

the CUTTING EDGE

news for and about the members of Anne Arundel County Detachment 1049 of the Marine Corps League

Mac McNeir, Commandant & Editor / <http://mclaacdet1049.org/>

Iwo Jima Memorial Repairs

NOTE – This story, by Gina Cavallaro, appeared in the online version of the Marine Corps Times – Monday, January 24, 2011.

It's one of the most iconic images of World War II – the flag-raising by five Marines and a sailor on Mount Suribachi in 1945 on the island of Iwo Jima.

The event, captured by news photographer **Joe Rosenthal**, is cast larger than life in a bronze statue in Arlington, Virginia. The monument and grounds, officially called the **Marine Corps War Memorial**, is often referred to as the **Iwo Jima Memorial**.



At close to 60 years old, the memorial is showing its age.

The statue's original green patina is faded, according to a Marine Corps news release. Polished granite panels are loose, the substructure is cracked, and water reportedly accumulates in depressions at the base of the parade deck.

But there's a plan in the works to refurbish the statue and improve the experience for the thousands of visitors who see it each year.

The newly formed **Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation** wants to partner with the National Park Service to repair and refurbish the monument. Under the plan, American flags would be rotated monthly, to ensure they do not become too worn.

(See Memorial Repairs on page 10)

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the **CUTTING EDGE**

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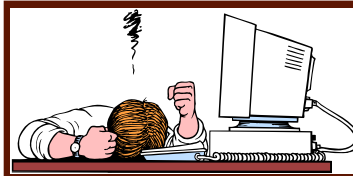
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Adjutant – *Tom Maiorana*
Auxiliary President – *Desiree Curtin*
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Chaplain – *Ken Webster*
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Legislative Officer – *Jim LeGette*
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Young Marines Commander – *George Martin*



2010 Award Winner

Marine Corps League
National Newsletter Competition
(Detachments of more than 100 Members)

Visit the Department of Maryland web site at...
<http://deptofmdmcl.org>



From the Editor

by Mac McNeir

February begins with the good news that my latest biopsy revealed that there are '*clean margins*' surrounding the site of my recent melanoma removal. Needless to say, my family and I are relieved. The only consequence being that I will need to be screened more frequently by my dermatologist. Again, thanks to all of you who prayed, extended well wishes, and provided transportation and other forms of support during my recent travail!

I hope that the newsletter is meeting your expectations; and as always, I encourage anyone with inputs for future articles or suggestions for improving *the Cutting Edge* to contact me. You are also reminded to keep me informed of new or changed email addresses, so that the electronic delivery of the newsletter to those of you having email capability remains uninterrupted. Electronic delivery is a cost-cutting mechanism that needs to be employed – wherever possible – to keep the expenses associated with publication and delivery of this newsletter to a minimum.

As always, I look forward to seeing all of you at our next monthly meeting!

The submission deadline for all March newsletter articles is **MIDNIGHT, Wednesday, March 9, 2011.**



Membership Stats

Detachment Membership Stats – 12/31/2010			
Good Standing (Dues Paid)			
Type	USMC	Associate	Multiple
Life Memberships	73	8	6
Annual Memberships	38	6	–
Delinquent Dues (Still on Active Roster)			
Type	USMC	Associate	Multiple
Annual Memberships	3	1	–
New Members			
	–	–	–
Sub-Totals			
	114	15	6
Total			
	135		

Renewal dates are fast approaching for the following members...

RENEWALS		
March 2011	April 2011	May 2011
– None –	Oliver, Keith Stephens, Joseph	– None –

Please consider a Life Membership as a potential cost reduction.

Commandant's Message



Mac McNeir

Fellow Detachment Members,

The items specified below, require your attention in the coming months.

Department of Maryland Marine of the Year – 2010

We are still accepting nominations for **Department Marine of the Year**. After the February meeting, the officers will review all of the submitted candidates and then forward the detachment's recommendation to the Department. This is officially done via letter, signed by our Adjutant and Commandant.

Instructions for making nominations are spelled out in the January issue of this newsletter.

The nominee found to be most deserving will be announced at the 2011 Department Convention Dinner, in Ocean City, Maryland on **7 May 2011**.

Detachment 1049 Marine of the Year – 2010

We will continue to accept nominations for **Detachment Marine of the Year** until **21 March 2011**. Members of the Detachment Marine of the Year Committee will select the most deserving nominee after reviewing all of the nominations received.

Instructions for making nominations are spelled out in the January issue of this newsletter.

The 2010 Detachment Marine of the Year will be announced at the April detachment meeting.

Election of Detachment 1049 Officers

At the meeting on **February 28th**, we will begin accepting nominations for **Commandant, Senior Vice Commandant, Junior Vice Commandant, and Judge Advocate**. We will also be looking to fill vacant staff positions (see officer listings on page 2), especially **Adjutant** and **Historian**. So if you are interested in any of these positions please let us know.

We will also accept nominations at the meeting on **March 28th**. Elections will be conducted immediately after the nominating process has been concluded.

Newly elected officers will be sworn in and assume their posts during the **April 25th** meeting.

Semper Fi,

Mac

Bill Would Set Penalties for Funeral Protests

NOTE – This column is an edited version of an article, by Emily Pettus (AP), which appeared in the online version of the Marine Corps Times on January 23, 2011.

JACKSON, MS – Some Mississippi lawmakers want to impose penalties for any funeral demonstrations like those carried out by **Westboro Baptist Church**.

The group from Kansas has been protesting for years at military funerals with signs blaming U.S. military deaths on the nation's tolerance of homosexuality.

State Representative **Willie Bailey** (D) said he thought Westboro's picketing was tasteless enough. But when the group initially planned to picket the funeral of a 9-year-old girl killed in the Arizona shooting rampage, Bailey said things had gone too far.

"It's one thing for a family to go through a normal process of mourning," said Bailey. "It's another thing to be subjected to humiliation and anger and outrage because some group wants to advance their political agenda."

Even though the Westboro group backed off and did not protest at the funeral of **Christina Taylor Green** in Arizona, Bailey said he'll ask the Mississippi House to support a bill that would set penalties for protesting at funerals in this state.

"We're advancing the bill so people can have a discussion about it," said Bailey, who is chairman of the House Judiciary 'B' Committee.

The bill originally proposed penalties of up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. The committee subsequently changed that to one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Bailey said he knows there are potential constitutional problems about limiting expression; but, he said those could be sorted out in court if the bill becomes law.

It's unclear how the bill will fare in House debate, or if it would survive in the Senate. Lawmakers from both parties in both chambers have said they're reluctant to limit people's free-speech rights, but those concerns would be balanced with some members' desire to pass a bill presented as a protection for mourning military families.

Some other states have tried to limit protests at funerals. Missouri enacted a law in 2006 that banned picketing at or near a funeral from one hour before until one hour after a service. Because of concerns about court challenges, Missouri enacted a separate law to set a 300-foot buffer zone between funerals and protesters.

This past August, a federal judge declared both Missouri laws unconstitutional.

(See Funeral Protests on page 10)

From the desk of the

Senior Vice Commandant



Chris Thompson

Hello fellow Marines,

I hope everyone has been having a good winter and enjoying our lack of snow so far this year. The Marine Corps League is approaching a very busy time of year including the **Department Convention** being held on the 5th, 6th, and 7th of May, and the **Marines helping Marines Golf Tournament** being held on May 13th. I hope I get a chance to see each and every one of you at these events.

I hope to have tickets on sale for the **BBQ Chicken Dinner** fundraiser during this month's meeting. It looks like we will probably only be selling around 60 tickets, and I expect them to be going pretty fast at \$10 per plate; so, if you want a dinner plate, you better buy your tickets early. The choices will be either **Lemon-Pepper Chicken** or **BBQ Chicken**, with the sides being baked-beans, coleslaw, and potato salad.

Semper Fi,

Chris Thompson



M14 Rifle

Please Support Our

6th Annual Marines Helping Marines Golf Tournament



Friday,
May 13, 2011
9:00 AM

Bay Hills
Golf Club
Arnold, MD

For more information, contact
Manny Airey or James Brady

From the desk of the

Junior Vice Commandant



Woody Bowman

Fellow Members,

We recently had three members dropped from our roster because they were delinquent in the payment of their 2009 & 2010 annual membership dues. We also have a few members, who are delinquent only in the payment of their 2010 annual dues.

Life memberships may be a good remedy for some of you. The rates are as follows:

35 and under	\$500
36 - 50	\$400
51 - 60	\$300
61 and over	\$150

Hopefully, this information will answer your questions about the cost of life memberships.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting,

Woody



Have You Heard?

by Mac McNeir

January Meeting Recap...

The most significant topics covered at the January meeting focused upon the spending/raising of detachment funds.

Donation to St. Baldrick's

Detachment members in attendance voted to donate \$100 to the St. Baldrick's Campaign, which supports research for the ultimate eradication of childhood cancers.

Pot-Luck Dinner

Our Senior Vice Commandant, **Chris Thompson**, volunteered to conduct a pot-luck chicken dinner (at a to-be-determined date). After discussion, the detachment voted to allocate the proceeds of this dinner to the General Fund.

Department Convention Ad

Members in attendance voted to purchase a full-page detachment ad in the 2011 Department Convention Book.





Legislative Report

by Jim Le Gette, Legislative Officer

Among the current bills being considered within the two legislative houses in Annapolis, are the following proposals, which may be of interest to you.

Subtraction Modification/Military Retirement Income

There are two varying forms of this legislation being considered.

- SB 190 is similar to what we have seen in previous years – increase the subtraction amount from \$5,000 to \$10,000 thus lowering your tax obligation to the State.
- HB 11 and SB 346 propose a \$3,500 deduction from qualified member's Maryland Defense Force income.

Slot Machines

There are three bills (HB 39, SB 4 & SB 249) proposing that slot machines be allowed at various non-profit organizations – including veteran's associations. These proposals continue to be an uphill struggle, year after year.

Retirement Credits

HB 335 and SB 356 would allow for altering the criteria to determine eligibility for a military service credit of 10 years, which would be applied to persons who are under the State Retirement and Pension System.





Marine Corps League

Department of Maryland



Support Your

2011 Department Convention

Princess Royale
Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center
Ocean City, Maryland

5 – 7 May 2011

Reservation Deadline – Thursday 7 April, 2011

**Be sure to state that you are with the
Marine Corps League Convention**



National Museum News...

A recent letter from the **Marine Corps Heritage Foundation** contained the following highlights:

- The museum hosted more than 500 veterans of the **Battle of Iwo Jima** and their family members on February 19, 2010.
- **Three new galleries** were opened in June of this past year, which chronicled the early years of our Corps – from its founding in 1775 through the end of World War I. Featured artifacts include the first American armored car and the first Marine Corps aircraft.
- August 18th marked the **two millionth visitor** to the museum – Mrs. Gloria Campbell of Manassas, VA.
- The unveiling of an Internet-based **virtual tour of the museum**, which is accessible via the following link.
<http://www.virtualusmcmuseum.org>
- Trail construction within **Semper Fidelis Memorial Park** is scheduled for completion in April of 2011. The date of the park's dedication will be forthcoming in the near future.
- The mission to tell the stories of more recent, post-Vietnam generations of Marines will continue.

If you have not visited the National Museum of the Marine Corps in the past year or so, you are highly encouraged to go again and make note of the changes to this awesome facility and its grounds.

If you have never been to the museum... you do not know what you are missing!



Quotation

"Patriotism is supporting your country all the time... and your government when it deserves it."

Mark Twain

American author (1835-1910)

Members' Birthdays

NOTE – Please advise the editor of any errors/omissions in the following birthday listings.

Members of our detachment, who will be celebrating birthdays during the month of **March** include:

Albert Bell	Woody Bowman	Butch Cavey
Paul Downey	Frank Fleishman	Gary Frye Sr.
James Hayes	Scott Neff	Jack Seal
	Chris Thompson	



The Fun & Honor Society of the Marine Corps League

Woof-Woof,

The **Maryland Pack** had a very successful Growl in Hagerstown on January 8th, although many dogs could not paddle through the snow to attend. Those of us who did make it, had a very good time and contributed **\$242.01** for the children's hospital in Boise, Idaho, the site of this year's Supreme Growl. Well done Dogs! Again, the Maryland Pack will lead the way for other Packs to emulate. No one will out do us.

By the time you read this, the Mid-Winter Mini-Growl will be over. Hopefully many of you dogs attended. Remember that Pups and DDs can attend this mini Growl. It is a good time to attend a Kennel Growl to see how they do things.

Pound 204 will growl on **February 20th** at the Pound Dog House (VFW Post 160) at **1000**. **Anne Arundel County Detachment 1049 MCL** will serve breakfast at 0900, Our Dog House host, **VFW Post 160**, will open the bar at **0800** – serving up 'Bloody Marys' for one big bone.

As always, keep the fleas at a safe distance.

Remember: It is an honor to be a Devil Dog!

Woof-Woof,

Paul Taylor

PDD & Dog Robber

Corps Humor

Navy vs Marines

A Marine and a sailor were in the bar arguing over which was the superior service.

After a swig of beer, the Marine said, "We had Iwo Jima."

Arching his eyebrows, the sailor said, "We had the Battle of Midway."

"Not entirely true," said the Marine. "Some of those pilots were Marines. Henderson Field on Guadalcanal was named after a Marine pilot killed at the Battle of Midway."

Taken aback, the sailor said, "Point taken."

Then the Marine added, "We were born at Tun Tavern."

The sailor replied, "We had John Paul Jones."

The argument continued until the sailor came up with what he thought was the topper... "Well, the Navy invented sex."

The Marine didn't even blink. "Well, that may be true, but it took the Marines to introduce it to women!"



Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Ken Webster

Please keep those mentioned below, as well as those with medical problems of which we may not be aware, in your thoughts and prayers.

The following members are well on their way to recovering from recent medical procedures and injuries – **Irene Airey** (wife of **Manny Airey**), **Kiara Thompson** (daughter of **Chris Thompson**), **Dick Savage**, **Jennifer Wall** (daughter of **Ken Webster**), and **Mac McNeir**.

Pete Pervi is scheduled for partial gastrectomy surgery at **Saint Agnes Hospital** during the first full week of February. He will subsequently be recovering at home for approximately 30 to 45 days. Pete requests that no visits to the hospital be made and that no flowers be sent. Pete will put out the word when he is ready for visitors.

Kenny Rollins was in Harbor Hospital with circulatory problems at the time of this article. He was hoping to be allowed to go home soon. Let's hope that the doctors are able to find and fix whatever is ailing Kenny.

Please contact me at either of the following numbers as soon as you become aware of any member or family member, who is sick, in distress, etc.

410-255-0741 (home) or **443-618-9641** (cell)





Corps History

by Vic Halme, Historian

1 February 1967

Operation Prairie II began in Quang Tri province by elements of the 3rd Marine Division. During the 46 day search-and-destroy operation, which terminated on 18 March, 93 Marines and 693 enemy combatants were killed.

2 February 1944

The 4th Marine Division, as part of the first assault on islands controlled by the Japanese before the start of World War II, captured Namur and eight other islands in the Kwajalein Atoll.

2 February 1968

Operation Hue City, Tet Offensive began in Vietnam.

5 February 1918

1st Marine Replacement Battalion sails for France (WWI).

6 February 1968

The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines with two companies, and the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines with three companies, recapture Hue's hospital, jail, and provincial headquarters. It would take three more weeks of intense house to house fighting, and nearly a thousand Marines casualties, before the imperial city was secured.

7 February 1832

250 Marines defeat Malay pirates in Sumatra, Indonesia.

8 Feb 1832

Brevet Captain Alvin Edson leads attack at Quallah Battoo, Sumatra.

9 February 1904

49 Marines, commanded by Captain A. W. Catlin, establish first permanent Marine garrison in Honolulu.

9 February 2005

Marine administrative message 057/05 was issued stating that casualty assistance officers would wear the service alpha uniform when notifying families of their Marine's fate rather than the dress blue uniform. The change was intended to help curb the growing negative view of the dress blue uniform resulting from its wear during casualty calls.

11 February 1904

Marines land at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

11 February 1922

BGen John H. Russell appointed U.S. High Commissioner and personal representative of the President to the government of Haiti. This nine-year assignment placed this future Commandant in supreme command of both the occupying American force and the Haitian Gendarmerie.

13 February 1943

U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve formed.

15 February 1898

28 Marines and 232 seamen lose their lives when the battleship USS Maine is mysteriously hit by an explosion and sinks in the Havana, Cuba harbor.

16 February 2003

In anticipation of hostilities with Iraq, nearly 7,000 Marines from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) hit the shores of Kuwait, boosting the Corps in country strength to more than 40,000 troops.

19 February 1945

4th and 5th Marines Divisions assault Iwo Jima... raise flag on Mount Suribachi four days later.

(see *Corps History* on page 10)

Corps Considers New MARSOC .45 Pistol

NOTE – This story, by Dan Lamothe appeared in the online Marine Corps Times on Tuesday, January 25, 2011.

The competition to provide Marine special operators with new .45-caliber semiautomatic pistols is beginning to take shape, with at least three companies submitting samples to the Marine Corps while others bow out.



Springfield Armory's Full-Sized MC Operator pistol (left) and Colt's Defense's prototype, adapted from its 1070RG Rail Gun.

Colt Defense of Hartford, CN and Springfield Armory of Geneseo, IL sent samples of their latest 1911 pistols to acquisition officers this fall, company officials said during the **Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade Show and Conference**, known as SHOT Show, in Las Vegas. The Corps is expected to seek proposals from the defense industry soon.

The M45 Close Quarter Battle Pistol is modeled after earlier versions of the semi-automatic 1911 pistol used since the 1980s by Force Reconnaissance units. The Corps could buy between 400 and 12,000 as part of a contract worth up to \$22.5 million, according to Marine Corps sources.

Earlier versions were called the MEU (SOC) pistol, short for Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Weapons experts at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., have hand-assembled 1911 pistols chambered for .45-caliber Automatic Colt Pistol ammo for years, fielding them primarily to Force Recon and the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.

With both communities growing, however, the Corps is seeking an off-the-shelf option.

Force Recon was brought back in 2008 after a two-year hiatus designed to help the Corps stand up and round out MARSOC. The Corps' Special Operations Command was activated in 2006, and is working to grow to about 2,700 personnel by 2014.

The Corps hasn't said that the next-generation pistol must be a 1911-style model, but industry sources at SHOT Show said they assume it will be. The next weapon ideally will fire with the Corps' existing .45-caliber pistol magazines, Marine officials said.

(See *MARSOC Pistol* on page 9)



Veteran's Affairs

by Ed Dahling

Hospital & VAVS Program

The goal of the Hospital & VAVS program is to meet the needs of hospitalized patients in VA Medical Centers and other hospitals throughout this country. With the influx of this generation's veterans and the rise in long-term rehabilitative services, there is a greater need for volunteers. However, the type of help needed is changing. Be sure to speak with your local VAVS Representative to find out how you can serve these special veterans.

History

In 1928 Volunteer Hospital work became the second National Program adopted by the VFW Ladies Auxiliary. As America's troops return from battle and aging warriors need medical attention, the Ladies Auxiliary has been there to assist with a cheerful smile, an encouraging word, and time to write or read a letter from loved ones. The organization volunteers 1.8 million hours a year.

Resources

- *VAVS and Hospital Volunteer Guide*
- *VHA Handbook of Voluntary Service Procedures*

The above publications are generally available in the **Voluntary Service Office** at VA Medical Centers.

More information is available at www.volunteer.va.gov/



Public Information

by Ed Dahling

Vets Urged to Use Direct Deposits

The Department of Veterans Affairs is encouraging veterans to sign up for electronic payment of their benefits. On March 1, 2013, the VA will stop issuing paper checks.

People who receive VA compensation or pensions for the first time after May 1, 2011, will automatically receive the benefits electronically.

To learn more about the federal government's switch to direct deposit, or to change VA benefits to direct deposit, visit www.GoDirect.org or call 1-800-333-1795.



Join us in the fight...

Let's Conquer Kid's Cancer

Make Contributions at either...

<http://www.stbaldricks.org/participants/mypage/participantid/413460>

or use the pre-printed forms in the newsletter rack at the post.

Thanks – Mac McNeir & Ed Ross

Bombastic Bumper-Snicker:



**A journey of 1,000 miles
begins with one step,
and a lot of bitching!**

**Rich Morton Lincoln
Mercury Mazda**



**51 Mountain Rd.
Pasadena, MD 21122**

Phone: 800-577-1658



Coming Events

The following events are scheduled to occur through **June of 2011**. Unless otherwise noted, these events will take place at VFW Post 160, located at 2597 Dorsey Road, Glen Burnie, MD 21060 (410-766-9802).

NOTE – The dates and times listed below are subject to change. Please verify the information with the indicated organization (point of contact).

MODD Pound 204 Growl

Sunday, 20 February 2011 @ 1000 – Mike Hadley

Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting

Monday, 28 February 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

Detachment 1049, Friday Night Dinner

Friday, 4 March 2011 @ 1800 – Pete Pervi

Department of Maryland Staff Meeting,

Saturday, 26 March 2011 @ 0900 – Paul Taylor

Harford County VFW Post 8672

1714 Morse Road, Forest Hill, Maryland, 21050

MODD Maryland Pack Growl,

Saturday, 26 March 2011 @ 0900 – Ed Ross

Harford County VFW Post 8672

1714 Morse Road, Forest Hill, Maryland, 21050

Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting

(Officer Elections)

Monday, 28 March 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting

(New Officer Installations)

Monday, 25 April 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

Department of Maryland Convention

5 through 7 May 2011 – Bud Raines

Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center

Ocean City, Maryland

Detachment 1049, Friday Night Dinner

Friday, 6 May 2011 @ 1800 – Pete Pervi

Detachment 1049, Golf Tournament –

Fund-Raiser for Marines Helping Marines

Friday, 13 May 2011 @ 0800 – Richard Gonzales

Bay Hills Golf Club, 545 Bay Hills Dr Arnold, MD

Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting

Monday, 23 May 2011 @ 1900 – TBD

Memorial Day

Monday, 30 May 2011

MCL Mid-East Division Convention

Dates – TBD

Location – TBD

FLAG DAY

Tuesday, 14 June 2011

MCL Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting

Monday, 27 June 2011 @ 1900 – TBD



MARSOC Pistol...

(continued from page 7)

Colt tweaked its 01070RG rail gun pistol and sent 10 prototypes to Quantico in the fall, said **Greg Rozon**, a product development engineering manager at Colt.

The civilian 1911 rail gun usually has a stainless steel finish and rosewood grips, but Colt's prototypes for the Corps have a desert-color Cercoat finish, eliminating glare on the weapon and making it less identifiable at a distance. They also have more stainless steel internal components to reduce corrosion. They're equipped with a popular night sight made by **Novak** of Parkersburg, W. Va. It utilizes tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen, to power the optic, which is mounted on a Picatinny rail.

Springfield Armory sent the Corps six copies of its PX9105ML pistol for evaluation, said **Larry Collinson**, a production manager with the company. The company calls it the Full-Sized MC Operator, with the "MC" standing for Marine Corps. The pistol has a black slide with a green chassis. It also includes tritium night sights and has been sold to the Corps in small quantities before. The Corps also has bought Springfield Armory 1911 slides in the past to use on pistols assembled at Quantico, Collinson said.

A smaller company not present at SHOT Show, **Karl Lippard Designs** of Colorado Springs, Co., has submitted a proposal to adopt its New Generation Model 1911 A2 pistol. Lippard Designs has not been a big player for government contracts in the past, but says it has developed a pistol capable of accurately engaging targets beyond 400 yards — rifle distance.

Company officials said tight Marine Corps deadlines set in the fall prevented them from submitting weapons for consideration at the time, but they are available now.

Other 1911 manufacturers have bowed out on the competition.

Kimber America of Elmsford, N.Y., is widely considered a player in the 1911 civilian and law enforcement market but decided against submitting samples to the Corps in the fall, company officials said. They cited time restraints and other competing business priorities.

Smith & Wesson of Springfield, Ma., also produces 1911s, including a new line called the enhanced "E" series. The weapons won't be in production until the end of the month, however, and company officials decided it would be best to not rush the Corps prototypes last fall before they were proven, said Joe Bergeron, director of defense programs for Smith & Wesson.



Corps History

(continued from page 7)

20 February 1815

Captain Archibald Henderson leads Marines in the USS Constitution's capture of HMS Cyane and HMS Levant, which occurs 3 days after the end of the War of 1812.

20 February 1962

Lieutenant Colonel John H. Glenn Jr. orbits the earth in first manned American space capsule.

23 February 1945

Men of the 5th Marine Division raise flag on Mount Suribachi.

24 February 1991

1st and 2nd Marine Divisions breach Iraqi defensive positions.

24 February 1991

The I Marine Expeditionary Force and coalition forces began a ground assault on Iraqi defenses in the final chapter of Operation Desert Storm.

26 February 1991

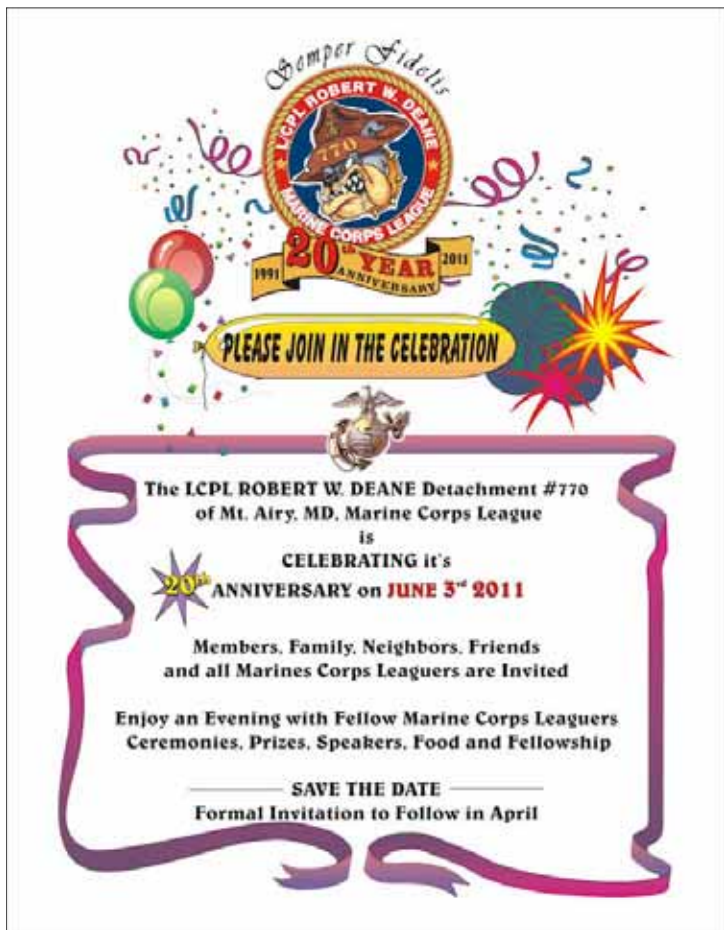
A Marine recon unit was the first U.S. force to enter Kuwait City and retake the American Embassy.

28 February 1991

Operation Desert Storm ends. I Marine Expeditionary Force, with a strength of more than 92,000 for the operation, becomes largest Marine Corps operation in history. 24 Marines were killed in action during the Gulf War.

28 Feb 1967

PFC James Anderson Jr. is first black Marine to win the Medal of Honor.



Memorial Repairs...

(continued from page 1)

In addition to repairs, the foundation wants to improve the overall experience at the memorial. In the short-term, the group wants to replace the plastic portable toilets with heated toilet trailers. The vision ultimately calls for a reception center with permanent restrooms, staffed with volunteers.

Dedicated on November 10, 1954, by **President Dwight D. Eisenhower**, the 32-foot-tall figures stand on a rock slope, rising above the 10-foot base. From the ground, to the flag pole's top, the monument stands at 78 feet. Etched in gold on the granite base are the names and dates of every major Marine Corps engagement since November 10, 1775. The monument and grounds were built on a slope with a sweeping view of Washington, D.C.

The memorial is a popular tourist destination, but also a place where those who have served go to reflect and honor the sacrifices of Marines, who have given their lives for their country. On Tuesday evenings in the summer, the public can enjoy the Sunset Parade, featuring music and rifle demonstrations.

Those interested can make donations to the effort at...

www.iwoflags.com.

For more information about the memorial and how to schedule and hold an event there, call the National Park Service at **703-289-2500**.



Funeral Protests...

(continued from page 3)

Protests rarely occur at funerals in Mississippi, where drivers frequently pull to the side of the road to let funeral processions pass.

In 2006, when the Mayor of Laurel heard that Westboro members might protest at a soldier's funeral there, more than 100 members of a motorcycle group – the **Patriot Guards** – showed up to keep any potential protesters away. None showed up.

Supporters of the bill say they're trying to head off potential problems.

"There's just a certain amount of respect you ought to show at any funeral, but especially for our military members. They're laying their lives on the line every day to protect our country," said Representative **Bryant Clark** (D).



Remembrances of a Casualty Notifications Officer

by Lt. Colonel George Goodson, USMC (Retired)

In my 76th year, the events of my life appear to me, from time to time, as a series of vignettes. Some were significant; most were trivial...

War is the seminal event in the life of everyone that has endured it. Though I fought in Korea and the Dominican Republic and was wounded there, Vietnam was my war.

Now 42 years have passed and thankfully, I rarely think of those days in Cambodia, Laos, and the panhandle of North Vietnam where small teams of Americans and Montangards fought much larger elements of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead I see vignettes: some exotic, some mundane.

- The smell of Nuc Mam
- The heat, dust, and humidity
- The blue exhaust of cycles clogging the streets
- Elephants moving silently through the tall grass
- Hard eyes behind the servile smiles of the villagers
- Standing on a mountain in Laos and hearing a tiger roar
- A young girl squeezing my hand as my medic delivered her baby
- The flowing Ao Dais of the young women biking down Tran Hung Dao
- My two years as Casualty Notification Officer in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland

It was late 1967. I had just returned after 18 months in Vietnam. Casualties were increasing. I moved my family from Indianapolis to Norfolk, rented a house, enrolled my children in their fifth or sixth new school, and bought a second car.

A week later, I put on my uniform and drove 10 miles to Little Creek, Virginia. I hesitated before entering my new office. Appearance is important to career Marines. I was no longer, if ever, a poster Marine. I had returned from my third tour in Vietnam only 30 days before. At 5' 9", I now weighed 128 pounds – 37 pounds below my normal weight. My uniforms fit ludicrously, my skin was yellow from malaria medication, and I think I had a twitch or two.

I straightened my shoulders, walked into the office, looked at the nameplate on a Staff Sergeant's desk and said, *"Sergeant Jolly, I'm Lieutenant Colonel Goodson. Here are my orders and my Qualification Jacket."*

Sergeant Jolly stood, looked carefully at me, took my orders, stuck out his hand; we shook and he asked, *"How long were you there, Colonel?"* I replied, *"18 months this time."* Jolly breathed, *"You must be a slow learner Colonel."* I smiled.

Jolly said, *"Colonel, I'll show you to your office and bring in the Sergeant Major."* I said, *"No, let's just go straight to his office."* Jolly nodded, hesitated, and lowered

his voice, *"Colonel, the Sergeant Major... He's been in this job two years. He's packed pretty tight. I'm worried about him."* I nodded.

Jolly escorted me into the Sergeant Major's office. *"Sergeant Major, this is Colonel Goodson, the new Commanding Officer."* The Sergeant Major stood, extended his hand and said, *"Good to see you again, Colonel."* I responded, *"Hello Walt, how are you?"* Jolly looked at me, raised an eyebrow, walked out, and closed the door.

I sat down with the Sergeant Major. We had the obligatory cup of coffee and talked about mutual acquaintances. Walt's stress was palpable. Finally, I said, *"Walt, what's the hell's wrong?"* He turned his chair, looked out the window and said, *"George, you're going to wish you were back in Nam before you leave here. I've been in the Marine Corps since 1939. I was in the Pacific 36 months, Korea for 14 months, and Vietnam for 12 months... Now I come here to bury these kids. I'm putting my letter in. I can't take it anymore."* I said, *"OK Walt. If that's what you want, I'll endorse your request for retirement and do what I can to push it through Headquarters Marine Corps."*

Sergeant Major Walt Xxxxx retired 12 weeks later. He had been a good Marine for 28 years, but he had seen too much death and too much suffering. He was used up.

Over the next 16 months, I made 28 death notifications, conducted 28 military funerals, and made 30 notifications to the families of Marines that were severely wounded or missing in action. Most of the details of those casualty notifications have now, thankfully, faded from memory. Four, however, remain.

MY FIRST NOTIFICATION

My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed:

- Name, rank, and serial number
- Name, address, and phone number of next of kin
- Date of and limited details about the Marine's death
- Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station
- A strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed

The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away... I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store/service station/Post Office. I went in to ask directions.

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Remembrances... *(continued from page 11)*

Three people were in the store... a man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The store owner walked up and addressed them by name, *"Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper."*

I was stunned. My casualty's next-of-kin's name was John Cooper!

I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, *"I beg your pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Cooper of (address)?"*

The father looked at me – I was in uniform – and then, shaking, bent at the waist, he vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor.

The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper, who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The storeowner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving.

I returned the store owner to his business. He thanked me and said, *"Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars."* I shook his hand and said, *"Neither would I."*

I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk. Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone.

My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

THE FUNERALS

Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys, and how to fold the flag.

When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, *"All Marines share in your grief."* I had been instructed to say, *"On behalf of a grateful nation..."* I didn't think the nation was grateful, so I didn't say that.

Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn't speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, *"I'm so sorry you have this terrible job."* My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother's house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff car. I

parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming *"NO! NO! NO! NO!"*

I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house. Eight or nine neighbors followed. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving.

The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me. The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

One morning, as I walked in the office, the phone was ringing. Sergeant Jolly held the phone up and said, *"You've got another one, Colonel."* I nodded, walked into my office, picked up the phone, took notes, thanked the officer making the call, I have no idea why, and hung up. Jolly, who had listened, came in with a special telephone directory that translates telephone numbers into the person's address and place of employment.

The father of this casualty was a longshoreman. He lived a mile from my office. I called the Longshoreman's Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father's schedule.

The Business Manager asked, *"Is it his son?"* I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, *"Tom is at home today."* I said, *"Don't call him. I'll take care of that."* The Business Manager said, *"Aye, Aye Sir,"* and then explained, *"Tom and I were Marines in WWII."*

I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, *"Is Mr. Smith home?"* She smiled pleasantly and responded, *"Yes, but he's eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?"* I said, *"I'm sorry. It's important. I need to see him now."*

She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, *"Tom, it's for you."*

A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, *"Jesus Christ man, he's only been there three weeks!"*

Months passed. More notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth... I never could do that... and held an imaginary phone to his ear.

(See Remembrances... on page 13)

Remembrances... *(continued from page 12)*

Another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, “*Got it*” and hung up. I had stopped saying “*Thank You*” long ago.

Jolly, “*Where?*”

Me, “*Eastern Shore of Maryland. The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam...*”

Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, “*This time of day, it’ll take three hours to get there and back. I’ll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter. I’ll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief’s home.*”

He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father’s door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, “*Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?*”

I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime.

He called me that evening about 2300 (11:00 PM). “*I’ve gone through my boy’s papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?*” I said, “*Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will.*”

My wife who had been listening said, “*Can you do that?*” I told her, “*I have no idea. But I’m going to break my ass trying.*”

I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, “*General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?*” General Bowser said, “*George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you.*”

I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, “*How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel.*” I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, “*Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?*” The Chief of Staff responded with a name.

The Admiral called the ship, “*Captain, you’re going to do a burial at sea. You’ll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed...*”

He hung up, looked at me, and said, “*The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don’t have to sic Al Bowser on my ass.*” I responded, “*Aye Aye, Sir*” and got the hell out of his office.

I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship’s crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, “*These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?*”

All the high priced help including me sat there looking dumb. Then the Senior Chief stood and said, “*Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War II hang out.*”

They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worst for wear, and said, “*It’s simple; we cut four 12” holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat.*”

The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth.

The sun was hot. The ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplain spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played “*Eternal Father Strong to Save.*” The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea.

The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever.

The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, “*General, get me out of here. I can’t take this anymore.*” I was transferred two weeks later.

I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up.

Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said, “*Well Done, Colonel. Well Done.*”

I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!

NOTE – This story is based upon an article which appeared in the September 2007 issue of the Marine Corps Gazette titled “A Burial at Sea.” It has subsequently reappeared on various web-sites and been distributed by email.

I chose to reprint it here as it portrays a solemn task that many never think about. Also, this article hit home with me as upon my return from ‘Nam’ in the early days of the War, I was tasked with accompanying our unit’s Casualty Assistance Officers on condolence calls. It remains probably the most heart-wrenching assignment that I was ever assigned.





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(Address Correction Requested)



Marines with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment conduct a census patrol in Sangin, Afghanistan – January 10, 2011. The Marines conduct patrols to suppress enemy activity and gain the trust of the people. The battalion, assigned to Regimental Combat Team 2, conducted counter-insurgency operations in partnership with the International Security Assistance Force.

[Photo – Lance Cpl. Dexter S. Saulisbury]