

# Leatherneck News

## Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment #931

### Upcoming Events

- 8-9 March—Spring Conference, Marion
- 13 March— 7 PM Marine Family Support Group Meets, Jasper American Legion
- 20 March—Regular Meeting, Jasper American Legion, 7 PM. Election of Officers.
- 24-27 April—Central Division Conference, Louisville, KY
- 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

### Marine Family Support Group

Congratulations to LCPL Adam & Kristen Werner on the birth of their son Jaxon Adam. Born 1-Feb-08. Adam is in Iraq and was able to coach Kristen over the phone and hear Jaxon's first cry. In Jan. and Mar. we sent out many care packages to our troops and got some very nice thank you's back. We send packages out not only to our Marines, but also others in all branches of the military. We will do packages again in May. A special thank you to the American Legion for donating money to help with shipping cost for the packages.

Right now we have 9 Marines deployed. A few will be leaving for deployment in a couple of weeks and some Marines will be returning home very soon.

Semper Fi *(story by Cindy Hembree)*

### Spring Conference Highlights

The Department of Indiana Spring Conference was held March 8-9 in Marion Indiana. A few of the agenda items included:

- Applications for regular membership must be accompanied by the applicants DD-214. There are currently three investigations within the Department of members who do not qualify for membership.
- Once again, the Department is attempting to get Bureau of Motor Vehicles for a USMC License Plate. A petition drive is under way.
- Due to the lack of a Department Newsletter, Marine Russ Eaglin has volunteered his services and has created an online blog spot for MCL information. The web address is: [www.marinesofindiana.com](http://www.marinesofindiana.com).
- Applications for the Crumbo Scholarship are due by the end of March.
- The State Convention will be held 6-8 June 2008 at Richmond. (Whitewater)
- The Fall Conference will be hosted by the Southern Indiana Leatherneck Detachment on October 4 and 5, 2008.

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### Detachment Election of Officers

As stated in Article 3 of the Detachment Bylaws, an election of officers will be held as the first order of New Business during the regular March meeting. A final call for nominations for election will be held as the first order of Old Business. Members interested in serving as a Detachment Officer should contact Commandant Englert as soon as possible to receive information on the responsibilities of each position. As of this newsletter, officers currently filling the positions of Com-

mandant, Chaplain, Junior Vice Commandant, Sergeant at Arms, and Paymaster have indicated their intent and willingness to continue in their present offices. The remaining officers will be polled at the next meeting as to their intentions. Per National Bylaws, only those regular members in good standing are eligible for elected offices. Associate members are eligible for appointment to select offices by the Detachment Commandant.

## Commandant's Corner

Better late than never! Hopefully most of you feel that way about the newsletter. Unfortunately with the wide variety of events that cropped up in late February and early March, I found getting the newsletter done to be an almost impossible task. Fortunately, with the help of my friends, I was able to pull enough information together to finally kick this one out.

Vice Commandant Moriarty and I attended the Spring Conference. I believe both of us are happy with the professional and businesslike attitude of our Department Commandant, Mike Lieber. Mike has done a great job of taking care of some of the issues that have plagued the Department for quite a while. The conference was very informative and efficiently run.

Junior Past Department Commandant Bernie Loechel experienced some very serious health problems during the conference and required medivac from the morning session. First reports were that he had suffered a heart attack, but more recent reports indicate that he had pneumonia, which led to an irregular heartbeat. We are all relieved that it was not quite as serious as first reports indicated.

As many of you know, we are ramping up quickly to our 5K run and the fishing tournament. Both of these events require us to "beat the bushes" and make contact with our sponsors. With the 5K run, we will also need to start putting out entry forms and coordinate pickup of same. The 5K has done well for us and has allowed our detachment to fulfill its mission— helping Marines and families of Marines.

Reading the news as of late, I can't help but note the significance of our close relationship with the Marine Family Support Group. It is vital that as our young Marines return home that they find the support they need. We must reach out and provide not only support, but our camaraderie and brotherhood. These warriors, returning home must be able to turn to someone, and we need to be proactive— seeking them out and offering our help.

Speaking of help, I would be remiss if I didn't thank each of you who have kept Karen, Faith, and I in your prayers and thoughts. It is very helpful to know that so many of you were there for us.

## This Month in Marine Corps History

2 March 1867: Jacob Zeilin, Colonel Commandant of the Marine Corps from 30 June 1864, was this date promoted to the rank of Brigadier General Commandant, the first time Congress authorized this rank for the Marine Corps. The statute, however, was repealed in June 1874 so that the rank of Commandant would again revert to colonel upon Zeilin's retirement.

8 March 1965: The 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade landed at DaNang, Republic of Vietnam as the first U.S. ground combat troops to be committed to that conflict. The 3,500 men arrived both across the beach with Battalion Landing Team 3/9, and at DaNang Airfield with Battalion Landing Team 1/3.

11 March 1778: Marines participated the action when the Continental Navy frigate BOSTON, enroute to France, sighted, engaged, and captured the British merchant ship MARTHA. As the drum of the BOSTON beat to arms, John Adams seized a musket and joined the Marines on deck until the frigate's captain, Samuel Tucker, sent him below for safety.

13 March 1943: The first group of 71 Women Marine officer candidates arrived at the U.S. Midshipmen School (Women's Reserve) at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. The Navy's willingness to share training facilities enabled the Marine Corps to begin training Marine Corps Women's Reserve officers just one month after the creation of the MCWR was announced.

17 March 1967: The first woman Marine to report to Vietnam

for duty, Master Sergeant Barbara J. Dulinsky, began her 18-hour flight to Bien Hoa, 30 miles north of Saigon. MSgt Dulinsky and the other officer and enlisted Women Marines that followed were assigned to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) based in Saigon. Most worked with the Marine Corps Personnel Section providing administrative support to Marines assigned as far north as the DMZ, but two Lieutenant Colonels, Ruth Reinholz and Ruth O'Holleran, served as historians with the Military History Branch, Secretary Joint Staff, MACV.

25 March 1945: After 35 days of bitter fighting, the amphibious assault on the rocky fortress of Iwo Jima finally appeared over. On the night of 25 March, however, a 300-man Japanese force launched a vicious final counterattack in the vicinity of Airfield Number 2. Army pilots, Seabees and Marines of the 5th Pioneer Battalion and 28th Marines fought the fanatical Japanese force till morning but suffered heavy casualties --more than 100 killed and another 200 American wounded. Nearly all of the Japanese force was killed in the battle.

27 March 1953: The 5th Marines, supported by the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, in the first full day of fighting after the Chinese assault the previous evening of Outpost Vegas on Korea's western front, counterattacked to regain enemy-held positions. Companies E and F of 2/7, down to only three platoons between them, managed to regain partial control of

*(Continued on page 3)*

## This Month in Marine Corps History Contd

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Outpost Vegas that day.

31 March 1801: On this date, LtCol Commandant William W. Burrows rode with president Thomas Jefferson to look for "a proper place to fix the Marine Barracks on." President Jef-

erson was a personal friend of the Commandant, and deeply interested in the welfare of the Corps and accompanied Burrows on horseback on the morning of 31 March. They chose a square in Southeast Washington, at 8th and I streets, because it lay near the Navy Yard and was within easy marching distance of the Capitol.

## Legislative News—

Washington, D.C. – As of February 1, 2008, the mileage reimbursement for travel to VA medical facilities by veterans more than doubled because of language inserted into the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, H.R. 2764, which was actively supported by Congressman Baron Hill. The travel reimbursement rate recently increased from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile. This is the first mileage reimbursement increase in 30 years.

### Disability "Overhaul" Bill Introduced

Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), the Ranking Member on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced "America's Wounded Warrior Act," S. 2674, last week to overhaul DoD's disability retirement system and modernize the VA's disability compensation program. These reforms are an upshot from last year's Dole/Shalala Commission recommendations.

The bill would reform the military disability retirement system and streamline the transition of disabled servicemembers from DoD to the VA. Basically, it would simplify the claims process by eliminating the need for duplicative DoD/VA ratings and disability examinations. Underlying concerns remain, however.

Under the proposal, DoD would determine a disabled servicemember's fitness for duty, and if found unfit, provide a lifetime annuity based on the member's rank and years of service. VA would then establish compensation for service-connected injuries, disease, or wounds. Under this proposal, the offset between DoD's annuity and future VA compensation would be eliminated.

The revamped VA compensation system would have three elements - replacement value of average loss of earning capacity; a new payment for loss of quality of life; and a new transition payment provided to servicemembers who participate in treatment or vocational rehabilitation programs or who are within three months if their retirement from service.

However, the jury is still out on what the new DoD disability health care benefit and VA compensation levels would eventually look like - MOAA expressed

concern with these same issues when the original Dole/Shalala report was released.

Currently, servicemembers who retire due to a 30% or higher military disability are eligible for lifetime family TRICARE coverage (dependent children until majority age). However, the bill directs DoD to study and recommend to Congress new TRICARE lifetime eligibility criteria under the new system. In the absence of a law change, the Secretary of Defense would establish eligibility by regulation effective the date of implementation of the new system. Additionally, the bill directs VA to study and provide a report to Congress within nine months and submit a proposal one year later detailing the new compensation and transition payment rate structure.

### Budget Blueprint

The Senate and House Budget committees began marking-up their FY2009 Budget Resolutions this week. The annual budget resolution is a non-binding measure that sets annual spending limits for the government.

Both measures expressed support for rejecting the administration's TRICARE fee increases for retirees under age 65. But rejecting those increases is contingent on finding funding offsets that don't increase the deficit. So at this point, we have to consider the Resolutions a statement of intent rather than a done deal.

VA fee hikes also were nixed for the fifth year in a row. Both chambers' Budget Resolutions replace the funding cut by the president's budget in anticipation that Congress would not approve higher VA health fees. This allows the Veterans' Affairs committees the funding "headroom" to reject the proposed VA enrollment fees for lowest priority veterans and pharmacy copay increases.

In addition to rejecting the VA fees, each Budget Resolution provided an additional \$3.2 billion more for veterans' programs than requested in the Administration's 2009 budget submission. The additional funding is intended to help improve veterans' disability compensation claims processing and health care, including enhancements in mental health, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and Traumatic Brain Injury treatment.

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**Legislative News—(Contd)**

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**Webb Offers New GI Bill**

Backed by Senator John Warner (R-VA), Sen. Jim Webb re-introduced his controversial plan last week to establish a wartime GI Bill for service men and women who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001.

Last year, Webb's original GI Bill proposal, S. 22, was criticized as too costly and administratively cumbersome. The new version of S. 22 retains a number of features in the original but drops paying the full cost of schooling at any public or private institution as in the World War II GI Bill.

Instead, the new S. 22 would reimburse veterans of the current conflicts for the cost of their education based on the highest state-by-state cost of public colleges or universities.

The bill also would permit activated Guard and Reserve servicemembers to accrue up to 36 months of GI Bill benefits in increments of at least 3 months. Sen. Warner recommended a "yellow ribbon" provision in the bill that invites private institutions of higher learning to pay half the difference between the new GI Bill rates and the cost of an independent college. The government would pick up the other half.

The bill also would establish a cost-of-living stipend based on the basic allowance for housing (BAH) zipcode formula at the family rate for an E-4. S. 22 extends the post-service usage period to 15 years from 10 and authorizes GI Bill "kickers" for reenlistments. But since the military services only use GI Bill "kickers" for recruiting purposes, DoD is sure to oppose this provision.

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