



The Scuttlebutt Newsletter  
P.O. Box 4561  
Glen Allen, VA 23058-4561  
**March 2019**



# **JAMES M. SLAY DETACHMENT MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MEETING**

**Virginia Society of CPA's  
4309 Cox Rd, Glen Allen VA  
I-64 Exit I78B**

**The Fourth Saturday Of Each Month  
Next Meeting 23 March 2019  
0830 Breakfast - 0900 Meeting  
[www.richmondmarines.net](http://www.richmondmarines.net)  
(804) 417-4569**

## **Detachment Monthly Meeting Location Change**

**This is very important, and although it is noted in the last Meeting Minutes some may not read the minutes in detail. So this month, March, and next month, April, we are calling it to your attention.**

**Specifics about the location and parking will be noted later.**

**Jim Barrett** - The VSCPA building will be under going renovations later this year; our meeting room will no longer be available. A team has been re-viewing new locations for our monthly meetings. The best location they have found is Lakewood. There is no cost for the meeting space. May 2019 is the anticipated date to move our meeting location. The motion to approve the new meeting location was approved.

### **Why I Joined The Marine Corps. Hank Ragland**

**When Hank gave me his written “Why” explanation it was basic and to the point, Marine style Account.**

**Basically, he related, “that when he was finishing high school, he told his father that he was going to join the Air Force. His father said that he was just not “man enough” to join the Marine Corps. “So, I did join The Corps!”**

**“Dad was Proud, and Mom was Mad”**

**This is the rest of the story. The back story was that his father had been in the Navy, other family members had also been Navy including his older brother. But No Marines. So, I think he was going for the Air Force to be “different”. Well The Corps was the real “Different”.**

**Hank was one of those lucky Marines that went through Boot Camp in the 8 week shortened schedule in 1967 as they were trying to get “bodies” quickly through Boot Camp, ITR and MOS training to get them to Vietnam. Like most Marines in 1967, when he got to Nam they gave him an M16 after training him with the M14. It was a quick start to a 4-year enlistment.**

**His MOS was 0331 and they ominously told them that this machine gunner life expectancy in combat in Nam was about “15 seconds”. The Marine Corps never “sugar coats” expectations!**

**Hank says that he really liked The Corps and thought it might be a good career. He lived in foxholes in I Corps (northern part of Vietnam) mostly on the move with Charlie 2 and Charlie 4 until, 5 months into the 13 month “tour” he was seriously wounded. Hank spent the next 6 months in medical facilities from the Philippines to Guam to the States and then was medically discharged.**

**So, his 4 year enlistment ended in less that 2 years, but -**

**“Dad was Proud, and Mom was Mad”.**

James M. Slay  
Detachment Marine  
Corps League

Richmond, Virginia

www.richmondmarines.net

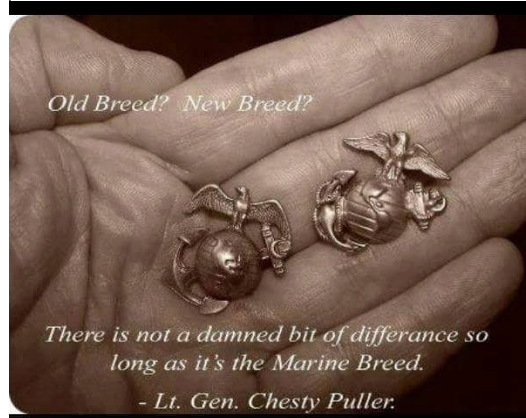
# The Scuttlebutt

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

- Joe Vass  
Commandant
- Mark Moore  
Sr Vice Commandant
- Phil Hebner  
Jr Vice Commandant
- Bruce Russell  
Adjutant
- Dave Schneider  
Judge Advocate
- Jim Ralls Chaplain
- Rick Barden  
Sergeant at Arms
- Fred Marotta  
Paymaster
- Spike Williamson  
Quartermaster
- Rich Schollman  
Web Sergeant
- Kevin O'Connor  
Scuttlebutt Newsletter  
Editor  
oconorsix@verizon.net

## OLD CORPS VS NEW CORPS



At the Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon I often sit next to or across from some of the Marines from Ft. Lee.

They're always squared away, respectful, and interesting to talk to. Because of the programs and training at Ft. Lee they invariably have an MOS that is foreign to most of us. I don't know if they perceive that Old Corps vs New Corps attitude that has always been part of the generational changes. I've interacted with the local recruiters a bit and have seen the selection process and the preparation and it is incredibly different from what most of us experienced.

Testing is involved at several levels before a recruit is given a "choice" of MOS based on that testing. Most of us joined the Corps expecting to be 03XX with a chance at something else. But this really helps organize and prepare the Corps to fill all jobs, even if all Marines are still riflemen first.

These recruits even get some PT training and some formation, marching and discipline experience as they often have a delayed time before boot camp.

The Old Corps was always harder and tougher than the New Corps according to those who served in the "Old Corps."

But the bottom line is that today's Marine recruits are a different "Few" than we were. 75% of young people between 17 and 24 are unqualified to join the armed services and even fewer of them are qualified to join the Corps. Poor physical fitness, educational deficiencies, criminal issues and drugs are just some of the problems. So our Marines today are the best of their generation. I would not say that of my Vietnam generation where standards were lower.

*In 1775, when the Corps was formed, they recruited the **first** Marines in a place called Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. The prospective recruits lined up for free beer and signed up for the Corps. The first recruit went outside and sat down to wait for the rest of the recruits. When the second recruit came out he sat down next to the first recruit who said, "Let me tell you about the Old Corps!"*

Let's appreciate today's Marines!



**MINUTES  
JAMES M. SLAY DETACHMENT  
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE  
23 FEBRUARY 2019**

**0900 Call to Order**

Commandant Vass declared the meeting open. Ordering the securing of quarters, posting of colors, Pledge of Allegiance and the opening prayer.

**Roll Call of Officers**

All Officers were present.

**Introduction of Guests**

The following guest was introduced: Jim Borka.

**Applications for New Members**

He following new members were voted on and then sworn in: Nick Longobardo and Dawson Reese.

**Reports of Officers**

Commandant – Joe Vass    Senior Vice Commandant – Mark Moore

Nothing to report.

**Junior Vice Commandant – Phil Hebner**

He has made up some recruiting cards and brochures; they were available to members. Disabled Veterans' ski weekend at Massanutten was a success; 15 vets attended the event.

**Adjutant – Bruce Russell**

January meeting minutes have been published in the Scuttlebutt. Motion made, seconded and a vote taken to approve the minutes.

**Paymaster – Fred Marotta**

All dues transmittals to National are up-to-date. Life membership pins were handed out to the new Life members. The Financial Fire Team has done an outstanding job and will make a report later in the meeting. A brief financial report was given.

**Chaplain – Jim Ralls**

Sick Report has been emailed to all members; Jim provided a few updates.

**Legislative Relations – John Clickener**

Only two of the seven legislative MCL supported objectives were passed.

**Committee Reports**

**Honor Guard – Spike Williamson**

Staying busy. Looking for new members. There will be an Honor Guard meeting today.

**Henrico MCJROTC Programs – Jerry Howard**

Recently had a good meeting with the schools. Gave a report of the meeting and planned activities for this year.

**Range Day - Lou Seigel**

Range Days start on 1 April.

**Fort Lee - Ron Echols**

Marines at Ft. Lee regularly attend and support our HHS luncheons.

**Military Order of Devil Dogs - Lou Seigel**

Next month we will be taking nominations for officer positions in our Pound.

**Houston - Holicky - Sitter Luncheon - Joe Wadle**

Scott Laidig, USMC (Ret.), will be the February speaker; his topic will be the life of Al Gray. Al Gray will be the April speaker.

**Virginia War Memorial - Bruce Steeley**

Construction continues. Memorial Day ceremony scheduled for 27 May at the Memorial. Described the shadow box to honor Bruce Heilmann; solicited donations from members to pay for the shadow box. The box will be presented to Dr. Heilmann at our April meeting. \$600+ was collected during the meeting.

**Care Packages - Herb Delbridge**

11 packages have recently been shipped.

**Quartermaster – Spike Williamson**

Did a store inventory after January meeting. The store has about \$2500 of merchandise for sale. MCL HQ recently issued a SOP for Honor Guards. It has received mixed reviews. We have drafted an alternative SOP that is in a better format and it will be presented at the Mid-Winter Conference.

**Past State Commandant – Jim Barrett**

State Convention in VA Beach 17-19 May.

**Unfinished Business**

**Jim Barrett** - The VSCPA building will be under going renovations later this year; our meeting room will no longer be available. A team has been reviewing new locations for our monthly meetings. The best location they have found is Lakewood. There is no cost for the meeting space. May 2019 is the anticipated date to move our meeting location. The motion to approve the new meeting location was approved.

**Jim Ralls** – Update on the proposed Pistol Raffle. We will raffle a Heritage .45 revolver pistol; there will be 500 \$5 tickets sold. Approved spending up to \$500 for the pistol.

**Good of the League**

**Bruce Russell** – Described a new annual budgeting process for the Detachment, and gave the rationale for needing an annual budget (to maintain our 501C(4) tax-exempt status). Described proposed changes to the By-Laws that will address the specific steps to be followed when requesting a charitable contribution and described the new request form. A vote on these proposals was deferred to March to allow for the required 30-day review period

**Bruce Steely** - Officer elections coming up in April. Wes Pruett will head up the Nominating Committee.

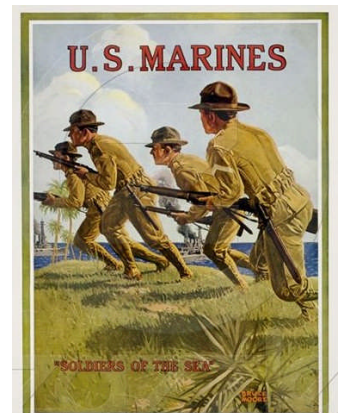
**Fred Marotta** – He will purchase a “Square” which is a credit card reader. Quartermaster can use it for Sales to members.

29 March is Vietnam Veterans Day; Mission BBQ will provide free sandwiches to Vietnam Vets.

**Closing Ceremony**

By order of the Commandant the Colors were retired, the Chaplain gave the closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned until Saturday, 23 March 2019 at 0900.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bruce Russell, Adjutant



## Corps Decision— Corky Gardner

Growing up here in Richmond in the late 50s and early 60s, I'm not sure what initially drew me to wanting to serve in our military. I remember as young boy watching TV shows like "Combat", "McHale's Navy", "Gomer Pyle", and "Hogan's Heroes" and movies like "The Sands of Iwo Jima", "The Longest Day" and "PT-109". I also recall a family vacation to Virginia Beach and being able to closely observe a Marine amphibious exercise.

My father was drafted into the Army near the end of World War II. Upon completion of boot camp in Ft Lewis, WA, he was shipped to the east coast just prior to V-E Day and then back to the west coast to prepare for the invasion of Japan, which, of course, never took place. My maternal grandfather was a policeman and my father's uncle served in World War I. Their stories and, in particular, eye witness accounts of World War I warfare were very memorable and inspired me to want to be in the military.

In elementary school we went to the library each week and I probably read every book they had on the military, aviation and the Naval Academy. My parents took me to visit Annapolis and attend a Navy football game. I was probably hooked, when I saw the Midshipmen in uniform after the game with their dates. My Boy Scout troop here in Richmond also went on a camping trip near the Naval Academy. We spent the entire weekend on the Yard, attending athletic events and eating in the Mess Hall.

Just before I entered high school, my father changed jobs and we moved to Southern California. As everyone knows, the late 60s and early 70s were tumultuous times in our country, which make today's divisiveness pale in comparison. I applied to the Naval Academy and was designated as an alternate by our congressman. About a week later, I was offered an appointment to the Class of 1977, but I started to have second thoughts about my choice.

To be 18 years old and obligated for nine years of service (four years at USNA and five years in the naval service) suddenly seemed like a very long time. As anyone who lived in those times will recall, our military was at the lowest level of public esteem in its history. Out of nearly 700 graduates in my high school class, I was the only one considering a life in uniform on the other side of the country. The vast majority of my classmates were going to college in California and getting ready to enjoy a free lifestyle. If my parents had left me alone to make my decision, I probably would have "chickened out".

Approaching the deadline to decide, my father reminded me this was something I had always wanted to do. He said I should go and not quit for at least a year. That was the best advice my father ever gave me, proving once again, how parents know their teenage kids better than they know themselves.

I reported to the Naval Academy in July '73 and was homesick for about a week. However, we quickly made lifelong friends with people from all over the country. The camaraderie and character that develops when young, motivated Americans are thrust into a challenging, pressure packed, full time military indoctrination shaped the rest of our lives.

During the first semester, I decided I wanted to become a Marine Aviator. The Marine Officers assigned to the Naval Academy, were top notch professionals. They took obvious pride in their performance, uniform appearance and physical fitness. It was clear their job was a calling and the upperclass Midshipmen that aspired to become Marines were cut from the same cloth. It was an easy decision to follow in their footsteps.

**(Note: Corky retired as a Lt. Col. He was one of the pilots for Marine One, HMX -1, The helicopter transport for Presidents. Corky flew for part of the President Reagan and President George H.W. Bush administrations.)**



## **Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon Tuesday, 9 April 2019 General Al Gray, USMC Ret.**



Gray was born on June 22, 1928 in Rahway, New Jersey, the son of Emily and Alfred Mason Gray.<sup>[1]</sup> The family moved to the Jersey Shore community of Point Pleasant Beach.<sup>[2]</sup> He transferred from Rahway High School to Point Pleasant Beach High School, where he played baseball, basketball and football, graduating as part of the class of 1946.<sup>[3]</sup>

Gray studied at Lafayette College, and received a Bachelor of Science degree from State University of New York. He has honorary degrees from Lafayette College, Monmouth University, Norwich University, the National Defense Intelligence College, and Franklin University.<sup>[4]</sup> He married the former Jan Goss of Burlington, Vermont on July 20, 1980.

Gray enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1950. He served overseas with Fleet Marine Force (FMF), Pacific, attaining the rank of sergeant before being commissioned a second lieutenant in April 1952. By definition, serving in the enlisted ranks prior to becoming an officer makes Gray a "mustang," which generally commands more respect in the Corps because of the combination of officer smarts and enlisted practicality. His early tours included service with 11th Marines and 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division in Korea, the 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., during which he saw service in Guantanamo Bay and Vietnam.<sup>[6]</sup>

As a major, Gray joined the 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division in South Vietnam in October 1965, serving concurrently as regimental communications officer, regimental training officer, and artillery aerial observer. He took command of the Composite Artillery Battalion and United States Free World Forces at Gio Linh in April 1967. In September, Gray was reassigned to the III Marine Amphibious Force in Da Nang where he commanded the 1st Radio Battalion elements throughout I Corps until February 1968. Following a brief tour in the United States, he returned to Vietnam from June to September 1969 in conjunction with surveillance and reconnaissance matters in the I Corps area.

After his Vietnam War tour, Gray served as Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, Battalion Landing Team; the 2nd Marine Regiment; the 4th Marine Regiment; and Camp Commander of Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan. While commanding the 33rd Marine Amphibious Unit and Regimental Landing Team-4, and concurrently serving as Deputy Commander, 9th Marines Amphibious Brigade, Gray directed the Operation Frequent Wind evacuation of Saigon in April 1975. Advanced to brigadier general in March 1976, Gray served as Commanding General, Landing Force Training Command, Atlantic, and the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade.

Promoted to major general in February 1980, he assumed command of the 2nd Marine Division, FMF, Atlantic, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in June 1981.<sup>[7]</sup> While in the position, he was a confidant to Vice-Admiral Arthur S. Moreau Jr., finding marines for a covert team which targeted terrorists and drug traffickers.<sup>[8]</sup>

Following his promotion to lieutenant general on August 29, 1984, Gray was reassigned as Commanding General, FMF, Atlantic/Commanding General, II Marine Expeditionary Force, and Commanding General, FMF, Europe. Gray was promoted to general and became Commandant of the Marine Corps on July 1, 1987. His appointment as Commandant of the Marine Corps was recommended by Jim Webb, then Secretary of the Navy.<sup>[7]</sup> Gray presided over changes in training in the 1970s with an emphasis on large-scale maneuver in desert and cold-weather environments, and changed Marine doctrine to one of maneuver warfare in the 1980s. This transformation from the Vietnam War-era is sometimes called the second enlightenment of the Marine Corps (the first being under Major General John A. Lejeune), and included development of a robust maritime special operations capability, emphasis on the education of leaders, establishment of Marine Corps University, and development of a long-range desert operations capability. As a reminder that the primary role of every Marine is a rifleman, he had his official photograph taken in the Camouflage Utility Uniform, the only commandant to have done so.

## Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon

MC: Col. Bill Parrish, USMC Ret.

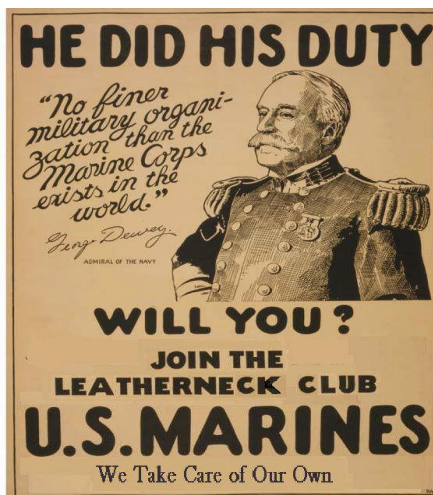


The Holicky-Sitter Luncheon was started to help support the local Active Duty Marines serving in the Richmond Area and Fort Lee. Our goal is the support of the local Marine Reserve Unit, the Marine Detachment at Fort Lee, Marine Corps Recruiters and the Marines assigned to Defense General Supply Center. We are also now taking a very active roll in working with and supporting the families of the wounded from all the services at McGuire Veterans Hospital.

Uniform: Whatever you want to wear.  
 Cost: **The chow: Optional but available at the Publix Deli on Main floor.**  
 Date: Tuesday, 9 April 2019 (The second Tuesday of every month )  
 Speaker: General Al Gray, USMC Ret. Commandant (bio page 7)  
 Chow: 1130 - Speaker - 1210 - Secure at 1245.  
 Where: **"IMPORTANT" Location — Publix (Formerly Martins)  
 2250 John Rolfe Parkway, Henrico, VA 23233**

## 2019 LEATHERNECK CLUB

Bill Akers  
 Jim Barrett  
 John Beall  
 Mike Boudreau  
 Herb Delbridge  
 John Clickener  
 Phillip Gee  
 Bob Gilliam  
 Tim Godbey  
 Bob Hartley  
 Phil Hebner  
 Houston Holicky Sitter  
 Luncheon Group  
 Bill Jeffress  
 Ed Kemp  
 Greg Lee  
 Annebel Lewis



Tom Mraz  
 Tom Milhausen  
 Kevin O'Connor  
 John O'Connor  
 Wes Pruitt  
 Jim Ralls  
 Bruce Russell  
 David Schneider  
 Lou Seigel  
 Fred Smith  
 Bruce Steeley  
 David Taylor  
 John Thomas  
 Richard VanDamme  
 Joe Wadle  
 Bill Wagner

In Memoriam  
 Chip Houston Pat O'Hare Bill Lyell  
 Fred Smith



Begin or renew your Leatherneck Club Membership/Support for 2018. For a contribution of \$100 you will support our standard monthly donation to: , Virginia Dept. of Veterans and Family Services Project, USMC Wounded Warriors Project, USO Gift Cards in Richmond, and the Slay Det. Ladies Auxiliary.  
 Contact Det. Paymaster Fred Marotta at : [fredmarotta@gmail.com](mailto:fredmarotta@gmail.com)