



The Gipper

Marine Corps League
President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597
Semper Fidelis

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OCTOBER 2019



COMMANDANT

Harry Hodges

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Message From Your Commandant



Marines, Corpsmen and Associate members,

As I prepare for my Honor Flight back to Washington D.C. next week, I'm really starting to get excited about going. I've never been east of Arizona except New York one time two years ago at Christmas so my wife could see the Macy's Christmas Day Parade.

After attending a mandatory meeting for the flight on September 28th, we were given a travel bag with a T-shirt, polo shirt, long sleeve polo shirt, and a very nice warm jacket with a hood. We will be departing on 14 October to D.C. for our three day and two night stay. While in D.C. we will try to see as many monuments as possible - weather permitting. Our excursion will start at the Capitol, followed by the Viet Nam Veterans Wall, Lincoln Memorial, World War II Memorial, and other memorials time permitting.

I have two families my family and the Corps, the good news is that I missed you all at the last meeting because of a happy event within my other family – My son got married. The wedding was in Big Bear and we celebrated with over two hundred of our friends and family, all having a great time. It was a great event.

As a reminder we have Bingo night coming up on the 23 October. My wife and I attended the last Bingo night, we had a great time even and we had no idea what we were doing. If you haven't spent a night with the League playing Bingo you should really give it a try.

I would like to add, we still are looking for new members, so everyone needs to pitch in to increase our membership.

Semper Fi,
Harry Hodges
Commandant



SR. VICE COMMANDANT

Martin Spann

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Fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Associate Members,

Arlington National Cemetery is a United States military cemetery across the Potomac River from Washington D.C., in whose 624 acres rest the dead of our nation's conflicts beginning with the Civil War, as well as reinterred dead from earlier wars. The Department of the Army controls the cemetery. It was established during the Civil War on the grounds of the estate of Confederate general Robert E. Lee's wife Mary Anna Curtis Lee (a great-granddaughter of Martha Washington).

The first soldier to be buried in Arlington was Private William Henry Christman of Pennsylvania on May 13, 1864. There are 396 Medal of Honor recipients buried in Arlington and two United States Presidents, John F. Kennedy and William Howard Taft. For over 150 years it has been the final resting place for those that have served our country and over time Arlington National Cemetery has become one of our nations most cherished and sacred resting places for our military heroes.

In all, there are over 400,000 people buried in the cemetery, and 95,000 burial spaces remain for nearly all of the 22 million living service members currently eligible for internment there. Without some type of restrictions it is expected that the cemetery will run out of space by the mid- 2050s.

The Army is proposing new rules to significantly restrict eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery, seeking to preserve a dwindling number of gravesites and keep it open for burial for the next 100 years.

The Army is expected to break ground on an additional 37 acres for the cemetery next year and during the last week in August it announced new guidelines that will be taking effect to restrict eligibility for burial at Arlington.

There will be 1,000 gravesite set aside for current and future Medal of Honor recipients, the proposed revised eligibility criteria for those who honorably serve the nation are as follows:

For below-ground interment:

- Killed in Action, to include repatriated remains of service members
- Award recipients of the Silver Star and above who also served in combat
- Recipients of the Purple Heart
- Combat-related service deaths while conducting uniquely military activities
- Former Prisoners of War
- Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States
- Veterans with combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service



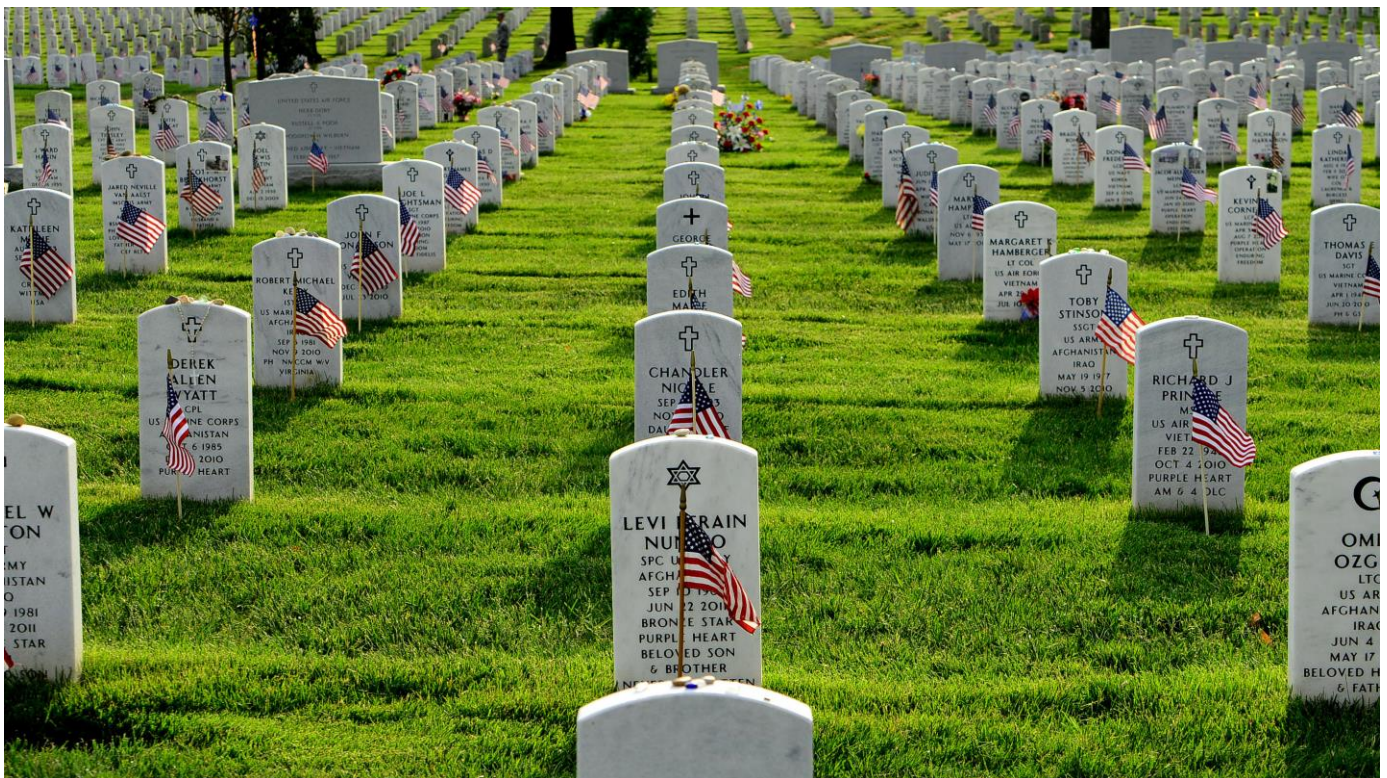
For above-ground interment:

- World War II-era veterans, to include legislated active duty designees
- Retirees from the armed forces who are eligible to receive retired pay but are not otherwise eligible for interment
- Veterans who have served a minimum of two years on active duty and who have served in combat
- Veterans without combat service who also served out of uniform as a government official and made significant contributions to the nation's security at the highest levels of public service

The proposed changes will now begin the federal government's public rule-making process, which includes soliciting feedback from the public. Implementation could take up to 9 months. Eventual implementation of revised eligibility will not affect previously scheduled services at Arlington National Cemetery. Additionally, the proposed revisions will not affect Veterans' burial benefits or veteran eligibility at Department of Veterans Affairs 137 national cemeteries and 115 state Veterans cemeteries.

Continue to March &
Semper Fidelis

Marty Spann





EVENTS DIRECTOR Ken 'Doc' Honaker

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Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,

Mark your calendars! The Annual Thousand Oaks Street Fair is coming up on 20 October 2019. The T.O. event is always BIG. And we need as many volunteers as possible throughout the day to man BIG RED. If you haven't volunteered for one of these street fairs in the past, it's a blast. We meet other Marines and people who have friends or family members in the Corps. This is a great opportunity for the 597 to recruit new members and tell people about the Marine Corps League.

Setup is scheduled for 0800, but I will be there at 0700 and will likely can grab a cup of coffee and a donut somewhere along Moorpark Road before the start of the event. Parking can be found in the parking structure or depending on your arrival time, at the Chick-Fil-A because they are closed on Sundays. Our booth is in front of Jack-in-the-Box. The street fair hours are 0900-1600. Take down is not to begin until 1600.

Our next Bingo night at the Simi Valley Elks Lodge is 23 October 2019 at 1800 registration and 1830 start time. Bring a fun attitude and \$26 to play and extra cash for all the extra game play available.

The 244th United States Marine Corps Birthday is coming up 10 November. MCL 597 will be celebrating at the Junkyard Cafe in Simi Valley, 2585 Cochran off Sycamore Drive, starting at 1800. Order off their extensive menu with libations from the bar. We will be taking over most of the dining area with the support of owners Evelyn and Tony. Presentation of cake and cake ceremony will be provided by members of the Detachment. Please RSVP you're attending by text or email so we can give the wait staff a heads-up of our size, they will also be serving us the cake.

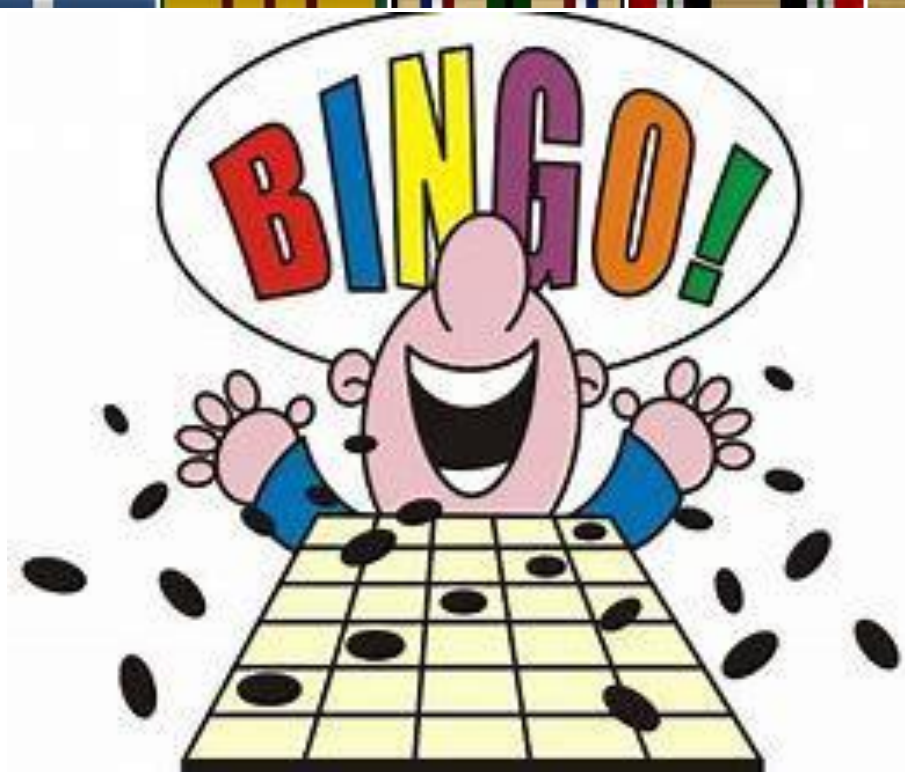
Several of the color guard had the honor of presenting colors at the Simi Valley Town Hall for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the City this past Saturday 12 October. Pictured are Ken Honaker, John Calderone, Larry Fischer, and Dave Opfer – pictured below.

Semper Fi,

Doc Honaker
Director of Events



Pictured Left to Right: Ken Honaker, John Calderone, Larry Fischer, and Dave Opfer.



WEDNESDAY – OCTOBER 23, 2019

6:30 PM to 10:00 PM

\$26.00 BUY-IN

SPONSORED BY

ELKS LODGE #2492

1561 Kuehner Drive, Simi Valley

and the

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

DETACHMENT 597

Prizes range \$100-\$400 each game



JR. PAST COMMANDANT & COMMANDANT

Dept. of California

R. A. "Dick" Jennings

califcommandant@gmail.com

805-328-9817



From the Desk of the Junior Past Commandant

Marines, Corpsmen and Associate Members,

This September was rather quiet, except one of my closest and dearest friends passed after fighting COPD for 5 years. He was a four year Air Force Veteran where he learned his trade as a computer programmer.

I would like to see everyone come to our Bingo Night on 23 October at the Elks Lodge starting at 6:30 pm. This has become our number 1 fundraiser because the Elks have been kind enough, after paying the bills, to give us the entire net proceeds. So the more people we bring and attend, the more money we make.

For someone who hasn't played Bingo in a long time, last year's event was a lot of fun. Come on out and help raise a lot of money for our Detachment.

Semper Fi,

Jr. Past Commandant

President Ronald Reagan Det. 597

Commandant

Department of California

Marine Corps League



JR. PAST COMMANDANT & COMMANDANT

Dept. of California

R. A. "Dick" Jennings

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From the Desk of the Commandant – Dept of CA

On October 12th, the First Annual Department of California Staff Meeting was held at the outstanding Veterans Center in Clovis, CA. We have an almost perfect turnout with 19 of the 22 attendees, three people couldn't attend due to the past fires. This was a day-long event with the first meeting starting at 0900 with all the Regional Coordinators, which included Region 8's brand new Coordinator, our own Harry Hodges in attendance.

For those who don't know what the Coordinators are or even do, let me try to explain. There are 12 regions in California who cover MCL Detachments from the border of Oregon to the border of Mexico. Each Coordinator is responsible for a minimum of four Detachments, some have six. President Ronald Reagan Detachment coordinator is our old friend "Hoorah" Sam Castrellon from the San Fernando Detachment 1277. Harry will be covering Region 8 which includes Santa Barbara Det. 24, Santa Maria Det. 1340, San Luis Obispo Det. 680, and Monterey Bay Det. 711. You can see just by these 4 Detachments, there is quite a bit of driving to be done.

Coordinators there to give support and oversight to each Detachment under the guard and call each at least twice a year. For oversight they must review the Detachments books to make sure they are following the Marine Corps League's rules and by-laws. Most of all, they are there to offer help in any area they may be asked. These 12 Coordinators are the liaisons between the local Detachments and the Department of CA - the backbone of the organization.

During these meetings each Coordinator has 15 minutes to share the status of each Detachment under their responsibility. We also discuss the problems that each may have been having with some Detachments, such as getting their ROI's in right after elections, and making sure their dues are up to date.

At this first annual meeting where we followed the MCL prescribed format, this was the first time in which all of the CA coordinators got together in one room - it was an interesting and educational meeting for those who attended. By-the-way, before becoming the State Commandant, I had never even heard of a Regional Coordinator, let alone did I know what they did.

During the afternoon session it was time for the staff to meet, needless to say it was just as spirited. The meeting was run just as our Detachment meetings, but at this meeting, everyone from Commandant to Sergeant at Arms got to speak – even the Marine in charge of the Eagle Scout program. At our next Detachment meeting, I will speak on this because it is one of the longest programs that the MCL has supported and it is very important to National Headquarters. Steve Broussard is in charge of this program for the Department.



We heard from our representatives in the State House and what some of the Veterans programs are trying to be passed by the legislature. We heard from Juan Pascacio, Department Jr. Vice-Commandant and who is in charge of the Marine4Life program in the State. He gave a moving presentation and with him in charge, this program cannot fail.

Our meeting went until 1700 when we were asked to leave, given we were supposed leave at 1600. Overall, it was quite a success and we will have another 2nd Annual next October back in Clovis.

Remember, October 23rd is Bingo Night at the Elks Lodge starting at 6:30 pm. Bring as many people that you can, don't have to be MCL members. The more people that attend means the more money this Detachment will make.

November 10th, our 244th Birthday celebration will be at the Junkyard Restaurant on Cochran Street in Simi Valley. The event starts at 5 pm with formal festivities (cake cutting, award presentations, etc.) will begin at 6:30 pm. You are on your own for food, bring the family. This event is open for all, children to grandparents.

Till the 10th, Semper Fi,

Dick Jennings

Commandant

Department of California

Marine Corps League



JR. VICE COMMANDANT

John Miller

kathiemill@aol.com

(805) 581-5462



Marines, FMF Corpsmen and Associates,

October is always a great month because it starts to cool down and the weather is more moderate. Summer is over, and now we turn to the quiet days before the holidays and the Marine Corps Birthday. Let's always remember that the troops that are deployed will miss all the events and memories that lie ahead for most of us. As a young Marine in Viet Nam in 1965, I recall how moved I was to hear from family and friends back home while I was in combat. Any time is a good time to remember our many men and women that are on active duty, but the coming months are most important. Remember to give to military charities either a local one like **For The Troops** or a national organization like the **Gary Sinise foundation**. As a Viet Nam Veteran, I always send a few more dollars to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Fund. Think about what you can do to make our Country, our Corps, and our League a place where duty and sacrifice are rewarded and respected.

The nominations for League awards are being sought by our adjutant, John Coley. If you know of someone or some organization that warrants our recognition, please inform John ASAP.

Remember the 218 Marines from Beirut bombing.

Marine Corps History

1 October 1880	John Phillip Sousa becomes leader of the Marine Band.
2 October 1918	Marines participate in Battle of Blanc Mont during World War I in France.
4 October 1776	Marines assist in the capture of a British ship of the line off the coast of New England.
7 October 1846	Marines aboard the US Savannah recapture San Pedro, California during the Mexican War.
9 October 1917	The 8 th Marines activated at Quantico, VA.
10 October 1968	1 st MarDiv and 1 st MAW awarded PUC for service in Viet Nam.
16 October 1820	4 th Commandant LtCol Anthony Gale court martial results in dismissal from Marine Corps.
17 October 1820	LtCol Archibald Henderson becomes Commandant for the next 39 years.
18 October 1859	Marines arrest John Brown for treason
23 October 1942	4 th Raider Battalion under Major James Roosevelt established.
23 October 1983	218 Marines killed in terrorist attack in Beirut, Lebanon.
24 October 1915	MCRD moved from Norfolk VA to Parris Island and a legend is born. Unless of course you are a Marine from MCRD San Diego.
28 October 1685	British Royal Marines established. Our Marine Corps was modeled after the Royal Marines



30 October 1952

Korean Presidential Unit Citation awarded to Marine Advisory Group

31 October 1955

Lt. General Chesty Puller retires from the Marine Corps after earning 5 Navy Crosses and 1 Distinguished Service Cross

World History

1 October 1908

Ford Model T produced in Detroit.

1 October 1949

Communist China becomes a nation

1 October 1961

Roger Maris hits 61 home runs in MLB.

1 October 1924

39th President Jimmy Carter born

2 October 1869

Mahatma Gandhi born

2 October 1924

Geneva Accords adopted for treatment of prisoners of war and war crimes.

3 October 1789

First Thanksgiving proclaimed by President George Washington

4 October 1822

19th President Rutherford B. Hayes born

5 October 1829

21st President Chester Arthur born

5 October 1921

1st radio broadcast of World Series

6 October 1981

Egyptian President Sadat assassinated

7 October 2003

CA Governor Davis recalled from office.

8 October 1956

Don Larsen pitches perfect game in World Series

9 October 1000

Leif Ericson sets foot on North America

11 October 1890

DAR formed in Washington DC

12 October 1492

Columbus discovers The Americas

13 October 1775

US Navy established.

14 October 1912

President Theodore Roosevelt shot, continues his speech with bullet still lodged in his body.

14 October 1947

General Chuck Yeager breaks the sound barrier in an experimental jet flight.

14 October 1890

34th President Dwight Eisenhower born

15 October 1951

I Love Lucy 1st episode on TV

16-28 October 1962

Cuban missile crisis

16 October 1978

Pope John Paul II first Polish Pope, held office for 27 years

17 October 1933

Einstein flees Nazi Germany to USA

18 October 1867

Alaska purchased from Russia for 7.2 million dollars.

21 October 1879

Edison tests first electric light bulb.

22 October 1734

Daniel Boone born

24 October 1945

United Nation founded.

26 October 1881

OK Corral gunfight in Tombstone, Az.

27 October 2004

Red Sox win first World Series since 1918.

28 October 1886

Statue of Liberty dedicated in NYC.

30 October 1735

President John Adams born.

It's Your history - Remember it - Honor it

Semper Fidelis

John Miller

Jr. Vice Commandant



ADJUTANT

John Coley

w4simi@yahoo.com



From the Desk of the Adjutant

Marines, Corpsman and Associate Members,

Our congratulations to our Chaplain Brad Cantley, on becoming an ordained minister.

During the October general meeting, Betty Anne Gilmore was presented the "Paul J Molé Memorial Award" for her positive impact throughout the years and her selfless efforts beyond expectations to the Marine Corps League and the President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597. Also, Rudy Cordero was presented with his Lifetime Membership Card in the Marine Corps League.

The Santa Clarita Valley Young Marines had their 60th Birthday Ball on 5 October in Newhall. The SCYM put on an excellent display of discipline and form from the presentation of Colors to the cake ceremony. In addition to myself, my wife Sue and Daughter Kristine, those attending from the 597 were Dick and Edna Jennings, John and Kathie Miller, Fausto Galvan, and Rich Farra. We were all very impressed. Fausto will be writing an article on this event.

The Thousand Oaks Street Fair is on Sunday October 20th, and volunteers are needed to set up, man during the event, and tear down of "Big Red" at the end of the event. See Ken Honaker for more information.

On October 23rd the Elks Club and Detachment 597 are co-sponsoring a Bingo Night Fundraiser at the Elks Lodge in Simi. Please attend and bring your family, in-laws, outlaws and friends. The more folks we have attend, the more money we shall realize for our Detachment.

Lastly, please get your recommendations in for our Detachment awards ASAP! These awards will be presented during the Birthday Celebration at the Junkyard on the 10th of November. **The Awards Committee needs your submissions as quickly as possible (by 25 October please)** to determine who the recipients are for Marine of the Year, Associate of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award and the Commandant's Recognition Awards. This form will also be used for awards that will be given during the year as the occasion merits. Forms were emailed the last week of September to all Members and Associates. **The time frame for award recognition is from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.**

Please copy the form and put in the names and reasons that you think a person or people deserve recognition and email to w4simi@yahoo.com or return to Coley at 1550 Rory Lane, Space 210, Simi Valley CA 93063

Semper Fidelis,

John Coley

Adjutant



Betty Anne Gilmore was presented the "Paul J Molé Memorial Award"



Rudy Cordero was presented with his Lifetime Membership Card in the Marine Corps League



THE DOG ROBBER HOWLS

Pound 325, Ventura County Devil Dogs
California Pack 2012 Pound of the Year

DD Rudy Cordero
Pound Keeper

benpdet597@gmail.com

818-208-1095



Woof Woof Devil Dogs, Marines and Associate members,

Woof-woof Devil Dogs! I am honored to be your new Pound Keeper and hope we can have an active year going forward. Thank you Ben Pfister for your leadership and outreach into the community over the last two years as Pound Keeper.

Marines Our next meeting will be at 1800 on November 12 at the Junkyard restaurant in Simi Valley. The 244th Birthday of our beloved Corps will be at the Junkyard Restaurant starting at 1800.

Anyone wishing to become a member of the MODD must be an active member of the MCL with at least one year as a member and let the Commandant know that you're interested in joining the MODD. Unfortunately associate members aren't allowed to join.

Woof Woof,
PDD Rudy Cordero
Pound Keeper



CHAPLAIN Bradley Cantley

bradleycantley@gmail.com

Cell: 805-813-3571



The Chaplain's Corner

Fellow Marines, Veterans and Friends:

A short and simple prayer to those in need: "Supreme Commandant (Father God), I pray for healing for all on this list. Thank you Jesus, Amen". Newly added will be highlighted in sky blue, but only the first time when I send an update. *If you have recovered nicely please let me know if you wish to be removed or need an update on your condition. Also if I missed anyone please let me know.*

Below are those brave men and women who need our prayers:

Mike Davies—Needs some prayer for strength and healing.

Russ Hicks—Is recovering from heart surgery, pray for continued healing and strength.

Drew Haydon's daughter—Kayleigh needs healing and strength.

Dick Jennings's wife Edna—Needs strength and healing.

John Miller's daughter—continue to pray for strength and healing.

Ken Mask—He needs strong prayer for his cancer has returned.

Don Joy—Is back at home with homecare, but still needs prayers.

Bill Trammell—Pray for continued healing.

Conrad Wright—needs prayer for healing and recovery

Conrad Wright's wife—also needs prayer for an injury

Julie Stranges—needs prayer and healing

Maria Avila—Has cancer needs strength and healing

Ericka Silva—Still under treatment

Jim Lieberknecht – Stay strong.

Mike Maxwell – Still under treatments, and healing

RED (Remember Everyone Deployed) – Let us keep those Marines and other service members in our prayers as they might be in harm's way, or just away for training. "We ask our Supreme Commandant to watch over them and keep them safe. Bring them back home as soon as You are able too. Amen"

May our Lord and Savior keep watch over us, and to continue to watch over us. May He protect us, keep us healthy, and to keep us safe.

God bless

Semper Fi,

Chaplain Brad



HISTORIAN

John Miller

kathiemill@aol.com
(805) 581-5462



Colonel Jay R. Vargas Dai Do and Beyond



Capt. Vargas-1971



Col. Vargas-2017

Jay R. Vargas was born to a Hispanic father and Italian mother on July 29, 1938 in Winslow, Arizona. After graduation from High School, he went on to an education degree at Northern Arizona University. Jay had three older brothers who went into the US Military and all three were highly decorated for combat actions in World War II and Korea. His brother Angelo served on Iwo Jima, his brother Frank served on Okinawa, and his remaining brother Joseph served in Korea. During World War II this was not unusual, but still it remains, that his family was dedicated to our country and to our way of life. What is more astounding is the fact that all four brothers came home from their combat assignments alive and in good health.

Jay joined the Marine Corps right out of college in June 1963 and went on to the Basic School at Quantico. After basic school, he was assigned as a platoon commander with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. In the summer of 1968, he was sent to Viet Nam with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, The Magnificent Bastards. On 30 April 1968, Captain Vargas was leading Golf Company 2/4, when they were ambushed near the village of Dai Do, Republic of Viet Nam. He suffered numerous shrapnel wounds and continued to lead his men. The following day on May 1, 1968, He combined his Company with two other companies and attacked the fortified village of Dai Do. He went forward with a fire team and all four men were immediately killed or wounded and Captain Vargas was left alone. He managed to take out three machine gun emplacements and killed 14 North Vietnamese regulars. His actions allowed other units to continue the attack. Down to only 80 Marines, Captain Vargas dug in and awaited the Communist counterattack. With little to no sleep and low on ammo his Company survived the attack but was forced to withdraw to a nearby cemetery. His unit was surrounded and cut off from reinforcements. He ordered his men to dig up the bodies of the dead and use them to fortify their position. His Company was about to be wiped out, when he received communication from Admiral John McCain that his unit had the highest Naval priority and was told to hold on. Immediately



there was a C-130 gunship overhead and the area surrounding his unit was saturated with aircraft, artillery and naval gunfire. His company fought all night with their hands and bayonets and were finally relieved after three days of constant combat. During the intense fighting, he had called artillery on his own position and had told his men to dig deeper as the rounds were going to be dangerously close. The Battalion Commander came to his position and found Captain Vargas wounded but still fighting. During their conversation, the Colonel was shot three times in the back and fell into a rice paddy. Without hesitation and with no regard to his own personal safety, Captain Vargas went to the Colonel's side and pulled him to safety. For his actions during the battle of Dia Do, Captain Vargas received the Congressional Medal of Honor during a White House ceremony, by President Richard Nixon in May 1970.

His citation reads:

"Rank and organization: Major (then Captain), U.S. Marine Corps, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 9th Amphibious Brigade. Place and date: Dai Do, Republic of Viet Nam, 30 April to 2 May 1968. Entered service at: Winslow, Ariz. Born: 29 July 1940, Winslow, Ariz.

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as commanding officer, Company G, in action against enemy forces from 30 April to 2 May 1968. On 1 May 1968, though suffering from wounds he had incurred while relocating his unit under heavy enemy fire the preceding day, Maj. Vargas combined Company G with two other companies and led his men in an attack on the fortified village of Dai Do. Exercising expert leadership, he maneuvered his Marines across 700 yards of open rice paddy while under intense enemy mortar, rocket and artillery fire and obtained a foothold in two hedgerows on the enemy perimeter, only to have elements of his company become pinned down by the intense enemy fire. Leading his reserve platoon to the aid of his beleaguered men, Maj. Vargas inspired his men to renew their relentless advance, while destroying a number of enemy bunkers. Again wounded by grenade fragments, he refused aid as he moved about the hazardous area reorganizing his unit into a strong defense perimeter at the edge of the village. Shortly after the objective was secured the enemy commenced a series of counterattacks and probes which lasted throughout the night but were unsuccessful as the gallant defenders of Company G stood firm in their hard-won enclave. Reinforced the following morning, the Marines launched a renewed assault through Dai Do on the village of Dinh To, to which the enemy retaliated with a massive counterattack resulting in hand to hand combat. Maj. Vargas remained in the open, encouraging and rendering assistance to his Marines when he was hit for the third time in the 3-day battle. Observing his battalion commander sustain a serious wound, he disregarded his excruciating pain, crossed the fire swept area and carried his commander to a covered position, then resumed supervising and encouraging his men while simultaneously assisting in organizing the battalion's perimeter defense. His gallant actions uphold the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service."

The night after he received the Medal of Honor, he got together with his brothers at supper and for the first time his brothers began to talk about their combat experiences. The brothers all related to one another and it was a defining moment for Colonel Vargas. He had held back on his feelings because his brothers had held back on theirs. Colonel Vargas stated that there **"is not a Marine in the world that's not tough, but there's an ongoing issue in the military called fatigue."** It causes mental problems like post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal thoughts. Coming from a family of hunters, Colonel Vargas would always go out and hunt. During one hunt, he just walked around for some time then returned to the base camp. He said, "I just couldn't kill anymore."



After retiring from the Marine Corps, Colonel Vargas continued his service to the military by serving as the regional Veteran advisor for the Department of Veteran Affairs, where he served until 2009. He also served as the Secretary of California Department of Veteran Affairs for 5 years. His service to our Nation never stopped as Colonel Vargas later became a spokesman for the Gary Senise Foundation. His reason for joining the Senise Foundation was because in his view, it does so much for all Veterans above and beyond any other organization in America. He continues by stating that the foundation cares and gives so much to today's wounded veterans and it is done straight from the heart.

September 15 to October 15 is Hispanic American Heritage month. October is National Italian Heritage month. Colonel Jay R. Vargas is a proud member of that heritage and as an American he has served our Nation and Corps extremely well. The Colonel retired from the Marine Corps in 2004 after more than 30 years of Military Service. His decorations, besides the Medal of Honor, include The Silver Star and 5 Purple Hearts. Colonel Vargas is a "Totus Porcus," - A whole hog Marine. He is a man of extreme courage and one that we as Marines should look up to as the model for every Marine. Country ahead of self.

Semper Fi,
John Miller
Historian



PAYMASTER'S CORNER

ANDY DOBRZYNSKI

andydobrzynski@gmail.com

805-428-5902

My fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,

For those members and associates who have not received for renewal invoices, you are most likely past due. Statements have been sent out to members, so please call me if you have not received your renewal invoices. To bring your membership current, please send your check made out to the President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597 of the Marine Corps League or MCL597; and mail it to:

MCL Detachment 597

P.O. Box 65

Simi Valley, CA 93062.

Mark your calendars! And please join us for another fun packed evening playing BINGO. This is a big money maker for our 597, so please help the League and have fun doing it.

The fun starts at 1800 (check in) on Wednesday, 23 October 2019 at the Elks Lodge.

Your paymaster,
Andy Dobrzynski



Fausto Galvan
Executive Officer
Santa Clarita Valley Young Marines

Fausto_galvan0471@yahoo.com

818-259-2119

Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,

The Santa Clarita Young Marines had their 60th Birthday Ball on October 5, at the Santa Clarita Young Center. It was like a mini-Marine Birthday Ball that we have had in the past. Our Master of Ceremony was Juan Avalos, Master Sergeant, USMC (Retired) and Unit Commander who orchestrated the Ball. We had a presentation of cake and cake cutting ceremony with the youngest Young Marine Private Jameson Kehoe at a ripe age 8 years old and the oldest Sergeant Mattias Lopez at 17 years old. The guest of honor was Robert Merriman, US Army (Retired), who gave a brief presentation. We had a silent auction and 50/50 raffle to help raise money for the Unit and dinner was served for all those who attended. And dancing for those who remembered how to move their feet and swing.

Representing the Marine Corps League and the 597 were R.A. "Dick" Jennings, Dept. of CA Commandant, and his lovely wife Edna, John Coley, Adjutant, and his lovely wife Sue and daughter Kristina, John Miller, Jr. Vice Commandant and Historian, with his lovely wife Kathie, Rich Farra, Gipper Editor, and yours truly Fausto Galvan.

I want to give special thanks to the Santa Clarita Young Marines Board of Directors: Juan Avalos-Unit Commander, Timothy Stratton-Executive Officer, Jennifer Hernandez-Unit Adjutant, Tina Mainferme-Paymaster, Cathy Hagopian-Event Coordinator, and our supporting staff members Jacob Castillo, Kelly Lenhert, Jeff Martin and Gene Schreiner.

Semper FI
Fausto Galvan

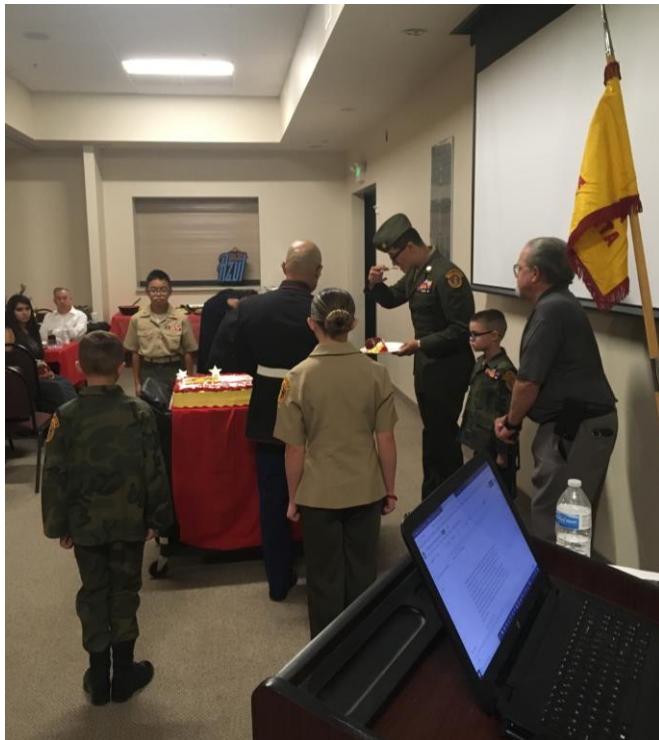


Back row left to right: John Coley, Edna Jennings, Jennifer Hernandez-SCYM Adjutant, Rich Farra, Kristina Coley, Kathie Miller, Fausto Galvan
Front row left to right: Dick Jennings, Sue Coley, John Miller



SCYM Board: Juan Avalos-Commander, Fausto Galvan, Jennifer Hernandez-Adjutant, Tim Stratton-XO







William Trammell

**Vice President Los Angeles Chapter #8
Montford Point Marines Association**

wmtrammell@twc.com

Marines:

As an invitation and reminder, our Chapter 8's monthly meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. This month's meeting will be at 1100 on 26 October 2019 at the American Legion Post 46 at 5309 Sepulveda Blvd, Culver City, CA 90230. Please join us as my guest.

The National Montford Point Marine Association "NMPMA" national elections require that they be held every two years for officials, such as the National President and Vice President, and Chapter President and Vice President, as with various other positions within the organization levels, and then reported to the National Executive Committee (NEC). The newly elected President of the National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc., is Ms. Carmon Cole. President Cole, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, joined the USMC in November 1980 as a Motor Transport Mechanic and retired in May 2001 as a CWO-3 Motor Transport Maintenance Officer. From January 2001 to May 2010 she worked as a Marine Corps Junior ROTC Instructor at Butler High School, August GA. She resigned that position in May 2010 and relocated to Fredericksburg VA to serve as the Operations and Instructional Branch Manager working at the Marine Corps JROTC Headquarters on Marine Corps Base Quantico. She is responsible for 268 High School units encompassing over 35,000 Corps of Cadet and over 500 MCJROTC Instructors. (Pictured here.)

For our local elections, we were pleased that Mr. Bennie Harris and Mr. William "Bill" Trammel both accepted the requests to stay in office for another two year term as the President and Vice President, respectively, of the Montford Point Marine Association, Inc., Los Angeles Chapter 8.

The NMPMA Los Angeles Chapter 8 is preparing for the Marine Corp's Birthday Ball, one of our principle annual efforts. We have been hard at work and this is where we are right now. This year we will be celebrating the 244th birthday of our beloved Corps. With a luncheon to be held on Saturday 09 November 2019, from 1200-1500 at Luminario's Restaurant, located at 3500 Ramona Blvd.,





Monterey, CA 91754. You are welcome to join us, for tickets and more information please contacting Mr. Culmer or SgtMaj Cook for tickets and additional information (see flyer below).

Sincerely,

William Trammell

USMC (Ret)

VP LA CH 8 MPMA

(805) 512-2215

wmtrammell@twc.com

**Happy 244th Anniversary
U.S. Marine Corps**

You are cordially invited to join the Montford Point Marines and other
Marines in celebrating their legacy and the Birthday of the Marine
Corps at the **ANNUAL CELEBRATION LUNCHEON!**

12 noon-3PM, Saturday, November 9, 2019

Luminario's Restaurant
3500 Ramona Blvd
Monterey Park CA 91754

\$60.00 per person

Special Corporate Sponsorship Packages available
Great food, libation, history and celebration!

Call Mr. Dave Culmer 310.594.0599 or
SgtMaj Charles Cook 951.522.1306

Or email kree8d@yahoo.com for ticket information

Military Dress Uniform or Business Attire

**THE MARINES OF
MONTFORD
POINT**

AMERICA'S FIRST BLACK MARINES

NMPMA

**UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS**



Jean Irving **Marine & Oldest MCL Member**

Message from Jean to the Detachment

Marines, Corpsmen and Associated Members

There is no adequate way I can express my thanks and appreciation to all of you, my fellow Marines, for the Special Award and honor that has been given to me. One of the best decisions I ever made was re-aligning myself with the Marine Corps League, especially Pres. Ronald Reagan Detachment 597. I am so very proud and honored that at this late stage of my life, you have given me a "Last Hoorah" so unexpectedly. Thank you.

A very special thanks should also go to our Jr. Past Commander Dick Jennings who worked so tirelessly on my behalf. He is indeed the most extraordinary person I've ever met (and there have been quite a few of them in my lifetime although none of his caliber). Thank you, Sir.

A very heartfelt thanks to you all.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank Doug Morrison with all my heart for immediately recognizing me as a Marine, for standing by me and with me, and for voluntarily transporting me to all things Marine Corps League, as well as to doctors and elsewhere. He and his wife Liz have become cherished friends and I love them both.

Semper Fi

Jean Irving
USMCWR 04/43-12/45



Frank Lopez Detachment 597 Member

Detachment Members,

I had the privilege of hosting Marine Jean Irving who was one of the honored WWII Veterans at the Wings Over Camarillo airshow last August 17-18, 2019. She was presented with a certificate by WWII Army pilot Star Thompson who has attended the airshow since its inception.

Though Jean could not spend the whole day with us, we took her around the air show to meet some of the Marine aviators at the show.

I would like to thank MCL member Douglas Morrison for bringing her to the airshow.





Birthdays for the month of November

Guy D. Nohrenberg	7	Michael Maxwell	14
Rafael Dagnesses	11	John B 9Von Osinski	18
Bradley Cantley*	13	Valeria Galvan	22
John D. Coley*	13	Joon Park	28
Mardu Lydick	14		

*Life Member



Matt E. Valenzuela
Past Commandant

mattval@aol.com

310-768-2847 Office

310-308-7015 Mobile

Ed Aragon Korean War Veteran



Marines and Associates,

MCL Det 597 Associate, Nigel 'Tony' Boucher went on a Day Fishing Boat with his son and caught a large Yellowtail weighing in at close to 40 pounds. You should have seen the one that got away!



Marines from MCL Det 597 visited Charter Member Don Montgomery at his home. Due to medical issues, Don cannot leave home to attend meetings, so Marines from the 597 visited Don and Patti. Both Don and Patti were very happy to see Marines Godfrey Harris, John Mitchell, Matt Valenzuela, and Ben Pfister. Don reminisced about his time on active duty in the Marines, and also about the grand time he had in the old Ventura County Detachment 597. After about an hour and a half of camaraderie, with beverages and snacks provided by Patti, Matt pinned Don with an MCL Life Member Lapel Pin and presented him with a copy of the Detachment Newsletter that listed Don as a Staff Member.

All in all, it was a good visit for all.

Semper Fi,

Matt



Matt and Taj visit with Marine Pete Wilson, former Governor of California, at a friend's house.





JR. PAST COMMANDANT & COMMANDANT

Dept. of California

R. A. "Dick" Jennings

califcommandant@gmail.com

805-328-9817



Guest Speaker

United States military Veteran suicide is an ongoing phenomenon (I would call it an epidemic) regarding a reportedly high rate of suicide among the U.S. military Veterans, in comparison to the general public. According to the most recent report published by the United States department of Veterans Affairs in 2016 alone, an estimated 7500 former military personnel died by suicide. Active duty veterans were 177 which succumbed to suicide where 176 died of combat related wounds. According to a report published by the VA in 2016, which analyzed 55 million veterans' records for 1979 to 2014, the current analysis indicates that an average of 22 veterans a day die from suicide.

The total number of suicides differs by age group: 31% of these were Veterans aged 49 or younger, versus 69% were 50 years or older. This last number includes mostly the Vietnam War Veterans of which most of us are connected. As you see from this study, suicides don't necessarily happen immediately.

Annual number of suicides per 100 thousand from 2000-2010

Never served in the Military		Veterans and active duty	
Women	5.2		28.7
Men	20.9		32.1

Some will look at this and think, "Well, that's not bad being it's out of 100 thousand people." One is to many because of suicides.

The number of military service members and Veterans in the US is declining, but their suicide rates are increasing. New data shows that suicides among US Special Operations Command tripled in 2018.

PTSD, Depression, alcohol and drugs all lead to suicide. About 1 veteran in 6 suffers from PTSD. According to research in the journal "Depression and Anxiety," 28% of those who reported a past traumatic event had attempted suicide.

A study done by the Department of Veteran Affairs discovered that veterans are more likely to develop the symptoms of PTSD for a number of reasons, such as:

Longer times at war (some active duty Marines have had up to 6 deployments.)

Lower level of education

More severe combat conditions

Other soldiers around them killed

Brain/head trauma

Female gender

Life lasting physical injuries



Military structure

The Department of Veteran Affairs also discovered that where you were deployed and which branch of the military you are with can also have drastic effects on your mental status upon returning from service.

Combat Stressors See dead Shot at Attacked Rocket Knowing killed

		See dead	Shot at	Attacked	Rocket	Knowing killed
Iraq	Army	95%	93%	89%	86%	86%
Iraq	Marines	94%	97%	95%	92%	87%
Afghan	Army	39%	66%	58%	84%	43%
Afghan	Marines	95%	95%	88%	94%	94%

Form many service members, being away from home for a long periods of time can cause problems at home or work. These problems can add to the stress. This may be even more so for National Guard or Reserve troops who had not expected to be away for so long. Almost half of the Army who have served in the current wars have been Guard and Reservists.

Why the National Guard? Remember when we were young, and the ADS would come on the TV and Radio to join the Guard. At the end of the Ad would be "You can rest tonight - your National Guard is awake."

Well, these troops are civilian. They have civilian families, civilian jobs and they train one week-end a month and 2 weeks during the year. You can't learn a lot with this little training. The Guard used to be part of each states volunteer state militia. In August of 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Operation Desert Storm brought the largest mobilization of the Guard since the Korean War.

Why does the National Guard have the largest suicide rate?

These people, who were civilians weeks ago, go into combat and are not really ready for it. They are still in their civilian mindset, and they see things that no humans should see, thus they are shocked and traumatized. Not meaning that the other service members aren't shocked as well, but when on active duty, you have that state of mind that makes it a little easier at the onset.

Veterans can have difficulty transitioning from the military to civilian life. Many choose to transition by utilizing their GI Bill or other education benefits. The pursuit of education among Veterans can aggravate post service conditions that are linked to a higher likelihood of suicide, yet sometimes aids in the transition to civilian life.

Difficulty relating to fellow students

Difficulty in coping with military experiences in an academic environment

Lack of support or understanding for services connected disabilities

Negative stigmas related to military service

Feelings of isolation

Lack of social support

Difficulty with stable or reliable income

Difficulty with stable housing.

The first suicide prevention center in the US was opened in Los Angeles in 1958 with funding from the US Public Health Service. In 1966, the Suicide Research Unit was established at the National Institute of Mental



Health. Later in 1970, the NIMH pushed in Phoenix the discussion about the status of suicide prevention presented relevant findings about suicide rate and identified the future directions and priorities of the topic.

Key points from the Phoenix discussion:

- Suicide prevention must recognize and affirm the value, dignity and importance of each person.
- Suicide is not solely the result of illness or inner conditions. The feelings of hopelessness that contribute to suicide can stem from societal conditions and attitudes. Therefore, everyone concerned with suicide prevention shares a responsibility to help change attitudes and eliminate the conditions of oppression, racism. Homophobia, discrimination and prejudice.
- Some groups are disproportionately affected these societal conditions, and some are at greater risk for suicide.
- Individuals, communities, organizations and leaders at all levels should collaborate to promote suicide prevention.

The success of this strategy ultimately rests with individuals and communities across the US.

A technical Package of Policies, Programs and Practices:

- Lessen harms and prevent future risks
- Strengthen Economic Support
- Strengthen Access and Delivery of Suicide Care
- Create Protective Environments
- Promote Connectedness
- Teach Coping and Problem-Solving Skills
- Identify and Support People at Risk

Is there a solution to ending suicides?

I wish I could say yes or even maybe but right now, no one has a solution to end military suicides.

The one thing you can do is if you see someone or even suspect someone by be suicidal. Get him/her some help. Talk to them. Never mention the word suicide but get them to a mental health facility at the VA. They are equipped with handling these type of things.

Support your Suicide hotlines. Volunteer to answer phones. They will train you.

Most of all, pray. Pray that this epidemic will soon show signs of decreasing. Pray that these men/women will seek help on their own. Pray that these men/women will not harm anyone else. But most of all, Pray, that the future soldiers will never again see things while serving that will cause them to think of suicide.

Thank you very much and Semper Fi.

Jr. Past Commandant

President Ronald Reagan Det. 597

Commandant

Department of California

Marine Corps League



Ongoing and Future DoD Suicide Prevention Efforts

To address the complex interaction of environmental, psychological, biological, and social factors, the Department continues to implement and evaluate policies and multi-faceted strategies rooted in data-driven, global practices, in collaboration with other federal and non-federal agencies. **Planned efforts include:**

- **Populations of greatest concern:**

- *For young and enlisted Service members:*

- Pilot interactive educational program to teach foundational skills to deal with life stressors early in military career, particularly those unique to our young, enlisted members.
 - Teach Service members how to recognize and respond to suicide warning signs on social media.

- *For National Guard members:*

- Partner with Department of Veterans Affairs to enhance National Guard member's access to mental health care in remote areas via Mobile Vet Centers during drill weekends.
 - Use Suicide Prevention & Readiness for the National Guard (SPRING) initiative with the Total Force Fitness framework and readiness model to inform a data-driven, holistic approach for data collection and predictive analytics.

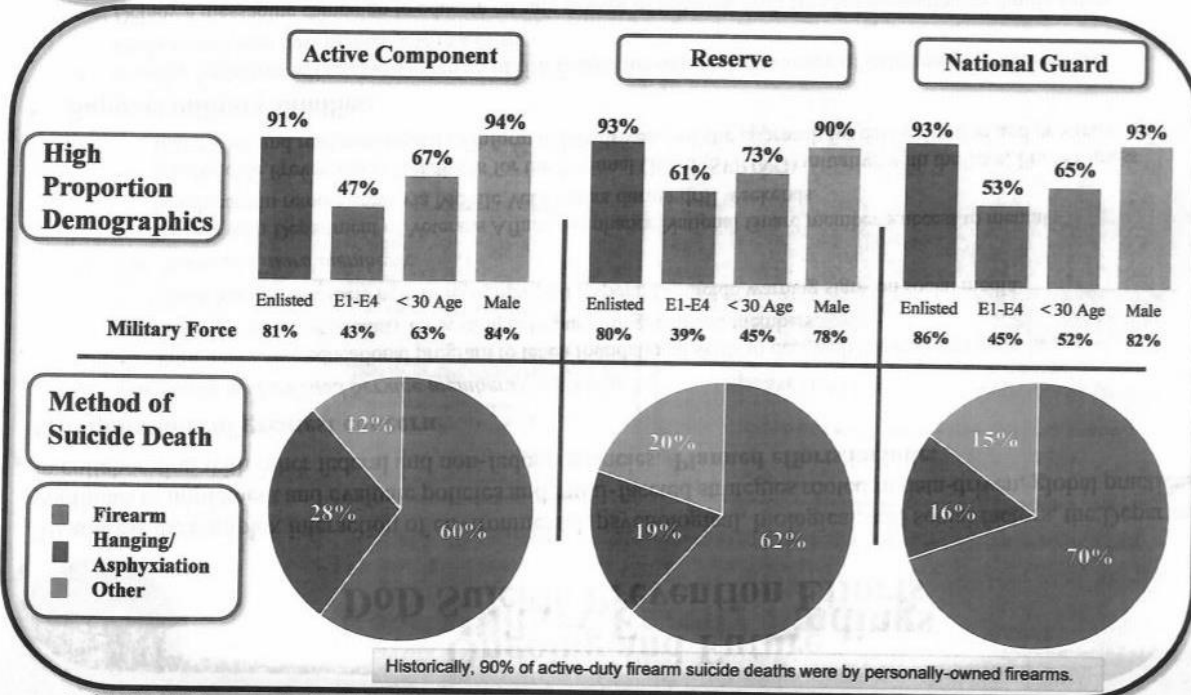
- **Support military families:**

- Develop initiatives to increase awareness of risk factors for suicide, safe storage of lethal means (firearms and medications), and how to intervene in a crisis.
 - Deploy a messaging campaign to educate on safe storage of firearms, with targeted messaging on family safety.
 - Enhance education to include other wellness and risk factors, such as relationship issues and periods of transition.

- **Metrics to measure program effectiveness:**

- The Department, in collaboration with the Military Services, developed a program evaluation framework that maps the goals, objectives, and initiatives articulated in the Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention to measurable outcomes.

Key Service Member Findings (cont.)



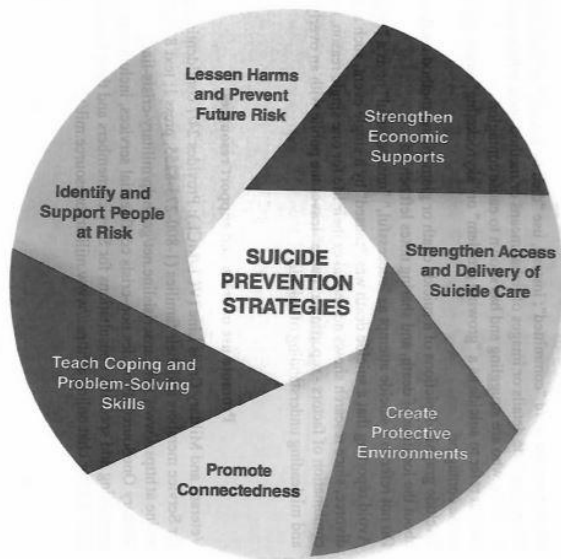
• Source(s): Active Component method of death from AFMES; Reserve and National Guard method of death from the Military Services.
• Other methods of death include drugs/alcohol, sharp/blunt objects, poisoning, falling/jumping, unknown, and pending.

5



PERSONNEL AND READINESS

Public Health Approach to Suicide Prevention



- Suicide prevention requires a bundled approach that combines community and clinical interventions.
- DoD is committed to implementing a multi-faceted public health approach to suicide prevention, aligned with the Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention, as well as the seven broad suicide prevention strategies outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Source: 2017 CDC's Preventing Suicide:
A Technical Package of Policies, Programs, and Practices



Safe Reporting for Suicide

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should align with safe reporting best practices. The way media cover suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to suicide contagion or positively by encouraging help-seeking. Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes a death. Leaders can help us by advocating and using safe reporting guidelines and continue to have conversations around wellness and readiness, and promote help-seeking behaviors.

Tips for Media Messaging on Suicide:

Do's:

- ✓ Always provide helpline information - "If you are in crisis, please call the Veterans and Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), press 1"
- ✓ Convey that suicidal thoughts and behaviors can be reduced with the proper mental health support and treatment, and are not weaknesses or flaws
- ✓ Share the hopeful message that suicide is preventable in language, tone and images used

Don'ts:

- x Do not use the word "committed"; instead, use "died by suicide" or "took his/her life"
- x Do not include details or images of lethal means or method used, which can be triggering for those who are struggling and has shown to cause contagion
- x Do not refer to suicide as a "growing problem" or "skyrocketing" as this has shown to cause contagion
- x Exclude graphic depictions of a suicide death or glamorizing method used, avoid details about the location of death, and sharing notes left behind
- x Do not refer to a suicide attempt as "successful," "unsuccessful" or as a "failed attempt"
- x Avoid reporting that a suicide death was "caused" by a single event, such as a job loss or divorce, since research shows no one takes their life for one single reason, but rather a combination of factors - reporting a "cause" leaves the public with an overly simplistic and misleading understanding of suicide

Promote use of crisis and support resources:

- ✓ Veterans and Military Crisis Line (VCL/MCL): Provides 24/7 confidential crisis support for Service members and their families (1-800-273-8255, press 1; text 838255, or chat online at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line>).
- ✓ Military OneSource: Provides non-crisis confidential services, including non-medical counseling and specialty consultations for Service members and their families (1-800-342-9647 or chat online at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>).



Kenneth L. Mask Sgt. (Ret.)
Silver & 2 Bronze Stars
3 Purple Hearts



My Story

Barstow, California, is the home of the Marine Corps Supply Depot and Fort Irwin Army base. In 1966 the population consisted of Marine Corps and Army personnel, and the civilians who hated both services. The MCSD was to be my first home in the Marine Corps.

I grew up in Denver, so the weather in Barstow came as a complete shock to my system. I arrived on February 12th, 1966, at 6:45 a.m., or 0645 in military terms, and the temperature was 100.

The first sign of trouble came when I gave my orders to the Sgt of the Guard. He got a scowl on his face and asked, "Are you related to Robert Mask?" I said, "Yes, he's my older brother." He said, "Your brother was the biggest shit-bird I had the displeasure of knowing." To add to the misery of the heat, I had to overcome the reputation of my brother.

I was told to go another building about three-quarters of a mile away. I asked if there was transportation, and he answered with a smirk, "yes, your legs." I had a sea bag and a suitcase, together weighing slightly more than me. Someone gave me a canteen of water, unfortunately it was filled with warm water. The temperature was now 105. It took almost 45 minutes, requiring many stops to sip water that got warmer as I went along my merry way.

I entered the building, and the air conditioning hit me like a blast of cold air. Going from an outside temperature of 109 to an indoor temperature of 68 was an eye-opening experience. I handed my orders to yet another sergeant. He chewed me out for being late, saying "You were supposed to be here two days ago. You're AWOL." I didn't know why he thought I was late. This was not a good start for my career in the Corps.

I was panicked and told him, "I don't understand. My orders say I'm supposed to be here today." He pointed to his paperwork, showing I should have been there on February 10th. I looked at the papers and heaved a sigh of relief. The name was the same as mine, but the serial numbers were different. This other person with the audacity to have my name never did arrive.

I was sent to my barracks, another three-quarter of a mile away. This time I took the base shuttle. The outside temperature at that time was now 112, but it was 115 in the bus. I got settled in and introduced myself to others there. They gave me the scoop on Barstow, mostly negative. In the next few days, the temperature did one of two things, it stayed where it had been the day before, or got hotter. By mid-April the temperature stayed around 114 during the day and dropped into the mid 60's at night.

Flash forward to June 15th, 1966. There was a Commanding General inspection. Most of the base turned out for this. There were many formations of Marines, all standing at parade rest until the general got to them, then at attention while he slowly walked by each man, stopping to look at one now and then. It



started at noon and took almost three hours. I survived by some miracle but knew it was questionable as to whether I could repeat the performance in the future.

When the inspection ended, I immediately volunteered for a transfer to Vietnam. It couldn't be any worse than Barstow even knowing that as a scout/sniper, this was the last place on earth I should be.

My plane landed in Chu Lai, where the temperature was 112 degrees, and it was raining. I didn't go from the frying pan into the fire; I made a perfect swan dive into that fire. The conditions were terrible, but at least I was out of Barstow.

I was there until losing an argument with a bullet. When I recovered, I got to a unit in Phu bai. At the end of my 13-month tour, I got orders back to the states. Unfortunately, they were sending me back to Barstow. I was heartbroken. To avoid going there, I decided to stay for another six months. Being shot at, with the chance of being wounded again, or worse, was more palatable than Barstow. Most thought I was crazy. Sending me back to Barstow had to be a mistake on the part of the Marine Corps, but that couldn't be because the Marine Corps never made mistakes.

I was promoted to sergeant and earned a Silver Star, Bronze Star, and several awards from the Vietnamese government for heroism (heroism being another definition of stupid) in combat. At the end of the six months, I got orders sending me to Barstow again. Someone at Headquarters, Marine Corps, had something against me.

Not being the brightest bulb in the chandelier, I volunteered to stay another six months rather than return to that desert hellhole. You would think that anyone wounded once would think twice about staying where the same may happen again, or worse, but Barstow was not a viable option.

I was at Khe Sahn during the Vietnamese Tet offensive in February 1968, one of the worst episodes of the war. We were under siege for 71 days. I was awarded another Bronze Star, two more Purple Hearts, and with a Vietnamese Honor Medal Second Class, all earned on the same day, within hours of each other. At the end of my six-month extension, I received my orders back to the states, and they were sending me to – you guessed it, Barstow. My friends weren't surprised to learn that I had volunteered to extend my tour once again. Most questioned my sanity, but I was determined to stay away from Barstow. A friend offered to shoot me to get it over with, but I declined that offer.

A short time later, me and 18 members of my unit were on a truck going for some badly needed rest, but a landmine ended that little adventure. I survived, but the other 18 on board were killed in the explosion.

When I recovered, I went back to the states, but thank God, not to Barstow. If you join the Marine Corps and they want to send you to Barstow, do all you can to avoid going there, being careful not to get court-martialed in the process. Barrow, Alaska, in the dead of winter would be preferable. In my humble opinion, Barstow is the armpit of the world, or somewhat lower, and getting shot and possibly killed is a better choice.

Semper Fi,
Kenneth Mask, Sgt USMC (Ret.)



Death All Around Me

By Kenneth L. Mask, Sgt.,
U. S. Marine Corps (Retired)

There were 18 and 1, brothers all
Young boys who answered the call
All grew into men before their time
They all trained to be U. S. Marines

They went to Vietnam from many ports
Some were sent, some volunteered
Either way, to Vietnam they went
They came together as the 18 and 1

Many weeks fighting endless battles
All fighting beyond their limits
None could continue, a break needed
Time to recover, to rest weary bones

18 and 1 boarded a truck, without a care
On the way to bliss, leave the war behind
On their minds were beer and frolic
None were thinking of war and fighting

Death was around a bind, known by none
The explosion horrendous, no warning at all
Bodies and truck shredded with no mercy
The purpose was to kill, and kill it did

Some died instantly, some suffered first
In the end, they died either way
All died but one, he watched them die
Pinned to the ground, he couldn't help

They were brothers, friends and Marines
They played, loved and fought together
They were 18 and 1, now down to only 1
They were fellow Marines, now in graves

So sad to say, I was that one
I didn't die with them, though should have
I live knowing they're gone, and I'm not
I live knowing I should be with them

Now I am the one, the 18 are gone
I have the memories and sorrows
I live going on to mourn forever
Their deaths will haunt me forever

They died as boys hardened by war
Their youths taken by hidden death
They were and will always be heroes
They will live on in my heart forever

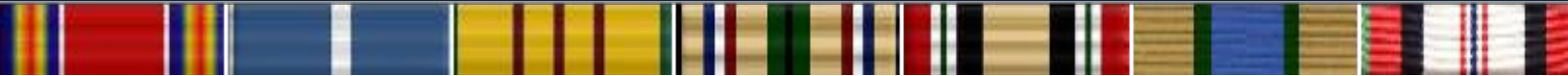
THE AWARD

I am an actor, the best
I live the perfect life
Everything I could ever want
Married to a beautiful starlet
My children are successful

We're at the Academy Awards
Best Actors being announced
I'm fifth on the list

It thrills to hear my name
And the winner is –

I hear my name being called
I get up, ready to accept
No, this can't be true
My wife is telling me
Get up, you'll be late for work



By Ken Mask





MANAGING EDITOR

RICHARD FARRA

richfarra@gmail.com

818-470-3258 Mobile

Hard Charging and Selfless Deeds

Our Detachment is blessed to have some of the hardest working and selfless members I have ever seen in an organization. They don't brag or wave the hands around saying look at me. They are the people who have learned from the past and look forward to those things that make a difference in the lives of others. They are the humble and quiet ones who want to make the world a better place – it comes from within. They have the energy and the commitment to make a difference, we know who these people are. They honor those who are no longer with us and they honor those who are, they march for our country, they march for our community, they share their experiences to give prospective on life in combat, they reach out to help those in need, they give the shirts off their backs for another Marine – they are the heroes of our Detachment. I won't mention names. I wonder how they find the time to do all that they do. Some have jobs and families to tend to. Yet their mark on the world is made over and over again without fan fair. I make a point to say, "Welcome home" to a Viet Nam Veteran when I see one, I also make a point to shake the hands of those who make a difference and say, "Thank you."

Thank you for all you do. You know who you are and if this is for you.

Thank you,
Rich Farra
Managing Editor

What do you envision for the future of our Detachment? Our Commandant wants to hear your thoughts, he listens so we can get better. Please email him a "DEAR COMMANDANT" letter with your constructive thoughts.

We need your ideas to make our detachment better. If you have ideas and/or gripes about our general meetings, events or whatsoever. Your Commandant wants to hear about them.

Like a shark, we must keep moving forward or we will die. We need your input to move forward and grow. For example, Dick Jennings suggested and executed on his idea for a Veterans Center to help Veterans transition from active duty to civilian life. His idea is getting the attention of those in local government and businesses to bring this dream to reality. Share your ideas and let's make them happen.

We want our members to share their thoughts, concerns and compliments to the Commandant. If there is something not done to one's expectations, please submit your ideas on how to resolve these issues and concerns. All correspondence will be kept confidential unless specified otherwise. Email me your ideas and thoughts to me, Richard Farra, Managing Editor, at richfarra@gmail.com and I will forward them to the Commandant anonymously for his feedback and include them in the Gipper.



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	Juan Avalos	(858) 229-1894	avalosimscvym@gmail.com
Toys For Tots Chairman	John Mitchell	805-379-9664	Kathleen.Mitchell.is18@statefarm.com
Fundraising Coordinator	Debbie Sands	818-535-4738	dsandsconsulting@aol.com
Director of Associates	Valeria Galvan	818-302-9816	ValeriaHGalvan@yahoo.com
Department of California Staff			
Commandant	Richard A. Jennings	805-328-9817	califcommandant@gmail.com
MODD			
MODD Pound Keeper	Ben Pfister	805-208-1095	benpdet597@gmail.com
VAVS			
MODD Dept. of CA Pack - Watch Dog	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	fausto_galvan471@yahoo.com



ATTENTION ON DECK

EMAIL ADDRESSES: If you did NOT receive this newsletter via email, it means your email isn't on the detachment roster. Please email Dick Jennings with your new email address to: mcl597commandant@gmail.com.

DD214 REPLACEMENT AND MILITARY MEDALS & AWARDS: Are you in need of a replacement DD214? Are you missing awards or medals and would like to get your records updated? Would you like to get the military records of a deceased next of kin? Please visit www.archives.gov/veterans/ to fill out the eVetRecs online system or download the SF180 form.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS AND NEW MEMBERS: Members more than 6 months past due will no longer receive the newsletter and will be removed from the roster prior to publication. MCL National HQ requires a new application if a member is more than 12 months past due. To bring your dues up to date, contact the Paymaster. Renewal dues are \$40 per year, and due in September. New member dues are \$45. All new applicants for regular membership must be prepared to show proof of Honorable military service with a DD214.

MCL Det. #597 GENERAL MEETINGS

1st Thursday of each month
Simi Valley Elks Lodge #2492
1561 Kuehner Drive
Simi Valley, CA 93065
Meet and Greet 1800
Dinner 1800-1859
Meeting 1900

BOARD MEETINGS

3rd Wednesday of each month – start time 1600
US Bank Building
1445 East Los Angeles Avenue, Room 302
Simi Valley, CA 93065