



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



JAMES M. SLAY DETACHMENT MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MEETING

NOTE: JUNE SPECIAL LOCATION—

**American Legion
3386 River Rd W,
Goochland, VA 23063**

**The Fourth Saturday Of Each Month
Next Meeting 27 June 2020—Details page 3
www.richmondmarines.net
(804) 417-4569**

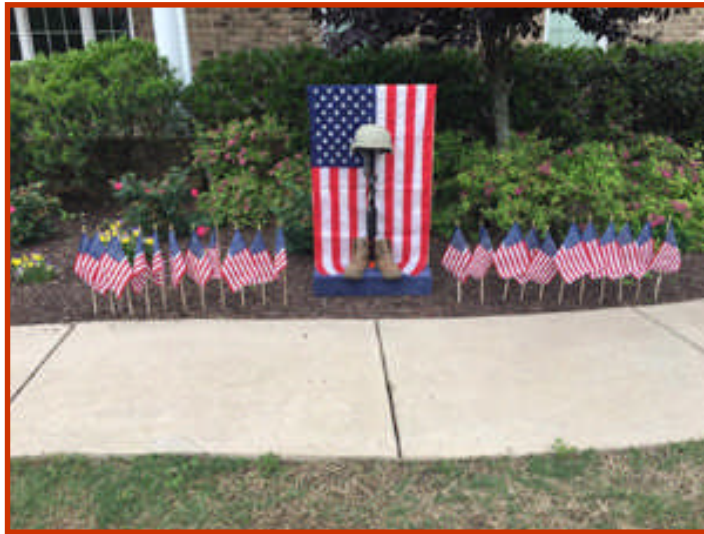
**Special Note: Richmond New Interim Police Chief, Maj. William V. “Jody” Blackwell
Marine Corps Veteran**

As the Richmond community faces many challenges and the police department must deal with civil unrest and protests of Police brutality, we wish our fellow Marine success in calming the community and protecting our policemen.

Phil Hebner

Senior Vice Commandant Memorial Day Observance

Although official Memorial Day events were cancelled, my son and I made this fallen soldier memorial in remembrance of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We staged it in my front yard and played TAPS at 3:00 (the official moment of remembrance) and sundown when we brought the memorial back in the house. There were a couple of neighbors in attendance and Henry Valdez from the League. We flanked the memorial with 22 flags as well in remembrance of veteran suicide. As a member of the honor guard and having provided honors to the fallen, it really hit home that we were able to build a wonderful tribute. The memorial will remain in my possession and anyone who would like to use it for an event is welcome to get in touch for arrange-



ments.



Marine recruits sit on a bus after receiving a health screening and getting their gear before heading for quarantine at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on Monday, April 13.

James M. Slay
Detachment Marine
Corps League

Richmond, Virginia

www.richmondmarines.net

- **Mark Moore**
Commandant
- **Phil Hebner**
Sr Vice Commandant
- **Walter Cornett**
Jr Vice Commandant
- **Tim Taylor**
Adjutant
- **Dave Schneider**
Judge Advocate
- **Lonny Fry** Chaplain
- **Rick Barden**
Sergeant at Arms
- **Fred Marotta**
Paymaster
- **Steve Farmer**
Quartermaster
- **Bob Gilliam**
Web Sergeant
- **Kevin O'Connor**
Scuttlebutt Newsletter
Editor
oconorsix@verizon.net

The Scuttlebutt

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

Marines,

Good afternoon I hope this email finds everyone in good health. I have been extremely busy these last several weeks so I will keep this short and to the point.

We will be having a detachment meeting on June 27th at the American Legion in Goochland, Va.

James M. Slay #329 Detachment Meeting
American Legion
3386 River Rd W,
Goochland, VA 23063
Time: 0900-1030



Here is the additional information for the detachment meeting scheduled on June 27th. Again, the meeting will be held at the American Legion located at 3386 River Road W, Goochland, VA. The time of the meeting will be 0900-1030. Unfortunately, there will be no breakfast at the meeting. If you would like breakfast, I would suggest the Goochland Restaurant which is located at 2966 River Road W. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have been unable to meet and there are items that needs our attention. I will be sending out a detachment agenda this week so continue to check your email.

If you are planning to attend the meeting please arrive on time so we can get things underway. Please keep in mind that we must adhere to the CDC guidelines in Phase 2 which is 50% of the event space or 50 people or less whichever is applicable. Usually we have anywhere between 35-45 members at our detachment meetings. At this time, I do not know the buildings occupant fire code, however I can get those numbers from Jim Ralls. Once I receive that information, I will pass it along.

Upon entering the building, your temperature will be scanned at the door by the Sergeant-At-Arms. If your temperature is 99.5 or above you will not be allowed in the building. If you have been sick in the last two weeks or you're not feeling well. Please stay home! Since the majority of the membership is over 55 I encourage you to wear a mask. I will not enforce this rule so use your own discretion. If you arrive after 0900, you will not be allowed in the building. These rules are for the safety of EVERYONE.

I will be arriving early to ensure everything is sanitized and social distanced for the meeting. We will also have hand sanitizing stations throughout the building. I ask that you sanitize your hands prior to entering and before you leave. Once the meeting has concluded we need to ensure that everything is put back in place. In addition, anything we touch or use is also sanitized. Let's work together so we can leave the building exactly the way we found it.

In the coming months, we may continue to utilize the American Legion until Lakewood Manor fully reopens. I spoke to Jim Barrett a couple days ago and they are planning to reopen in August. I will keep everyone informed of any changes that occur. I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy. If you have any questions or suggestions please let me know.

Semper Fi,
Mark Moore, Commandant

Several months now of lock-down and minimal contact. Minimal socializing with friends and even relatives. No Houston Holicky Sitter Luncheon and no Slay Detachment Meetings for March, April and May.

While we're hoping to enter Phase 3 soon (possibly June 26th) it's good to have this update from Detachment Chaplain Lonny Fry about two of the "Icons" of the Detachment.



Sick-Call Update June 2020

Bruce Steeley
9190 Harvey Hollow
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 746-4413

By now you have probably heard that our own Bruce Steely had a heart attack on June 9th while playing golf with some of our League members. Upon admission to the hospital Bruce had two stints placed and an additional three stints in a second procedure later during his stay. Bruce has had some serious heart issues in the past including previous stints as well as bi-pass surgery in 2009, but this was his first heart attack. He was released from the hospital that week-end and is resting comfortably at home under the careful eye of his wife Catherine. He reports that he is doing well, feels like he is healing, and just needs to rest to fully recuperate. He is thankful for the prayers, cards, and phone calls from many of you and gives his best to all members and hopes to see us at our July meeting. Always thinking and acting for the good of the James M. Slay Detachment, Bruce has been a loyal member holding several positions over the years including Past Commandant. I encourage everyone to include him in your prayers and send him a card to encourage him in recovery. May God Bless you Bruce and your caregiver Catherine!

Jerold Evans – Room 418
Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center
1601 Broad Rock Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23224
(804) 716-4381

Jerold is another long-time member that has done so much for League. Many of you probably don't even know Jerold, but he was one of the handful of Charter Members of the James M. Slay Detachment. He helped form #329 in 1964, 56 years ago, making James M. Slay the oldest detachment in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Jerold is now 93 and continues to reside at Sitter & Barfoot after a double amputee of his legs in January. I had visited Jerold about every 10 days with my Collie pup up until COVID19 hit. To make his recovery even more difficult he has not had any outside visitors since mid-March. I continue to call and stay in touch, but how difficult it must be to be so isolated from family and friends. He is a champion. Please pray for Jerold and send him a card, I know he would appreciate hearing from each of you. Stay strong Marine, stay strong. Our God is watching over you!

ATTENTION MARINES!

If you, or a member, is ill or having surgery , please let me know so that I may make contact. During COVID19 I have had very few calls and notifications concerning our membership. Let us Pray for All our Sick and or Shut-in Marines and let us not forget the Spouses and family members also.

Semper Fi,
Chaplain, Lonny Fry
landsfry@gmail.com
(804) 525-0913

Eve of Destruction

1968

Riots, destruction, and deaths over racial inequality and The Vietnam War. Massive riots at the 1968 Democratic Presidential convention, the Black Power Fist raising at the Olympics, College campus riots – and the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

A Pandemic began in July 1968, the Hong Kong Flu, that would kill 100,000 Americans and 3 million worldwide.

1968 was the year of most Americans killed in Vietnam, 16,899, and the worst “kill day” of the war January 31st.

It was also a presidential election year with tensions raised because Johnson declined to run for reelection and Richard Nixon ran on a Law & Order pledge.

2020

Riots & destruction. Racial inequality and deaths due to Police brutality. The Black Lives Matter movement with peaceful protests. But there is also violence and looting and burning of buildings being common with probable agitators taking advantage of the mob scenes.

The Covid-19 Pandemic locking down much of the country with terrible impact on employment and all variety of business, education, travel, and families.

A contentious Presidential year with all the above impacting the terrible divide between the political parties and the vitriol back and forth.

Differences

Today we have 24 Hour cable TV News which is often out of balance between reporting and opinion. This makes distinguishing between fact and interpretation difficult to assess.

In 1968 there were no cellphones to record everything which today can enhance understanding of events or misrepresent them. It seems that many people participate in marches and protests for “selfies” and almost entertainment. This means that Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms become sources for endless sharing of the action. This feeds the “frenzy”. The more things change, the more they stay the same.



On the left is an art piece

“He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother” that won the regional competition at this years Regional Veterans Administration Art contest in the Pyrography category. Pyrography is a design burned into a surface using wood burning tools. It has “moved on” to the National competition in Washington D.C. scheduled for this summer.

I cut and burned this on reclaimed wood to symbolize that we are all “reclaimed” in some way as veterans.

The design was copied from a Black Vietnam Veterans statue in Wilmington, Delaware.

It is a black soldier carrying a white comrade.

Some of us may remember being told in Boot Camp that there is “no black or white in the Marine Corps, only Marine Corps Green”

Editor,
Kevin

Editors Note:

Below is an article describing The Mighty Pen Project. I first heard of it from Detachment member Carl Panebianco several years ago. I was scheduled to participate in April but had to postpone until the next session in September. Kevin

The author is Joe Maslanka a Marine Veteran, 1984—1988.

COMARADERIE OF THE PEN

It must have been 2016 when a good friend, Barry Moore of Haley Buick, placed me in touch with an energetic young veteran, Rachel Lanslee. I played with a band, The Righteous Outlaws. The band played to aid local charities. Our primary goal to support Veteran's organizations. Barry explained that Rachel was the CEO for a Veteran's creative writing program called

The Might Pen Project (MPP).

Rachel met me at the Starbucks on Libbie and Grove. Over coffee, we shared stories from our time in the service. Naturally, the stories differed, with her a Captain in the Army, Iraq-Afghanistan, modern era, and me an 0311 Corporal, 80's era Marine. She began to tell me about the MPP, and about this Professor from VCU, David Robbins. The program was David's vision. Although he had never served, he had a heart for veterans and a passion for writing.

After three hours, not only had I agreed to have the band do a few shows to support the program, I found myself wanting to join. Rachel was a great promoter of the MPP. It was either that or her sincere thrill to have an 80's era Veteran join the program. Regardless, I was sold.

I met Professor Robbins at the show we performed for MPP at O'Banks in Ashland. He describes himself this way, and it is the most accurate description I have heard when I think of Professor Robbins he is a "chihuahua in a Doberman Pincher's body." I can't remember everything he said when he stepped up to the microphone hoping to drum up donations for the MPP, but my bass player turned to me and said, "man, this guy can sling some crap." Whatever Professor Robbins said, it was enough to fill the donation bucket.

My first class with MPP began in January of 2017, unfortunately I did not have Professor Robbins as my instructor for that class. I showed up on a freezing winter night surrounded by veterans from several eras, although most were Vietnam Vets. As the only Marine, I took some well-meaning jibes, and dished out some of my own. In a class of 10 to 15 veterans, four or five will volunteer to write each week, for twelve weeks. This is not a class for therapy, no one is expected to exorcise demons or explore psychological meanings behind stories. Veterans are free to submit whatever they are moved to write about. However, many will eventually write of their time in war as the level of trust in the group develops. I can tell you with all respect and sincerity that the stories can be shocking, hilarious, sad, moving, but always powerful.

The best part of joining the Mighty Pen Project is the camaraderie that is built and friendships that are made. I believe I am on my seventh time taking the class? But who's counting? All I know is I look forward to Wednesday nights at the War Memorial (although right now we are on Zoom for virtual class). It's an honor to look around the room and see faces, familiar and new, of men and woman who have served our country. To share in the pursuit of spinning a good tale. Expect good natured dogging for bad writing or called on the carpet for making less than satisfactory choices in your writing, but you will learn, laugh, enjoy friendships and become one heck of a writer. It will and does happen. Like a human M60, Professor Robbins never stops speaking, teaching, motivating, and driving you to become a better writer. His passion and dedication, at that of those around him, will get you there.

The program is now sponsored by the War Memorial. Their support is greatly appreciated. As are Professor Robbins steadfast student volunteers, who give their time and support to the Mighty Pen. To become part of the Mighty Pen Project, visit the website for the War Memorial: <https://vawarmemorial.org/learn/adults/mightypen/> this will guide you to information and you will be able to learn more and sign up for future sessions. Feel free to contact me at Sguard94@comcast.net or call me at 804-253-1808 if you would care to discuss the program. Trust me, it is a great experience whether you take one class or continue on in the program, as many of us have. Semper Fi!

Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon 2020

Still no Luncheons scheduled until Guidelines about group meetings are changed

Generals and Politics!

In the Fall of 1967, I was a young Lance Corporal just a few months out of Boot Camp and stationed in Pensacola, Florida. It was a tumultuous year of anti-war and racial protests throughout the country with many becoming violent and destructive. Sound familiar?

I was stationed at the small and tightly secured Corey Station, a Navy and Marine Intel and Communications base quite far and separate from the main Navy base.

There were minor protests locally but there were rumors of a major event to come. Our small contingent, Co K, Marine Support Battalion Marines, were told that we were going to be assigned to crowd control. We even had a couple of mornings of instruction and drill for crowd control. I think we all felt extremely nervous and disoriented by the possibility of lining up against our fellow Americans. Fortunately, the anticipated protest never happened, and I moved on to Camp Pendleton for training and staging for Nam.

But, of course, this suggests the events of the past few weeks. I do not want to focus on those events, the causes, complications, or any of the controversial perspectives. I am sure we all abhor unnecessary violence and especially the death of George Floyd. And I expect we have varying opinions of protest. Complete disclosure – in the late 1970's I had a leadership position in two protests by Vietnam Veterans “demanding” complete disclosure by North Vietnam of POW's that had not been identified. Veterans in black *Bring Home Our POW-MIAs* t-shirts and black berets marching at the UN in NYC and at former President Nixon's home in Saddle River NJ. So, I have some “protest understanding”.



What I want to talk about is what Victor Davis Hanson wrote about on January 7th, “Not-So-Retiring Retired Military Leaders”. Former chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey wrote an op-ed criticizing retired generals mixing in politics. “The American people should not wonder where their military leaders draw the line between military advice and political preference..... and our nations soldiers, sailors’, airmen and Marines should not wonder about the political leanings and motivations of their leaders”.

This was brought about by the often-incendiary reaction and terminology of many of these retired, and respected leaders. James Mattis, Marine General, former defense secretary and a “deservedly iconic figure”, recently suggested that “Trump fostered disunity in much the same way that Nazis did”.

Many of these retired leaders have used terms that suggest the President is evil, a traitor, and use Fascist or Nazi similes to convey disdain. They were especially incensed that the President suggested he had the power to use the active military, if necessary. These retired leaders certainly have a First Amendment right to express their opinions. But the concern is the impact this may have on the active duty military and the possible politicization in an election year.

I recognize the concern about the politicization of the military, both retired and current, I haven't yet established a position on this but am simply “stirring the pot” with Victor David Hanson's and General Dempsey's published perspectives.

What do you think?

Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon

MC: Col. Bill Parrish, USMC Ret.



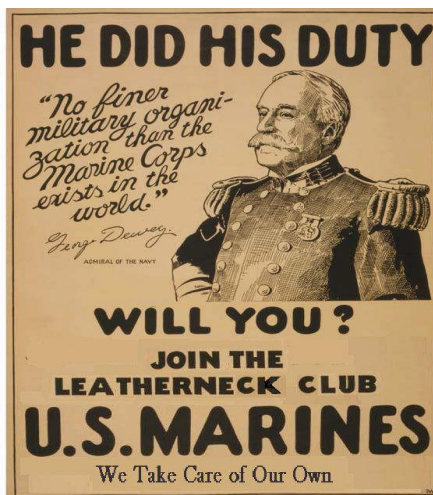
The Houston-Holicky-Sitter Veterans' lunch group is an informal forum for veterans of all branches of the armed forces. Col. Joseph J. Holicky, Jr. (USMC, ret.) and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Col. Carl L. Sitter (USMC, ret.) began having lunch together in the mid 1970's following their retirements. 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.

Still not able to hold these luncheons. Will resume as soon at State requirements for meetings and social distancing are changes or dropped.

2020 LEATHERNECK CLUB

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



- Fred Marotta
- Tom Mraz
- Tom Milhausen
- Kevin O'Connor
- John O'Connor
- Carl Panebianco
- Jim Ralls
- Bruce Russell
- David Schneider
- Lou Seigel
- Charlie Slay
- Bruce Steeley
- David Taylor
- Tim Taylor
- John Thomas
- Richard VanDamme
- Ken Varndell
- Joe Wadle
- Bill Wagner
- Joe Washington
- Jerry Wells

In Memoriam
 Chip Houston Pat O'Hare
 Bill Lyell Buddy 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