

THE MARINE CORPS READER – AROUND THE R.A. ELLARD DETACHMENT

June 6, 2017

Hey Marines, it is about time I put this newsletter together before it becomes an “annual reader”. Ha. We had quite a month which started off with an excellent showing of Marines and Marine families and Vet’s at the Wednesday Bingo night. Four Marines won jackpots with a lot of hooting and hollering. We thank Martin and all the MCL members who participated in this fun fund raising event. Next Bingo Night is Wednesday June 7th (TOMORROW) at 7PM with all proceeds going to support the family of our recently slain Officer Moore. By the way, the Legion is now serving good food several nights a week so come out and enjoy the night.

Mrs. Ritter has organized, and now the entire Longfellow School presents to all veterans a musical celebration honoring America, those who died in service, and veterans of every branch. The gym was packed with students, parents and veterans. Marines were front and center with about 15 of us showing lots of the color red. A big shout out to Mrs. Ritter, the entire Longfellow School staff and to all of you who attended. Teaching our youth about America and our duty to protect her is vital.

We have welcomed several Marines to our Detachment over the past year, Jay Van Voast being the latest and just in time to complete our “Blues dressed Color Guard. We also want to say farewell to Paul Gowin and Andy Krikorian, as they relocate to new areas of our great country. We remember Paul as the excellent speaker of General LeJeune’s address at the Marine Birthday Ball and Andy was a member of our Detachment Marine Corps Postal Match rifle team. We wish them the very best in all of their future endeavors. Semper Fidelis and go in God’s grace.

Our monthly Marine Lunch at the Gran Tree was attended by many members of the Detachment and a great time of BS, laughter and good food was had by all. Mr. Gene Bell, our Iwo Jima survivor was in attendance and we all enjoyed his stories and presence. Thank you Gene – you are a treasure.

The State MCL Convention was held at Fairmont Hot Springs on the weekend before Memorial Day. We had six families attend which was outstanding. We are gathering all the info possible to host the State MCL Convention next year in our town. A grand time was had by all as we had an outstanding address by Col. Gerald Berry, USMC Ret., a Montana Marine and the pilot who flew our U.S. Ambassador out of Saigon ending our formal involvement in that war. Every member of our detachment received an award from the State MCL Department or Division for all of the great work they perform caring for Marines, their families, and serving our community, state and country. Many issues were discussed at the business meetings and we had a grand time cussing and discussing most of them. The hosting Detachment presented a very moving memorial service for those MCL members who have passed in the last year. The music was presented by an excellent group of Kilt laden Irish bagpipers. Doc Cravens, despite being hurt, was able to drive up and present our Gene Bell with his Veterans picture during our proceedings – Thank you Doc. Those attending all or part from Robert A Ellerd were – Armstrong’s, Gene Bell, Doc Cravens, Chepulis’s, McCoy’s, Strickler’s, and Ritter’s.

The Sunday schedule included a meeting of MODD (Military Order of the Devil Dogs) which was great fun as two of our Detachment, Armstrong and Chepulis, were initiated as Pup’s and Kevin McCoy was elevated to Dog status. It was an excellent convention and much thanks to the Private Mike Detachment from Anaconda for a great time.

Our 8th Annual Gold Star Shoot was a huge success on Memorial Day weekend and was off to a great start with over 25 volunteers from our Detachment gathering at the range on Saturday to clean, trim, install steel and set up for the following day. We were very fortunate to have a grader from SIME show up and grade the range road. Many thanks to Dan and Adam for this service. The Shoot day was beautiful, great weather, greater friendship and family comradery. Several new Dog Tags of our fallen brothers were placed on our Dog Tag Memorial. We lift up all those precious families in our prayers.

Memorial Day was another uplifting event for the entire community as we marched, honored Gold Star families and all of those who have served and passed on in the defense of our great country and freedom for all. Our Marines started at 0630 (that IS in the morning) with a setup of the memorial site beside the Vietnam Wall, enjoyed a breakfast at the Legion and proceeded with the implementation of the parade. Our Marines manned many of the staging points for the parade. We were very fortunate to have our Marine Color Guard in dress blues much to the delight of the parade attendees. Much thanks to Sgt. Ryan Cox, Cpl. Jay Van Voast, 1stLt. Paul Gowin and Lcpl. Joe Hoffman – outstanding job. The cadence of our 16 strong marching Marine detachment was perfect as were the marchers to the delight of onlookers and Marines alike.

We also are beginning to form a Marine Color Guard and did perform with the American Legion 21 Gun Salute and a few funerals. If interested, please contact myself or Ron Lashley.

We have changed the meeting date and time for MCL meetings for June, July and August to the last Wednesday at 1800 upstairs at the Post 14 Legion Hall.

Thank you all for your excellent participation in the events of this Marine Detachment, see you at the Memorial Bingo night tomorrow evening at 1800. Semper Fidelis – Det. Cmdt. Armstrong