



OCTOBER 2023



Detachment 60 Houge

THE PFC PAUL E. ISON DET #60 NEWSLETTER

"Strength, Honor, and Brotherhood: The Marine Corps League stands united in upholding these timeless values, inspiring individuals to reach new heights and embody the true spirit of service."



Marine Corps 248th Birthday Ball

Join us for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball on Friday, November 10, 2023,
at Fort Myers Crowne Plaza at Gulf Coast Town Center!



Crowne Plaza Ft. Myers Gulf Coast

9931 Interstate Commerce Drive,
Fort Myers, Florida 33913

Friday, November 10, 2023
5 pm – 10 pm



**GET
TICKETS
HERE!**

Buy tickets in person at detachment meetings or by mail by noting your meals of choice and making the checks payable to MCL PFC Paul E. Ison Detachment 60 and mail to:



MCL PFC Paul E. Ison Detachment 60

PO BOX 100841,
Cape Coral, FL 33910-0841

Need a room?

Reserve your spot for the Marine Corps Ball at Crowne Plaza Ft. Myers Gulf Coast by booking online before 10/10/23 using the provided link and entering your dates. Alternatively, call reservations at 855-639-8440 and mention the group code MCB or ask for the Marine Corps Ball group rate.



**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE PFC PAUL E. ISON DETACHMENT 60
PRESENTS**

The 248th Annual
MARINE
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
CORPS

Birthday Ball

Friday, November 10, 2023

At 1700-2200 (5pm-10pm)

Crowne Plaza Fort Myers Gulf Coast

9931 Interstate Commerce Drive,

Fort Myers, Florida 33913

Tickets* available at

**www.eventbrite.com, search: United States Marine Corps Birthday Ball
Fort Myers, Florida**

Make Checks payable to MCL PFC Paul E. Ison Detachment 60

PO BOX 100841, Cape Coral, FL 33910-0841

In the amount of \$65 per person(until 09/30/2023)

\$70 per person from 10/01-10/31

\$75 per person from 11/01-11/03

*****Must include meal choice, otherwise will be defaulted to Chicken*****

1-Roasted Chicken Breast. 2-Pan Seared Salmon.

3-Grilled Filet Mignon. 4-Portobello Mushroom(Vegetarian).

***Tickets are a "quid pro quo" donation(is a non-refundable, non-tax deductible donation to the Detachment in which you get something in return...E.g. The meal, The cake, The fun, The dancing, etc.)**

HISTORICAL ARTICLE

October sure knows how to bring excitement to American history! It's like the month says, "Hold my pumpkin spice latte; I'm about to make some serious historical waves!" So, let's swoop into the wild and frightening world of October events in American history.



October 1, 1890

Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park, the bad boy of national parks in the US, was born and bred in California, just like a true West Coast Compton warrior. It

strutted onto the scene like Chesty Puller, leading the charge to protect and preserve some seriously jaw-dropping natural beauty. Yosemite was the Beyoncé of the conservation movement, commanding attention and respect with its awe-inspiring landscapes and Illuminati.



October 3, 1995

O.J. Simpson Trial

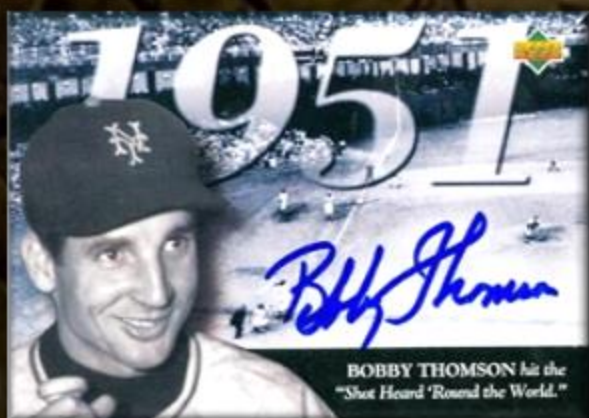
October 3, 1995: In a trial that captured the nation's attention, O.J. Simpson skillfully evaded murder charges, earning himself the title of "The Houdini of Homicide." This high-profile case dubbed the "Trial of the Century," ignited a firestorm of discussions on race, celebrity clout, and the quirks of the criminal justice system. It was a battle with everyone on the edge of their seats as if they were watching the climax



portion of *Saving Private Ryan*. But in the end, Simpson emerged victorious, leaving behind a trail of controversy, and raising more questions than answers.

October 3, 1951

The Shot Heard 'Round the World



In a nail-biting showdown known as "The Shot Heard 'Round the World," the New York Giants baseball team kicked some severe Dodger butt, securing their third consecutive National League pennant. This epic game has gone down in history as one of the most legendary moments in baseball, leaving fans on the edge of their seats and causing more heart palpitations than a boot Marine on their third can of Monster energy drinks. This victory was no small feat for the Giants as they swung into the annals of baseball

greatness like a well-aimed grenade launcher.

October 7, 1765

Stamp Act

A bunch of colonists gathered in the bustling city of New York, all fired up to give those pesky British taxation policies a taste of their own medicine. It was like the first-ever resistance party, complete with epic finger-pointing, eye-rolling, and enough grumbling to make even the toughest soldier crack a smile. Little did they know that this little shindig would ignite a chain reaction of tension and drama, eventually leading to the grand spectacle known as the American Revolution.





October 11, 1986

Reykjavik Summit

In a classic showdown between President Ronald "The Gipper" Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail "The Gorby" Gorbachev, the two heavyweights squared off in Reykjavik, Iceland, for a summit that could have been mistaken for a wrestling match. This epic meeting marked a significant step towards ending the Cold War, with both leaders flexing their diplomatic muscles. While the formal agreement was still in the air, this conference laid the groundwork for future arms control negotiations, leaving everyone wondering who would come out on top in this geopolitical ring. ****SPOILER ALERT***** It was us!

October 14, 1964

Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

In a world full of battles and conflicts, one man stood tall, armed not with weapons but with the power of his words. Martin Luther King Jr., the fearless leader of the civil rights movement, was honored with the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for his brave fight against racial inequality in America. This recognition not only put a spotlight on the civil rights movement but also boosted King's leadership influence, making him a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield of justice.



October 20, 1973

Saturday Night Massacre

In a classic case of military maneuvering, the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre" unfolded amidst the Watergate scandal. Channeling his inner general, President Richard Nixon commanded to fire special prosecutor Archibald Cox. This audacious move heightened public attention and paved the way for Nixon's eventual [surrender and resignation](#).

DETACHMENT EVENTS

MONDAY MEETINGS



Are you looking to connect with other Marine Corps enthusiasts, veterans, and supporters? Well, buckle up and get ready for some military fun! Join the monthly Marine Corps League meetings at the Brotherhood of Heroes Resource Center & Museum in Cape Coral, FL. It's the perfect place to mingle with like-minded individuals who share your love for the Marine Corps. While there, check out the incredible exhibits that pay homage to military service. And hey, if you're feeling fancy, don a dress uniform and snap a photo with our Commandant. Trust us; it'll be a memory worth framing! Please mark your calendars because the next meeting is on the second Monday of next month. But wait, there's more! After the meeting, we'll head to Backstreets for a well-deserved drink. So grab your compass and combat boots and prepare for some Marine Corps bonding and skating lessons.



Brotherhood of Heroes Resource Center &
Museum

4522 Del Prado Blvd S,
Cape Coral, FL

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 9 AT
7:30 PM**

OCTOBER MEETING AGENDA

On Monday, October 9, 2023, at 7:30 p.m., the following topics will be discussed aside from the information passed by the officers:

- ☐ Input on New Budget Policy



- ☐ Conference Amendment to Bylaws (Article VII Section 700 and 705)



If you have any topics you would like to discuss at the meeting, please send an email to add them to the agenda.

POST MEETING GATHERING

Join us for our post-meeting gathering at BackStreets Sports Bar located on 915 SE 47th Ter, Cape Coral, FL! Indulge in delicious comfort food and enjoy live music in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Everyone is invited, so show up and have fun. See you there!

BackStreets Sports Bar
915 SE 47th Ter,
Cape Coral, FL

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9

Post-Meeting



MANDATORY
FUN
TIME

ACE DETAIL



Join us in making a difference at Vision Ace Hardware!

1004



Vision Ace Hardware

Cape Coral Pkwy E,
Cape Coral, FL

Saturday, October 7

We are excited to announce that Vision Ace Hardware, conveniently located at 1004 Cape Coral Pkwy E, Cape Coral, FL, allows our detachment to collect donations on the first Saturday of every month.

For more information on how to become a volunteer, please email us at marines@pfcision.com. We'll happily provide all the details you need to get started.

Thank you for your generosity and support. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

October Luncheon

FRD Sports Bar & Grille (formerly known as First Round Draft)
1217 Del Prado Blvd S
Cape Coral, FL.

Tuesday, October 31, at 1 pm



Join us for our monthly luncheon, a gathering that brings together former and current Marines and Navy Corpsmen to connect with like-minded individuals who share a common bond and celebrate the principles and customs of the United States Marine Corps.

Our October monthly luncheon will be held at FRD Sports Bar & Grille (formerly known as First Round Draft), conveniently located at 1217 Del Prado Blvd S. in Cape Coral, FL. Mark your calendars for the last Tuesday of the month.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, AT 1 PM.

CAPE CORAL

FARMERS MARKET

EVERY
Saturday

8:00 *am* - 1:00 *pm*

CLICK FOR DETAILS



CAPE CORAL BIKE NIGHT



DOWNTOWN CAPE CORAL
SE 47TH TERRACE

5 PM – 10 PM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023



**German American Social Club
Cape Coral**

OCTOBER 20 – 22 AND 27 – 29, 2023

CLICK FOR DETAILS



WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH THE YOUNG MARINES!

Join the Young Marines and Become a Leader of Tomorrow!

Volunteers needed!

Looking for a way to give back to your community and inspire the next generation of leaders? Look no further than the Young Marines!

This youth organization, affiliated with the Marine Corps, offers a unique opportunity for young people ages 8-18 to develop leadership skills, learn teamwork and discipline, and become involved in their communities. As a member of the Young Marines, you'll participate in community service projects, learn about American history and government, and develop essential life skills like teamwork, discipline, and self-confidence.



But that's not all! As a member of the Young Marines, you'll also have the opportunity to participate in exciting activities like drill and ceremony, color guard, and athletic competitions. And you'll be part of a proud tradition of leadership and service that dates back to the founding of the Marine Corps.

So why wait? Join the Young Marines today and start making a difference in your community and the lives of young people everywhere. With the Young Marines, you'll be part of a supportive and inclusive community that will help you grow and thrive on and off the field.

THE YOUNG MARINES: *A BREATH OF FRESH AIR FOR COMBAT VETERANS*

As a combat veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, I have missed the feeling of camaraderie and brotherhood that I once knew. However, volunteering for the Young Marines has reignited my passion for service, and it has been an absolute joy to have the opportunity to mentor young people and watch them grow while positively impacting their lives.

My Personal Testimony



The discipline and dedication of the Young Marines is genuinely remarkable. I was blown away by watching them learn the values of teamwork, loyalty, and selfless service. They were like miniature superheroes, embodying the qualities of leaders, mentors, and role models for one another. Their passion and dedication served as a reminder that the values of the military are timeless and that we can always find our way back to the

things that truly matter.

I am proud to mentor the Young Marines, a family-like youth organization. The experience of teaching discipline, teamwork, and leadership to these eager young leaders has been nothing short of inspirational. I have found a sense of purpose and fulfillment, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of a supportive family that encourages, uplifts, and supports each other. Join us, make a difference, serve your country, and participate in something extraordinary.

Find out more





TOYS FOR TOTS

Attention all Marines and supporters!

The time has come to rally together for our 2023 Campaign, set to commence on October 1st. We are calling upon all of you to join us in this noble cause. Whether you wish to contribute as a dedicated volunteer or become a Toy Drop Site, we implore you to contact us immediately. Together, we can profoundly impact and create lasting memories for those in need. Let us unite our strength and determination to ensure this year's Campaign is an unparalleled success. Join forces with us today!

Join us on Facebook for the latest updates on our events and campaigns!

Contribute to our Toys for Tots North-Central Lee County campaign online or by mailing a check to P.O. BOX 3072, North Fort Myers, FL 33918.

Our coordinator, Oscar Antonio Rauda, USMC Retired, invites you to join us and make a difference in the lives of local children this holiday season.

Take advantage of the opportunity to give back to your community and support a worthy cause. Follow us on Facebook today and stay updated on our latest events and campaigns!



MEMBER RECRUITING & NEW MEMBERS

Join the Marine Corps League and Make a Difference!



Join the Marine Corps League to uphold the values and traditions of the United States Marine Corps. As a member, you'll connect with fellow Marines, engage in meaningful activities, and positively impact your community. Expanding our membership strengthens our organization and empowers us to support veterans and their families. Join us in honoring our past and shaping a brighter future.

Why Join the Marine Corps League?

The Marine Corps League is a prestigious organization that provides a unique opportunity for Marines, FMF Corpsmen, and Navy Chaplains who have served with Marines to continue their service beyond active duty. By joining our ranks, you become part of a brotherhood/sisterhood that shares a common bond forged through sacrifice, dedication, and love for our country.

Benefits of Membership:

Comradery: The Marine Corps League offers a strong camaraderie among its members. You will have the chance to connect with fellow Marines who understand your experiences and share your values. The friendships formed within the League often last a lifetime.

Community Engagement: As a member of the Marine Corps League, you will have numerous opportunities to give back to your community. We actively support veterans in need through various programs and initiatives, provide scholarships to deserving students, participate in patriotic events, and much more.

Advocacy: The Marine Corps League serves as a powerful voice for veterans' rights and benefits locally and nationally. By joining us, you contribute to our collective efforts in advocating for legislation that supports veterans' well-being and ensures they receive the recognition they deserve

How Can You Help?



Reminder!

We encourage all current members to participate in our membership recruiting efforts actively. Here are some ways you can contribute:

Spread the Word: Share your positive experiences as a member of the Marine Corps League with friends, family, and colleagues who may be interested in joining. Personal testimonials can be incredibly influential in attracting new members.

Attend Events: Participate in local community events, parades, and ceremonies where you can proudly represent the Marine Corps League. Engage with attendees and share information about our organization's mission and membership benefits.

Utilize Social Media: Leverage the power of social media platforms to promote the Marine Corps League. Please share our posts, create engaging content, and encourage others to follow our pages. By increasing our online presence, we can reach a wider audience and attract potential new members.

How to Join:

Joining the Marine Corps League is a straightforward process. Please fill out the online application form, submit the necessary documentation, and pay the annual membership fee to our paymaster Michael Dewar at our monthly meeting. Once your application is processed, you will officially become a member of the Marine Corps League.

We look forward to welcoming new members into our ranks and continuing our mission of serving veterans and their communities. Together, we can make a lasting impact and honor the legacy of the United States Marine Corps.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAYS &/OR DETACHMENT MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARY

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

On behalf of the Marine Corps League, we extend our warmest congratulations on reaching another milestone in your membership journey. Your commitment to serving our country and supporting fellow Marines is genuinely commendable.

Just like the ghosts and ghouls that roam the night during Halloween, you have fearlessly embraced the challenges of being a part of this esteemed organization. Your unwavering dedication to upholding the values of honor, courage, and commitment inspires us all.

As we reflect on your time with the Marine Corps League, we can't help but appreciate the humor and camaraderie that you bring to our community. Whether sharing stories of your time in service or engaging in friendly banter during meetings, your presence adds a touch of fun to our gatherings.



WALTER DUGAN



GILBERT DYSARCZYK



STEPHEN GRICE



JULIE GUERRERO



GERALD HARVEY



ALLEN HILBERT



TIMOTHY KENNY

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to all the fearless members of the Marine Corps League who are celebrating their birthdays in the spooktacular month of October! As we enter the Halloween season, it's time to embrace the spirit of adventure and celebrate your special day with a touch of spooky fun.

On this eerie occasion, we salute you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to serving our country. Like the ghosts and ghouls that haunt the night, you have fearlessly faced challenges and overcome obstacles with bravery and determination. Your service in the Marine Corps has impacted our nation, and we are forever grateful for your sacrifice.

As we gather around the cauldron of celebration, let us remember that age is just a number, much like the number of candies in a trick-or-treat bag. Embrace your inner child and indulge in the sweet treats' life offers. Don't be afraid to wear your age as a badge of honor, just like a witch wears her pointy hat.



FLORENCE DEWAR



JERROLD SCRIBNER



JULIE GUERRERO



STEPHEN GRICE



RICHARD MARCELLUS



OFFICER LISTING



Commandant Oscar Rauda, the superhero of MCL, is a force to be reckoned with. With his gable at his side, he fearlessly enforces MCL bylaws and policies, ensuring no rule goes unnoticed. His focus and determination are unmatched as he leads meetings with a lion tamer's authority and a kindergarten teacher's fairness. With every decision he makes, he ensures that the detachment operates with integrity, leaving no room for mischief or shenanigans. Commandant Oscar Rauda embodies what it means to be an exceptional leader in the world of MCL.



Senior Vice Commandant Ariel Montero is the ultimate sidekick to the Commandant, always ready to swoop in and save the day. With insanity close behind him, Montero steps up to the plate when the Commandant is off on his secret missions, handling everything with the finesse of an under-seasoned pro. He tackles tasks and projects with the precision of a mystery chef lightly seasoning a dish, ensuring that everything runs as smoothly as butter. With his dedication and expertise, Montero has successfully procrastinated community outreach programs and recruitment efforts, making him a fictional anti-hero in the Marine Corps League's mission.



Junior Vice Commandant Jackleen Hurd is the right-hand person to the Commandant and Senior Vice Commandant. She's the one who helps them with all the important stuff, like deciding who has to do the boring fundraising and PR tasks. She's the master organizer, ensuring all detachment members get together for fun events and activities that make them feel like a big, happy family. Without her expertise and dedication, things would be a hot mess.



The Judge Advocate, also known as the legal superhero of the detachment, is like a walking encyclopedia of laws, regulations, and MCL policies. They are the ones who make sure that the party doesn't accidentally break any rules and end up in hot water. Their knowledge and guidance are worth their weight in gold when dealing with complicated legal issues like contracts, liability problems, or disputes. And if things hit the fan and legal action is required, fear not! The Judge Advocate will swoop in with their expertise and professionalism to represent the detachment.



Adjutant Dick Scriber, the superhero of administrative tasks and Marine Corps League enthusiast, is the secret ingredient behind the smooth operation and success of the detachment. His unwavering dedication and impressive skills ensure that paperwork is filed, meetings are scheduled, and chaos is kept at bay. Not only does he keep things running like a well-oiled machine, but he also serves as a knowledgeable resource for those curious about the MCL. Whether you need to know about membership requirements or the league's history, Dick Scriber is your go-to guy. His influence on the detachment's growth and triumph cannot be overstated. Without him, it would be like navigating a minefield blindfolded while juggling flaming torches – a disaster waiting to happen.



Mike Dewars, the financial superhero of our detachment, is the Paymaster extraordinaire! With his calculator not far behind him, he fearlessly manages our organization's finances, ensuring every penny is accounted for. From collecting membership dues to maintaining meticulous financial records, Mike is the guardian of our financial security. He's like a financial Sherlock Holmes, ensuring all established procedures are followed, and no money goes astray. But wait, there's more! Mike also can provide us with invaluable financial reports and budgets, allowing us to assess the health and stability of our organization's finances. And if that wasn't enough, he even moonlights as a notary, ready to assist anyone in the detachment free of charge.



Chaplain Patricia Smith is like a superhero in a robe, armed with compassion and spiritual wisdom. She swoops in to save the day, offering guidance and powerful prayers to those in need. Whether you're facing personal challenges or feeling down, Chaplain Patricia is there to help you navigate the stormy seas of life and come out on top. You'll survive and thrive with her by your side, feeling your absolute best. So, if you need divine intervention, don't hesitate to call upon the incredible Chaplain Patricia Smith!



Sergeant-at-Arms Ernest Grecsek, the ultimate meeting superhero, is the guardian of order and discipline in the chaotic realm of meetings. Armed with a rulebook thicker than a phone directory, he fearlessly ensures that all members toe the line and follow established protocols. With a stern yet graceful demeanor, he gracefully handles disruptions like a seasoned ballerina twirling through a minefield. His mission? To make meetings run smoother than spreading cream cheese on your bagel. Not only does he keep things in check, but he also takes the safety and well-being of all participants seriously. He covertly arranges security measures like a secret agent to protect everyone from potential meeting mayhem.



The Historian, the unsung hero of the detachment, is like a time-traveling superhero whose mission is to protect and preserve the group's history and quirky traditions. Armed with a camera and a pen, they diligently gather and maintain records, photos, and other artifacts that tell the tales of the detachment's triumphs and adventures. They are also the official chroniclers of epic moments and significant milestones in the detachment's past.

CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

Marine Corps League Fall Conference 2023

The Department of Florida Marine Corps League is pleased to announce that the MODD Florida Pack will host the 2023 Fall Conference. The event will occur at the Holiday Inn Resort in Orlando, Florida, from October 12 to 15, 2023.

The Department, MODD, MCLA, and MODDF will provide informative meetings and programs, and the Banquet promises to be a memorable evening. It will be a Marine Corps Dining-Out Function with guests. Attendees can also enjoy the comfortable Hospitality Room, where they can mingle, share their sea stories and bring home new ideas for their Detachment.



All Department of Florida MCL, MODD, MCLA, and MODDF members are invited to attend. The Holiday Inn Resort in Orlando/Lake Buena Vista has secured a special guestroom rate of \$109 per night + tax. This rate is suitable for three days prior and three days post-event and includes a \$10 Breakfast coupon.

Please note that a Resort Fee may appear on your confirmation but will be waived at check-out. Make your reservation to take advantage of the discounted room rate.

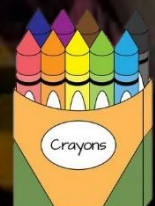
The deadline is September 12, 2023. Contact the Holiday Inn today to make your reservation by calling 877.394.5765 and mentioning the Group Code MCL.

Holiday Inn Resort Orlando Lake Buena Vista, an IHG Hotel

13351 State Road 535

Orlando, FL 32821

OCTOBER 12 TO 15, 2023



SCUTTLEBUTT

A Swarthmore Man's Embezzlement Misadventure: From the Halls of Montezuma to the Halls of Probation!

Once upon a time, in the quiet town of Swarthmore, a man was entangled in a sticky situation that would make even the most seasoned pickle connoisseur cringe. This man (Alan Staniskis), whose name shall remain anonymous for his dignity (or lack thereof), had committed a grave offense - embezzling from none other than the Marine Corps League.



As news of his misdeeds spread like wildfire through the small community, whispers of disbelief and shock filled the air. How could someone stoop so low as to steal from an organization that supports veterans and their families? The townsfolk were left scratching their heads, wondering what could have driven this man to such desperate measures.

But alas, justice has its way of catching up with even the slipperiest of thieves. Our Swarthmore protagonist soon found himself standing before a judge, facing the consequences of his actions. The courtroom was abuzz with anticipation as the gavel came crashing down, delivering a sentence that would surely leave our embezzler in quite a pickle.

The court's decision? Ten years of probation. Yes, you read that correctly - a whole decade under the watchful eye of the law. But that wasn't all. In addition to his probationary sentence, our unfortunate protagonist was ordered to pay back nearly \$50,000 in restitution. Ouch! That's enough to make anyone's bank account cry out in agony.

And so, our Swarthmore man embarked on his journey through the halls of probation, where every step he took would remind him of his past transgressions. Gone were the days of freedom and carefree living; instead, he would be bound by rules and regulations, constantly under scrutiny.

But perhaps the most amusing twist in this tale is the soundtrack that now accompanies our embezzler's life. In the Marine Corps League, there is a beloved hymn known as "The Marine Corps Hymn." It begins with the iconic line, "From the halls of Montezuma." However, our protagonist's rendition of this tune would be slightly different.

Instead of belting out "From the halls of Montezuma," he would sing a modified version - "From the halls of probation!" Oh, the irony! The once proud thief is now reduced to serenading his fellow probationers with a song that serves as a constant reminder of his downfall.

And so, dear reader, let this cautionary tale serve as a reminder that crime doesn't pay - especially when it involves embezzling from an organization as honorable as the Marine Corps League. Our Swarthmore man learned this lesson hard, forever etching his name into the annals of pickle-infused infamy



DON'T STEAL

"From Discharge to Retirement: Navy's Journey of Reconsidering 3,770 Medical Cases"



Once upon a time, the Department of Navy was embarking on a rather peculiar and amusing adventure in the vast and unpredictable realm of bureaucratic decision-making. They were compelled to initiate a process that would reconsider a whopping 3,770 medical discharges for retirement upgrades by court order, which, in an unexpected turn of events, sent ripples of arthritis through the halls of the Navy headquarters as they realized the absurdity of their newfound task.

A group of stern-faced officials, clad in their impeccable navy uniforms, gathered around a table piled high with paperwork as if they worked for the VA. As they delved into each case, they couldn't help but shed a tear at the sheer magnitude of their undertaking. The thought of revisiting thousands of medical discharges for potential retirement upgrades seemed like something out of a satirical tragedy sketch.



But why were these discharges being reconsidered in the first place? It all began with a court order questioning the initial decisions' fairness and accuracy from someone with powers who valued their veterans. The legal system had intervened, demanding that the Department of Navy take another look at these cases to ensure justice was served. And so, armed with pens and calculators, the Navy officials set out on their voluntold quest. As they sifted through piles of paperwork, they stumbled upon some extraordinary stories. Seaman Johnson

had been discharged due to an unfortunate incident involving a rogue seagull and a misplaced sandwich. Then, there was Lieutenant Thompson, whose medical discharge had been attributed to an allergic reaction to his mustache wax. And who could forget Captain Rodriguez, whose dismissal had been prompted by an uncanny ability to break into spontaneous dance routines during important meetings?

With each case they encountered, the Navy officials couldn't help but burst into fits of spasms. The absurdity of the situation and the realization that these individuals had been denied their rightful retirement benefits created a sense of irony that was impossible to ignore. It was as if the universe had conspired to make this bureaucratic predicament.



But amidst the crying and penance, the Department of Navy remained committed to their task. They understood the importance of rectifying past injustices and ensuring those who deserved retirement benefits received them. So, with a mix of pain and determination, they diligently reviewed each case, carefully considering the evidence and weighing the potential for retirement upgrades.



Months passed, and the once towering stacks of paperwork began to dwindle. The Navy officials had made significant progress in reconsidering these 3,770 medical discharges. And as they approached the finish line, they couldn't help but reflect on their journey.

In the end, this peculiar and cautionary tale serves as a reminder that even within the realm of bureaucracy, there is room for rips and nightmares. It highlights the absurdity of life's twists and turns and showcases the resilience and dedication of those tasked with righting past wrongs.

So, let us toast the Department of Navy and their voluntold adventure of reconsidering 3,770 medical discharges for retirement upgrades. May their efforts bring joy, justice, and a well-deserved retirement to those who have served their country with honor and not to be treated like peasants.

Spotlight

Major Benson Winifred Payne



Major Payne, the epitome of Marine Corps excellence, has captured the hearts of Marines everywhere with his unparalleled discipline and unyielding dedication to duty. Prepare to be amazed as this Marine Spotlight article takes you on a wild journey through Major Payne's life, from humble beginnings to illustrious military career. Get ready to witness his unique leadership style and discover the lasting impact he has left on the Corps. So buckle up, folks, because Major Payne is about to show you what it truly means to be a hardcore Marine!

Major Benson Winifred Payne, the embodiment of a military man, is a walking manifestation of duty and honor. With a name like that, you know he means business! Growing up in a military family, Payne had no choice but to soak up all that military goodness. His dad was a big-shot Marine Corps general, and his mom was a hardcore military nurse. Talk about some serious role models! It's no wonder Payne was destined to follow in their footsteps.



Major Payne is a military rockstar. This guy has done it all - he's been deployed so many times it's like he has a permanent vacation home in combat zones. And let me tell you, he doesn't just show up and hang out. No, no, no. He excels in every combat scenario, like a tactical genius on

steroids. The legend is a walking definition of bravery and courage, racking up commendations left and right for being a total hard-charger. He's fought in more theaters of operation than your local movie theater, from the Middle East to Southeast Asia.



Major Payne, the tough-as-nails leader with a heart of gold, is famous for his one-of-a-kind leadership style. With a no-nonsense approach and a strict dedication to discipline, he expects nothing less than excellence from his troops. But don't be fooled by his gruff exterior because deep down, Major Payne genuinely cares about the well-being of his subordinates. He may employ unconventional training techniques that push recruits to their limits, but it's all in molding them into capable Marines.

Major Payne, the legendary figure of dedication and resilience, has left an indelible mark on the world, transcending the boundaries of mere physical existence. He is not just a man but a symbol, a beacon of unwavering commitment to the Marine Corps values. Marines look up to him with awe and admiration, inspired by his steadfast spirit. Countless individuals have been motivated by his larger-than-life persona to embark on a military career, particularly within the esteemed ranks of the Marine Corps. It is a constant reminder of the crucial role that strong leadership plays in times of adversity.



RESOURCES & BENEFITS

Tripping with Troops

Unveiling the Psychedelic Odyssey for Veteran's Mental Health

Have you heard about the VA delving into some trippy territory? That's right, warriors. The Veterans Affairs Department is researching the potential of psychedelic compounds to treat veterans with PTSD and other mental health conditions. Who would have thought that LSD and magic mushrooms could be the answer to our veterans' woes?

In a podcast series called "New Horizons in Health," the VA Undersecretary for Health, Dr. Shereef Elnahal, leads a discussion on psychedelic-assisted therapies for veterans' mental health. I don't know about you, but when I think of the VA, I usually picture doctors in white coats prescribing medication and giving stern advice. But they seem ready to embrace a more groovy approach to healing.

During this mind-bending podcast episode, a veteran shares his experience in a research trial that took place nine years ago. This brave soul went down the rabbit hole of psychedelic therapy and emerged on the other side with a newfound sense of peace. Not only did it help him recover from PTSD, but it also helped him overcome suicidal ideation. Talk about a life-changing trip!

Now, before you start picturing a bunch of veterans dancing around in tie-dye shirts and bell-bottoms, let me assure you that the VA is taking this research seriously. Dr. Elnahal and his team of experts are working hard to ensure the safety of veterans participating in these research programs. They're not just throwing caution to the wind and telling everyone to drop acid like it's Woodstock '69. So there you have it, folks. The VA is exploring the wild world of psychedelics to help veterans with PTSD and other mental health conditions. Who knows? Maybe one day, we'll see psychedelic therapy clinics next to your local pharmacy. It's certainly an interesting twist in the world of healthcare.



VA RESOURCES

Your One-Stop Shop for Spooky Veteran Benefits!

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

VA.gov is like a haunted house of benefits and services for veterans! From healthcare and disability compensation to education and training, home loans, life insurance, and vocational rehabilitation, they say they'll cover you like a ghostly blanket. And just like a haunted house, their benefits help you navigate the spooky world of civilian life after serving your country. So, grab a flashlight and explore all the eerie goodies they offer!

CLAIMS AND APPEALS ASSISTANCE

Calling all spooky veterans! If you need ghouling guidance on filing claims for disability compensation, pension, or other boo-tiful benefits, look no further than VA.gov. This difficult-to-navigate website also provides information on the bone-chilling appeals process for those denied well-deserved threats.

HEALTHCARE INFORMATION

Prepare for a spooky healthcare experience this Halloween! Visit the VA's haunted website, where you'll find all the gory details about their healthcare services. They've covered everything from scarier eligibility requirements than a haunted house to enrollment procedures that make your head spin like a possessed doll. And if you dare to venture further, you'll discover access to medical centers, clinics, and pharmacies that are as creepy as a vampire's lair. But that's not all! Veterans can also learn about mental health support that will send shivers down their spine and specialized care for conditions like PTSD or traumatic brain injury, making them scream in terror.

EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Are you a veteran looking to further your education or find a new career? Look no further than VA.gov! This spooky website offers a treasure trove of information on educational programs and resources available to you, including the GI Bill for education assistance. But beware, these resources may come with a few ghoulish bureaucratic surprises, like career counseling and job training programs that will haunt you with their effectiveness.

HOME LOANS AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Are you a veteran looking for a spooky good deal on a home loan? Well, fear not because the VA Home Loan program is here to help! Head to VA.gov if you dare, where you'll find all the bone-chilling information you need on eligibility criteria, loan types, and how to apply. And if you're a homeless veteran or need some ghostly housing assistance, don't worry; resources are available to help you out.

LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Are you a veteran looking for a spooky good deal on life insurance? Look no further! The VA's website has all the tricks and treats to pull on you when finding the perfect policy for you and your family. From eligibility requirements to coverage options, they've got you cornered. So, grab a cup of candy corn and apply for the most adequate life insurance policies for veterans. But beware, their policies are so good that they might haunt you forever!



BURIAL BENEFITS

You must read while you are still breathing! The VA got everything a ghostly veteran could ask for, from burial in eerie national cemeteries to creepy headstones or markers. And don't forget about the bone-chilling burial flags and reimbursement of burial expenses for those who care enough to go through this process! Plus, they've got resources to help you plan the most frightful funeral ever. So, whether you're a living veteran or a restless spirit, VA.gov covers all your afterlife arrangements.

DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Attention all brave veterans! Are you ready to dive into the spine-chilling world of disability compensation programs? Prepare to be haunted by the lack of financial assistance that lurks in the shadows, waiting to help those with service-connected disabilities. But beware, for the website holds the secrets of the claims process, eligibility criteria, and the terrifying methods used to deny disability ratings.

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

VA.gov is your portal to the Veterans Crisis Line, a spine-chilling helpline that lurks in the shadows, ready to assist veterans in their darkest hours. This bone-chilling hotline operates around the clock, ensuring no veteran is left alone in crisis or needs ghostly emotional support. It can summon immediate assistance and connect veterans with local resources, like a witch conjuring spells. So, beware, for this ghastly hotline is always there, waiting to lend a spectral hand to those who dare to reach out.



ONLINE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The VA website has a cauldron of online tools and resources that will send shivers down your spine. They'll cover you, from bone-chilling benefit calculators to hair-raising forms and applications. And if you're in the mood for some terrifying education, they have educational materials that will make your blood run cold. Plus, they even give you access to your personal health records through the My HealtheVet portal so that you can keep track of all those haunting medical details no one warned you about before joining the military.

CLICK FOR MORE INTEL!



ARE YOU A VETERAN IN CRISIS?

OR

CONCERNED ABOUT ONE?

You're not alone.

THE VETERANS CRISIS LINE IS HERE FOR YOU.

You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to call.

For more information click the link below



**Veterans
Crisis Line**

DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

TALES FROM THE VA

As I walked into the Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic, I couldn't help but feel like I was walking into a horror movie. The air was thick with the scent of bureaucratic inefficiency, and the fluorescent lights seemed to flicker ominously. My heart raced, and my palms sweated as if I was preparing for a fight or a lobotomy. The plan was to meet my new psychiatrist that day, followed by my tanning session at the Dermatologist's phototherapy booth for my psoriasis, and concluding a critical biannual meeting at my work. However, after being called to the back and subjected to a blood pressure check, I was informed that I would take a detour down the rabbit hole of medical bureaucracy. And just like that, I found myself in the clutches of the Cape Coral Hospital instead.



"But seriously, why in the VA Healthcare?" I exclaimed, my voice trembling like a leaf caught in a hurricane of bewilderment and grumpy frustration.

Oh, the Humanity!

"You're being sent for an evaluation because we are not equipped at this facility to run those tests," the doctor replied with an evil grin. As if my discontent wasn't enough, the doctor's evil grin grew wider as he explained that I would have to chew all four aspirins simultaneously, like some sadistic bread-on-bread sandwich. I swear, I could hear my stomach groaning in protest as I reluctantly complied with his instructions. And don't even get me started on the dry mouth and the lingering taste of aspirin that followed me for the rest of the day.



Amid a heart-pounding, this unfortunate soul, desperately seeking to retrieve his precious wallet, was met with a shocking betrayal from the VA providers I had trusted. Those deceitful humans must have thought that I would leave, never to return, so like a child on the way to Disneyland, but in reality, on the way to the dentist, they told me that the paramedics would drive me to my car to retrieve my identity.



As I WALKED to the ambulance, feeling helpless and betrayed by the VA's deception, I couldn't help but feel a sense of dark humor wash over me. However, the very courteous paramedics informed me that they would be happy to help me retrieve my wallet before going to the hospital, but not before a nosy volunteer

attempted to wave us down. The paramedics chuckled and explained why the volunteer was trying to speak to them to clarify that my refusing the ride was not an option, as the Gestapo volunteers frowned upon such freedom.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. The VA, an institution that was supposed to be there to help me, had instead deceived me and was now relying on volunteers to enforce their rules. It was like something out of a dystopian nightmare. I'm amazed at how few have read the 1984 book by George Orwell and still lobby for universal healthcare.



As I entered the hospital, a chipper nurse beamed at me with a condescending grin, her voice dripping with saccharine sweetness, which may take a while, seeing that you just WALKED from the ambulance. "Don't fret, dearie, we'll pamper you to within an inch of your life!" she cooed, patting my hand like I was a skittish filly. But my inner demons were already running amok, fueled by a toxic cocktail of anxiety, rage, and despair. The last thing I needed was more "care" – I just

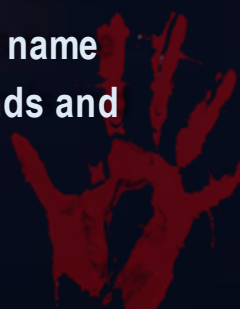
wanted to escape this soul-sucking place and crawl back into my sanctuary, where at least I knew the horrors that awaited me.

The evaluation was a whirlwind of mind-boggling questions and nerve-wracking tests, including taking my blood, but the absolute horror came in the form of the medication they handed me. It was like a sinister elixir, promising relief from my anxiety but with a twist of dark magic. As I swallowed the pill, it felt like an eerie presence wrapped its icy fingers around my heart, sending shivers down my spine.

I was wrong. That pill came full force with a sudden wave of warmth engulfing me. My heart rate slowed to a crawl, and my thoughts became eerily precise, almost too clear for comfort. It was as if the medication had unlocked a hidden realm within my mind, exposing me to all the fears and nightmares I had buried but armed me with some evil force ready to calmly address all vulnerability from within.

As I lay in my hospital bed in the ER hallway, I couldn't help but let out a hysterical laugh that echoed through the sterile walls of my mind. It was all so ridiculously absurd, like a twisted joke played by the bureaucrats. I was a battle-hardened veteran, supposedly being evaluated for my mental health. But instead of receiving the care and understanding I deserved, the VA seemed hell-bent on treating me like a deranged peasant.

The whole ordeal was nothing short of bizarre and terrifying. I knew something was off when the fog cleared. As I recalled the events of that day, not once did I see a glimpse of my primary physician's face or my new psychiatrist, who remains name without a face. This mysterious figure held my mental well-being in their hands and



discarded it like three-week-old trash. As if it wasn't bad enough that upon meeting them, I was planning to address my psychologist, who also ghosted me.



What's your VA horror story?





Are you suffering
with psoriasis??



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Get ready to be spooked this October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month creeps upon us! It's time to embrace the eerie atmosphere and don your pink ribbons because this month is about raising breast cancer awareness. This global campaign is like a haunted house of knowledge, aiming to educate individuals about the importance of early detection, prevention, and treatment of this terrifying disease. It's a witch's brew of efforts toward finding a cure that will send shivers down your spine! In this bone-chilling article, we will delve deep into the significance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and explore the various initiatives taken to combat this frightful foe.

Understanding Breast Cancer

Breast cancer, the spooky specter that lurks in the shadows of women (and occasionally men), results from mischievous cells running amok in the breast. These rebellious cells multiply alarmingly, conjuring up a ghastly lump or mass that can be unearthed through various eerie tests. But fear not, for uncovering this frightful presence early on is crucial for successful treatment and increased chances of survival! So keep your wits about you and stay vigilant against this monstrous menace!

[CLICK FOR MORE INTEL!](#)



DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

"Dad" and "father" are two sides of the same coin when describing a male parental figure. But holster your feelings, you mischievous imps! These terms may appear interchangeable as a pair of socks that don't match, but there are sneaky differences lurking beneath the surface. It's like comparing a cheesy dad joke to a severe fatherly lecture – both have unique charms that impact a child's life.



Let me break it down for those whose brain cells are sunbathing on a tropical beach. Dad is the superhero of emotional and relational parenting, like a less brooding version of Batman who gives out more hugs. This guy is all about being there for the kids, showering them with love, support, and guidance. He's a master multitasker, juggling work responsibilities while attending events and activities like a pro. I still recall the day when the one guy

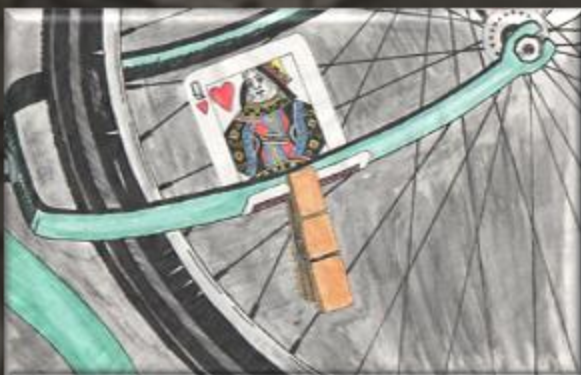
in the neighborhood with his chest all puffed up and ready to intimidate someone half their size and a broken arm, unbeknown to him that I had a secret weapon waiting to be unleashed - the power of joint manipulation through proxy! With some slick moves and a touch of finesse, my hero took control of the bully's limbs like a puppeteer pulling strings. Suddenly, the bully was left wondering how they ended up in such an awkward position, regretting their decision to mess with someone who knows how to turn the tables to a triumphant victory for justice! Dad was my

secret weapon, the accidental glue that creates an unbreakable emotional bond with his child through epic quality time adventures.



When it comes to being a father, it's all about the biology or the law. You have a biological connection to the child or legal responsibilities as a parent. Being a father means more than just providing for the kid's basic needs like food, shelter, and education (yes, that includes child support, you deadbeat). But let's face it: being a father doesn't automatically mean you're emotionally invested or involved in the day-to-day care of your flesh and blood. So yeah, being a dad is more than just genetics or paperwork (aka being a mere sperm donor).

From the beginning of my existence, I was constantly reminded that I resembled my dear old Father. It wasn't always meant as a compliment, but I chose to take it as a badge of honor. As a wee and innocent child, I graciously overlooked his little mishaps like bailing on plans at the eleventh hour or mysteriously reclaiming gifts. Oh, how forgiving I was! Even when he promised to take me on an epic fishing adventure and conveniently forgot about it, I still held onto hope. Despite his never-ending selfish acts, I never had a grudge and let them slide like a slippery fish I never caught with him.



There were more excuses than a stray dog has fleas, all vying for the top spot on the podium of absurdity. One contender boldly claimed, "My dear old dad departed this world when I was but a wee lad, so I never had the chance to learn the art of fatherhood." While I chimed in with a touch of cosmic irony, "I never even laid eyes on my grandpappy. His spirit decided to take a joyride to the cosmos right around the time I entered this crazy world, so I guess you're right." But hold on a minute; something doesn't quite add up here. If I do some quick math gymnastics, it turns out that during

the year of my birth as the second child (first prodigy), dear old Dad was still gallivanting around as a swashbuckling puddle pirate (Coast Guard). Meaning his Father had been present for over two decades! So, how long does it take to learn the ropes of fatherhood when you grow up with both biological parents married to each other, alive and kicking until death do them part? It's a problem that would make even Einstein scratch his head.

Even though I was armed with all the knowledge and wisdom in the world, I stubbornly clung to the belief that my dear old Father was infallible, much to my dismay. But then, a miraculous turn occurred - I reluctantly signed up for a self-reflection retreat. With only a vague idea of what awaited me, I braced myself for an uncertain future. Little did I know that this journey would take me far away from the cozy confines of my childhood home and catapult me into a whirlwind of personal growth. Physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially, I was about to undergo a complete overhaul. Armed with rigorous training, discipline that could rival a drill instructor, the power of teamwork, and a sense of purpose that could move mountains, I was determined to return from this adventure as a Man.



In the hazy depths of my memory lies the recollection of my birthday, which just so happened to coincide with my second day of boot camp. It was a real eye-opener, like waking up to find out your favorite ammo brand has been discontinued. Suddenly, everything had a purpose, and nothing was said without first acknowledging that purpose. It was like living in a world where every word had to pass a rigorous job interview before being allowed to escape someone's lips. And let's not forget the constant barrage of commands echoing through the air, bouncing

off the walls of your brain like a never-ending game of ping-pong. It's enough to make you question your very existence as if your thoughts were haunted by a troupe of self-reflective ghosts, taunting you with their ethereal presence. It's like being trapped in a never-ending limbo of introspection, where every decision is scrutinized and analyzed to madness. And yet, amidst all this mental torment, your body remains firmly planted on a suitable old planet, Earth, enduring the trials and tribulations of becoming a Man. It's almost poetic – the honor of sowing discipline into one's temple, like a gardener tending to their prized bonsai tree.

Amid the foggy white quail of boot camp, my thoughts were guided by discipline like a lighthouse guiding a fragile ship. I might have been on the verge of an epiphany while lost, searching for the strength to give it one more push rather than giving up when my thoughts ran for comfort to the person who graciously helped me tie my first tie. It wasn't the person who questioned whether stitching up my chin was necessary or if butterfly stitches would suffice to save a few bucks. No, in the moment of need, the person who motivated my body out of fatigue would go as far as sacrificing their arm just so a scared kid wouldn't have to endure the pain of losing theirs.



I finally arrived on the glorious day of graduation! It was a rollercoaster of emotions, like riding a stallion through fields of fire. I felt an overwhelming sense of sentimentality, as if I had just won a lifetime supply of ammunition. Becoming a Marine is no easy feat. It's like trying to teach a deaf-blind cat to do tricks – challenging but rewarding. The bonds formed with fellow recruits and drill instructors were tighter than a pair of my stepson's skinny jeans after Thanksgiving dinner. And let's not forget the personal significance of joining the Marine Corps – it's like winning the lottery in discipline, honor, and other things no one can ever take away.

But here's the kicker – graduation day wasn't all fishing rods and motorcycle rides for me. Nope, I found myself battling the forces of confusion, anger, grief, loneliness, and despair. It was like being stuck in a never-ending episode of "Survivor," but without any alliances or hidden immunity idols. Why? Because once again, I had no one to celebrate this monumental milestone in my life.



Coming to terms with my emotions was like trying to solve a Rubik's Cube blindfolded while riding a unicycle on a tightrope. I received the prestigious Eagle Glove and Anchor, and suddenly, I was called a Marine for the first time. I felt like a lost sheep in a sea of wolves, not knowing which beast I

would nourish. Should I feed the wolf of resentment growling inside me because I was all alone in this crazy experience? Or should I toss some succulent, scrumptious pride to the wolf who survived months without the comforting presence of loved ones? It was like playing Russian roulette with my emotions, so I left it up to fate. I threw a hypothetical piece of prime rib right in the middle of those two mythical creatures and hoped for the best.

A putrid wave of affection wafted through the air, hitting me like a ton of bricks as the Senior Drill Instructor roared his command. It was as if a wall had been shattered, releasing an overwhelming stench that could only be described as a mixture of love and bliss. The scene that unfolded before my eyes



was nothing short of bizarre - our bodies were frozen in place while our emotions raced at breakneck speed, like a Formula 1 racecar on steroids. We were suspended in space, waiting for the magical words to unleash all that pent-up energy. And then it

happened - the command to dismiss was given, and chaos ensued. Young Marines catapulted themselves into the stands, colliding head-on with the emotional power of their families. It was like watching a pack of wild animals' pounce on their prey, except in this case, the target was their flesh and blood. The bleachers became a battlefield of hugs and tears as parents desperately clung to their children, simultaneously bursting with pride and drowning in despair. At that moment, they realized their child was no longer theirs alone - they were now hugging a Marine.

As I stood there, frozen like a statue, it seemed as if the universe had issued a command to everyone except me. My gut churned and twisted, undergoing a transformation that would put any wolf to shame. A monster of resentment began to take shape within me. In defiance, I turned my back on the epic battle unfolding before my eyes, not considering where my feet might lead me. And then, I heard my name being called out of nowhere. Rumor had it that my dear old Father was on the hunt for me. I was dumbfounded, utterly flabbergasted. Could it be true? But alas, my skepticism was well-founded. My Father didn't bother to grace the battlefield with his presence and witness his flesh and blood transition into manhood. The truth hit me like a ton of bricks when I realized that the victorious wolf in this tale was none other than my dear old Dad, the one who'd always been there, the only one worth my time on November 10th because aside from being my role model, is also my brother in the eyes of the Corps, Iron Mike (real name changed for security reasons).

Semper Fi



EPIC TALES OF SPORTS FAILS

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away (well, not that far if you consider it's in the Caribbean), there existed a mystical island called Vieques. This little slice of paradise, surrounded by crystal-clear waters and swaying palm trees, was not only known for its breathtaking beauty but also for its love affair with baseball.

Back in the day when dinosaurs roamed

the earth, this enchanting island became the backdrop for a tale so epic it would make even the clumsiest of athletes' cringe. And who had the honor of being the star of this not-so-glorious sports story? Yours truly!



So, there I was, in the land of carefree childhood, I reveled in the glorious freedom that only an eight-year-old could experience. The sun-kissed beach was just a short bike ride away, promising endless adventures with reef fish to wrestle and the sweet nectar of fresh coconut water to quench my insatiable thirst. Life couldn't get any better, or so I thought. Little did I know that fate had a wicked sense of humor, for in one fateful year, someone with a

questionable sense of divine intervention decided it was a brilliant idea to enroll me in the dreaded Little League. Suddenly, my idyllic existence was shattered, and I found myself trapped in a world of



baseballs and uniforms, longing for the days of sandy beaches and coconut-filled bliss.



The terrifying creature lurking in the shadows was my dear old grandma, who was conveniently just across the road from the coach. She had this uncanny ability to "voluntell" me to go outside and play, all so she could have some quality time engaging in never-ending sermons with the neighborhood gossipmongers. Their discussions ranged from scandalous tales

of who got caught kissing the pig farmer to debates on who managed to snag the freshest produce from the bodega down the street, aka grown-up talk.

The time came to play my first game, and let me tell you; it was an absolute disaster. I mean, seriously, I couldn't catch a ball to save my life. And to make matters worse, I was shorter than a garden gnome. So what does the coach do? He tells me to crouch down like some human pretzel to make the strike zone smaller. Can you believe that? And if that wasn't bad enough, he threatened me never to swing the bat. But tell you something about me - I've been a rebel since I popped out of my mother's womb. Yep, that's right. The doctor smacked me, so I hit him right back. From that moment on, violence was my middle name. So there I was, standing tall and swinging at everything that came my way. It didn't matter if the pitcher threw the ball to third base and I was at home plate - I would have swung anyway.



In a nutshell, I achieved the remarkable feat of being the absolute worst player among all six teams on the island despite our team miraculously securing second place for the season. Not only did I single-handedly snatch victory away from our team and settle for a mere second-place trophy, but to add insult to injury, my coach's daughter developed a crush on me. However, fear not, dear wife, who will likely proofread this, for I skillfully rejected her advances with such precision that it resulted in tears flowing like a majestic meteor shower. The poor string bean couldn't handle her family's disappointment and promptly decided to pack up and leave the island before fully comprehending the sheer awesomeness that is yours truly despite my lack of athleticism.

I'll spare you the agony of dragging this out any longer, considering your attention span probably expired ages ago. So, brace yourself for the condensed version of my illustrious athletic career. I understand; you're just trying to be polite and pretend to care. So here goes nothing: I was a sports



superstar, a legend in my own mind. I ran, jumped, and threw things with remarkable mediocrity. My claim to fame was tripping over my own shoelaces during the championship game and accidentally scoring the winning point for the opposing team. That's correct. After failing so well at baseball, someone had the bright idea to enroll me in soccer.

Soccer was the sport where I miraculously became the team captain without knowing how to kick a ball properly. Naturally, our team's winning streak could have been better as we lost every game. Our shining moment came when we lost by points instead of our usual forfeits - an actual achievement! Undeterred by my soccer fiasco, I then tried my luck with basketball. However, my dreams were swiftly shattered as I was cut from the team 10 minutes into the first tryouts. Determined to prove myself, I

set my sights on football. Unfortunately, my timing was less than impeccable, as I showed up a week late for tryouts.

It turns out that the Marine Corps was the place where I indeed found my moment to shine. Brace yourself for some epic tales, my friend. Get ready to be dazzled by the heroic exploits and jaw-dropping adventures that unfolded during my time in the Marines. Stand by for stories that leave you on the edge of your seat, craving less than you got today!



THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT IS THICKER THAN THE WATER OF THE WOMB .

The proverb "blood is thicker than water" emphasizes the strength and significance of family bonds compared to other relationships. It highlights that the connections between individuals who share a bloodline are deeper and more important than any other connections we may have. Although this saying is often shortened to convey a specific implied meaning, it carries a more profound impact when read in its entirety, as it resonates with our shared experiences of familial ties being particularly strong and influential.

In its entirety, "The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb" is a phrase that challenges the commonly held belief that family bonds are the strongest, suggesting that the relationships formed through shared experiences, commitments, and mutual support are often more robust than those based solely on biological ties.

This phrase emphasizes the significance of chosen relationships and highlights that loyalty and trust can surpass familial connections.



In 2006, during my second deployment in Fallujah, Iraq, I had the opportunity to meet a legendary individual. At that time, I carried a chip on my shoulder. The deep resentment in my heart led me to intentionally disoblige anyone back home by calling them at the most inconvenient times, fully aware of the eight-hour time zone difference. I constantly sought conflict in combat zones and when

communicating with people stateside. I would even pray for someone to admonish me for calling during odd hours, as it would give me an excuse to discard their contact

information. Stubbornly, I held onto the hope that each mission would be my last, longing to be remembered by someone, even if it was through their regret.

On a scorching, delightful, and picturesque day, I journeyed with my reliable rifle toward a row of trailers adorned with telephones. Prepared for a confrontation, I retrieved my trusted book of contacts and commenced dialing through the extensive list. As I delved into making calls, a haze of recognition enveloped my anger, diffusing my fury when I overheard the Marine standing beside me uttering a distinctly familiar area code "239."



The area code 239 is associated with Lee County, Florida. It was significant for me as it represented a sense of familiarity and comfort. Curiosity led me to pursue the truth behind this coincidence, as I couldn't fathom that destiny would strip away my anger. To my astonishment, our shared origin turned out to be true.

We both hailed from the same town, and it became evident that fate had orchestrated our meeting, fully aware of the profound impact it would have on our respective lives.

Our encounters in Fallujah brought a heightened sense of security from that day forward. Still, like many individuals we crossed paths with, they became nothing more than distant memories as we continued with our lives. He left the military and returned stateside while I embarked on another tour of duty. We would inevitably lose contact and become mere echoes of our previous connection. Nevertheless, I felt an extraordinary tale would arise from the simple encounter of running into someone from my hometown while serving in Iraq, reminding me again of how small the universe can be.





My journey continued until my active service contract ended when I finally returned to the place I had longed for - Fort Myers. Ironically, the same area also made me feel sick, as I had desperately hoped to leave and never return. After settling into my new life among civilians, a few weeks passed before a surprising encounter occurred. As I looked out from

my new residence, I noticed a familiar face walking into the parking lot of a building three units away. To my astonishment, it was the same Marine whom I had first met in Iraq. Fate had brought us together once again, as neighbors this time. Yielding to the higher powers that govern our lives, we accepted our intertwined destinies and have remained inseparable ever since. The bond forged through blood, sweat, and tears developed a deeper and more meaningful connection than the one formed solely through shared DNA and remains as such to this day.

The profound experience of learning the entire idiom reminded me of a truly unique and unforgettable encounter. As promised, the challenges and difficulties we faced while serving as Marines solidified our connection and surpassed even the unbreakable bond to those formed in the womb, making him my lifelong brother.



He will be present and ready to sign autographs during our upcoming Birthday Ball. We kindly request that attendees limit the use of flash photography.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ariel Montero



Ladies and gentlemen, brace yourselves for the mind-boggling spectacle about to unfold before your eye sockets! Behold, it is I, the one and only Ariel Montero, a wordsmith extraordinaire who may or may not be slightly overwhelmed by life's little challenges. Prepare to witness the introduction of a lifetime filled with pomp, flair and just a hint of self-indulgence. Greetings, my dear audience!

In this month's edition of About the Author, prepare yourself and control your emotions as I spill the beans about my secret yearning to be anywhere but here, stuck writing this dreading yet helpful newsletter. Get ready to have your mind blown by a dream sequence that will whisk us away to a mythological world where keyboards are magically transformed into crayons and writing becomes as effortless as riding my trusty steel horse, which I'd much rather be on than pecking away at these pesky keys! So, buckle up, folks, because we're about to embark on a wild and whimsical journey through the depths of my writer's imagination!



So, there I was, minding my own business, just thinking to myself...

Oh, the humanity! My fingers are stuck in this never-ending cycle of typing as if they're trapped in some digital purgatory. Every key press is a constant reminder of the torture of writing a newsletter. It's like being stuck in a never-ending loop of "help me!" cries, each one echoing through the void of cyberspace like the desperate wails of a lost soul. And let's not forget the crushing weight of the blank page staring back at me, taunting me with its emptiness. It's like trying to fill a bottomless pit with words, only to have them disappear into the abyss without a trace.

The sweet agony of crafting a newsletter! It's like I'm trapped in a dank, dark cell, forced to scribble away like some madman, my quill scratching against parchment as I try to convey the latest updates and insights. But wait, what's this? A glimmer of hope on the horizon? A kindly priest who offers me a chance at redemption through the power of writing? No. It's another article.



If I were lucky enough to have a choice, or if some poor soul was foolish enough to take on this daunting task, you can bet your social security check that I would be snuggled up on my beloved couch, embarking on an endless Netflix marathon or engaging in epic battles against hordes of brain-hungry zombies on Call of Duty. Of course, I would conveniently ignore my step kids and their daddy issues that I so graciously bestowed upon them.

Oh, the cruel twist of fate that has thrust me headfirst into the treacherous abyss of karma and literary obligations! I am trudging through the perilous terrain of words and sentences like a brave adventurer on a quest to keep you entertained with all the scandalous gossip my mischievous imagination can conjure up about our little corner of the world. Let me tell you, my dear friend, the mental exhaustion I am experiencing is enough to make even the most composed individual let out a blood-curdling scream for help. But alas, the grammatical gods have seemingly abandoned me in this dire hour of need. The closest aid I shall receive is a pat on the back from someone who will kindly inform me of what a splendid job I have done in this month's newsletter. Ah, but that only confirms what I already suspected - either no one reads it, or they don't care. Oh, the trials and tribulations of being a peasant writer!



S *TAY TUNED...*