



# The Gipper

Marine Corps League  
President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597  
Semper Fidelis

R. A. "Dick" Jennings, Commandant  
mcl597commandant@gmail.com  
Richard Farra, Managing Editor  
richfarra@gmail.com

**JUNE 2019**



**COMMANDANT**  
**Dept. of California of the**  
**Marine Corps League**  
**R. A. "Dick" Jennings**  
[califcommandant@gmail.com](mailto:califcommandant@gmail.com)  
805-328-9817



To say the months of May and June were very busy is an understatement.

Simi Valley is one of the few cities in this wonderful country that fully supports its Veterans. For example, on May 18, the Simi Valley Town Center dedicated the large mid-section of the mall to become the new Veterans Court. Our Detachment's Color Guard and Rifle Squad presented Colors and provided a rifle salute for the dedication ceremony, both of which went smoothly under the helm of Harry Hodges, our Sr. Vice Commandant. In addition, the Master of Ceremonies was our very own Marty Spann, who did a great job. A big thank you goes out to our Color Guard and Rifle Squad for doing another terrific job.

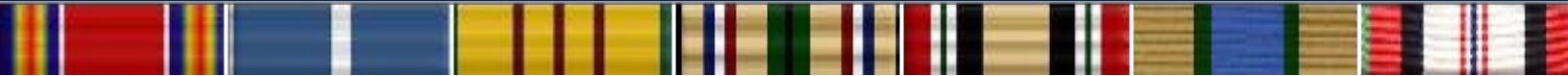




Every Memorial Day weekend is busy for the Detachment with its full schedule of events for the Color Guard and Rifle Squad Details. This year was no different, but with a kicker, in the past, the Memorial Day festivities for the Pioneer Cemetery were organized by our Detachment. However, ten years ago when Past-Commandant Mark Shuster was being deployed, he had asked Wayne Wright, of VFW Post 10049, to carry the torch to organize this annual event. And he did so for the past ten years without complaint and selflessly carried his duty every year. But ten years has proven to be a little bit longer than a temporary assignment, as was thought that the then incoming Commandant would resume the responsibility. But after watching Commandant after Commandant come and go, he decided that he wanted to give the torch back to the Detachment. Wayne had done a fantastic job every year to make the Pioneer Cemetery Memorial Day event flawless. We thank you Wayne for all you have done.

Wayne continued to be a great asset in helping with the logistics in making the festivities another success. To help me out with organizing the event, I turned the everyday duties over to the one person that I can count on to get things done, David Opfer-Associate of the Year. We'll see how long he'll carry the torch.

The event was well attended with over 200 guests, as well as guest speakers who included: Assemblywoman Christy Hill, Ventura County Supervisor Bob Huber, Mayor of Simi Valley Keith Mashburn. Laying wreaths at the base of the Veterans Monument and Flag were representatives from the VFW, American Legion, DAV, Marine Corps League, and Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Daughters of the Civil War.



Pioneer Cemetery Memorial Day Remembrance



Daughters of the American Revolution Vice Regent Debbie Sands with fellow DAR member laying a wreath at the base of the memorial.

Boy Scout Troop 622 and the Civil Air Patrol Squadron 1986 put crosses w/American Flags attached at each Veterans gravesite, and seating was provided by Simi Valley's Park & Rec Department. Thank you to everyone who participated.

June 1 was Veterans appreciation day at Dodger Stadium, and 50 of our members and families got on a bus to Dodger Stadium where we watched the victorious Dodgers whip those "wimps" from Broad Street, the Philadelphia Phillies. What a wonderful night, everyone got along, and the camaraderie was exceptional. Everyone wanted to know when we would do another trip. So, the next day I contacted the Rams and set up a possible trip for Sunday, October 13 at the LA Coliseum for the game between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Los Angeles Rams. Tickets for the game are \$85 and the bus will cost \$25. Total for the trip is \$110, payment will be due no later than September 1 and we are only taking 30 people. First come, first served.

As I am writing this for the Gipper, I am getting ready to go to the Department of California MCL State Convention in San Diego.



Well, I WON!

On Saturday, June 8th at the 87th MCL Department of California State Convention in San Diego, I was elected to be the new Commandant of the Department of California for 2019-2020. To say I am amazed would be an understatement. I am filling some big shoes from the Past Commandants, and especially Ray Valenzuela's, who I am replacing.





To the members and associates of the President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597, it has been my honor and pleasure to be your Commandant for this last year and a half. We have accomplished a lot, but there's a lot more to be done. I am sure with your new Commandant, Harry Hodges, there will be no problem in accomplishing everything he and our Board of Directors decide to do.

To the Detachment Board - you are fantastic- and it was a pleasure to come together monthly, have a few laughs, and to accomplish almost everything we wanted to get done. I will probably miss this part of the Commandant's job the most.

I am not going away I will still be attending the Detachment meetings but in a different capacity – as a dignitary – and to update you on what is going on at the Dept level with articles in the Gipper. One thing I get to do as Department Commandant is to wear that "funny hat."

God Bless each one of our wonderful members and associates. I couldn't have done anything without your support and your love.

Semper Fi,

Dick Jennings  
Commandant  
Department of California  
Marine Corps League



## COMMANDANT

**Harry Hodges**

[Hodges1951@gmail.com](mailto:Hodges1951@gmail.com)

805-515-1401, Mobile



### **From the Desk of the Commandant**

#### **Marines and Associate members,**

Please join me in congratulating Dick Jennings on his appointment as Commandant, Dept. of California of the Marine Corps League. He will do a great job as he did with the Detachment 597 and we are happy for him.

I attended the MCL State Convention this past weekend and took some copious notes on some really good ideas presented in the various classes. Most of the classes were informative in nature, however, the biggest concern continues to be membership growth and retention. Ideas for recruiting came in the form of business cards having the Detachment's complete information, e.g., meeting dates, time and place, and contact information.

Another idea brought up was to write the information of a potential member, e.g., complete name, address, phone number, and email address. They said the ideal target age for new members are those in their 40's, because it seems like the younger adults are busy raising their families and working. Middle-aged people tend to have a little more time on their hands to make it to meetings easier.

The future of the League is in our hands, it's either grow or die, it's that simple. As Marines we grow to pass on the heritage and history of the Corps beyond active duty through the Marine Corps League. Every Marine is a brother regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, and we must do our best to keep the Corps alive through the Marine Corps League.

Besides membership another item discussed was the MCL working with active duty Marines with their transition back to civilian life. In August of this year, I look forward to attending the MCL National Convention in Billings, Montana. I've never been to a National Convention before, but I am sure it'll be interesting, full of information, and overwhelming. I will share any new information I learn at National.

Semper Fi,

Harry Hodges  
Commandant



## EVENTS DIRECTOR

**Ken 'Doc' Honaker**

[kdhonaker@gmail.com](mailto:kdhonaker@gmail.com)

805-416-4063, Mobile



### Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,

May was a busy time for Simi Valley and the 597. The AV Traveling Vietnam Wall was setup in Rancho Tapo Park (a.k.a. Lemon Park) with assistance of local volunteers, among them many of our brother Veterans including several from President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597. Opening ceremonies included MCL 597 colors presentation and rifle salute. The Wall was to remain for the entire Memorial Weekend. This opportunity afforded many of us to remember our fallen brothers that were not able to come home and whose sacrifice should never be forgotten.



This year's Cajun Festival at Rancho Santa Susanna Park in Simi Valley started very good. Saturday setup was accomplished early with Paymaster Andy providing donuts for assembly fuel. Just prior to noon, Big Red was left in the capable hands of John Fuentes, Chuck Shoemaker, Ben Pfister, and Paymaster Andy, while Dick Jennings, Dave Opfer, Harry Hodges and I presented colors to the Zydeco inspired crowd. We changed out of color guard uniforms to find something to eat, which at the Cajun Festival is no small tasks just deciding what spicy delight to consume. Of course, this activity also involved washing the diner's choice down with a



beer, available from several different vendors. We talked with many booth visitors regarding the MCL 597 and the Young Marines organizations. Our attendees donated or purchased MCL and USMC items to the tune of more than \$170.

Sunday did not start well because of the weather - clouds and drizzle – as many vendors had abandoned their sites during the night. Later in the day, the drizzle did let up enough for us to present colors. Again, finding enough sustenance was not problematic, as we knew the layout of the food booths and proceeded to chow down. As the drizzle increased after lunch time, the attendance had noticeably thinned out, and we too decided to pack up and head home as well. We did still manage to receive donations and sales of more than \$50. While it is the intent of manning a booth to spread the word about MCL and YMs, it's encouraging to know we can increase the workload of the paymaster by collecting a few dollars in the process.





Closing ceremonies for the Antelope Valley "AV" Traveling Wall was Monday afternoon with the 597 again presenting colors with a rifle salute. Matt Valenzuela was the master of ceremony who orchestrated the speakers, Color Guard and Rifle Squad details. He was the perfect Marine for the job, thank you Matt. After the closing ceremony Monday evening, the "Wall That Heals" was dissembled Tuesday morning and loaded into its travel trailers for their return to Antelope Valley. The AV people are some wonderful folks and I hope many of you experienced that firsthand. I did manage to visit several times between assembly and take down to find all too many names I know personally. Along with all the items brought to setup and care for the wall, a needed item was a box of tissue available in several places. I still miss my friends. I always will.



The next setup for Big Red will be the "Cops N Cruisers" by the Simi Valley Police Station on 23 June, which is a car show with a variety of vendor booths. Setup will be 0730 on 23 June. I trust the usual suspects will be available for setup, staffing and teardown. No, we were not required to register Ben Pfister's great looking 1970 Ford Ranchero to attend, although he was willing if need be. The attendee hours are 0900-1400 with teardown after that.

Two more reminders for our members, Gary Sinise will be speaking and a book signing at the Simi Valley Elks Lodge on 27 June, and the annual Ventura County Stand Down remains the last weekend of July - the 26th through 28th. The stand down at the Ventura National Guard Armory can always use volunteers in a variety of capacities.

Semper Fi  
Doc Honaker  
Events Director





## JR. PAST COMMANDANT

**Jerry R. German**

[jrgerman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jrgerman@sbcglobal.net)

818-324-2338, Mobile



## THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL

&

## THE MOBILE VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL-THE AV WALL

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a 2-acre U.S. National Memorial in Washington D.C. It honors service members of the U.S. armed forces who fought in the Vietnam War, service members who died in service in Vietnam/South East Asia, and those service members who were unaccounted for during the war. The centerpiece of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the Memorial Wall designed by American architect Maya Lin.

### **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall**

The Memorial Wall is made up of two 246-foot-9-inch long black granite walls, polished to a high finish, and etched with the names of the servicemen being honored in 144 panels of horizontal rows with regular Optima typeface and spacing. The walls are sunken into the ground, with the earth behind them. At the highest tip (the apex where they meet), they are 10.1 feet high, and they taper to a height of 8 inches at their extremities. Symbolically, this is described as a "wound that is closed and healing". The stone for the 144 panels was quarried in Bangalore, India.

One wall points toward the Washington Monument, the other in the direction of the Lincoln Memorial, meeting at an angle of 125° 12'. Each wall has 72 panels, 70 listing names (numbered 1E through 70E and 70W through 1W) and two very small blank panels at the extremities. There is a pathway along the base of the Wall where visitors may walk.

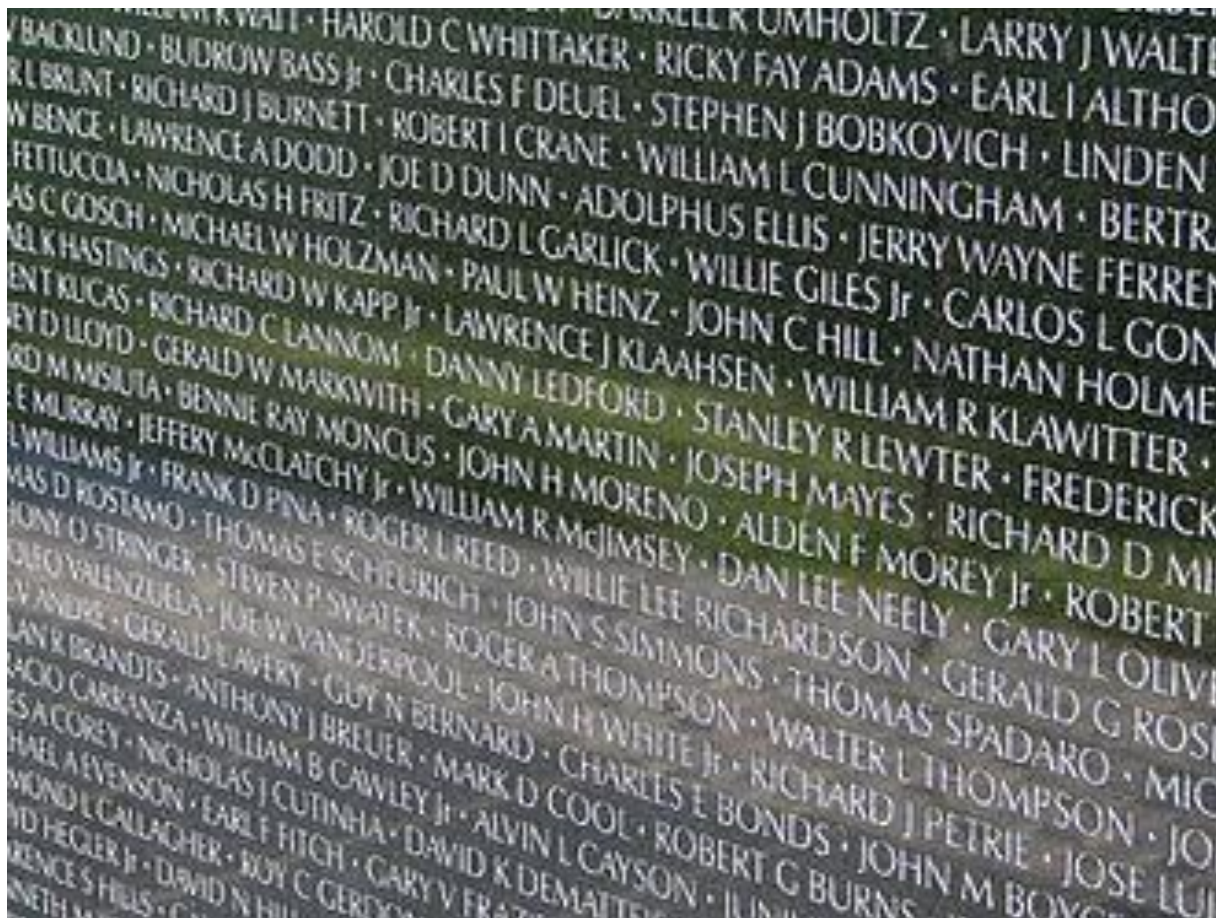
The wall originally listed 57,939 names when it was dedicated in 1982; however, other names have since been added and as of May 2018 there were 58,320 names, including eight women. The number of names on the wall is different than the official number of U.S. Vietnam War deaths, which is 58,220 as of May 2018. The names inscribed are not a complete list of those who are eligible for inclusion as some names were omitted at the request of families.

Directories containing all the names are located on nearby podiums at both ends of the monument where visitors may locate specific names.

The memorial has had some unforeseen maintenance issues. In 1984, cracks were detected in the granite and, as a result, two of the panels were temporarily removed in 1986 for study. More cracks were later discovered in 2010. There are several hypotheses about the cause of the cracks, the most common being due to thermal cycling. In 1990, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund purchased several blank panels to use



in case any were ever damaged; these were placed into storage at Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA. Two of the blank panels were shattered during the 2011 Virginia earthquake.



One panel of The Wall, displaying some of the names of fallen U.S. service members from the Vietnam War.

Inscribed in the memorial are the names of service members classified as "declared dead"; as the memorial contains names of individuals who had died due to circumstances other than *killed in action*, including murder, vehicle accidents, drowning, heart attack, animal attack, snake bites and other causes. Also included are the names of those whose status is unknown, which typically means "missing in action" (MIA). The names are inscribed in Optima typeface. Information about the rank, unit, and decorations are not given.

Those who are declared dead are denoted by a diamond, and those who are status unknown are denoted with a cross. When the death of one who was previously missing is confirmed, a diamond is superimposed over the cross. If the missing were to return alive, which has never occurred to date, the cross is to be circumscribed by a circle.

The earliest date of eligibility for a name to be included on the memorial is November 1, 1955, which corresponds to President Eisenhower deploying the Military Assistance Advisory Group to train the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The last date of eligibility is May 15, 1975, which corresponds to the final day of the Mayaguez incident. There are circumstances that allow for a name to be added to the memorial, but the death must be directly attributed to a wound received within the combat zone while on active duty. In such



cases, the determination is made by the Department of Defense. In these cases, the name is added according to the date of injury—not the date of death. The names are listed in chronological order, starting at the apex on panel 1E on July 8, 1959, moving day by day to the end of the eastern wall at panel 70E, which ended on May 25, 1968, starting again at panel 70W at the end of the western wall which completes the list for May 25, 1968, and returning to the apex at panel 1W in 1975. There are some deaths that predate July 8, 1959, including the death of Richard B. Fitzgibbon Jr. on 08Jun1956.

### ***The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall – The AV Wall***

The AV Wall is a half-scale size tribute monument of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. It is cared for by **Point Man Antelope Valley (PMAV)**, a Veterans outreach organization that ministers to veterans of all wars.

PMAV is a non-profit, faith-based 501(c)(3) autonomous organization that is fully financed by donations. PMAV is under the umbrella of **Point Man International Ministries (PMIM)**, Spring Brook, NY, a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing and meeting the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of veterans and their families. PMAV is the guardian of The AV Wall. They are responsible for the maintenance, storage and displaying of the Memorial which is an important part of healing for many Vietnam Veterans. Mike Bertell is the PMAV Outpost Leader.

The concept of a local mobile Vietnam memorial wall was first discussed in 2005 when a committee celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Palmdale Playhouse was looking for a mobile wall to display at the “A Piece of My Heart” play. The play, by Shirley Lauro, details the stories and struggles of six women who served in Vietnam. A mobile wall would be the perfect tie in, but none was available at that time. A Playhouse staff member asked, “Why can’t we build our own wall”, and the concept took off!

It took four years to raise the \$102,000 to fabricate the wall. **Signs and Designs, Inc.** of Palmdale, CA was integral in the manufacturing and engraving of the wall. Each year, upon the release of additions and changes to the wall by the Department of Defense, Signs and Designs, Inc. updates the AV Wall panels.

### **Interesting Wall Facts**

Vietnam Era: 01Nov1955 – 15May1975 (by Congress in 1999)

Names added since 1986 – 379 (as of 2018)

At least one US Service member died in Vietnam every day from 31Dec1965 to 09Dec1970. A total of 1,804 days and 52,448 lives lost!

There are 8 Females on the Wall all Nurses (7,484 Military women served in Vietnam, 6,250 were nurses.)

There are 36 sets of Brothers on the Wall and 1 set of Stepbrothers

There are 3 Fathers/Sons on the Wall

There are 16 Chaplains on the Wall, 7 Catholic (2 Medal of Honor Recipients), 2 Jewish, 7 Protestant

There are 10 Nurses on the Wall; 8 Female, 2 Male

There are 1343 Army Medics on the Wall

There are 691 Navy Corpsmen on the Wall

There are 8 Coast Guardsmen on the Wall

Earliest to Die – Richard B Fitzgibbon, Jr (52E, 021), 8Jun56

Highest Casualty Day – 31Jan68: 246

Highest Casualty Month – May68: 2,416



Highest Casualty Year – 1968: **16,916**

There are 76 Names on the Wall with ties to the Antelope Valley.

Medal of Honor – 160 on the Wall, Total for Vietnam 260

Army – 174

Marine – 57

Navy – 15

Air Force – 14

Native Americans – 227

Oldest on Memorial – Frank Luther Huddleston (16E, 109), 12Aug02, 68 years old (added in 2003)

Oldest to Die – Kenna Clyde Taylor (07W, 082), 21Sep70, 62 years old

Youngest – Dan Bullock (23W, 096), 07Jun69, 15.5 years old, Born: 21Dec53

13 Soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.

3,135 Soldiers on the Wall were 18 years old.

8,341 Soldiers on the Wall were 19 years old.

40,394 Soldiers on the Wall were under 22 years old.

At least one Soldier was killed as the result of an attack by an Indochinese tiger – Francis Baldino (39W, 063), 14Nov68, At about 2145 hours PFC Baldino was acting as his patrol's rear guard three paces behind the patrol leader when he was attacked and carried off the tiger, his body was recovered the next day.

234 KIA Battle of the Ia Drang Valley: 14/18Nov65; Panel 3W, Lines 48-100

Panel 1E covers the period from 8Jul1959 thru 6June1965; Panel 1W covers 15Apr1972 thru 15May1975  
9 years covered on 1E. Other 9 years – 139 Panels

1968 alone requires 74 of 140 panels – first 33E and last W35

Chester Melvin Ovnand died 9Jul59; his name is the second on the Wall, Panel 1E, Line 001. It was later discovered that his last name was misspelled, and the wrong middle initial was used: *Chester N Ovnard*. To correct the error his name was re-engraved on Panel 7E, Line 046. It was later discovered that his middle initial was again wrong: *Chester A Ovnand*! There has been no indication that his name with all the correct information will be re-engraved again.

All the names on The Wall were read aloud – in chronological order – during dedications on 10<sup>th</sup> (1992), 20<sup>th</sup> (2002), 25<sup>th</sup> (2007) and 30<sup>th</sup> (2012) anniversaries.

Larry E Smith and Larry E Smith are next to each other on Panel 14E, Line 109

There are five (5) Smiths in a row on Panel 38E, Line 14

Billie J Williams and Billie J Williams are next to each other on Panel 1W, Line 94; there is a Billy Joe Williams on Panel 11W, Line 119

Some Interesting Names on the Wall:

JACKIE *FRANKENSTEIN* Panel W59, Line 2

ANDREW JACKSON Panel 43E, Line 23

RANDOLPH THOMAS JEFFERSON Panel W52, Line 44

RONALD I Mc DONALD Panel W11, Line 3

FRANCIS B MIDNIGHT Panel 25E, Line 34

GEORGE PATTON Panel 22E, Line 47

ARTHUR JOHN RAMBO Panel W16, Line 126



*ROY R ROGERS* Panel 8E, Line 116

*KENNETH E SARGENT* Panel 3E, Line 104

*WISELEE SMITH* Panel 27E, Line 18

*SIM SMEDDLEY STEVERSON* Panel 31E, Line 89

*ABRAHAM TRUJILLO-TRUJILLO* Panel W36, Line 24

*JUAN P VALDEZ* Panel 49E, Line 48

*GEORGE R WASHINGTON* Panel 35E, Line 36

*PENI UELI* Panel 4E, Line 75

The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall – The AV Wall was displayed in Veterans Plaza at Rancho Tapo Community Park, 3700 Avenida Simi, Simi Valley, CA during Memorial Day Weekend 2019. The wall was installed in time for an opening ceremony at 4pm on May 24th. Public viewing was available 24 hours a day from 4PM on May 24<sup>th</sup> until 8am on May 28th.

Jerry R. German  
Junior Past Commandant

Jerry R. German  
Junior Vice Commandant



## JUDGE ADVOCATE

**John Miller**

kathiemill@aol.com  
(805) 581-5462



## GREATEST GENERATION



*Judge Advocate John Miller and Captain Sam Sachs*

June is a very special month for a great many of the Veterans of the "Greatest Generation." June 6, 1944 was the day allied combat troops landed in France to push the Germans out of Europe and eventually back into their own territory. On Saturday 25 May 2019, I drove out to the "Gathering of the Scottish Clans" in Costa Mesa. It was very exciting to watch the ancient clans come together and celebrate my heritage. I passed by a booth that had a 104-year-old World War II Veteran from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Glider Division. He was a Captain and flew (sort of) onto French soil on D-Day. His glider crashed and therefore he had to fight all the way through France as an Airborne Paratrooper. He was pulled back to England and regrouped and assigned another glider. This time he flew into Holland in "Operation Market Garden" ( better known as a bridge too far). He avoided capture and returned to fight with his unit until the surrender of Germany in 1945. He is an amazing man and is very proud of his involvement in saving the world from the Axis powers.



If you ever get a chance to stop and talk to a combat Veteran from WW II, do it. You will be rewarded in many ways, especially in the fact that most of the Veterans don't think they did much for the war effort. They give all the credit to those who died over there. There were a few Marines involved in the D-Day operation, but only as gunners and security details on the warships that bombarded the coastline of France. There were others who landed in France to assist and coordinate with the French resistance prior to the actual landings on 6 June 1944. Captain Sam Sachs lives in Southern California with his son and attends as many memorial services as he can. He is a true American Hero and it was a very high honor and distinct privilege to have met him and to have talked to him.

**Congratulations to Former Detachment 597 Commandant Dick Jennings who was voted in as the new State Commandant last week in San Diego. Welcome Harry Hodges as our new President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597 Commandant.**

Semper Fidelis  
John Miller  
Detachment 597 Judge Advocate



**ADJUTANT**  
**John Coley**  
w4simi@yahoo.com



### From the Desk of the Adjutant

#### **Marines, Corpsman and Associate Members,**

First, I want to congratulate our new Department (State) Commandant, Dick Jennings, who was elected at the State Convention in San Diego on June 8<sup>th</sup>. This is the first time since 2010 that the Department Commandant has come from the southern part of California. I am extremely confident that Dick will "square away" the Department as he did with Detachment 597. He has a department board that seems to be able to work with him and he has confidence that they will carry out the duties of their positions.

While at the State Convention, I heard of a new program from the Semper Fi Fund called "LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund for Vietnam Veterans." The Semper Fi Fund expanded their mission to care for Veterans from all US Military service branches who are catastrophically wounded, ill, or injured from combat operations in Vietnam.

#### **Eligibility Criteria\***

- Blind/legally blind
- ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease)
- Amputation (loss of any limb or extremity)



PTSD (combat related) - 70% or greater VA rating  
Paralyzed (paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia)  
Severe Traumatic Brain Injury (cannot function independently)  
Severe illness linked to agent orange exposure (recognized by the VA)  
*\*must have one or more of the conditions*

#### Documents Required

Copy of DD-214  
Photo ID (front/back)  
LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund Application  
VA Rating decision letter and/or signed note from medical provider stating diagnosis

#### Assistance may be provided in the following areas

Housing grant (adaptive housing, home modification/repair, rent, mortgage, and/or utilities)  
Transportation grant (adaptive transportation, vehicle modification/repair)  
Medical care grant(not covered by insurance, Medicare or the VA)  
Funeral/Cremation expense

For more information , please call 760-725-3680 or contact the Semper Fi Fund at  
[Vwestcoastcw@semperfifund.org](mailto:Vwestcoastcw@semperfifund.org).

Gary Sinise will be coming to the Elks Lodge on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June to speak to our Detachment and any guests that have signed up and reserved a seat. The maximum seating is controlled, so get your reservations to Deborah Sands at 818-535-4738 or Dick Jennings @mcl597commandant@gmail.com. Mr. Sinise will be doing a book signing after the event, so if you would like an autographed copy, please state this when making your reservation.

The next scheduled general meeting will be on the second Thursday of July, the 11<sup>th</sup> at the Elks Lodge in Simi Valley, because of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. Come early for a burger and the comradery before the formal meeting starts.

Our annual picnic is scheduled for the 13 July at the Simi Valley Veterans Plaza, on Avenida Simi, Simi Valley. The picnic is free, thanks to the 597 picking up the costs. As it is with every Detachment picnic if your last name starts with A to I, please bring a dessert; J through R bring a side dish; S to Z bring a salad. Our picnic area is situated near the kid's playground for the little ones and the young at heart to enjoy. We are planning competitions in non-strenuous sporting events between the service organizations for bragging rights for a year, so get ready for show them what you've got.

Semper Fidelis,  
John Coley  
Adjutant



## **THE DOG ROBBER HOWLS**

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

**DD Ben Pfister**

**Pound Keeper**

[benpdet597@gmail.com](mailto:benpdet597@gmail.com)

818-208-1095



### **Woof Woof Devil Dogs, Marines and Associate members,**

Reiterating what I said in prior newsletter articles, our pound is growing. Pound 325 welcomes Pups Rick Foss (Det.11) and Julio Rodriguez (Det.965), they joined the MODD at the Grand Growl in San Diego on June 7th. We also had two Pups (Don Joy Det.597 and RD James Det.965) advance to degree of Devil Dog.

Pound 325 congratulates Harry Hodges to his appointment as the new Commandant of Detachment 597, and Dick Jennings to the position of Commandant, Department of California of the MCL.

Woof Woof  
PDD Ben Pfister  
Pound Keeper



## CHAPLAIN Bradley Cantley

[bradleycantley@gmail.com](mailto: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:**

**Ken Mask**—Well be going for some more surgeries, pray for quick recovery.

**Don Joy**—is currently in the hospital. Please pray for healing.

**Hank Noorda**—Is at home, and recovering

**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-she is in the hospital in Utah

**Maria Avila**—Has cancer needs strength and healing

**Robert Nelson**—Is scheduled for back surgery

**Ericka Silva**—Still under treatment

**Thomas Hernandez**—Strength

**Blanca Hernandez**—Healing

**Jim Lieberknecht**—Stay strong.

**Mike Maxwell**—Still under treatments, and healing

**Sue Honaker**—need prayer for healing.

**Cherie Lynnae Whitaker**—Passed away please pray for her family she was a friend of veterans.

**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



## **HISTORY OF OUR DETACHMENT'S BOARD**

Each member of this detachment has a history that reflects who they are now and who they were years ago. The following is just a glimpse of the Marine Corps history of the Officers of Detachment 597.

### Past Commandant/Commandant Dept. of CA of the MCL

Dick Jennings, Service Number 2046822, MOS 8541 - Recon

Dick served as a scout/sniper with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Marines while in country, Viet Nam, from 1964 through 1966. He obtained the rank of E-5 sergeant and was very proud of that accomplishment. Dick completed 2 tours in Viet Nam and returned home to take up his civilian duties. Dick was proud to serve his country and was proud that he was able to honor all those who served in Viet Nam.

### Commandant

Harry Hodges, Service Number 2583394, MOS 3531

Harry is a veteran of the Viet Nam War and served as a driver assigned to motor transport battalion. Harry was assigned to the Da Nang Theater of operations from 1970 through 1971. Harry is a third generation Marine as his father and grand- father were also in the Corps. Harry served his nation honorably and was proud that he was able to protect his country and loved ones from communist aggression. Harry was a non-commissioned officer and obtained the rank of corporal prior to his discharge.

### Junior Vice Commandant

Jim Wagner, Service Number 2656904, MOS 0341/combat mortar-man and MOS 2531/radioman. Jim comes from a long line of Veterans who have served our nation in both war and peace. His uncle was a Major General in the United States Army and served in Korea with the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne division. His father continued the service to America as a Captain with the 5<sup>th</sup> United States Air Force. Jim joined the United States Marine Corps at age 18 and went to Viet Nam as a combat mortar-man and secondary as a combat radio man. He obtained the rank of lance-corporal prior to his honorable discharge. He served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Combined Action Group in and around Quang Nam province, Viet Nam. Jim's unit was always involved in heavy combat and was referred to as "all alone in Indian country." Jim felt that it was his patriotic duty to serve and was honored to do so in remembrance of his father and grandfather.

### Corporal of the Guard

Gunnery- Sergeant John Fuentes, Service Number 2498724, he had three MOSs - 2511 field wireman, 2531 radio operator and 0369 company gunnery sergeant. He served 20 years in the United States Marine Corps from 1968 through 1988. John went to Viet Nam and served with 1<sup>st</sup> med. Battalion HML 262 and finally in Weapons Platoon assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 23<sup>rd</sup> Marines. (Reserves) John's older brother served in World War II and John took up his brother's gauntlet. John believes that the combat he endured in Viet Nam made him realize that it was each citizen's duty to protect and defend their country.



### Judge Advocate

John Miller, Service number 2062660, MOS 0351/anti-tank assault man. John joined the United States Marine Corps in 1963 and served with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 9<sup>th</sup> Marines (known as the "Walking Dead") and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 1<sup>st</sup> Marines (known as "The First of the First") while in Viet Nam from 1965 to 1966. He served in Da Nang and later in Hue City. He returned from Viet Nam and went to H&S Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Marines and was discharged from the regular Marine Corps in 1967. He enlisted in the reserves from 1972 to 1985. John's grandfather served as an Army Sergeant in World War II in France. His great uncle was killed in action during the battle of Belleau Wood while serving alongside US Marines as a bugler with the US Army. His father was a Veteran of both World War II and Korea and retired from the United States Army after 23 years of service. Both of John's younger brothers served in the United States Army and his youngest served 3 tours in Viet Nam. John believes that it is every one's duty to serve their country and protect those who are unable to protect themselves.

### Chaplain

Brad Cantley MOS 0352/anti-guided missile gunner. He joined the United States Marine Corps when he was 18 years of age and served from 1987 until his discharge in 1991. During his tour of duty, Brad served during Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and was also stationed in Honduras, and Great Britain. His family tree also includes his Grandfather who served in World War II with the United States Navy. His father and uncle were Korean War Veterans, and he had an uncle who served in the United States Air Force during the Viet Nam War. Brad comes from a long line of warriors and he continues to help those in distress and discomfort. Brad strives to assist those who are ill or injured and keeps track of those in need. During his combat tours his unit was nick named "Task Force Papa Bear." His assignments included tours with 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion and Headquarters 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

As you can see, our Detachment is filled with men of honor and commitment who believe that we must carry on where others have left off. It is our duty and privilege to serve as officers of our Detachment. We are here to honor and respect those who have gone before. We are also here to assist those who are Veterans, members of our detachment, and the Marine Corps League who need our assistance. We are the officers of this Detachment and we are here to celebrate each-and-every Veteran that comes to us for assistance and advice. Our motto is "Veterans Helping Veterans" and we will always stand by that motto.

Semper Fi,  
John Miller  
Historian





## Matt E. Valenzuela

[mattval@aol.com](mailto:mattval@aol.com)

310-768-2847 Office

310-308-7015 Mobile



**Marines, Corpsmen and Associate members.**

*Please join me in congratulating Richard Jennings, Commandant Dept of CA of the MCL!*



Color Guard presentation of colors at the State Convention.



Passing of command.



Acceptance speech.

Semper Fi  
Matt Valenzuela



## PAYMASTER'S CORNER

**ANDY DOBRZYNSKI**

[andydobrzynski@gmail.com](mailto:andydobrzynski@gmail.com)

805-428-5902

**My fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Associates,**

Congratulations to our new State Commandant, Richard Dick Jennings, he deserves this position. The only thing is, he will be missed. I will miss him dearly.

Spent few days at the state convention in San Diego with my cousin Maximilian and his girlfriend Celine that are visiting us from Germany. It was a great experience for Maximilian to be able to see the new recruits graduating from the MCRD boot camp. What a ceremony. There is nothing more spectacular than that in the world. The Marine Corps Band was spectacular and all our friends that attended the ceremony made it more exciting.

On another note, please renew your memberships as soon as you can. We still have approximately 60 no shows for this year. Please also be aware that new membership dues for the upcoming year will be due in September. And yes, you can send them ahead of time.

"See you all at our annual picnic on July 13th starting at 9AM at Lemon Park. This year we invited VFW, American Legion and the Elks lodge."

Semper Fi,  
Andy Dobrzynski  
Paymaster





**William Trammell**  
**Vice President Los Angeles Chapter #8**  
**Montford Point Marines Association**  
[wmtrammell@twc.com](mailto:wmtrammell@twc.com)

### Marines:

The National Montford Point Marine Association, Los Angeles Chapter 8, holds its monthly meetings on the fourth Saturday of each month. Our June meeting will be on 22 June 2019 at 11:00 AM, the meeting place is at the American Legion Post 46 located at 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230. Our meetings are open to anyone who wishes to join us. Our membership is open to anyone who has served honorably in the US military.

During the past month we were saddened to announce the passing of two of our Original Montford Point Marines, *GySgt Lowell Arnold* (OMP) passed away on the 20 April, his services were held on May 15<sup>th</sup>, and *Mr. John Thomas Grier* (OMP) whose funeral services were on 26 April. Mr. Grier went to meet the supreme commander on April 17, 2019.

Members of the community were invited to attend a Band Concert performed by the First Marine Division Band. The concert was attended by members of the civilian community and a generous outpouring from the Military Veterans Community including the: U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and the U.S Marine Corps. The concert was performed at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center on June 2, 2019.

We submitted an RSVP for the Freedom, Patriotism and Valor Fund Raiser being hosted by the Los Angeles Chapter Tuskegee Airman. The luncheon will be held at the Westin Hotel Los Angeles Airport 5400 West Century Blvd LA 90045, event Center on June 15, 2019. The luncheon be 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Semper Fidelis

William Trammell  
Vice President  
Los Angeles Chapter #8  
MPMA



## USMC 1st Marine Division Concert Band

[www.1stmardiv.marines.mil/Units/1ST-DIV-BAND](http://www.1stmardiv.marines.mil/Units/1ST-DIV-BAND)

**FREE GENERAL ADMISSION**



**SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2019  
3:00 P.M.**

Oxnard Performing Arts Center  
800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, CA 93030

[www.oxnardambassadors.org](http://www.oxnardambassadors.org)

Hosted by: **Ambassadors**

### Tickets Available at:

- ★ Oxnard Performing Arts Center  
800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, CA 93030
- ★ St Johns Hospital Gift Shop,  
1600 N Rose Ave, Oxnard, CA 93030
- ★ American Drive In Cleaners  
535 S C St, Oxnard, CA 93030

Sponsors:



THE LA CHAPTER OF TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC.  
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE

## ***FREEDOM PATRIOTISM & VALOR FUND RAISER LUNCHEON***

SATURDAY, JUN 15  
11:00 AM TO 2:00PM

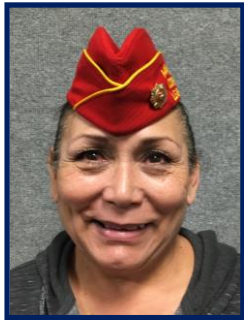
THE WESTIN HOTEL- LOS ANGELES AIRPORT  
5400 WEST CENTURY BLVD  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90045

**KEY NOTE SPEAKER**  
MAJOR GENERAL PETER J. GRAVETT  
UNITED STATE ARMY

**HOSTED BY**  
LA CHAPTER OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

**RSVP BY JUNE 5TH**  
COST: \$95.00 PER PERSON

**MUSIC ~ ENTERTAINMENT ~ RAFFLES**  
**MEET & GREET THE ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMEN**



## **ANNUAL PICNIC DIRECTOR**

### **VALERIA GALVAN**

#### **Hello Marines, Associates Family and Friends,**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Our Annual Family Picnic is on 13 July at the Simi Valley Veterans Plaza. The picnic is free, thanks to the 597 picking up the costs. As it is with every Detachment picnic, if your last name starts with A – I please bring a desert; J – R a side dish; S – Z a salad.

Come and share a good time with your friends and family, AND free food!

Sincerely,  
Valeria Galvan



#### **Birthdays for the month of July**

Parris Jason Duval	7
William P. Noyes*	11
David L. Revels*	11
Gerald H. Feldman*	12
Taj O'Toole*	15
Thomas R. Hernandez	20
Godfrey R. Harris*	25
Donald Ansell	26
Richard Farra	27
Rebecca Ann Theiler	30

\*Life Member



## **MANAGING EDITOR**

**RICHARD FARRA**

[richfarra@gmail.com](mailto:richfarra@gmail.com)

818-470-3258 Mobile

## **CONGRATULATIONS COMMANDANTS!**

Commandant Jennings, we're all very happy for your new assignment as Commandant for the Department of California of the Marine Corps League. Your leadership will be missed by the Detachment and we hope you'll continue to be active in the projects already in the works.

As for the GIPPER, National advised me that we were missing notifications from the Dept of CA, as well as Detachment vs. state average membership statistics. We look forward to hearing what you'll be doing and seeing you at the general meetings.

And Congrats to our new Detachment Commandant Harry Hodges! I have a feeling that Jennings knew something was going to happen, he had been involving Harry more frequently in the recent months - just a feeling... Regardless, Let's give both of our new Commandants a big OOOORAH!

The AV Wall ceremonies which included Color Guard presentation of Colors, rifle squad three-volley salute, dignitaries and Veteran speakers on remembrance, welcome home ceremony to Vietnam Veterans, and the playing of taps. It was emotional for many as we looked at the thousands of names engraved on the Wall. Matt Valenzuela was the Master of Ceremonies on the closing day, and he did a flawless job representing all Veterans in attendance.

There were too many Detachment members at the event, but I do have some pics below.

Richard 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](mailto:richfarra@gmail.com) and I will forward them to the Commandant anonymously for his feedback and include them in the Gipper.



## 2019-2020 BOARD MEMBERS AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

Rank or Title	Name	Phone	E-mail
Commandant	Harry Hodges	805-515-1401	<a href="mailto:Hodges1951@gmail.com">Hodges1951@gmail.com</a>
Sr. Vice Commandant			
Jr. Vice Commandant	Jim Wagner	760-898-4548	<a href="mailto:analogcowboy61@gmail.com">analogcowboy61@gmail.com</a>
Jr. Past Commandant	Jerry German	818-324-2338	<a href="mailto:jrgerman@sbcglobal.net">jrgerman@sbcglobal.net</a>
Judge Advocate	John Miller	805-581-5462	<a href="mailto:johnmillerusmc@gmail.com">johnmillerusmc@gmail.com</a>
Adjutant	John Coley	805-368-1086	<a href="mailto:w4simi@yahoo.com">w4simi@yahoo.com</a>
Paymaster	Andy Dobrzynski	805-428-5902	<a href="mailto:andydobrzynski@gmail.com">andydobrzynski@gmail.com</a>
Sergeant-at-Arms	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	<a href="mailto:Faustogalvan14@gmail.com">Faustogalvan14@gmail.com</a>
Corporal of the Guard	John Fuentes	805-485-4230	<a href="mailto:John.R.Fuentes@Nav.mil">John.R.Fuentes@Nav.mil</a>
Chaplain	Bradley Cantley	805-813-3571	<a href="mailto:bradleycantley@gmail.com">bradleycantley@gmail.com</a>
Color Guard Commander	Ruy Peña	818-912-9863	<a href="mailto:colorguard597@gmail.com">colorguard597@gmail.com</a>
Color Guard Vice Commander	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	<a href="mailto:Faustogalvan14@gmail.com">Faustogalvan14@gmail.com</a>
Ship's Store Captain	Harry Hodges	805-515-1401	<a href="mailto:Hodges1951@gmail.com">Hodges1951@gmail.com</a>
Director of Events	Ken "Doc" Honaker	805-416-4063	<a href="mailto:kdhonaker@gmail.com">kdhonaker@gmail.com</a>
Director of Speakers	Robert Martinez	805-368-7001	<a href="mailto:Thebugler597@yahoo.com">Thebugler597@yahoo.com</a>
Fundraising Chairman	Harry Hodges	805-515-1401	<a href="mailto:Hodges1951@gmail.com">Hodges1951@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Miller	805-581-5462	<a href="mailto:johnmillerusmc@gmail.com">johnmillerusmc@gmail.com</a>
Managing Editor, The Gipper	Richard Farra	818-470-3258	<a href="mailto:richfarra@gmail.com">richfarra@gmail.com</a>
Young Marines	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	<a href="mailto:Fausto_galvan0471@yahoo.com">Fausto_galvan0471@yahoo.com</a>
	Timothy Stratton	661-257-9690	<a href="mailto:e-8sierra@sbcglobal.net">e-8sierra@sbcglobal.net</a>
	Juan Avalos	(858) 229-1894	<a href="mailto:avalosimscvym@gmail.com">avalosimscvym@gmail.com</a>
Toys For Tots Chairman	John Mitchell	805-379-9664	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Mitchell.is18@statefarm.com">Kathleen.Mitchell.is18@statefarm.com</a>
Director of Associates	Valeria Galvan	818-302-9816	<a href="mailto:ValeriaHGalvan@yahoo.com">ValeriaHGalvan@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Department of California Staff</b>			
Commandant	Richard A. Jennings	805-328-9817	<a href="mailto:califcommandant@gmail.com">califcommandant@gmail.com</a>
<b>MODD</b>			
MODD Pound Keeper	Ben Pfister	805-208-1095	<a href="mailto:benpdet597@gmail.com">benpdet597@gmail.com</a>
VAVS MODD Dept. of CA Pack - Watch Dog	Fausto Galvan	818-259-2119	<a href="mailto:fausto_galvan471@yahoo.com">fausto_galvan471@yahoo.com</a>



## 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](mailto: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/](http://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