

*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/>

# Courage & Heroism

*NOTE – This story, which appeared in many online publications, was written by Lance Corporal Garry J. Welch (Marine Corps Bases Japan).*

CAMP HANSEN, OKINAWA, JAPAN – Running into a hail of bullets to save lives is not something just anyone would do, but Marines who have earned our country’s highest awards for heroism have done just that.

Most citations tell of men running through enemy fire to win battles, but for 1st Lt. Jeremiah J. Davis, a company mentor while deployed to Afghanistan, now assigned to 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, the story is a little different.

“I was serving in Wardak province, Afghanistan, when we had a friendly fire incident take place between Army Rangers and some Afghan National Army soldiers,” explained Davis.



1st Lieutenant Jeremiah J. Davis, right, is awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroism during an awards ceremony on December 10, 2010 at Camp Hansen, Okinawa. The presentation was made by Lieutenant Colonel Ricardo Miagany (middle), the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force and Sergeant Major Everett L. Gilliam (left), the 3d Bn, Sergeant Major.  
[Official Marine Corps Photo]

The Rangers had gone into a nearby village the previous night to conduct a raid. Upon conclusion of that raid, the Rangers moved to an extraction point near Combat Outpost Akakhel.

The Afghan army was in control of this outpost and saw the Rangers gathering. The problem was no one told the Afghans the Rangers would be there, Davis said.

The Afghan soldiers thought it was the enemy preparing to attack them, so they engaged, explained Davis.

## CONTENTS...

Birthdays .....	9
Book Review – BRUTE .....	8
Bombastic Bumper-Snicker .....	13
Chaplain’s Corner .....	6
Coming Events .....	13
Commandant’s Message .....	3
Corps History .....	7
Corps Humor .....	9
Department Convention Ad .....	6
Devil Dogs .....	9
Don’t Ask – Don’t Tell and the League .....	7
Featured Foto .....	14
From the Editor .....	2
Heroes of the Vietnam Generation .....	10
Junior Vice Commandant .....	4
Legislative Report .....	5
Lest We Forget... ..	5
List of Officers .....	2
Membership Stats & Renewals .....	2
Priorities of the 35th Commandant .....	6
Public Information .....	4
Quotation .....	5
Senior Vice Commandant .....	4
Veterans Affairs .....	6

(see *Courage...* on page 7)

# the **CUTTING EDGE**

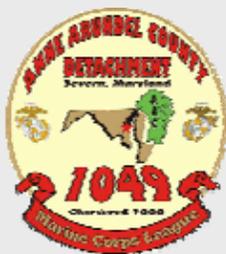
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- Be sure to keep us advised of your current email address to ensure prompt delivery.



- Commandant – *Mac McNeir*  
 Senior Vice-Commandant – *Chris Thompson*  
 Junior Vice-Commandant – *Woody Bowman*  
 Judge Advocate – *Joe Wright*  
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## 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*

As we begin 2011, we need to prepare for a hectic schedule of events during the next few months... the **Mid-Winter Conference, Detachment Elections, Department and Division Conventions**, and the **2011 Marines Helping Marines Golf Tournament**. Traditionally, our detachment has participated in and been major contributors to the success of these events... I hope that our members will continue to build upon that record.

On the subject of **Detachment Elections**, I wish to make it known that regretfully, *I will be stepping down from my position as Detachment Commandant and will not be running for nor accepting nomination to any detachment post* for fiscal year 2011-2012. However, I would like to continue in my role as editor of *the Cutting Edge* and will, as in the past, make myself available to our elected and appointed detachment officers to provide help on an as-needed basis.

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

Since it is our goal to have a copy of the newsletter in the hands of our membership prior to that month's meeting, the submission deadline for all February newsletter articles is **MIDNIGHT, Wednesday, February 9, 2011!**



## Membership Stats

Detachment Membership Stats – 12/31/2010			
Good Standing (Dues Paid)			
Type	USMC	Associate	Multiple
Life Memberships	75	9	6
Annual Memberships	40	6	–
Delinquent Dues (Still on Active Roster)			
Type	USMC	Associate	Multiple
Annual Memberships	2	2	–
New Members			
	–	–	–
Sub-Totals			
	117	17	6
Total			
	140		

(see *Renewals...* on page 12)

# Commandant's Message



Mac McNeir

## Fellow Detachment Members,

With each new year, comes an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process that will guide our Detachment and the Department of Maryland in the coming fiscal year. Please take the time to seriously reflect upon each of the topics delineated below and subsequently provide the appropriate support or take the appropriate actions based upon your reasoned assessments of each.

### Department of Maryland Marine of the Year – 2010

This detachment will be submitting the name of one (1) nominee for this award on **25 February 2011**. If you have someone in mind that you believe to be deserving of statewide recognition as the Department of Maryland Marine of the Year, you need to do the following:

- Write your nominee's name on a piece of paper along with and a minimum of three (3) reasons as to why that individual deserves the award. Please note that you can recommend any member of the Marine Corps League, who is a member in good standing of any Department of Maryland Detachment.
- Sign your recommendation – unsigned recommendations will not be considered!
- Place your recommendation within a sealed envelope, address the envelope to our Detachment Adjutant (Tom Maiorana), and place it in the detachment's mailbox at the Post.

Names will be accepted until **11 February 2011**. After that, the Adjutant, Senior Vice Commandant, and the Judge Advocate will review all nominees and select one candidate for submission to the Department of Maryland.

The Department of Maryland Marine of the Year will be announced at the 2011 Department Convention Dinner, which will be held at the Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center in Ocean City, Maryland on **7 May 2011**.

### Detachment 1049 Marine of the Year – 2010

Nominations for the Anne Arundel County Detachment 1049 Marine of the Year will be accepted until **21 March 2011**. If you wish to nominate an individual, you will need to do the following:

- Write your nominee's name on a piece of paper along with and a minimum of three (3) reasons as to why that individual deserves the award.
- Sign your recommendation – unsigned recommendations will not be considered!
- Seal your recommendation in an envelope.
- Place your recommendation within a sealed envelope, write 'Detachment 1049 Marine of the Year—2010' on the envelope, and place it in the detachment's mailbox at the Post.

The members of the Detachment Marine of the Year Committee will review all of the nominations received and then select the most deserving nominee. The Detachment 1049 Marine of the Year will be announced at the Detachment Meeting scheduled for **25 April 2011**.

### Detachment 1049 Election of Officers for FY 2011 – 2012

It is time to start thinking about who you would like to lead the Detachment during fiscal year **2011 – 2012**. Candidates (nominees) are needed for the following positions. Please remember, that any **regular member in good standing** may run for office.

- Detachment Commandant
- Detachment Senior Vice Commandant
- Detachment Junior Vice Commandant
- Detachment Judge Advocate

*(see Cmdt's Message on page 8)*

From the desk of the

# Senior Vice Commandant



Chris Thompson

## No Article This Month

Our **Senior Vice Commandant's** column will not appear in this issue of the newsletter due to his currently hectic schedule. Considering all that he does for the detachment, I think we can cut him some slack.

**The Editor**

From the desk of the

# Junior Vice Commandant



Woody Bowman

Fellow Members,

I hope that everyone had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year. In March, we will be taking nominations for new detachment officers. If you are interested in serving as Commandant, Senior Vice Commandant, Jr Vice Commandant or Judge Advocate be sure to make your feelings known by having your name place into the nomination process . You can nominate yourself or have someone else nominate you at either the February or March meetings.

I have been your Junior Vice Commandant for three years; and, I believe that it is time for me to step down. The opportunity to serve you for the past three years has been a very rewarding experience.

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

**Woody**



## Public Information

by Ed Dahling, Public Information Officer

## Gates Recommends Cuts

Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced... that the Pentagon will cut programs and overhead by \$78 billion over the next five years through the cancelation of high-cost weapons programs, and through personnel and management efficiencies. His recommendations are just proposals. More details will be known when the president releases his FY 2012 federal budget request in February or March.

The *Marine Corps* would shed between 15,000 and 20,000 members and the *Army* would cut 27,000 soldiers starting in 2015, the first time either service has faced reductions in troop strength since the mid-1990s.

There are currently about 202,000 Marines on active duty, up from 175,000 in 2007. The Army has about 569,000 soldiers on active duty, including a temporary increase of 22,000 that is already scheduled to lapse in 2013.

(see Public Info... on page 5)



### SHAMROCK AWARDS & ENGRAVING

(410) 766-4866 FAX: (410) 766-7277

M/W/F 9:00 - 4:30  
T/T 9:00 - 7:30  
SAT 9:00 - 1:00

900 Crain Highway North  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

TINA TODD  
Assistant Manager

shamrockawards@erols.com

## YOUR DETACHMENT NEEDS YOU!



**NOMINATE** a candidate of your choice and **VOTE**

Nominations - February & March Meetings

Elections - March Meeting

Installation of Officers - April Meeting



# Legislative Report

by Jim Le Gette, Legislative Officer

This month, a new **Vet Center** was opened at 1527 Merritt Blvd. – **Danville Square Shopping Center** – in Dundalk, MD 21222. The hours are **8:00 AM to 4:30 PM** and walk-ins are welcome. The Center is part of the **Readjustment Counseling Center and Department of Veterans Affairs Maryland Healthcare System**. The Center provides readjustment counseling for returning combat veterans and their families. They offer a full array of social services. All services are free and confidential. A DD-214 is needed to determine eligibility.

During the **64<sup>th</sup> American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting** in December, discussions were held which emphasized the correlation between combat-induced Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Epilepsy. The VA is treating 80,000 veterans with epilepsy and expects an increase in epilepsy associated with combat veterans, who suffer from TBI.

The Defense Department Inspector General has issued a scathing report condemning the **Department of the Navy Military Justice System** for consistent failures as to their handling of various aspects and phases of the judicial responsibility by the Navy and Marine Corps Judge Advocate General Office(s). New initiatives are being developed and put into place in order to replace what appears to be gross negligence. A key example of the alleged system failure is the overturning of the conviction and imprisonment for 10 years of Sgt. Brian W. Foster for the alleged rape of his wife, based on hearsay evidence.



## Public Info... *(continued from page 4)*

The permanent rollbacks will be complete by 2016 and will save \$6 billion over two years. Gates said the cuts were prompted by the country's "dire fiscal situation." But he noted that the Army and Marines will still be larger – by 40,000 soldiers and 7,000 to 12,000 Marines – than when he took over as Secretary of Defense in December 2006.

Senior military officials said they supported the troop cuts, but warned against going any deeper.



# Lest We Forget...

*NOTE – This memoriam is based upon an online article by Martin Weil published online by The Washington Post on 3 January 2011.*

**Lance Corporal Maung P. Htaik**, 20, of Hagerstown, Md., died on January 1 while conducting combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.



Htaik's family left Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, in 1998, and moved to Singapore, according to his brother Yar. Htaik's brother went on to say that the family then came to the United States in 2002 because their father wanted them to be able to get a better education.

The 2008 graduate of Smithsburg High School, is remembered as a quiet, easygoing and well behaved student, who seldom called attention to himself. Since many people wrestled with the pronunciation of his first name, he told everyone to call him 'Sam' – his preferred nickname.

Prior to graduation, he told a school counselor that he did not feel ready to go off to college. The counselor tried to steer him toward the Air Force (where she had once served). According to the counselor, he did not fit the image of the typical Marine; but, she said, that was the branch of the service that he wanted. His family had emigrated from Southeast Asia, she recalled, and "I just felt he wanted to do something to give back to this country."

LCpl Htaik is survived by his parents, Hla and Florie Shwe of Hagerstown and his brother Yar.

Interment with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18th, at 9:00 AM .

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Gateway Ministries, P.O. Box 590, Williamsport, MD 21795



## Quotation

*A Marine should be sworn to the patient endurance of hardships, like the ancient knights; and it is not the least of these necessary hardships to have to serve with sailors.*

**Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery**

*Senior British Military Commander at D-Day  
Deputy Supreme Commander of NATO forces in Europe (1951 to 1958)*



# 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



## Chaplain's Corner

by Mac McNeir for Chaplain Ken Webster

Please keep our extended family members, mentioned below, in your thoughts and prayers. Please contact me at either of the following numbers as soon as you learn of any member or family member, who is sick, in distress, etc.

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

**Irene Airey**, wife of **Manny Airey**, recently underwent partial-knee replacement surgery at *Harbor Hospital*.

**Mac McNeir** recently had an early stage melanoma removed at the *Baltimore-Washington Medical Center (North Arundel Hospital)*.

**Pete Pervi** is scheduled for partial gastrectomy surgery at *Saint Agnes Hospital* during the last week of January. Afterwards, he will be recovering at home for approximately 30 to 45 days.

It is requested that no visits to the hospital be made and no flowers be sent. Pete will put out the word when he is ready for visitors.

All of the people mentioned above should be at home and recovering well by the time you receive this issue of the newsletter. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.



## Veteran's Affairs

by Ed Dahling

### VA Update – COLA

WASHINGTON (Dec. 30, 2010) - The Social Security Administration has announced that no cost-of-living adjustments will be made to Social Security benefits in 2011 because the consumer price index has not risen since 2008 when the last Social Security increase occurred.

Like recipients of Social Security and other federal benefits, veterans, their families and survivors will also not see a cost-of-living adjustment in 2011 to their compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Under federal law, the cost-of-living adjustments to VA compensation and pension rates are the same percentage as for Social Security benefits.

VA provides compensation and pension benefits to about four million veterans and beneficiaries. For more information about the VA, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call **1-800-827-1000**.



### Priorities of the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps

The following list of priorities appeared in a 2010 publication titled the **35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Commandant's Planning Guidance**.

- We will continue to provide the best trained and equipped Marine units to Afghanistan. This will not change. This remains our top priority!
- We will rebalance our Corps, posture it for the future and aggressively experiment with and implement new capabilities and organizations.
- We will better educate and train our Marines to succeed in distributed operations and increasingly complex environments.
- We will keep faith with our Marines, our Sailors and our families.

General Amos also included the following admonition...

*"A Marine is a Marine. I set that policy two weeks ago - there's no such thing as a former Marine. You're a Marine, just in a different uniform and you're in a different phase of your life. But you'll always be a Marine because you went to Parris Island, San Diego or the hills of Quantico. There's no such thing as a former Marine."*

**General James F. Amos**

35th Commandant of the Marine Corps



#### 4 January 1991

Marine helicopters evacuate 281 people from U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia.

#### 9 January 2002

All seven Marine crewmen were killed when their KC-130R crashed near a forward operating base at Shamsi, Pakistan. Enemy ground fire was not suspected in the crash. These Marines of VMGR-352 were the first to die in the war on terrorism.

#### 10 January 1995

2,600 U.S. Marines deployed to Somalia (Operation United Shield) to assist in the final withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops from Somalia.

#### 11 January 2007

President George W. Bush presented the Medal of Honor to Corporal Jason L. Dunham's family during a White House ceremony. Corporal Dunham, who died of wounds sustained in combat in April 2004, was not only the first Marine to receive the nation's highest military award for valor for Operation Iraqi Freedom, but also the first Marine to receive the award for any action since 1970.

#### 13 January 2003

General James L. Jones relinquished duties as the 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps to General Michael W. Hagee during a ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy. General Jones was the first commandant in 40 years not to retire from the position as he became the first Marine to assume duties as the head of U.S. European Command on 16 January 2003 and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe on the following day.

#### 18 January 1951

Marines of the 1st Marine Division begin mop-up operations against guerrillas in the Pohang, South Korea region, following their epic battle with Communist Chinese troops at the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir.

#### 19 January 1929

Brigadier General Smedley Butler's 3rd Marine Brigade disbanded at Tiensin, China.

#### 20 January 1968

The second battle for Khe Sanh began when Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines attacked a North Vietnamese battalion between Hill 881 South and Hill 881 North.

#### 22 January 1969

Operation Dewey Canyon began with the airlift of the 9th Marines and supporting artillery into the A Chau/Da Krong Valleys.

#### 25 January 1856

Marines and seamen from the U.S.S. DECATUR went ashore at the village of Seattle, Washington, to protect settlers from Indian raids.



## Courage... *(continued from page 1)*

"My job while I was there was to mentor and train the Afghan company. They were good friends," he said.

"When I heard the fire fight start, I knew right away it was a blue on blue fire," said Davis. "We did everything we could to raise them on their radios and even tried their cell phones, but we were not able to reach them."

That's when Davis ran from cover through a hail of bullets for more than 200 meters to link up with the Rangers in an attempt to stop the firefight.

"I immediately tried to get them to cease fire, but I was unable to because I could not reach the Afghans and was unable to convince the Rangers to stop firing until the Afghans did too," said Davis.

After 45 minutes, the fire-fight finally came to an end.

"Even though it only lasted 45 minutes, it felt like it lasted two hours," said Davis.

Davis then organized a medical evacuation for all the wounded and saved seven potential casualties from succumbing to their wounds.

Davis received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroism on December 10th for his actions that day.

"I feel humbled to get this award," said Davis. "Unfortunately, five Afghan soldiers were killed. One of the Afghan soldiers was a good friend we called Rambo because of his fearlessness in battle."

"In light of his sacrifice, I feel that my attempts to stop the firefight were not that significant," Davis said.



## Don't Ask - Don't Tell and the League

**National Commandant Voltaggio** wants you all to know that the League's position is very clear. Here is our official position:

*"The actions taken by the U. S. Congress and the President relate ONLY to the Military and have absolutely nothing to do with the Marine Corps League. The Marine Corps League has always followed a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin or sexual preference. Nothing has changed for the League."*

We would advise that you avoid engaging people in discussions with regard to your personal feelings about the change. You will never win in those discussions. There is no right answer.

**Michael A. Blum**

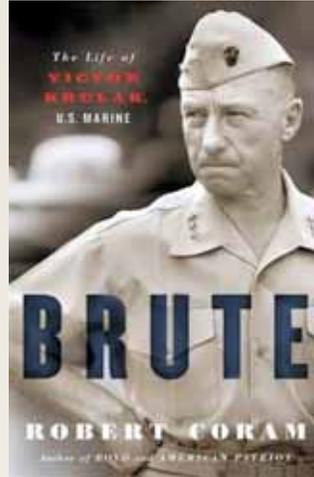
Executive Director, Marine Corps League



# BRUTE

The Life of VICTOR KRULAK, U.S. Marine

I put this book on my list of desired Christmas presents and was pleased when I received it from my grandson. It is an easy read and a real page turner that I could not put down. Although it spans more than 350 pages, I started reading the book late in the afternoon on Christmas day and finished it the very next afternoon.



The book begins with a description of the Marine Corps participation in World War I. More importantly, it describes how their victory at the Battle of Belleau Wood engendered the jealousy and animosity within the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy that would lie at the heart of a never ceasing effort to dissolve the U.S. Marine Corps. In the decades that followed, Brute Krulak would become a key and constant player in the efforts to beat back those attempts and ensure the Corps survival – if only temporarily. This book underscores the fact that Marines of future generations will have to remain ever vigilant; for as long as the Corps remains the United States pre-eminent military force and the innovator of tactics and equipments to meet future needs, the self-perceived inferiority and jealousy of our nation's other military services will cause those services to expend far too much effort on doing away with the Corps rather than focusing upon their own deficiencies.

However, the book's main objective is to provide an even-handed character study of one of the Corps giants, Victor Krulak... warts and all. It delves into his early years and the lengths that this son of an immigrant Russian Jewish father went... in order to enter the Naval Academy, gain the favor of well placed Marine and Naval officers, and rapidly climb to the rank of Lieutenant General. It describes Krulak's well chronicled audacity that reached its peak when he chastised President Lyndon B. Johnson for his poor handling of the Vietnam War... a confrontation that would, in the end, prevent him from attaining his ultimate goal of becoming Commandant of the Marine Corps. Prior to his ill-fated 'oval office' confrontation, Krulak's appointment to Commandant had been considered by many to be a *fait accompli*.

***This book is a must read for all Marines past and present!***

Regardless of your knowledge of the Corps, you will not be able to finish this book without an increased understanding of the "Brute" and those forces (individuals) obsessed with making our Corps an historical foot-note.



## Cmdt's Message... *(continued from page 3)*

The process for nominating/electing detachment officers is described as follows:

- During the meeting scheduled for **28 February 2011**...
  - Initial nominations will be accepted from the floor.
- During the meeting scheduled for **28 March 2011**...
  - Final nominations will be accepted from the floor.
  - Once the nomination process is completed, regular members of the detachment, who are present at the meeting, will vote for each detachment officer position.
- During the meeting scheduled for **25 April 2011**...
  - Newly elected officers will be sworn in and assume their posts.

### Remember this is your detachment!

This is the perfect time to make your wishes known.

- If you believe an individual deserves recognition as 'Marine of the Year,' let the appropriate people know!
- If you believe that one of your fellow members would make a good detachment officer and lead our detachment in a professional and effective manner, make the effort to vote him or her into office!
- If you want to make a difference or simply want to be more involved... run for office!

### Department of Maryland Convention

As you know our annual Department of Maryland Convention will take place on **5 through 7 May 2011**. One of the ways that we try to cover the cost of the convention is by selling advertisements in the convention book. To help our members show their support, we will be purchasing a **Patrons' Ad** for **Anne Arundel County Detachment 1049**. Please show your support for our Detachment and our Department by placing your name and your spouse's name in the ad. The cost is **\$5.00 per name**.

To participate in this endeavor, provide your name and/or your spouse's name – spelled the way you want it/them to appear in the ad – and the appropriate fee to the Adjutant at our next Detachment meeting.

As always,

**Mac**

# Members' Birthdays

NOTE – Belated birthday wishes are extended to new member, Sam Campbell.

Also, 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 **February** include:

Don Blanton	Joseph Jones	Ed Ross
Louis Dasch Jr	Michael Lettau	Phil Schwarzenberg *
Robert Eberts	Robert Lloyd	James Walker
Danny Fischio	James McCormick	Scott Woods
	Pete Pervi	

\* denotes someone really old



The Fun & Honor Society of the Marine Corps League

Woof-Woof,

**Pound 204** had a very successful Growl on December 19th. Your Detachment provided a hearty breakfast beginning one hour prior to the Growl. Thanks.

The Pound veterinarian was there to inoculate all the Dogs for Rabies and a variety of other canine ailments, and subsequently presented a certificate (suitable for framing) to each Dog attesting to same. All this for a measly five bones which were designated for the children's hospital in Boise, Idaho, the site of this year's Supreme Growl.

Speaking of the children's hospital, we collected another **\$227.06** in passport stamps at this Growl. With the additional bones resulting from the inoculations, and the 50-50 Raffle winner's donation, we forwarded **\$362.06** to the Kennel. That brings our total contributions from just two Growls (since August of 2010) to **\$667.06**. Well done Dogs!

The Maryland Pack will Growl on **8 January 2011** at **American Legion Post 42**, 405 Northern Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21742 (301-733-7676). 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

## *A History Lesson for Dummies...*

Have you ever wondered who first uttered the phrase "**You Gotta Be Shittin' Me?**"

Well, it just so happens to have originated with the Father of our country... way back when George Washington was crossing the Delaware River with his troops.

There were 33 men in Washington's boat (*remember this number*). It was extremely dark, a storm was raging, and huge waves were tossing the boat about.

Finally, Washington grabbed Corporal Peters (*remember this name*) and stationed him at the front of the boat with a lantern. Peters was ordered to keep swinging the lantern, so they could see where they were heading.

Corporal Peters, through driving rain and cold, continued swinging the lantern back and forth, back and forth. Then a big gust of wind and a huge wave hit Corporal Peters... throwing him and his lantern into the Delaware.

Washington and his troops searched for nearly an hour trying to find Corporal Peters, but to no avail. All of them felt terrible, for the Corporal had been one of their favorites.

Sometime later, Washington and his troops landed on the far side of the river, wet and totally exhausted. He rallied the troops and told them that they must go on.

About an hour later, one of his men said, "General, I see lights ahead."

They trudged toward the lights and came upon a huge house. What they didn't know was that this was a house of ill repute, hidden in the forest to serve all who came.

General Washington pounded on the door, his men crowding around him. The door swung open, and much to his surprise stood a very beautiful woman. A huge smile came across her face, when she became aware of the many men standing there.

Washington was the first to speak, "Madam, I am General George Washington and these are my men. We are wet, exhausted, and desperately in need of warmth and comfort."

Again, the Madam looked at all the men standing there, and with a broad smile on her face, said, "Well, General, you have come to the right place. We can surely give you warmth and comfort. How many men do you have in your group?"

Washington replied, "Well, Madam, there are 32 of us without Peters."

Whereupon the Madam replied, "*You gotta be shittin' me.*"



# Heroes of the Vietnam Generation

by James Webb



*NOTE – I apologize for the length of this article, however, I thought it needed to be made available to those who previously may not have had an opportunity to read it.*

*The author is the senior Senator of Virginia, former Secretary of the Navy, and Marine infantry officer, who earned the Navy Cross, Silver Star, and Bronze Star medals for heroism in Vietnam.*

*Originally printed in *The American Magazine* in its July/August 2000 issue. Available online at [www.American.com](http://www.American.com).*

The rapidly disappearing cohort of Americans that endured the Great Depression and then fought World War II is receiving quite a send-off from the leading lights of the so-called 60's generation. Tom Brokaw has published two oral histories of "*The Greatest Generation*" that feature ordinary people doing their duty and suggest that such conduct was historically unique.

Chris Matthews of "*Hardball*" is fond of writing columns praising the Navy service of his father while castigating his own baby boomer generation for its alleged softness and lack of struggle. William Bennett gave a startling condescending speech at the Naval Academy a few years ago comparing the heroism of the "*D-Day Generation*" to the drugs-and-sex nihilism of the "*Woodstock Generation*." And Steven Spielberg, in promoting his film "*Saving Private Ryan*," was careful to justify his portrayals of soldiers in action based on the supposedly unique nature of World War II.

An irony is at work here. Lest we forget, the World War II generation now being lionized also brought us the Vietnam War, a conflict which today's most conspicuous voices by and large opposed, and in which few of them served. The "best and brightest" of the Vietnam age group once made headlines by castigating their parents for bringing about the war in which they would not fight, which has become the war they refuse to remember.

Pundits back then invented a term for this animus: the "generation gap." Long, plaintive articles and even books were written examining its manifestations. Campus leaders, who claimed precocious wisdom through the magical process of reading a few controversial books, urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over 30. Their elders who had survived the Depression and fought the largest war in history were looked down upon as shallow, materialistic, and out of touch.

Those of us who grew up, on the other side of the picket line from that era's counter-culture can't help but feel a little leery of this sudden gush of appreciation for our elders from the leading lights of the old counter-culture. Then and now, the national conversation has proceeded from the dubious assumption that those who came of age during Vietnam are a unified generation in the same sense as their parents were, and thus are capable of being spoken for through these fickle elites.

In truth, the "*Vietnam Generation*" is a misnomer. Those who came of age during that war are permanently divided by different reactions to a whole range of counter-cultural agendas, and nothing divides them more deeply than the personal ramifications of the war itself. The sizable portion of the Vietnam age group who declined to support the counter-cultural agenda, and especially the men and women who opted to serve in the military during the Vietnam War, are quite different from their peers who for decades have claimed to speak for them. In fact, they are much like the World War II generation itself. For them, Woodstock was a side show, college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance, or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in World War II and Korea

Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it, and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communism's reach in Southeast Asia.

The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "*our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win*." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men served in the military during the Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam Theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of whom were pilots; there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground.

*(see Vietnam Heroes... on page 11)*

# Vietnam Heroes... *(continued from page 10)*

Dropped onto the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompletely on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead

***Those who believe that it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought – five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.***

Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had cracked apart along class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death choices about serving. The better academic institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. And frequently the reward for a young man's having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference of outright hostility.

What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their most formative stage, in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, ***"not for fame of reward, not for place or for rank, but in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it."*** Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious élan. And who deserve a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called [*sic*] spokesmen of our so-called generation.

Mr. Brokaw, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Spielberg, meet my Marines. 1969 was an odd year to be in Vietnam. Second only to 1968 in terms of American casualties, it was the year made famous by Hamburger Hill, as well as the gut-wrenching Life [*sic*] magazine cover story showing pictures of 242 Americans who had been killed in one average week of fighting. Back home, it was the year of Woodstock, and of numerous anti-war rallies that culminated in the Moratorium March on Washington. The My Lai massacre hit the papers and was seized upon by the anti-war movement as the emblematic moment of the war. Lyndon Johnson left Washington in utter humiliation.

Richard Nixon entered the scene, destined for an even worse fate. In the An Hoa Basin southwest of Danang, the Fifth Marine Regiment was in its third year of continuous combat operations. Combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, but we were well led. As a rifle platoon and company commander, I served under a succession of three regimental commanders who had cut their teeth in World War II, and four different battalion commanders, three of whom had seen combat in Korea. The company commanders were typically Captains on their second combat tour in Vietnam, or young First Lieutenants like myself who were given companies after many months of "bush time" as platoon commanders in the Basin's tough and unforgiving environs.

The Basin was one of the most heavily contested areas in Vietnam, its torn, cratered earth offering every sort of wartime possibility. In the mountains just to the west, not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnamese Army operated an infantry division from an area called Base Area 112. In the valleys of the Basin, main-force Viet Cong battalions whose ranks were 80 percent North Vietnamese Army regulars moved against the Americans every day. Local Viet Cong units sniped and harassed. Ridgelines and paddy dikes were laced with sophisticated booby traps of every size, from a hand grenade to a 250-pound bomb. The villages sat in the rice paddies and tree lines like individual fortresses, crisscrossed with the trenches and spider holes, their homes sporting bunkers capable of surviving direct hits from large-caliber artillery shells. The Viet Cong infrastructure was intricate and permeating. Except for the old and the very young, villagers who did not side with the Communists had either been killed or driven out to the government controlled enclaves near Danang.

In the rifle companies, we spent the endless months patrolling ridgelines and villages and mountains, far away from any notion of tents, barbed wire, hot food, or electricity. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside one's pack, which after a few "humps" usually boiled down to letter-writing material, towel, soap, toothbrush, poncho liner, and a small transistor radio.

We moved through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing a typical Marine to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush. When we stopped we dug chest-deep fighting holes and slit trenches for toilets. We slept on the ground under makeshift poncho hootches, and when it rained we usually took our hootches down because wet ponchos shined under illumination flares, making great targets. Sleep itself was fitful, never more than an hour or two at a stretch for months at a time as we mixed daytime patrolling with night-time ambushes, listening posts, foxhole duty, and radio watches. Ringworm,

*(see Vietnam Heroes... on page 12)*

# Vietnam Heroes... (continued from page 11)

hookworm, malaria, and dysentery were common, as was trench foot when the monsoons came. Respite was rotating back to the mud-filled regimental combat base at An Hoa for four or five days, where rocket and mortar attacks were frequent and our troops manned defensive bunkers at night. Which makes it kind of hard to get excited about tales of Woodstock, or camping at the Vineyard during summer break.

We had been told while training that Marine officers in the rifle companies had an 85 percent probability of being killed or wounded, and the experience of "Dying Delta," as our company was known, bore that out. Of the officers in the bush when I arrived, our company commander was wounded, the weapons platoon commander wounded, the first platoon commander was killed, the second platoon commander was wounded twice, and I, commanding the third platoons fared no better. Two of my original three-squad leaders were killed, and the third shot in the stomach. My platoon sergeant was severely wounded, as was my right guide. By the time I left, my platoon [*sic*] and I had gone through six radio operators, five of them casualties.

These figures were hardly unique; in fact, they were typical. Many other units; for instance, those who fought the hill battles around Khe Sanh, or were with the famed Walking Dead of the Ninth Marine Regiment, or were in the battle of Hue City or at Dai Do, had it far worse.

When I remember those days and the very young men who spent them with me, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians barely out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in hell and then return. Visions haunt me every day, not of the nightmares of war but of the steady consistency with which my Marines faced their responsibilities, and of how

uncomplaining most of them were in the face of constant danger. The salty, battle-hardened 20-year-olds teaching green 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of the hostile battlefield. The unerring skill of the young squad leaders as we moved through unfamiliar villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night. The quick certainty when a fellow Marine was wounded and needed help. Their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. To this day it stuns me that their own countrymen have so completely missed the story of their service, lost in the bitter confusion of the war itself.

Like every military unit throughout history we had occasional laggards, cowards, and complainers. But in the aggregate, these Marines were the finest people I have ever been around. It has been my privilege to keep up with many of them over the years since we all came home. One finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more for each other and for the people they came to help.

It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men. Because I already have, in more ways than I can ever recount. I am alive today because of their quiet, unaffected heroism. Such valor epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the boomer elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our fathers' generation while ignoring it in our own is more than simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.



## Renewals Coming Due... (Membership Stats continued from page 2)

Please note that **members, who have not paid their dues since 2009, will be dropped** from the roster during their anniversary month in 2011! The following members, whose membership renewal dates are approaching, should consider the potential cost reduction associated with becoming Life Members.

RENEWALS		
February 2011	March 2011	April 2011
Albo, Charles Grove, Charles Hutton, James Stone, Sinamin Thompson, Chris Wright, Joseph	NONE	Oliver, Keith Stephens, Joseph

*Note – Delinquent members, whose dues are now overdue are not listed above. Those members will be contacted by the Junior Vice Commandant.*



# 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).*

**MCL Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting**

24 January 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

**MCL National Mid-Winter Conference**

10, 11 & 12 February 2011 – see National Website  
Fairway Park Marriott Hotel  
Falls Church, VA

**MODD Pound 204 Growl**

TBD – Mike Hadley

**Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting**

28 February 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

**Detachment 1049, Friday Night Dinner**

4 March 2011 @ 1800 – Pete Pervi

**Department of Maryland General Meeting,**

TBD – Paul Taylor

**MODD Maryland Pack Growl,**

TBD – Ed Ross

**Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting (Officer Elections)**

28 March 2011 @ 1900 – Mac McNeir

**Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting**

(New Officer Installations)

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, Golf Tournament –**

**Fund-Raiser for Marines Helping Marines**

13 May 2011 @ 0800 – Richard Gonzales  
Bay Hills Golf Club, 545 Bay Hills Dr Arnold, MD

**Detachment 1049, Friday Night Dinner**

6 May 2011 @ 1800 – Pete Pervi

**Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting**

23 May 2011 @ 1900 – TBD

**Memorial Day**

30 May 2011

**MCL Mid-East Division Convention**

Dates – TBD  
Location – TBD

**FLAG DAY**

14 June 2011

**MCL Detachment 1049 Monthly Meeting**

27 June 2011 @ 1900 – TBD



**Rich Morton Lincoln  
Mercury Mazda**



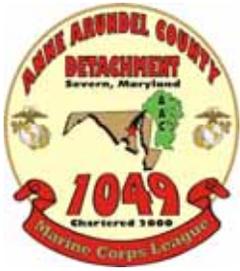
**51 Mountain Rd.  
Pasadena, MD 21122**

Phone: 800-577-1658

# Bombastic Bumper-Snicker:



**Calling for peace in the face of  
Global Terrorism is NOT  
Patriotism... it's COWARDICE!**



**Marine Corps League**  
**Anne Arundel County Detachment 1049**  
**PO Box 804**  
**Severn, Maryland 21144-0804**

(Address Correction Requested)



# Featured Foto



Two F-35B Joint Strike Fighters recently made the Marine Corps variant's first formation flight in the skies above the Patuxent River, Maryland Naval Air Station. The Department of the Navy signed a basing decision on 9 December 2010 naming Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, as the future home of 88 short takeoff and vertical landing jets, which will replace the air station's existing AV-8B Harriers.

[Photo – Lockheed-Martin]