



The Scuttlebutt Newsletter  
P.O. Box 4561  
Glen Allen, VA 23058-4561  
**March 2020**



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

**NOTE: NEW LOCATION—**

**LAKEWOOD**

**1900 Lauderdale Drive  
Richmond, VA 23238**

**The Fourth Saturday Of Each Month**

**No March Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Restrictions**

**Tentative Meeting 25 April 2020**

**[www.richmondmarines.net](http://www.richmondmarines.net)**

**(804) 417-4569**

## OUTWARD BOUND

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in an Outward Bound program with 5 other veterans and 6 Navy "Middies" from the academy and would like to share my experience. The program was sponsored by the Baltimore/Chesapeake Outward Bound School and veteran participants came from all over the region to participate. We spent a week in the woods participating in team building activities and sharing our leadership experiences. I will have to say that our nation is in good hands with these fine and motivated young men and women.



I have not donned a pack and gear in a LONG time and it all came back like a bad dream. The first two days we logged about 11 miles each day through the mountains and shale rock of Pennsylvania. Needless to say, when we made camp, the feet deserved a night of well earned rest. I will have to say the chow was much better than I remember in the field and was HOT. We're talking pizza, jambalaya, oatmeal, real coffee... This generation is a little spoiled. While we, the veterans, reminisced about our MRE favorites and adaptive field preparations as well as the severe constipation that would generally ensue, it was sometimes lost with the younger crowd. We did gather our water from the streams and the wonderful taste of iodine laced H2O came back like a bad dream.

Upon our return we learned of the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic and longed to be back in the woods where fresh air and nature were oblivious. I hope to have the opportunity to participate in other events like this so that our past and future leaders can share ideas and principles for the future of our country.

Semper Fidelis,  
Phil Hebner, Sr Vice Commandant

## Paymaster—Fred Marotta

MEMBERS OF DETACHMENT 329 - OUR DETACHMENT IS IN EXCELLENT FINANCIAL SHAPE BUT THERE ARE FORCES THAT WILL EFFECT OUR INCOME PRODUCING ACTIVITIES.

OUR DETACHMENT HAS NINE(9) MAJOR SOURCES OF INCOME BUT THE CURRENT NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE VIRUS WILL MOST LIKELY EFFECT FIVE(5) OF THOSE - - BREAKFAST RECEIPTS, HONOR GUARD DONATIONS, PATRIOT RACE REGISTRATIONS, WEAPON RAFFLE AND QUARTERMASTER SALES.

A VERY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF POTENTIAL LOSS IS \$13,000.00.

I AM ASKING THE MEMBERS TO LOOK AT HELPING TO SOFTEN THIS POTENTIAL LOSS. HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?

### THE LEATHERNECK CLUB!

THIS IS A WAY THAT MEMBERS CAN MAKE A MAKE A MONETARY DONATION OF \$100.00 TO THE DETACHMENT. OUR SCUTTLEBUTT NEWSLETTER LISTS THE NAMES OF YOUR FELLOW MARINES THAT HAVE MADE THIS DONATION TO THE DETACHMENT IN 2020.

NOW HERE'S THE HARD FACTS - OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS ONLY 42 MEMBERS AND FRIENDS HAVE MADE THIS COMMITMENT TO THE DETACHMENT - - SOME ONLY ONCE, SOME TWICE, SOME THREE TIMES AND A FEW EVERY YEAR (4 TIMES). A FEW HAVE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE BASE DONATION OF \$100.00 A YEAR.

SO THINK ABOUT IT AND MAIL A CHECK TO OUR POST OFFICE BOX .



James M. Slay  
Detachment Marine  
Corps League

Richmond, Virginia

[www.richmondmarines.net](http://www.richmondmarines.net)

# The Scuttlebutt

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

- **Mark Moore**  
Commandant
- **Phil Hebner**  
Sr Vice Commandant
- **Walter Cornett**  
Jr Vice Commandant
- **Bruce Russell**  
Adjutant
- **Dave Schneider**  
Judge Advocate
- **Jim Ralls** Chaplain
- **Rick Barden**  
Sergeant at Arms
- **Fred Marotta**  
Paymaster
- **Steve Farmer**  
Quartermaster
- **Bob Gilliam**  
Web Sergeant
- **Kevin O'Connor**  
Scuttlebutt Newsletter  
Editor  
[oonorsix@verizon.net](mailto:oonorsix@verizon.net)

## Commandant's Message



The world is a crazy place right now and it seems that things will not return to normal for quite some time. Every time our televisions are turned to the media more bad news enters our living rooms. As you know, we had to cancel our March meeting due to the Coronavirus. I want everyone to know this is a serious pandemic we are facing.

Please take every precaution necessary when going outside of their home. Unfortunately, I know two people that have tested positive for Coronavirus and they are currently in the hospital. We must all take this very seriously and I pray that this will be over soon. If anyone needs anything, please reach out to me or the detachment officers. I will ensure that whatever your needs are they will be met.

This morning, I spoke to the Department Commandant Roy Smith about the Spring Conference. We will be deciding in the next couple weeks if we should cancel the event. Once a decision has been made, I will let everyone know. Rest assured, our priority is to our members and their safety.

Earlier this month, our Department Senior Vice Joe Hoadley lost his house to a fire. As many know, I started a GoFundMe account for Joe and his family. Currently, we have raised \$3,325.00 and I want to say thank you to those that donated. If you would like to donate to Joe please let me know and I will send you the information. Joe and his family are doing well, and they are staying with family. We know possessions can be replaced but a brother cannot be. Please keep The Hoadley Family in our prayers.

We are facing some dark days but know the Lord is with you. Things will get better and we will become stronger. During these times, spend time with your loved ones. Sometimes we get so busy in our daily lives that we forget what is important. **WE WILL SEE THIS TO THE END!**

I will leave you with a verse from scripture which has helped me this past week. I hope it helps everyone as well. Pray for this nation, our President, our families, our military, and our Marine Corps League.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

**Semper Fidelis,**  
**Mark Moore**  
**Commandant**

**MINUTES**  
**JAMES M. SLAY DETACHMENT**  
**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**  
**22 FEBRUARY 2020**



**0900 Call to Order**

Commandant Mark Moore 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 except Joe Vass (Past Commandant, excused) and Lonny Fry (Chaplin, excused).

**Introduction of Guests**

Guests were Shawn Simms (USMC vet).

**Applications for New Members**

Marines MT Berger and JP Meade were voted in and sworn in.

**Reports of Officers**

Commandant – Mark Moore

Senior Vice Commandant – Phil Hebner

Junior Vice Commandant – Walter Cornett

The Mission BBQ dinner gatherings have done well. Starting in March, we will have “Bullets, BBQ & Beer Night” which will start with a group shoot at Colonial Shooting Academy followed by BBQ and Beer at Mission BBQ on Broad Street.

Adjutant – Bruce Russell

Asked for approval of the January minutes as published in the Scuttlebutt. The Minutes were approved.

Encouraged members to join the Leatherneck Club, and for existing members to give the Paymaster their annual cash donation.

Paymaster – Fred Marotta

Gave a brief financial update.

Chaplain – Lonny Fry

Gave the Chaplin’s Sick Report; Bill Akers is in the hospital.

Historian – Rich Van Damme

Reminded members that this the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Iwo Jima Campaign.

Web Sergeant – Rich Schollmann/Bob Gilliam

Need pictures of Detachment activities.

Legislative Relations – John Clickener

The latest Legislative Report has been emailed to members.

**Committee Reports**

Honor Guard – Spike Williamson

Honor Guard is very busy. Joe Washington received an award for participating in 140 HG details.

Range Day - Lou Seigel

April 6th will be the first Range Day of the year.

Fort Lee - Ron Echols

They continue to support the HHS luncheons each month.

Military Order of Devil Dogs – Jim Barrett

Next Growl is May 16 at Lakewood. Pups can advance to Devil Dog by attending the State Convention Growl on May 8-9 at Lakewood.

Virginia War Memorial - Bruce Steeley

Official Opening will be 29 February from 1000 – 1300 hours. Upcoming activities: Feb 25-Tuskegee Airmen discussion, Mar 5-Meet the Veteran Artists, Mar 7-Brave Women Warriors, Mar 14-K9 Veterans Day. Those wanting Vietnam Veterans Certificates should see Bruce Steeley.

Care Packages - Herb Delbridge

Sending a box of coffee and creamers to Kuwait.

Quartermaster – Steve Farmer

Visit [jamesmslay.com](http://jamesmslay.com) to order clothing and accessories. MCL covers are only available thru the Semper Fi Store on MCL’s national website.

Fund Raising – Jim Ralls

Jim has 25 tickets available for the M1A Raffle. The first corporate sponsor for the Patriot 5k Race is Kelleher Corporation. (Thanks Det. Member Joe Kelleher) We will advertise the Patriot 5k Run at other runs/races in the Richmond area.



Past State Commandant – Jim Barrett

National Mid-Winter Conference is next week in VA Beach. The Mid-East Conference will be in VA Beach in June.

#### Unfinished Business

Two new appointed Detachment positions were voted on and approved; they are Public Relations Officer (Randy Abernathy) and Legislative Officer (Open). It was discussed that we also need a Risk Officer. We need to open a stock brokerage account to allow the Detachment to accept donations of corporate stock.

#### New Business

Hatcher's Restaurant in Amelia has offered to host an Honor Guard benefit luncheon in July. All receipts from the luncheon will be donated to the Honor Guard/Detachment. Estimated to generate as much as \$4000 for the Detachment. It was voted and approved to expend up \$100 for advertising/marketing flyers and posters for the event.

#### Good of the League

Live fire event (Hotel Battery) at Fort Pickett is today. The bus will leave Lakewood after today's meeting.

#### Announcements

Commandant's Trip to 8<sup>th</sup> & I Barracks is being planned for July.

The Detachment will host its own Marine Corps Ball/Toys for Tots event at Lakewood on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Reservations will be required and the estimated cost is \$35/person.

Cecil McNair's shadow box is in production. Cost will be a bit more than originally planned.

Former members of our MCL Auxiliary are invited to become MCL Associate members.

#### Closing Ceremony

By order of the Commandant the Colors were retired, the Chaplain gave the closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned until Saturday, 28 March 2020 at 0900.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bruce Russell, Adjutant

### Bullets, BBQ & Beer Night

#### Marines

Wednesday night, March 4th, was our first BB&B Night at Colonial Shooting Academy. Boy, talk about first class treatment! We had our own range, safety officer and sent a lot of rounds down range. After, we headed to Mission BBQ for evening chow. Shooting makes you hungry and thirsty. If you are interested in coming out this will be a monthly outing. We will have BB&B Night on the first Wednesday of every month. We meet at Colonial Shooting Academy from 1800-1900 and then head to Mission BBQ from 1900-2000. I hope to see more Marines next month.

Semper Fi Mark Moore, Commandant



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**Top Shooters—Range Day Competition**  
**Lou Seigel & Mike Castanet**



Greg McQuade (Center), WTVR Richmond, interviewed Ron Echols and Mike Bonacci at the National Museum of the Marine Corps for his Special "Heroes Among Us" which aired on Thursday March 19th.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

By Slay Det. Marine Corps League Member Lonny Fry

"Are you a Marine, or do you just like to wear our gear?" The man slowly rose to his feet, did an about-face, looked me squarely in the eye and responded, in an equal, but very commanding voice, "Yes! Are you?"

Rewind exactly fifty years, a twenty-year-old young man, uncertain of what he hoped to become, temporarily dropped out of college and enlisted in the Marine Corps. Every Marine was rigorously trained to fight to live but told to prepare to die, knowing where we were headed. The probability was very high! To ensure we got the point, our DI reminded us daily:

"Left....gimme a left, right, left.....pla-toooon halt...ri...ght face. Squad three...half step right...for...ward, march...left, right, left...squad halt...about face... Look at these pukes in squad three, dead \*% !# they will be!"

Following boot camp, ITR (infantry training regiment), and MOS (military occupational specialty) school, I was assigned 0141, Personnel Administration. Naive and idealistic, faced with the biggest challenge of my life, this scared %\*#! PFC headed to Vietnam to serve with 2nd Battalion/1st Marines, H&S (Headquarters & Service) Company.

Like all deployed, there was mistrust in a foreign environment. Like all, I was faced with death, but from another perspective. Armed only with an immature faith in my God that I had come to know in my Christian home and faith in my fellow Marines. I began to face my demons.

"Yea tho I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.... Alav ha-shalom" (peace be upon him) added if the fallen was Hebrew. The Chaplin's words echoed throughout the battalion compound, once every month. A small group of Marines gathered to pay a final memorial tribute to those that gave it all. As chief personnel clerk, assigned to H & S, I attended all ceremonies; it was my job to document their final chapter.

Serving as an admin in an infantry battalion, my experience was much different than 0300 MOS grunt Marines. Apart from two brief firefights, rat patrols and perimeter duty at night, and mine sweeps in the early morning, my days were spent inside the compound assisting the CO and Top track a host of personnel activities. During my tour, I struggled with an intense conflict between the world's view of the war and the reality of those serving, and dying! An article in Reader's Digest best reflected the political and social environment of the war and how it was received by the men and women that served. In part, it read: *"What they need most is the assurance that their immense suffering has not been in vain. They need recognition of their courage in war's battles and in their own daily battles to recover. All about them swirl the voices of their countrymen calling the Vietnam war a travesty, one of history's horrible mistakes. The wounded recognize that these judgments may be proper, but they need the validation of their own response when they were called to serve."*

Readers Digest - August 1969

Every month the memorial service brought death inside the compound. Every company Echo, Fox, Golf, and Weapons, gave the ultimate sacrifice. Except H&S, to my memory. Understanding why my countrymen did not support these men's efforts, let alone give tribute to the price they paid, tore me apart. This conflict haunted me my entire tour. I penned it in prose then as a means to cope. The best of my duty was processing short-timers to return home; the worst of my duty was processing the fallen to return home...in a body bag.

Having been given a great gift of personal faith, maturity, and protection, by the grace of God, I was sheltered and returned safely home. The arrival from Vietnam however, was met with disdain. Unlike the feelings of euphoria from the glory of God, the gift of a maturing faith, and a belief in my future, I accepted a position of shame.

After touchdown at Edward's Air Force Base, I slowly disembarked the plane, fell to my knees and kissed the tarmac of my United States of America. I thanked God that I was home. Immediately, I changed into civilian clothes, as strongly suggested by fellow Marines, who had returned in uniform only to be spat upon by dissidents protesting the war. Following a short, loving family homecoming, life settled. Marrying my bride and starting a family became priority one. I was back home again in Indiana. There were no military bases or positive influences nearby, and the anger continued to grow throughout the country. The conflict and the reception we all received continued to fester and the wounds left behind never healed.

I lost touch with the Marine Corps and our mantra "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."

I buried the memories of the political environment towards the war and the hateful reception towards all Vietnam veterans.

The next time I had any contact with the Marine Corps was in 2009 when I first saw him at a local market. My wife and I were looking at hanging baskets for our new home after moving to Richmond. We pulled several from above and placed them on the floor for a closer inspection. During our examination, a man entered our space, bent down, and began to covet those we were considering. For fear of losing our selections, I decided to say something. It was then I noticed he was wearing a USMC shirt, so I tapped him on the shoulder, and in a friendly banter questioned his authenticity.

A friendship and bond instantly formed! We had never met, yet we had a universal tie - we were Marines. As we talked, we discovered we served in Vietnam about the same time. I learned the origin of his commanding voice and posture was that of a leader, a Captain. He could have been my Commanding Officer. During this initial conversation, I told him about our recent risky move from Ohio, my background, and my search for a position in banking.

The next day he called to invite me to a luncheon with 75 other Marines and veterans. We had a great conversation, getting to know each other's past and future dreams. We talked at length, especially regarding the degrading and hateful reception all Vietnam vets received. There was NO "thank you for your service" offered by our countrymen.

Continued on Page 7

## Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon 2020

**No Luncheon in April due to the Covid-19 Virus  
Restrictions in the Virginia Commonwealth**

### Thank You, Continued....

Before the week was out, I received another call asking if I would like to meet the president of a local bank. He arranged the time and place, and the three of us met to discuss my skills. Leaving, he asked me to wait while he went to his car. Returning, he threw a USMC shirt in my face; stating in a jestful, yet serious manner "Here, you need to wear this!"

It was then I learned another truism, "The Brotherhood of the Corps," Marines taking care of Marines. Later in that second week, I received a call from the human resource VP asking me to come in for formal interviews. In the third week, I accepted an offer to start a new division for the bank.

It was soon after I wore his gift with an eagle, globe, and anchor on the breast pocket; I heard my very first "Thank you for your service" from a stranger I passed on the street. Putting on that shirt was like applying a soothing medicated ointment, dressing wounds that had remained raw and open for forty years. I can't count the number of times since then those much-appreciated words passed across my ears every time I wear USMC gear.

As I continued to attend the monthly luncheons with him, I was invited to check out the local Marine Corps League. Familiar with the League, but with little direct knowledge of their contribution, I accepted the invitation. Drawn by the brotherhood, instant friendships, and living in the mantra, I enlisted.

For the first few months, I observed, getting to know how I might best contribute. Then it became clear! The Honor Guard would be a perfect place to fulfill my deep desire of what I long prayed for when I first read it in the Digest. It closed with the following: *"These men will live for a long time with the nightmares of memory. The least their countrymen can do is offer them assurance that their courage will be remembered and honored – no matter what final judgment historians make of a war that to each of them was personal Armageddon, come when life was fullest with promise."*

This past year our detachment honored 53 veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces, paying a final tribute to their service, and participated in another 10 ceremonies remembering and honoring those that gave it all, but received no gratitude.

It was by faith that we were drawn to Richmond facing the unknown. Captain Cal was my point man, used as God's guide the entire mission. He cleared the trail opening doors of employment, mending old wounds, and giving me new purpose as I approached retirement. He was a leader, a Marine helping another Marine, a Christian, and my friend. Reminding me that I was still a Marine, he helped to restore my soul and confirm my faith.

Every time I hear those words "Thank you for your service," it is like a warm balm, covering my flesh, healing the wounds of the past. Every time I fire a three-shot volley, recite the meaning of the folds of the American flag to the family or salute our Nation's Colors, all honoring a veteran's passing, I thank God for giving me such a privilege.

Times have changed as the world has changed in light of many conflicts. The military men and women of today are treated with respect and appropriately honored for their service. We still have miles to go, but a turn has been made. A cancerous seed of anger that was sown fifty years ago has miraculously been transformed, and today yields a renaissance of patriotism that supports and honors those who were once its target.

Recently, Captain Cal was called home by the Supreme Commandant...he will be missed!

Thank you for **your** service Captain Richard Calvert "Cal" Esleeck Jr.

Thank you for your friendship, your leadership, and reaching out to this Marine!

Semper Fi

## Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon

MC: Col. Bill Parrish, USMC Ret.



The Houston-Holicky-Sitter Veterans' lunch group is an informal forum for veterans of all branches of the armed forces. Col. Joseph J. Holicky, Jr. (USMC, ret.) and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Col. Carl L. Sitter (USMC, ret.) began having lunch together in the mid 1970's following their retirements. Over the years other veterans and local active duty Marines joined them for lunch. In the early 1980's Lt. Col. L.W. "Chip" Houston (USMCR, ret.) became part of the leadership team and served as its Master of Ceremonies for over 25 years. Today nearly 100 veterans meet each month to carry on the HHS tradition and to hear prominent guest speakers address military history, national security issues, and other topics of interest to veterans.

HHS is apolitical, and promotion of political interests is prohibited. HHS is a not-for-profit group, but it is neither a 501c3 nor a 501c4 organization.

**Notice: There will be no April Luncheon due to the necessary restrictions on group gatherings due to Covid-19 Virus.**

**We will communicate future meetings plans and changes accordingly. Be Safe!**

## 2020 LEATHERNECK CLUB

Bill Akers  
Jim Barrett  
John Beall  
Mike Boudreau  
Herb Delbridge  
Ron Echols  
Lonny Fry  
John Clickener  
Phillip Gee  
Bob Gilliam  
Tim Godbey  
Clint Harrington  
Bob Hartley  
Phil Hebner  
Houston Holicky Sitter  
Luncheon Group  
Bill Jeffress  
Ed Kemp  
Greg Lee



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

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



Begin or renew your Leatherneck Club Membership for 2020. Your \$100 annual membership fee supports the activities and efforts of the James M. Slay Detachment, a not-for-profit 501c4 Veteran's Service Organization. Contact Detachment Paymaster Fred Marotta at: [Paymaster329@gmail.com](mailto:Paymaster329@gmail.com)