

Leatherneck News

Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment #931

Upcoming Events

- 7 August—Marine Corps League Birthday Ball Meeting
- 14 August—Family Support Group Meeting, Jasper American Legion, 7 PM
- 10-16 August—National Convention, Orlando FL.
- 21 August—Regular Meeting, Jasper American Legion, 7 PM.
- 24 August—Birdseye Parade 1 PM
- 31 August—Labor Day Party at the Blemker Farm. 2PM—???
- 28 September—Huntingburg Herbstfest Parade Noon
- 4-5 October—Fall Conference Jasper Inn Convention Center, Jasper
- 12 October—18th District Volunteer Firefighters Parade, Otwell, 1PM
- 1 November—Marine Corps League Birthday Ball, Jasper Inn & Convention Center

Detachment Pays Final Tributes to Fallen Members

Marines of the Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment were called upon twice during July to assist in providing final honors to our fellow Marines.

On 15 July, Vietnam veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Robert “Bob” Sanders was called to his final reward. Bob was well known for his incredible sense of humor, which prevailed until the end, and his strong sense of civic duty.

Bob was a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, a member of the Marine Corps League and a life member of VFW Post 2939, Tell City. True to the leadership expected of a Marine, Bob led his fellow VFW members as the post commander.

With his fellow Marines as pall-bearers, Bob was laid to rest receiving full honors from VFW Post 2939 and the Marine Corps League.

An interesting footnote to Bob’s story is told in a

single photograph of Bob receiving his Purple Heart while recovering from his injuries. Presenting the Purple Heart was then Governor

Ronald Reagan, with his wife, Nancy at his side.

On 21 July, Life Member Donald Johnson passed away after a long illness. Don, a Korean War veteran, didn’t stop giving to his country after his tour of duty ended. Don was not only a member the Marine Corps League, but also VFW Post 2366, Huntingburg, and the Holland American Legion.

Also true to the leadership abilities expected of a Marine , Don manned the helm of the Fraternal Order of Eagles 3335.

Don’s services were provided by his fellow Marines, members of VFW Post 2366 and the Holland American Legion.

Continuing a tradition that has been of solace to our Marine families in the past, an evening vigil with the Ceremony for the Deceased was provided for the families of these distinguished men who bore the title—Marine.



8 July 2008—Commandant Englert and Chaplain Wagner conduct the Ceremony of Initiation for Bob Sanders, who had been unable to make it to previous ceremonies.

Inside this issue:

Fallen Comrades	1
Latest Events	1
Commandant’s Corner	2
Marine Corps History	2, 3
Legislative Affairs	3, 4
Detachment Officers	4

Independence Day in Pike County

The 4th of July is always an inspirational event in the city of Otwell, Indiana. What can only be described as an old fashioned Independence Day celebration is topped off with an old fashioned street parade. The 2008 Independence Day Parade continued a proud tradition with the Marines of the Southern Indiana Leathernecks providing the Color Guard for the parade, with the Marine Family Support Group in a strong showing. Parades like this one allows the Detachment to not only proudly show the colors for all to see, but to also promote the mission and name of the Marine Corps League.

New Website Up and Running!

A brand new domain name, a faster server, and greatly expanded storage were some of the features unveiled in the launch of the Detachment’s new website. On 20 July, transition to the new web service at WWW.SILDMARINES.COM was completed. Although the look and feel of the website are mostly unchanged, users should immediately notice a greatly enhanced download speed. With server space now measured in the gigabytes instead of megabytes, the ability to provide better resolution newsletters as well as some photography and additional features is now possible.

Commandant's Corner

The old adage "the older you get, the faster life goes" seems to be ringing true lately. Hard to believe that July has already escaped us and we're busy planning fall events. In addition to the normal parades, we've also been asked to join Birdseye's celebration of their quasiquicentennial. Like other organizations, participation in these parades gives our Detachment public exposure. This is our chance to tell the world about us, our mission, and what we stand for. Not only does this provide an avenue for new membership, but it also gives people an organization to turn to when they are in need. It helps us to help Marines and families of Marines.

During this last month, our Detachment was called out twice to assist families of Marines in their time of need. I am indeed proud to say that many of you took time away from work, your families and your lives to assist. Well done. I am most assured that the families of Bob Sanders and Don Johnson were very appreciative of the respect shown to them.

John and Leanna Blemker will once again host another Marine get-together on Labor Day weekend, Sunday, Aug. 31 at their farm. Come anytime after 2PM and eat at 5 PM. They will have the meat and tableware. Please bring **a dish** and **your own drinks**. Also bring a **lawn chair**, a fishing pole, and a swimsuit. **Call 683-4877 to RSVP** and for directions to the farm.

Quite a few of you have told me about your unit reunions and how much fun you had at them, renewing friendships and reviewing old times. I strongly encourage anyone who has a reunion coming up; go to it. Don't wait until you're retired, or less busy, or more financially secure; it may be too late then. Your friends and fellow Marines don't get any younger, so don't wait until many of them are gone to attend a reunion!

As always, I welcome constructive criticism of Detachment affairs, but appreciate constructive actions more. S/F

This Month in Marine Corps History

1 August 1944: After nine days of fighting in a battle termed "the perfect amphibious operation of World War II," MajGen Harry Schmidt, commander of V Amphibious Corps, declared the island of Tinian secured. The combination of surprise, heavy preassault bombardment, and effective logistical support was responsible for Tinian's recapture with a much lower casualty rate (344 killed and 1550 wounded) than had been experienced in previous landings.

3 August 1950: Eight Corsairs of VMF-214, the famed "Black Sheep" squadron of World War II, launched from the USS SICILY and executed the first Marine aviation mission in the Korean War in a raid against enemy installations near Inchon. After the F4Us delivered their incendiary bombs and rockets on their targets, the Marines concluded their greeting to the Communist troops with a series of strafing runs.

7 August 1990: President Bush ordered U.S. military aircraft and troops to Saudi Arabia as part of a multinational force to defend that nation against possible Iraqi invasion. One week later the Marine Corps announced the commitment of 45,000 troops to the Persian Gulf area as part of Operation Desert Shield which would become the largest deployment of U.S. forces since the Vietnam War.

9 August 1942: With the Guadalcanal airstrip secure after heavy fighting with the Japanese, the 1st Engineer

Battalion commenced work on the runway using captured equipment. Three days later, on 12 August, the first plane landed on Henderson Field, a Navy PBV which evacuated two wounded Marines. Nearly 3,000 wounded Marines would be evacuated from Henderson Field during the battle.

17 August 1942: Just prior to dawn, the 2d Marine Raider Battalion under LtCol Evans F. Carlson landed on Makin Island from the submarines NAUTILUS and ARGONAUT. The next day the Marines left the island after destroying a seaplane base, two radio stations, a supply warehouse, and killing about 100 Japanese soldiers.

21 August 1968: PFC James Anderson, Jr., was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by Secretary of the Navy, Paul R. Ignatius, for heroism in Vietnam while serving as a rifleman with Company F, 2d Battalion, 3d Marines in February 1967. This was the first Medal of Honor presented to an African-American Marine. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Anderson, Sr., received the award during ceremonies at Marine Barracks, 8th and I.

23 August 1984: The last Marines to serve peace-keeping duty in Lebanon arrived home. The 24th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) arrived off the coast of

(Continued on page 3)

This Month in Marine Corps History Contd

(Continued from page 2)

Lebanon on 9 April to relieve Marines of the 22d MAU who were guarding the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. The 24th MAU left Beirut on 31 July, marking the last presence of U.S. combat troops in Beirut since Marines entered almost two years earlier.

24 August 1814: Captain Samuel Miller's 100-man detachment from Marine Barracks, Washington, fought in

the battle of Bladensburg for the defense of the national capital. After helping to fight back three British charges, Captain Miller was wounded and the enemy began to work around both flanks of the American force. Almost encircled, the force of sailors and Marines was forced to retire to avoid capture. The Marines lost 8 killed and 14 wounded.

(Historical synopsis by History Division, HQMC)

Legislative Affairs—Subcommittee Reports and House Legislation (Excepts from MOAA)

Wounded Warrior Woes

The House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee held a hearing on July 22 as a follow-up to its investigation of how the Army is addressing the problems identified in the Walter Reed scandal last year. Unfortunately, the Subcommittee found some continuing shortfalls in the Army's ability to manage the recent growth of the wounded warrior population.

Specifically, the number of caseworkers wasn't rising to keep pace with the increased number of wounded, so that their workloads were double what was intended, and assistance was degraded accordingly.

Legislators found this understaffing and under-resourcing particularly worrisome, since the number of soldiers in the Army's warrior transition units (WTU) is expected to keep rising, from the current 12,000 to 20,000 next year.

Army medical officials described difficulties in filling medical and case worker positions with qualified professionals who are knowledgeable about medical and physical evaluation boards and processes.

LTG Michael Rochelle, Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, acknowledged, "We weren't agile, didn't anticipate the bureaucracy, and didn't empower our commanders sufficiently to meet requirements." He said new changes in policy are expected to correct the problems by January 2009.

VA Disconnect on Guard and Reserve

A VA Inspector General report released last week said the VA failed to send outreach letters to more than 36,000 National Guard and Reserve veterans. The report said this was one example of problems encountered by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in accessing the VA claims and transition assistance programs, and highlighted shortfalls in VA staff training to understand eligibility requirements for Guard and Reserve veterans.

At a Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing on July 23, VA officials addressed what is being done to remedy these issues. But testimony from reserve component commanders and military and civilian mental health providers got most of the Committee's attention.

They acknowledged that several VA programs are in

place, but said servicemembers and their families are still falling through the cracks. They recommended that:

- VA and DoD don't need to be the only source of care - care can be supplemented by building a large civilian network that's willing to help
- The VA needs larger numbers of experienced mental health providers to provide group and individualized care for veterans and their families
- VA and DoD need to educate the public that many servicemembers are experiencing normal reactions to combat or operational stress, not all of which is related to PTSD or TBI, and that they need services outside the medical community to help them through depression, anger management, relationships, finances, and grief
- VA must use age- and population-appropriate media and services to reach out to veterans on their terms

Sen. John Rockefeller (D-WV) said, "It's ironic that we pick these men and women for their youth to serve our country and we ask them to take risks, but when they come back from war we drop them at their most vulnerable age."

Troop/Vet Benefits Bills Clear House

With the August recess at hand, the House has rushed to pass a number of measures strongly endorsed by MOAA that address disability, financial, tax, reemployment, and health care protections for veterans and military families.

- *VA Disability System Reform:* H.R. 5892 would implement a number of recommendations of the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission. The bill would require the VA to provide immediate payment for unquestioned disabilities such as amputations rather than holding up claims until all conditions are evaluated. It would also require a plan to modernize the VA disability rating schedule and address quality of life issues, change evaluator incentives to improve processing quality, and require the VA to establish special offices to assist survivors and dependents. In addition, it would allow a survivor or dependent to proceed with a VA claim if the veteran dies before it is adjudicated
- *Mortgage Foreclosure Protections:* H.R. 3221 would prohibit foreclosure on property owned by a servicemember for nine

(Continued on page 4)

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#931

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WWW.SILDMARINES.COM

Legislative Affairs— (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

months (vs. 90 days) following deployment. It would also increase, through the end of 2008, the maximum guaranty amount for mortgages backed by the VA

- *VA Health Care and Counseling*: H.R. 6445 would exempt vets who have catastrophic, non-service-connected disabilities from paying copayments for hospital or nursing home care and loosen restrictions on counseling for those vets' family members
- *Reemployment Rights*: H.R. 6225 would strengthen protections for reservists denied reemployment benefits by state or private employers
- *Armed Forces Student Rights*: H.R. 6225 would limit interest on loan debts to 6% for members on active duty. It would also require colleges to refund tuition and fees for students forced to leave school because of military orders and reinstate those students on return with the same academic status held prior to service
- *Cellphone Contracts*: H.R. 6225 would let servicemembers terminate or suspend personal services contracts (e.g., cellphone or cable TV) entered into before being notified of PCS or deployment orders and penalize providers who violate the law
- *Spouse Domicile*: H.R. 6225 would let spouses of active duty members maintain the same state of domicile as the servicemember for state taxation purposes and voter registration
- *Roth Thrift Saving Plan (TSP)*: A provision in H.R. 1108 would allow servicemembers and federal workers a "Roth TSP" option, entailing taxable deposits into the federal retirement savings plan and tax-free withdrawals in retirement
- *In-state Tuition*: H.R. 4137 would require all states to continue in-state college tuition rates for a military dependent previously granted such rates if the military parent is re-assigned outside the state

Detachment Officers:

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