

Leatherneck News

Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment #931

Upcoming Events

- 10 April— 7 PM Marine Family Support Group Meets, Jasper American Legion
- 15 April—Entry Forms and collection boxes for 5K go out.
- 17 April—Regular Meeting, Jasper American Legion, 7 PM. Election of Officers.
- 24 April— Sponsor donations for 5k should be turned in.
- 24-27 April—Central Division Conference, Louisville, KY
- 10 May—Family Support Group Care Package packing, Jasper American Legion, 1 PM
- 15 May—Last day to pre-register for 5K
- 17 May—4th Annual 5K Run/Walk
- 6-8 June—Department of Indiana State Convention, Richmond
- 14 June—1st Annual Fallen Soldiers Bass Tournament, Newton-Stewart Ramp, Patoka Lake
- 4-5 October—Fall Conference Jasper

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Marine Family Support Group

The Marine Family Support Group is getting ready for their next care package mail out. On 10 May, the Group will meet at the Jasper American Legion to put together the packages and prepare them for shipping. The following items are in very short supply and donations would be greatly appreciated:

- Stick Deodorant
- Socks (8-12 pack is nice)
- Snack items, such as jerkey, meat sticks. Must be in original package and must be non-perishable.
- Toothpaste
- Drink Mixes
- Playing cards
- Double A batteries. Must be in original package. Packs of 8-10 are ideal.

Contact any Detachment Officer to arrange for drop off of donated items.

Detachment Loses Charter Member

Once again Detachment and Marine Family Support Group members gathered to honor one of our own. One of the original members, crucial for the startup of the Detachment, Leonard Benning passed away on March 11th 2008. Due to Leonard's active roles in the Huntingburg VFW and the Santa Claus American Legion, a large number of visitors made their way through the condolence line at the funeral home. Leonard had served as the VFW Post Commander and as a

Detachment Election of Officers

The annual Election of Officers was held during the March regular meeting with the following results:

Commandant: Dave Englert

Senior Vice: Vacant

Junior Vice: Chad Mehringer

Adjutant: Dennis Englert

Paymaster: Tina Moriarty

Judge Advocate: Jeramey Osborne

Sergeant at Arms: Allen Fritz

These Officers comprise the Executive Committee of the Detachment and will be installed on April 17th during the regular meeting.



Fresh from boot camp, Private Benning strikes a trim figure in his Service Alphas. Note that Leonard is standing on a bridge railing! You'll notice very little difference between this 1952 uniform and today's.

member of the Post's Honor Guard. Leonard served in the Marine Corps from 1952 through 1954 receiving two Atlantic Service Certificates and completing his service as a Corporal. Leonard was given full military honors in a combined effort by the Detachment and the VFW and Legion Posts.

Commandant's Corner

From time to time, I receive information about employment opportunities, many specifically directed towards the veteran community. A close friend of the Detachment, Don Hayes passed the following:

"Seasonal jobs with the Indiana Department of Transportation are available. These jobs usually run from April 1 through November 1 and pay between \$8.00 and \$11.00 per hour. There are some indoor office jobs but most are outdoor jobs in maintenance and construction. College students may apply. With the job market like it is currently, persons who have been laid off may be seeking alternative employment.

Please email me or call 634-9093 if you know of anyone interested in a seasonal job.
Don Hayes"

This month also marked the passing of another of our esteemed charter members, Leonard Benning. Leonard's light hearted humor and presence will be sorely missed.

As you can see by the calendar, we are getting close to crunch time for the 5K run. Very soon we'll be setting out entry forms and collection boxes and completing our sponsor list. I'm asking that all sponsor contributions be turned in by April 21st to ensure that they are recognized on the t-shirts.

As part of the Armed Forces Day recognition, the Patriot Guard Riders will host a Memorial Ride to honor southwest Indiana's fallen heroes. This will be a 150 mile poker run starting at the Flying J in Evansville at the intersection of 41 and 64, with an estimated time of arrival in Dubois between 1:30 and 2:00 PM. Detachment members are invited. A motorcycle is not required.

The second week in April marks important military dates. The 6th is Army Day. 9 April is the National Former POW Recognition Day and 11 April marks the official cease fire of the Persian Gulf War. You'll note in this month's Marine Corps History events that pretty much show the depth and breadth of the Marine Corps mission. Semper Fi.

This Month in Marine Corps History

3 April 1945: On Okinawa, Marines of the III Amphibious Corps continued to make good progress all along their front, clearing Zampa Misaki and seizing the Katchin Peninsula, thus effectively cutting the island in two. By this date (D+2), III AC elements had reached objectives thought originally to require 11 days to take.

5 April 1947: Five Marine guards were killed and eight wounded when attacked by Communist Chinese raiders near the Hsin Ho ammunition depot in Northern China. This last major clash between Marines of the 1st Marine Division and Communist forces occurred shortly after withdrawal and redeployment plans from China were issued for the 1st Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing on 1 April.

10 April 1959: Lieutenant Colonel John H. Glenn, Jr. was named as one of the original seven Project Mercury astronauts selected for space training. The seven astronauts, all volunteers, were selected by NASA from an initial group of 110 leading military test pilots. Three years later, on 20 February 1962, Col Glenn would become the first American to orbit the Earth.

12-13 April 1918: Marines of the 4th Brigade suffered their first gas attack on the night and early morning hours of 12-13 April when the Germans bombarded the 74th Company, 6th Marines near Verdun with mustard gas. Nine Marine officers and 305 enlisted Marines were gassed and evacuated, and 30 Marines died from the effects of the gas shells which hit in the middle of the reserve area cantonments in which they were

sleeping.

15 April 1962: Marine Corps operational involvement in the Vietnam War began on Palm Sunday when HMM-362 with its Sikorsky UH-34s arrived at Soc Trang in the Delta south of Saigon. The task unit was called "Shufly" and its first operational employment involved lifting Vietnamese troops into battle.

18 April 1983: One Marine Security Guard was killed and seven were wounded when a large car bomb exploded just outside the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Lance Corporal Robert McMaugh was standing guard at Post 1, just inside the front entrance when the bomb exploded outside the door. The explosion killed 61 people including 17 Americans. LCpl McMaugh was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on 26 April.

21 April 1951: Marine carrier-based airplanes made their first aerial contact with enemy planes over the Korean front lines. Captain Philip C. DeLong shot down two YAK fighters and 1st Lieutenant Harold D. Daigh destroyed one more and damaged another in the heavily defended Pyongyang-Chinnampo area. Both pilots were with VMF-312 flying from the USS Bataan.

27 April 1805: First Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon, who with seven other Marines was part of a force of Greeks and

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This Month in Marine Corps History Contd

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Arabs led by American Consul William Eaton, raised the United States flag for the first time over a conquered fortress of the Old World at Derne, a stronghold of the Tripolitan pirates. Two Marines were killed and one wounded in the assault on the walled city.

28 April 1993: The last A-6E Intruder departed from Marine Corps service. Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 332 transferred the last Marine A-6E to St. Augustine, Florida, and prepared for the squadron's transition to the F/A-18D and eventual movement from Cherry Point to Beaufort, South Carolina.

Legislative News—

Follows is testimony provided to the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs by a severely injured Marine,

Cpl. Casey Owens:

I was seriously injured on September 20, 2004 while serving under 1st Battalion 7th Regiment. I was assisting in a medivac (medical evacuation) to rescue Sgt. Foster Harrington when I ran over two anti-tank mines, which resulted in the loss of both legs. Consequently, I also suffered two collapsed lungs, numerous shrapnel wounds, pulmonary embolism, broken clavicle and jaw, perforated eardrums, trauma to my head. I was flown to Landstuhl, Germany from a field hospital in Iraq, and awoke from a coma three weeks later in Bethesda Maryland Naval Hospital. After numerous surgeries to stabilize me, I was transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Brooke Medical Center for my recovery phase. Over the next year and a half, I received more than sufficient care from these centers.

I was retired February 26, 2006. Shortly thereafter, I had to return to Brooke Army Medical Center to have my right myodesis repaired for a second time. I enrolled into the VA on April 1, 2006. I had transitioned to care under the VA system and was no longer in the Department of Defense's system. By this time, my right myodesis failed for a third time. After bringing it to the attention of the VA doctors, I was instructed to return to Brooke Army Medical Center for treatment. The doctor had suggested that I undergo the same procedure that I had the first two times again. I did not approve of their recommendation, and my objections had fallen on his deaf ear. I returned to the Houston VA letting them know I was not satisfied.

It was not until six months later that the procedure I had requested and wanted was performed. The two previous surgeries took less than 72 hours to be approved. I decided to call on non-

profit organizations for assistance. Organizations such as Semper Fi Fund, Marine for Life, Wounded Warriors and other non-government personnel helped me and their help was colossal. . In my opinion, this reflects poorly upon the culture and decisions of the VA system currently in place. While some of the problems I have encountered have been resolved, many have not. The learning curve of VA's system is steep and its bureaucratic maze is hard to understand. It has been thirty years since the last major war and what lessons has the VA learned since then? Did no one expect another war or learn anything from Viet Nam? What have the educated and highly paid personnel who have been appointed to correct the system been focusing their attention on? While the system continues to be broken, where is all the government funding going that is supposed to be fixing the system and what are they doing with ?

A tremendous problem that I have encountered is the double standard of the VA and the Department of Defense's claims and rating for veterans. It took me three to five months of agonizing appointments and addendums to finalize my Medical Board, which were performed by competent and qualified military and civilian personnel. After I had completed my medical boards, I thought I was finished with that process, only to find out I was not. When I enrolled in the VA, it took almost another year and a half to finalize those claims. It is actions like this that make veterans avoid the VA. My qualms is not that the VA does not have enough programs in place to benefit veterans or the adequacy of it, rather, it is the bureaucracy and red tape that are the problems. While many problems have been addressed, it is time for SOLUTIONS.

A key solution to solving many problems is establishing an OIF/OEF Center. Though this idea has been explored by setting up OIF/OEF coordinators at every VA, it is not enough. There needs to be a centralized building or group of personnel specifically for them. A great example for the VA to emulate is something I experienced at Walter Reed and Brooke Army Medical Centers. There, key staff met weekly to discuss all aspects of patient care and kept an open line of communication between departments. For example, Joe Ma-

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Southern Indiana Leathernecks
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Email: marines@psci.net

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Legislative News—(Contd)

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rine does not show up for physical therapy or his prosthetic appointments. With all of the departments communicating with one another, a psychologist may intervene and have some insight as to why he may be avoiding these appointments. It may be because he is suffering from severe PTSD and does not want to leave his room. From there, the department heads can agree on the best course of treatment and can initiate it in a holistic approach. . Another matter I take great issue with, and have experienced it and continue to do so, is the sharing of medial records between the Department of Defense and the VA. One solution may be the implementation of an ID card, similar to that which is in place for Active duty personnel. Each ID card has a microchip, which could contain all of their military and medical records accessible by a computer.

The impression that I get from the VA is that some within the organization think it is the duty of the veteran to endure and resolve these problems on their own. Those, like me, who were paid as a Marine Corp Grunt to do their job to the best of their ability never questioned whether if we got injured my government would be there for me. We all knew it would. It is now time for those who are responsible for the VA to care for those who did their duty. This is my sworn testimony and I stand by it just as I stand by my Marine Corp and the job we did in Iraq.

Semper Fi
Cpl. Casey Owens, 1-7 US

Detachment Officers:

Commandant:
Dave Englert 812-357-2792

Senior Vice Commandant:
Patrick Moriarty 812-695-5061

Chaplain
John Wagner 812-683-4997

Jr. Vice Commandant
Chad Mehringer

Paymaster
Tina Moriarty 812-695-5061

Adjutant
Dennis Englert 812-482-2987

Judge Advocate
Jeramey Osborne 812-295-6005

Public Affairs Officer
Steve Lindauer 812-634-9685

Sgt. at Arms
Allen Fritz 812-683-2192

Historian
Pat O’Keefe 812 630-2567

Quartermaster
Tim Rue 757-880-3138