



The Scuttlebutt Newsletter  
P.O. Box 4561  
Glen Allen, VA 23058-4561  
**January 2018**



# **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 27 January 2018  
0830 Breakfast - 0900 Meeting  
[www.richmondmarines.net](http://www.richmondmarines.net)  
(804) 417-4569**

## The Tet Offensive



At the end of January many Vietnam veterans, Marines, and many of our Slay Detachment members will commemorate (probably the wrong word) one of the most important times of their life—Tet '68. It's been 50 Years!

Personally, I arrived in country on 6 Jan '68 and was detached to an Army forward operating base a couple of kilometers outside the main base in Phubai. For obvious reasons, I remember that first

night and the pounding we took from rockets and mortars, meant to keep us in place while Hue was being controlled by the NVA and "Charlie".

I was fortunate to only be in a backup role in and out of Hue. The expression "PFC Power and Lance Corporal Ingenuity" was how Capt. (later LtGen) George Christmas described his Marine's efforts during the battle.

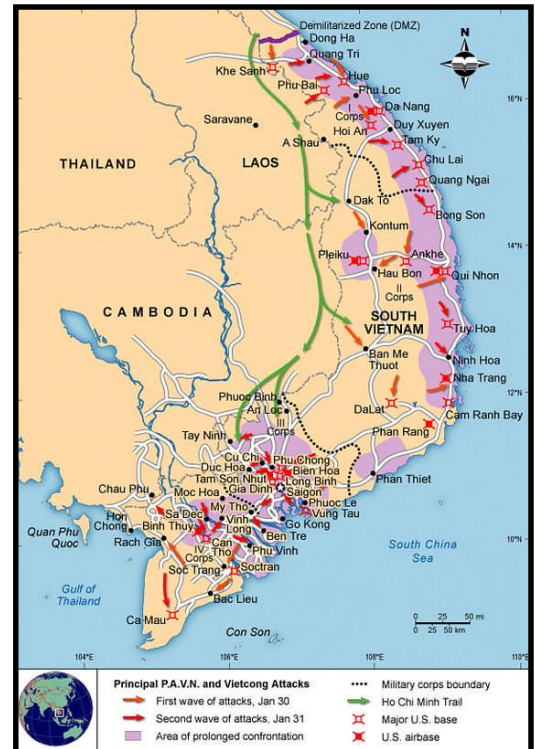
Here's a brief summary.....

It began during the early morning hours of January 31, 1968. The city of Hue, known for its great historical and religious significance, was about to change forever.

Known as the Tet Offensive because January 31st is the first day of the traditional lunar calendar and the most important Vietnamese holiday of the year. Both North and South Vietnam had announced that there would be a two-day cease-fire during the holiday. But instead the Communists launched a massive wave of attacks that stunned the US and South Vietnamese armies taking them completely by surprise. Soon all Hell would break loose.

The Tet Offensive, was one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam and U.S. Marine Corps forces attacked and defeated more than 10,000 entrenched PAVN and NLF guerrilla forces.

Editor.



**James M. Slay**  
**Detachment Marine**  
**Corps League**

**Richmond, Virginia**

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# The Scuttlebutt

**NEWSLETTER**

**JANUARY 2018**

## **WHO ARE THE SLAY DETACHMENT MEMBERS?**

**This may seem like a foolish question. But we have a great variety of members with amazing experiences both in and out of the military. We come from many different backgrounds and parts of the country. We have educators, accountants, police officers, independent and successful business leaders. We have interests, commitments and interests across the spectrum.**

**In 2018 we will have members profiles in the Scuttlebutt. You may think you know someone but these profiles will tell, “The Rest of the Story”. The profiles will be basic and informative. For example: where they are from, when and why they joined The Corps (or other branch of the service), family background and current family, MOS and service synopsis, education, job/career after the military, interests, hobbies, activities and other organization involvement. The profile will be based on the individuals preferred information and approval.**

**I will write some of these myself, but I’m looking for a Slay Det. Member who would like to do some of these as well. I will create and provide an outline format that will ask the appropriate questions and be easy to summarize.**

**The first one is on page 6 of this Scuttlebutt. Jack Bell, Korean War Marine.**

**“The Slay Detachment Members ”**

## Boot camp's Journey: Good year for Marine recruiting, training

[The Marines](#) were looking for a few good men — and women — and got more than they wanted last year.

- That was part of the report Marine Brig. Gen. William “Bill” Journey gave to the San Diego Military Advisory Council on Wednesday morning at Naval Base Point Loma. Competing with higher education, the other services and private industry in an improving economy, the Corps not only met recruiting goals but surpassed them in both numbers and quality of entry-level Marines, he said.

“This past year we had historical success, which exceeded the last 10 years, since 2008, in finding and selecting above and beyond what we were actually looking for,” said Journey, a career infantryman whose command includes San Diego’s boot camp — where about 500 recruits graduate weekly -- and 750 recruiting offices peppering the continental United States mostly west of the Mississippi River, plus Alaska, Guam and Hawaii.

“Almost 100 percent are high school graduates. Over three-fourths are in the upper mental categories for testing and we started the year off with having already selected over 55 percent of what I knew I needed to enlist for this coming year.” The Marine Corps annually brings about 38,000 recruits into the fleet but regulations guide enlistment standards. Nine out of every 10 candidates for service must have a high school diploma and all entrants must pass a battery of mental aptitude and physical fitness tests, plus criminal background checks.
- But competition is fierce for an all-volunteer force. Army researchers estimate that only about 5.7 million youngsters are qualified to serve — about one out of every six people in the age of young Americans — and far fewer express a propensity to enlist because of the lure of college or civilian sector employment. About 68 percent of the Marine Corps is aged 25 years or younger, putting a premium on finding and retaining physically fit and mentally sharp young men and women, Journey said.

The boot camp attrition rate stands at 7 percent, Journey said, a testament to finding qualified candidates and ensuring they show up in good physical shape for rigorous combat training. Last year, 70 percent of recruits also qualified “expert” on the rifle, the highest of the three qualifications, he added.

## Bruce Steeley

In the last issue of the Scuttlebutt we announced the 2017 Marine of the Year.

However, it was announced, and Bruce Steeley thanked the detachment for the honor.

But we think it was an oversight not to mention both the process for the selection as well as the accomplishments and participation of Bruce that led to his selection and the final commentary about him that the committee endorsed.



Bruce Steeley was recognized as the Marine of the Year for the James M. Slay Detachment. The many nomination forms and e-mails received by the committee covered a wide range of accomplishments which surely provided enough proof of his qualifications as the MOY.

From his swearing in ceremony back in the dark ages, he has been a key individual in the growth of the Detachment. He became the Scuttlebutt Editor and promptly rescued same, with his wit and ability to deliver a good newsletter on time and being very informative ; volunteer at the VA. War Memorial; Slay Detachment Commandant; State Commandant, which he presided over cases needed to be brought against Marines who violated National Marine Corps League policies. He joined the Military Order of the Devil Dogs and held several positions including Pound keeper. He also oversaw the installment of a Bone Wheel which has routinely removed Bones(\$) from the Dogs assembled and strengthened the financial position. The levity of the Dog meetings have caused an increase in the desire to become a member.

He has brought a lot of thought into detachment discussions on various ideas. He, of course, as others have mentioned in their nomination forms state he has the following attributes: helpful, courteous, kind, cheerful, THRIFTY, brave, and Wes Pruitt also stated he was mentally awake (most of the time). He has also been on committees to put forward Veterans issues in the state to be discussed and hopefully brought to VA legislators.

Further areas of importance: former Hanover Police officer, which in this day would include the word BRAVE.

I know that the MOY award will be well represented this year by Bruce Steeley.

Marine of the Year Committee



## Slay Detachment Profile

### Jack Bell



PFC Jack Bell  
Parris Island Jan 1950

Jack Bell, longtime member of the Slay Detachment, Marine Corps League, has had the unique privilege of having been honorably discharged from the Marine Corps three times. Born in the Churchhill section of Richmond in 1930, his father's depression era work landed the family in Chesterfield. He graduated from Manchester high school in 1948. In school he was on the baseball, basketball and football teams. On the football team he was a 6' 2", 165 pound starting guard.

Upon graduation, impressed by a family friend who was a Marine, Jack joined the Marine Reserves and trained at Camp Lejeune and a Little Creek and was part of the 1st 105 Howitzer Unit. Jack decided to go Regular Marines in October of 49 but had to be discharged first. This was his first honorable discharge. He went to Parris island and graduated in January of 1950 as a PFC and went to the 5th Marines at Lejeune. He was assigned as a rifle coach because of his high expert qualifications. (By the way the license plate on his car is a Semper Paratus Plate with "M1 Expert").

The Korean war started in June of 1950. Subsequently, Jack was deployed and served a regular and extended tour, with what I would call a "fluid"

MOS. The Corps had him doing various duties one of which involved moving with a truck, by rail, to a forward area with the assignment to drive back. On that transport Jack tells of being stranded by the locomotive on a railroad siding and stumbling upon a group of the enemy (Chinese or N. Korean) relaxing in a nearby railroad shed. Jack and his Marine buddy surprised them and captured them without firing.

Jack came home and in February 1953 and he was assigned to Quantico as a reenlistment interviewer. Jack talks about how no one was interested, and he had a perfect "no reenlistment" record on that job. In October of 1953 Jack received his second honorable discharge from the active Marines Corps. At that point he joined the Marine Reserves for four more years and ultimately received his third honorable discharge.

After The Corps Jack worked for a ESSO Oil, Old Dominion Iron and Steel and – 29 years for Reynolds Metals. At Reynolds they put him in the accounting department because he had a Marine Corps Institute Certificate for bookkeeping.

Jack was one of the original members of the Richmond Marine Veterans Color Guard in 1992 and has been active with a group ever since. He's been the Guard's primary instructor for the M1 Manual of Arms. Over the years since retirement he's coached little league baseball, worked at Birkdale Golf Club, and as a tax preparer. And until the last few years slowed him down, he has been a regular golfer.

2017 was a very challenging year for Jack. He needed carotid artery surgery for a blockage, but unexplained internal bleeding caused a delay in the surgery. Over about six months Jack need 6 pints of blood, 4 infusions of iron, 5 colonoscopies, and 3 endoscopies to diagnose and stop the bleeding.

But true to being a Marine, Jack "Improvised, Adopted and Overcame". He had the carotid repair in October and has been back and active. He's hoping to be back golfing and participating with the Color Guard in 2018.



Jack Bell—Today

## Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon

### Tuesday, 13 February 2018

### RAdm. Len Picotte

Leonard Francis Picotte, American Naval officer. Decorated Legion of Merit (2); recipient Distinguished Svc. medal. Member Surface Navy Association, United States Ship Wasp Association (honorary), Army and Navy Club, Town Point Club, Hampton Roads Council Navy League (board directors), National Security Industrial Association (Executive Committee Naval Expeditionary Warfare).

Picotte, Leonard Francis was born on December 8, 1939 in Calumet, Michigan, United States. Son of Irving René and Maria (Tamborino) Picotte

Bachelor of Science in Economics cum laude, University Northern Michigan, 1963. Master of Arts in Political Science, San Diego State University, 1975. Graduate with distinction, Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, 1976.

Master in Strategic Studies, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, 1985.

Commissioned ensign, United States Navy, 1963;advanced through grades to rear admiral, United States Navy, 1991;commanding officer, United States Ship Marathon, Vietnam, 1971-1973;Executive officer, United States Ship Point Defiance, San Diego, 1976-1978;Executive officer, officer in charge, Surface Warfare Officers' School, Coronado, California, 1978-1980;Executive officer, Naval Station, San Diego, 1980;commanding officer, United States Ship Alamo, San Diego, 1980-1982;surface warfare detailer, Bureau Naval Pers., Washington, 1982-1984;commanding officer, United States Ship Duluth, San Diego, 1986-1988;1st commanding officer, United States Ship Wasp, 1988-1990;inspector general, Commander in Chief, United States Atlantic Commandinspector general, Commander in Chief, United States Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, 1990-1992;commander, Amphibious Group Two, Norfolk, 1992-1995;retired, 1995;director expeditionary warfare, American Systems Corporation, Chesapeake, Virginia.

Member Surface Navy Association, United States Ship Wasp Association (honorary), Army and Navy Club, Town Point Club, Hampton Roads Council Navy League (board directors), National Security Industrial Association (Executive Committee Naval Expeditionary Warfare).

Avocations: jogging, hunting, reading, gardening, chess.

Married Sandra Lees Whiteley, July 14, 1984. Children from previous marriage: Mary Elizabeth, Lance, Michael.

## Leatherneck Club

**Another Reminder - The Leatherneck Club is a substantial part of our annual income. So to that end, this is a reminder to begin or renew your Leatherneck Club Membership for 2018.**

**I will maintain the current 2017 list for the January Scuttlebutt Issue and update to a current 2018 membership beginning with the February issue.**

**The contribution is \$100 and should be made out to:**

**James M. Slay Det. MCL and paid to the Paymaster at a meeting or by mail at:  
Fred Marotta  
17140 Napier Dr.  
Doswell, VA 23047-1617**



## Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon

MC: Col. Bill Parrish, USMC Ret.



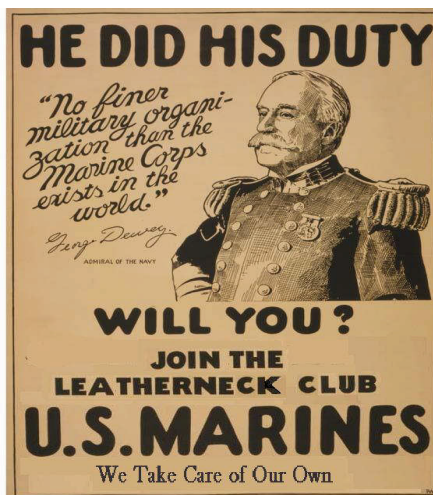
The Holicky-Sitter Luncheon was started to help support the local Active Duty Marines serving in the Richmond Area and Fort Lee. Our goal is the support of the local Marine Reserve Unit, the Marine Detachment at Fort Lee, Marine Corps Recruiters and the Marines assigned to Defense General Supply Center. 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 from the Deli on the ground floor.**  
 Date: Tuesday 13 February 2018 (The second Tuesday of every month )  
 Speaker: RAdm. Len Picotte (bio page 7)  
 Chow: 1130 - Speaker - 1210 - Secure at 1245.  
 Where: **"IMPORTANT" Location — Publix (Formerly Martins)  
 2250 John Rolfe Parkway, Henrico, VA 23233**

## 2017—18 LEATHERNECK CLUB

Bill Akers  
 Jim Barrett  
 John Beall  
 Mike Boudreau  
 Norm Carney  
 Clyde Childress  
 Herb Delbridge  
 Bob Gilliam  
 Tim Godbey  
 Clint Harrington  
 Bob Hartley  
 Bruce Heilman  
 Houston Holicky Sitter  
 Luncheon Group

Bill Jeffress  
 David Jennings  
 Greg Lee  
 Annebel Lewis  
 Blaine Mason  
 John McCann  
 Cee Cee Mickens  
 Tom Milhausen  
 Kevin O'Connor



John O'Connor  
 Carl Panebianco  
 Jamie Pleasants  
 Wes Pruitt  
 Jim Ralls  
 David Schneider  
 Lou Seigel  
 Fred Smith  
 Lee Smith  
 Bruce Steeley  
 David Taylor  
 John Thomas  
 Ken Varndell  
 Joe Wadle  
 Bill Wagner  
 Joe Washington  
 Jerry Wells  
 Spike Williamson  
 Christopher Word  
 Russell Wyatt  
 Richard Zimmer

In Memoriam  
 Chip Houston Pat O'Hare  
 Tom Burton Fred Neurohr



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)