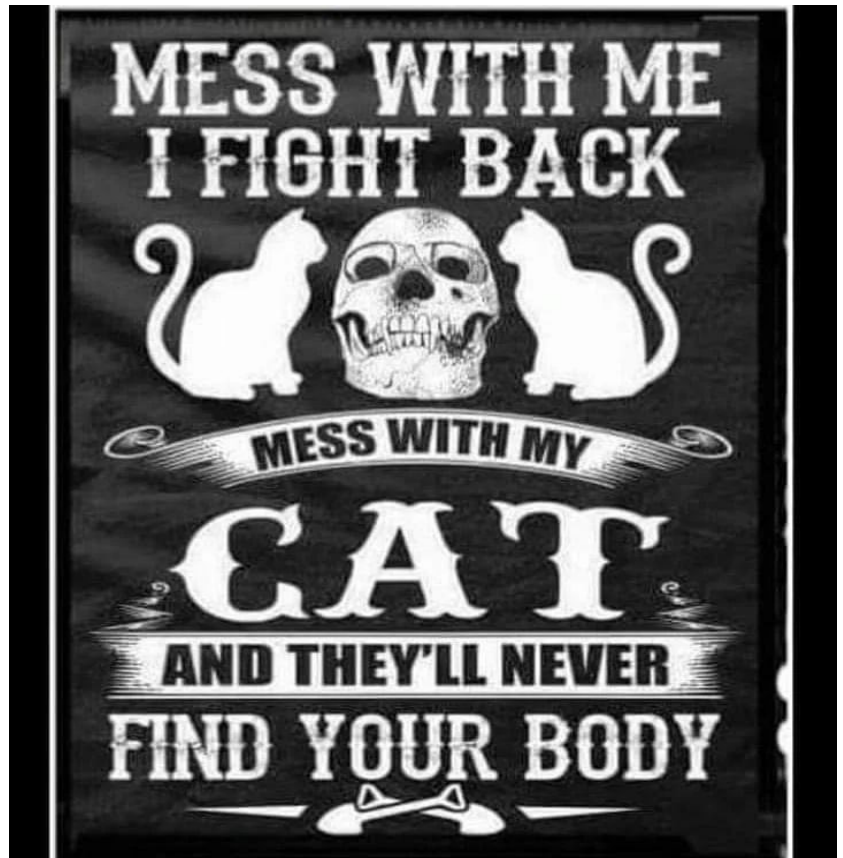
If you have service connected disabilities and hold a VA Card indicating that, you can go to the Myakka State Park Rangers Office, off of State Road 72, and be issued a pass.



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 # 998

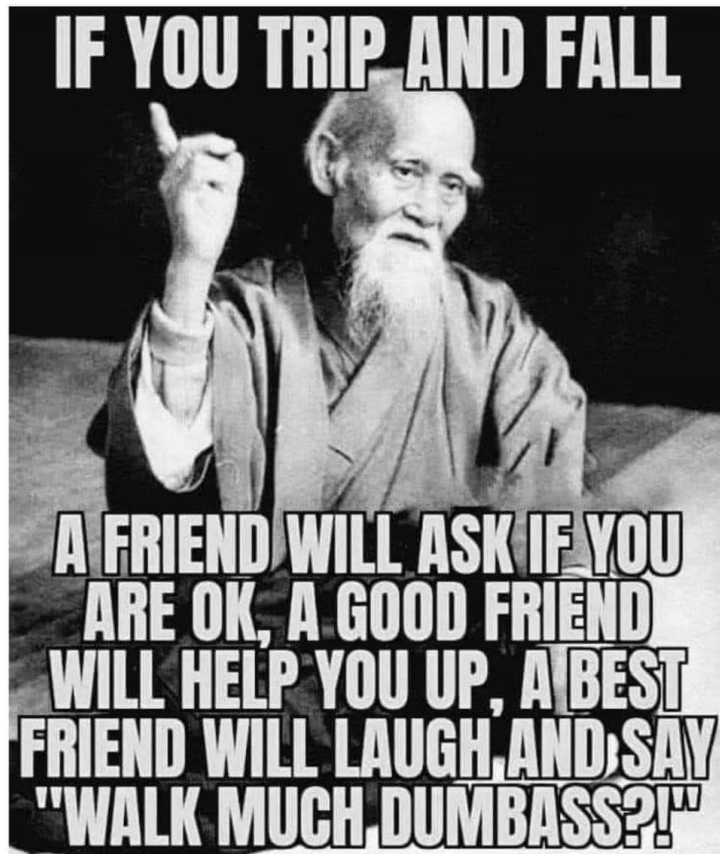
A Marine on Guard Duty has no friends. Guards must follow their General Orders at all times.

The Desoto Detachment Honor Guard practice has been moved to the last MONDAY of each month at 1730.

YOU can become a member of the Honor Guard, both Members and Associate Members are welcome.

No experience necessary.

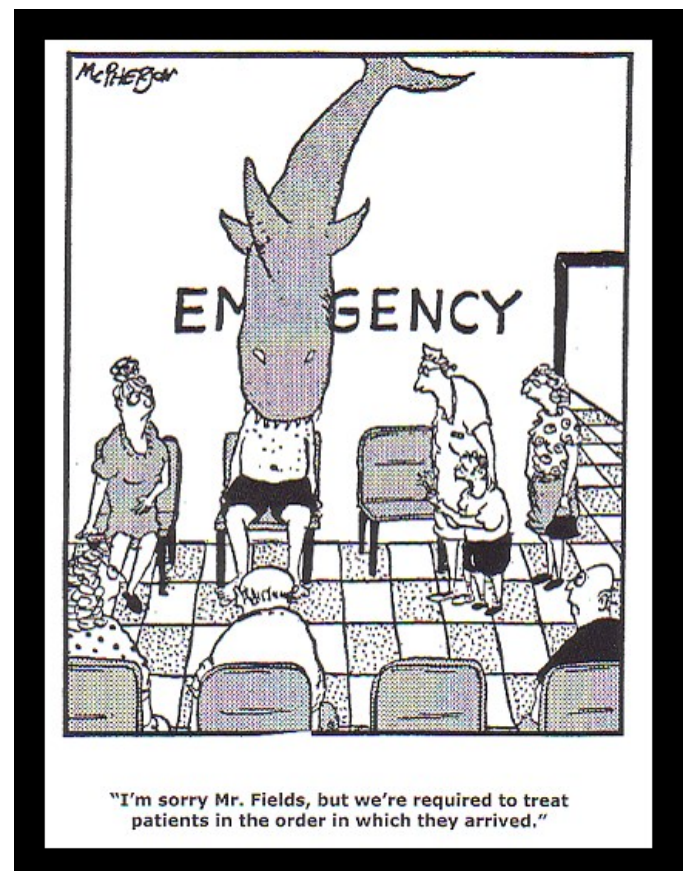
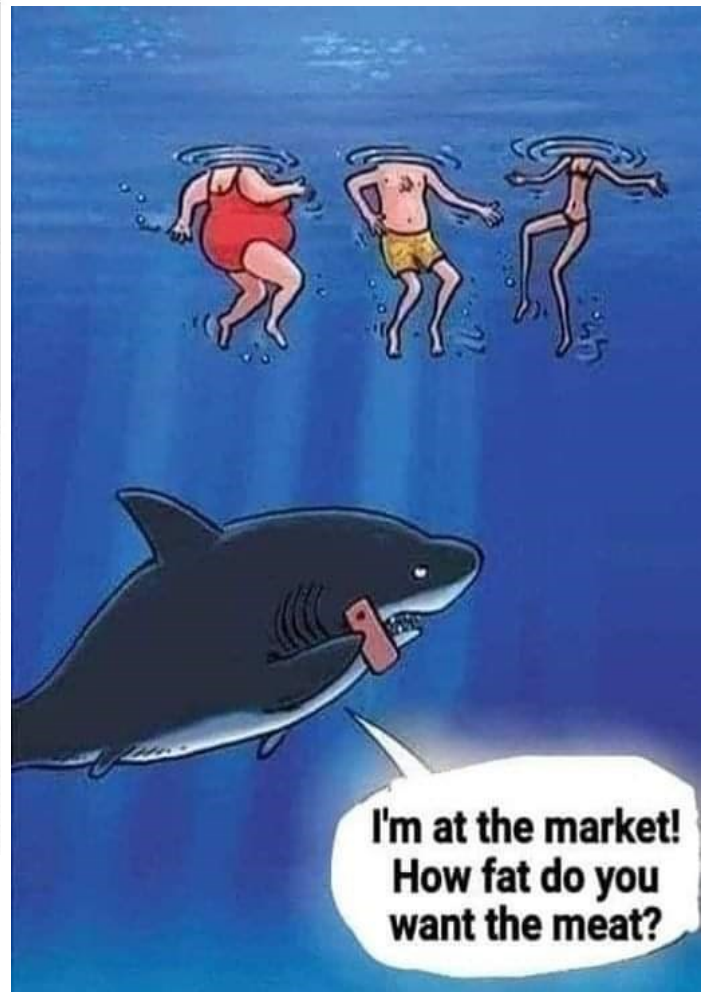
For more Information, contact JOE FILICE, JOHN D'ALUSIO or BOB FIELDS at the Bunker.



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.

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

We can teach you everything you need to know.



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.



I dodged the Draft.



I ENLISTED



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. 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, or text to 838255.

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

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,
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

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

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

(941) 745-3795

VETERANS 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.**

**Please keep Bonnie Grote,
Rex Williams, Everitt
Whipple, Paul Turner, and
Frank Hartman in your
thoughts and prayers.
They are all experiencing
significant health issues.
If you know of members
who are sick or in distress,
please call our Chaplain,
Ron Schneider
941-749-5799**



Military Stories

We are collecting stories by and about military personnel.

If you would like to have your story published email your story to Craig Hullinger at:

craighullinger@gmail.com

Your story can be long or short. The story can cover an interesting event or your entire life. You can write about yourself or a friend or relative that you would like to honor.

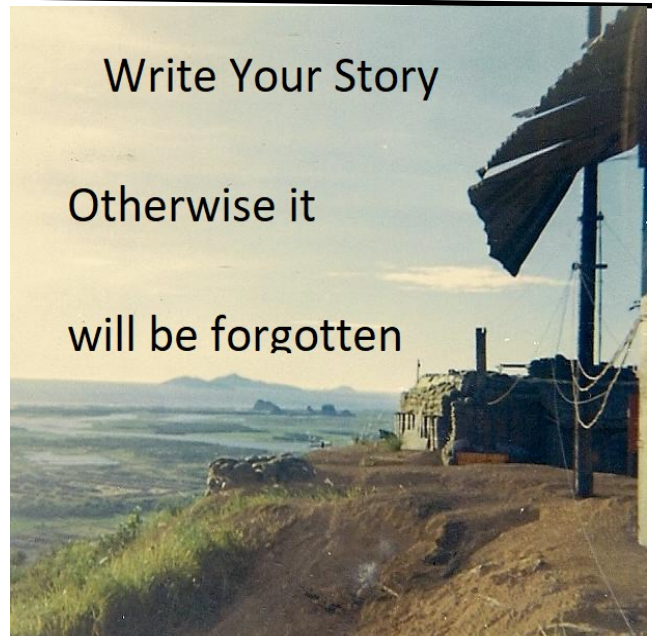
Pictures are worth a thousand words. You can write the story for a relative, friend, or ancestor. You can add to your story. We look forward to publishing your story on the blog.

Thank you for your stories.

Write Your Story

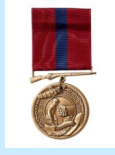
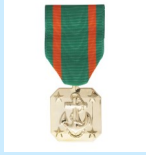
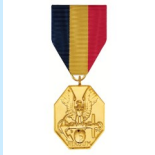
Otherwise it

will be forgotten



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



BAR POKER

EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON

3:00 –5:00 PM

AT THE BUNKER

Our Detachment has a new website that is now up and running.

Please visit it at: MCL588.org. The website will host announcements, photos, archived newsletters, etc. So go right now and put MCL588.Org into your browser.

Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

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

- **Leatherneck Magazine**
 (888) 237-7683; Fax: (703) 640-0823
leatherneck@mca-marines.org
- **Marine Corps Gazette**
 (800) 336-0291, ext. 144; Fax: (703) 630-9147
gazette@mca-marines.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, the stamps or pull tab cards, it is generally 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 APRIL

APRIL

3 April 1945: On Okinawa, Marines of the III Amphibious Corps continued to make good progress all along their front, clearing Zampa Misaki and seizing the Katchin Peninsula, thus effectively cutting the island in two. By this date (D+2), III AC elements had reached objectives thought originally to require 11 days to take.

5 April 1947: Five Marine guards were killed and eight wounded when attacked by Communist Chinese raiders near the Hsin Ho ammunition depot in Northern China. This last major clash between Marines of the 1st Marine Division and Communist forces occurred shortly after withdrawal and redeployment plans from China were issued for the 1st Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing on 1 April.

10 April 1959: Lieutenant Colonel John H. Glenn, Jr. was named as one of the original seven Project Mercury astronauts selected for space training. The seven astronauts, all volunteers, were selected by NASA from an initial group of 110 leading military test pilots. Three years later, on 20 February 1962, Col Glenn would become the first American to orbit the Earth.

12-13 April 1918: Marines of the 4th Brigade suffered their first gas attack on the night and early morning hours of 12-13 April when the Germans bombarded the 74th Company, 6th Marines near Verdun with mustard gas. Nine Marine officers and 305 enlisted Marines were gassed and evacuated, and 30 Marines died from the effects of the gas shells which hit in the middle of the reserve area cantonments in which they were sleeping.

15 April 1962: Marine Corps operational involvement in the Vietnam War began on Palm Sunday when HMM-362 with its Sikorsky UH-34s arrived at Soc Trang in the Delta south of Saigon. The task unit was called "Shufly" and its first operational employment involved lifting Vietnamese troops into battle.

18 April 1983: One Marine Security Guard was killed and seven were wounded when a large car bomb exploded just outside the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Lance Corporal Robert McMaugh was standing guard at Post 1, just inside the front entrance when the bomb exploded outside the door. The explosion killed 61 people including 17 Americans. LCpl McMaugh was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on 26 April.

21 April 1951: Marine carrier-based airplanes made their first aerial contact with enemy planes over the Korean front lines. Captain Philip C. DeLong shot down two YAK fighters and 1st Lieutenant Harold D. Daigh destroyed one more and damaged another in the heavily defended Pyongyang-Chinnampo area. Both pilots were with VMF-312 flying from the USS Bataan.

27 April 1805: First Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon, who with seven other Marines was part of a force of Greeks and Arabs led by American Consul William Eaton, raised the United States flag for the first time over a conquered fortress of the Old World at Derne, a stronghold of the Tripolitan pirates. Two Marines were killed and one wounded in the assault on the walled city.

28 April 1993: The last A-6E Intruder departed from Marine Corps service. Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 332 transferred the last Marine A-6E to St. Augustine, Florida, and prepared for the squadron's transition to the F/A-18D and eventual movement from Cherry Point to Beaufort, South Carolina.

**SECOND LIEUTENANT****JOHN H. LEIMS****Born: JUNE 6, 1921****Died: JUNE 28, 1985****Hometown: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

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

SECOND LIEUTENANT JOHN H. LEIMS

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

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 as Commanding Officer of Company B, First Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands, on 7 March 1945. Launching a surprise attack against the rock-embedded fortifications of a dominating Japanese hill position, Second Lieutenant Leims spurred his company forward with indomitable determination and, skillfully directing his assault platoons against the cave-emplaced enemy troops and heavily fortified pillboxes, succeeded in capturing the objective in the late afternoon. When it became apparent that his assault platoons were cut off in this newly won position, approximately four hundred yards forward of adjacent units and lacked all communication with the command post, he personally advanced and laid telephone lines across the isolating expanse of open, fire-swept terrain. Ordered to withdraw his command after he had joined his forward platoons, he immediately complied, adroitly effecting the withdrawal of his troops without incident. Upon arriving at the rear, he was informed that several casualties had been left at the abandoned ridge position beyond the front lines. Although suffering acutely from strain and exhaustion of battle, he instantly went forward despite darkness and the slashing fury of hostile machine-gun fire, located and carried to safety one seriously wounded Marine and then, running the gauntlet of enemy fire for the third time that night, again made his tortuous way into the bullet-riddled deathtrap and rescued another of his wounded men. A dauntless leader, concerned at all times for the welfare of his men, Second Lieutenant Leims soundly maintained the coordinated strength of his battle-wearied company under extremely difficult conditions and, by his bold tactics, sustained aggressiveness and heroic disregard of all personal danger, contributed essentially to the success of his division's operations against this vital Japanese base. His valiant conduct in the face of fanatic opposition sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

/S/ HARRY S. TRUMAN