

Leatherneck News

Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment #931

Upcoming Events

- 9 April 2009 – Marine Family Support Group meets at the Jasper American Legion 7 PM
- 16 April 2009— Meeting of the 5K Run Committee, 6:15 PM.
- 16 April 2009—Regular Meeting of the Detachment. Jasper American Legion, 7 PM. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
- 17-19 April 2009—National Central Division Conference, Neenah, Wisconsin. Hosted by Winnebago Detachment.
- 30 April 2009—1st Night for Marines—watch your mailbox and this newsletter for more information
- 16 May 2009—Fifth Annual Armed Forces Day 5k Run/Walk.
- 5-7 June 2009—Department of Indiana Convention. Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis. (317) - 244-3361 for reservations. Contact Pat or Dave for more info.

NITE for Marines—An Update

Just a reminder about the 'NITE for MARINES' on Thursday evening April 30th.

By now all members should have received their invitation letters to 'NITE for MARINES' event. If for some reason you have not received a notice please call me at (812) 695-3115 and I will explain fully the details necessary for attending. TAKE NOTE, that the deadline for reservations is Saturday April 18th.

We are hoping for a respectable turnout for the evening of fellowship among our Detachment members and are looking forward to chatting and laughing and generally enjoying a relaxing evening together.

This being the very first event of this type it is imperative that our members and their guests support the Detachment by attending and being seen within the community.

Ultimately it is hoped that our presence and exposure within the community can make more people aware of our MCL Detachment, and the good deeds that the League itself does in sponsoring and participating in the various community service events held throughout the year. Additionally, we are hoping that this will lead to an increase of applicants, joining our elite brotherhood, allowing us to continue supporting these worthwhile causes. It takes volunteers to ensure the success of any project undertaken and we must increase our membership rolls so as to have enough people available without asking the same individuals over and over again to carry the burden.

Current members, we are appealing to you to attend the regular meetings,

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Membership Chairman's Roll Call

"Welcome Aboard" to our newest members...

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our five new members who have joined since the first of the year.

Dr. Ryan Sherer became an associate member at the January meeting having been sponsored by our Chaplin John Wagner. During the March meeting four new members were voted upon and accepted, two as associates, and the other two others as regular members, one a life member.

John Wagner's second sponsored member this year was David Saull (associate), and I had the privilege of sponsoring Edward R. Oser (associate), Paul W. Chanley (regular) and Steve L. Wagner (regular) who joined as a life member. We are happy to have each of these gentlemen join our Detach-

ment and look forward to a long lasting friendship with each.

With the addition of these last members we have reached our membership goal for the first recruiting period of the year, and are looking forward in anticipation to adding even more members, as the year progresses. We still have 3 full months remaining in the first recruiting segment and everyone should make an effort to sign up at very least one new member each year.

Be sure to mention to any potential member over the age of 61 that 'life membership' dues for that age group are only \$150 plus their first years dues, which incidentally may be paid in full with their initial application. (It is not necessary to have been a member for an en-

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Commandant's Corner

Once again I find getting the newsletter out in a timely fashion to be a bit of a challenge. Thankfully, many of you keep me informed of items that would be good to include. Much appreciated!

Junior Vice Commandant Ed Herzog is fired up! Let's all do our best to support his superb efforts to grow the Detachment. I'm looking forward to the Nite for Marines and probably ought to make my reservations any day now!

As Senior Vice Commandant Pat Moriarty reported at last meeting, the Department of Indiana Spring Conference has led to some debate with regards to the rights of Detachments and the responsibilities of our leadership. As many of you know, my position is that the membership makes the decisions; the role of the elected Officers is to implement those decisions. A Commandant is responsible for providing leadership and vision, but does not direct. As with other volunteer organizations, the League is a "bottom-up" organization formed by and for its membership.

Deadlines for the 5K are almost here. I must have sponsors names by the end of the day on April 20th to ensure that they will get on the

back of the shirts. At the time of this writing, we seem to be considerably behind past years not only in the size of the donations but also in the number of donations. Please make sure that you've contacted your sponsors from past years. Understandably, the economy makes corporate sponsorship a bit more strained than in past years.

The April 13th edition of the Marine Times reports a new study by the University of Texas, the VA Medical Center, Dallas, and the Southern Methodist University. Of most interest in this study was the establishment of 3 categories of "Gulf War syndrome" based upon symptoms and further ties these categories to exposures to various chemicals and substances. As more studies like this are finalized, perhaps we'll see an improvement in care to afflicted veterans.

This issue also highlights some of the legislative efforts towards veterans. Previous budget crisis have shown that Veterans benefits and programs are prone to cuts; "sacrifices" necessary to balance the budget. It is vital that each of us stay on our toes to ensure that these sacrifices are shared by all, not just veterans.

Legislative Actions

Leaders of the House Armed Services Committee say they expect the Pentagon will once again propose big TRICARE fee hikes for military retirees.

Their March 15 letter to the Chairman of the House Budget Committee was very specific on the latter point, and asked for extra budget authority to reject the expected increases.

"The committee believes that the [end of April] budget request will again assume over \$1 billion in savings within the Defense health budget, based on recommendations from a previous Defense Department Task Force," said the letter signed by Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and Ranking Minority Member John McHugh (R-NY). "The committee will need additional [budget headroom] to prohibit the fee increases that we expect will be proposed by the Department of Defense."

If you agree with MOAA that that's the last thing the Defense De-

partment should do, you still have time to weigh in with the President and the Secretary of Defense, but you need to act quickly.

The House and Senate approved their respective versions of the FY2010 Budget Resolution on Friday before taking off for the two-week Easter recess. In the meantime, House and Senate leaders will be working to resolve the differences between the two versions so they can pass a final resolution once Congress reconvenes.

Of necessity, Hill leaders find themselves in a "cart-before-the-horse" mode this year. Their rules require finishing the budget resolution before April 15, on the assumption that the President's budget is delivered to them in February. But every newly elected administration needs extra time to prepare its initial budget - which won't be delivered to Congress until the end of April.

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NITE for Marines—An Update

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whenever possible, and participate in some of the functions, even if just once or twice per year. Walk along with the Family Support Group at one of the scheduled parades. Surely you can wave at the crowd, toss candy to the kids, or shake hands with those Veterans in the crowd, and others who applaud our Color Guard as it passes. It's very gratifying to see and feel the support as we pass in review. Take pride in your country as you did when you were actively serving in uniform. Help us by becoming active within the community, and together maybe we can influence enough of the

general public to Take Back our Country. "We stood up for it in our youth, let us not forsake it in our adulthood!"

Come to the 'NITE for MARINES' and visit with us even if just for the meal and exchange of a few pleasant-ries. We will be looking forward to seeing you there.

Ed Herzog

'NITE for MARINES' (chrn)

Semper Fi,

Legislative Actions

(Continued from page 2)

In March, leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees wrote their respective Budget Committees to request extra budget headroom for several specific priorities. Their requests included extra allocations for a 3.4% military pay raise (vs. the 2.9% proposed by the Pentagon), additional progress to ease VA compensation offsets to military retired pay and SBP annuities, and to reject any increases in TRICARE fees that the Administration may propose in its final budget submission.

The recommendations of both Armed Services committees for 3.4% pay raise are a very good sign that it will be approved, as the full Congress has agreed with such joint recommendations in the past.

Both budget resolutions also include "deficit-neutral reserve funds" that could potentially address compensation improvements for disabled retirees; SBP-DIC survivors; Guard-Reserve retirement, health and GI Bill benefits; and DoD and VA health care issues. It's nice that Congress acknowledged those needs, but these provisions offer no firm commitments. The "deficit-neutral" qualifier means they can be done only if Congress finds other "mandatory spending" reductions to offset any increases in those areas. The difficulty of identifying such offsets is why we haven't made more progress in past years.

New Bills of Interest

A number of new bills have been introduced that would benefit active duty members, retirees, Guard and Reserve members, and their families and survivors. Please click on the bills below to send a MOAA-suggested message to your elected officials asking them to cosponsor the respective bill.

[S.J. Res. 10](#) and [H.J. Res. 23](#) - Sen. Inhofe (R-OK) and Rep. Franks (R-AZ): Establish a U.S. policy of committing a minimum of 4% of the nation's gross domestic product to the base defense budget to meet national security requirements.

[S. 644](#) – Sen. Chambliss (R-GA): Allow Guard and reserve members to draw retired pay 3 months early for each 90 days served on active duty since 9/11/01. Current law only provides such credit for service after Jan. 28, 2008.

[S. 581](#) – Sen. Bennett (D-CO): Exclude combat pay from household income in calculating a military child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals under school lunch and other programs.

[H.R. 972](#) – Rep. Wilson (R-SC): Authorize all Guard and Reserve retirees eligibility for TRICARE upon receipt of retired pay. Under current law, those qualifying for earlier retirement due to active duty service are denied TRICARE coverage until age 60.

[H.R. 809](#) – Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL): Reduce from 57 to 55 the age at which a qualifying remarrying survivor could retain VA dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).

[H.R. 1592](#) – Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL): Require the military pay raise to exceed private sector pay growth by 0.5 percentage points each year for 2011 through 2014. The purpose of the bill is to continue reducing the current 2.9% pay gap between military and private sector wages by a half-percentage point each year.

Membership Chairman's Roll Call (Cont'd)

tire year prior to applying for that 'life membership.')

A very good deal, in that they will be completely paid up for life in just five short years. A good incentive for joining at that age, and yes, there are a number of 'old Marines' out there over that age that have never been members, or who may never have been asked, not to mention many veterans of other branches of the military, who could join at the same cost as an associate member. Also keeping in mind that associate membership does not require prior military service. Persons of good quality, that would be considered an asset to the Marine Corps League, and to the principles of which we believe in and uphold, not only are welcome, but should actively be sought after as members.

Much behind the scenes work has been done the past several months gathering leads, preparing and mailing letters to potential members, appealing to those members who are listed as 'unpaid' to retain their membership status and preparing and mailing invitations to all current members to attend the upcoming "NITE for MARINES"

event on April 30th. I'm hoping that in the months to come these preparations begin having an affect on our membership rolls and that our Detachment continues to receive new applications on a regular basis.

We will be looking forward to seeing our new members attend our regular meetings, and perhaps taking an interest in certain events, by participating as a volunteer. We can always use extra hands, and ideas, that may be of benefit to the good of the league.

The ball has been started rolling, so let's keep the momentum going by submitting new applicants for membership.

Semper Fi,

Ed Herzog
Jr. Vice Commandant (Membership Chrm)

Apply

Postage

*Southern Indiana Leatherneck
Detachment #931*

Southern Indiana Leathernecks
Marine Corps League
P.O. Box 184

Once a Marine, Always a Marine

WWW.SILDMARINES.COM

Please deliver to:

What do those VA Priority Codes Mean?

Priority of care for Veterans through the VA Medical System is established through a coding system numbered 1 through 8, based primarily upon the veteran's level of service connected disabilities and/or income means testing for non-service connected disabilities and medical care. The codes are: **Priority 1**—Veterans with service-connected conditions rated 50 percent or more disabling or who have been determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions. **Priority 2**—Veterans with service connected disabilities rate 30 percent to 40 percent disabling. **Priority 3**—Veterans who or former prisoners of war; have received the Purple Heart; have service-connected conditions rated 10 percent or 20 percent disabling; were discharged from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; and veterans who were injured as a result of VA treatment or participation in a VA vocational rehabilitation program. **Priority 4**—Veterans receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits and veterans who have been determined by the VA to be catastrophically disabled. **Priority 5**—Veterans who are receiving VA pension benefits; eligible for Medicaid programs; or whose income and assets are below the established dollar thresholds. **Priority 6**—Veterans who have zero-percent service connected conditions, but are receiving VA compensation, are seeking care only for disorders relating to Ionizing Radiation and Project 112/SHAD; are seeking care for Agent Orange exposure during service in Vietnam; are seeking care for Gulf War Illness or for conditions related to exposure to environmental contaminants during service in the Persian Gulf; served in World War I or the Mexican Border War; or serviced in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after Nov. 11, 1998 for two years following discharge or release from the military. **Priority 7**—Nonservice-connected veterans and zero-percent non-compensable service-connected veterans with income exceeding the threshold for the VA means tests established by law, and below the Department of Housing and Urban Development's geographic income limit, or with income below both the VA threshold and HUD low-income limit, whose net worth plus income exceeds \$80,000 and who agree to pay specified co-payments. **Priority 8**—Created by Congress in 2002, comprised of higher-income veterans who seek care for illnesses unrelated to military service subject to co-payments and whose income and net worth exceed both the VA means tests threshold and HUD's geographic means test threshold. Veterans who enrolled prior to Jan 17, 2003 remain in the VA Health System. Enrollment in this category has been suspended because of the inability of the VA to provide timely care to veterans already enrolled. For information about income thresholds go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility/Library/pubs/VAIncomeThresholds.

Detachment Officers:

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Senior Vice Commandant:

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Chaplain

John Wagner 812-683-4997

Jr. Vice Commandant

Ed Herzog 812-695-3115

Paymaster and Web Sergeant

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Chad Mehringer

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Sgt. at Arms

Allen Fritz 812-683-2192

Historian

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Tim Rue 757-880-3138