



# Marine Corps League

## Detachment 1226

Volume 10

November 2009

### League Officers:

**Commandant:** Jack Skelding  
**Sr. Vice Commandant:** Dennis Antle  
**Jr. Vice Commandant:** Ken Zolna  
**Adjutant:** Willie Little Jr.  
**Paymaster:** Willie Little Jr.  
**Judge Advocate:** Sid Atwater  
**Chaplain:** Dave Blizzard  
**Sergeant-at-Arms:** George Mc Master  
**Past Commandant:** John Bain  
**Web Sergeant:** Jacob Bain  
**Newsletter Editor:** Debra Steele  
**Historian:** Stan Horman

### League Auxiliary

**President:** Mary Zolna  
**Sr. Vice President:** Sheilah Blizzard  
**Jr. Vice President:** Marce Strom  
**Judge Advocate:** Nancy Horman  
**Secretary:** Cheryl Ferretti  
**Guard:** Mary Ann Raysick

### Marine Corps League Detachment 1226

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Riverview, Florida 33568

Mailing Label goes Here



# DEVIL DAWG MONTHLY

## **COMMANDANT'S CORNER:**

We have just completed a very busy month for our Color Guard and I want to personally thank them for all they have done. If you were not at any of the events they participated in I want you to know that they represented the Detachment very well.

I hope all that attended our birthday celebration had a good time. If you missed it we had about 75 members and guest in attendance. Thank you to Thomas (Cozmo) Horman and the associate members of both the Detachment and Auxiliary who did the cooking and serving of the diner.

Congratulations to Debra Steele who was announced as the Detachments Marine of the Year for 2009 at the birthday celebration. It was a well deserved honor.

For the next few weeks we will be heavily committed to the Toys for Tots drive. I want to thank all who are involved for their efforts. If you are not involved and want to be give me a call. I am sure I can find a way for you to donate some time to this project.

Our next meeting will be a joint meeting of the Detachment and the Auxiliary as we will be presenting a check to the Haley House.

Our next meeting, December 1, 2009 will also be the last meeting for this year. Where did the time go?

We need to keep recruiting new members at every opportunity. We should all have an application in our wallet for when we meet new Marines and qualified Navy Corpsman. You get three applications with each

issue of Semper Fi. Don't let them go to waste. Use them, please do not throw them in the trash.

As always I want to remind you that this is not my Detachment it belongs to you the membership. We can only be as good as you want us to be. If you have any idea on something that we can do to improve on what we already have please bring them to our meetings so they can be discussed.

Semper Fi

Jack Skelding  
Commandant

**Email: If you received this by regular mail and have an email address, please contact me via email so we may add you to the list.**

**[Debthecandlelegal@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:Debthecandlelegal@tampabay.rr.com)**



**We need your ideas. If there is other information you would like to see posted or certain topics you would like us to discuss, please let me know**

**AUXILIARY PRESIDENT COMMENTS:**

I would like to extend congratulations to Debra Steele on being presented with the Marine of the Year award on Saturday at the 234<sup>th</sup> Marine Corps Birthday party held at the American Legion Post 148. YOU GO, GIRL!!!! And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Marine Corps League Detachment Associate members who did an awesome job with the meal – it was delicious! Also a big THANK YOU to the MCL Auxiliary members who helped out by serving the dinners. Great job one and all.

We're still in the planning stage of a joint Christmas party for needy children being held at the American Legion Post 148 on December 13<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm. There will be activities for the children as well as Santa presenting gifts. More information at the December meeting.

Our busy season is upon us so please attend the next meeting, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 for updates on Toys for Tots, the joint Christmas Party with the Legion and also the new members of the Auxiliary will be initiated at this time.

We are still in need of items to sell at the weekly Flea Market and, if you are able, please work one Sunday from 7-Noon. It's fun and a money-maker for both the Detachment and Auxiliary.

Thank you

Mary Zolna,  
MCLA Unit 1226 President

**CAR WASH**

Car Washes will now resume on the last Saturday of every month at the Legion from 1000 to 1400 hours.

**YARD SALE:**

Need donations to keep this going and volunteers to help work the yard sale on Sundays. Contact Jack or Ken for further details. This has been a moneymaker for the league

**MEMBERSHIP CORNER:**

100% Membership Retention Goal based on roster dated 03/31/2009

Past due June-October 2009

Nathan Kidd	June
Robert Collins	July
Luis Rosario	Sept
Guillermo Serra	Sept
Edison Adams	Oct
Carl Correll	Oct
Juan De La Cruz	Oct
Thomas Horman	Oct
Michelle Johnson	Oct
Jerome Kirkland	Oct
Thomas Larrow	Oct
John Monck	Oct
David Paff	Oct

Nov-Dec. Membership Expirations

Danny Antle	Nov
Jennifer Antle	Nov
Jack Lively	Nov
Charles Cox	Dec
Eric Gaston	Dec
David Im	Dec
Ron Lussier	Dec
Bruce Scheller	Dec
Debra Steele	Dec
Eddie Sweeting	Dec

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP BY AGE CATEGLORY**

61 AND OVER	\$150.00
51 TO 60	\$300.00
36 TO 50	\$400.00

Should you have any questions regarding life membership, please contact Willie Little, Jr. (813)972-7711.

S/F Willie

**New Members:**

Bernie Kotrady

**Ill Members**

Cpl Mike Sherman's Father and Grandfather. Please remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

**Deaths**

None

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

\*Contact Willie Little for visits to the VA Hospital to show our support for our fellow soldiers.

\*If you are interested in becoming a member of the Honor Guard, please contact Ken Zolna.

**Rose Fund--**

**Our ROSE FUND** fundraiser was a tremendous success. Thanks to the 20 Marines/Auxiliary for their **support**. In going forward, our Rose Fund events should be on dates that are **symbolic** to our Country's Freedom such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day and the 4th of July.

Contact Bob Gramprrie(741-2844) or Willie Little(972-7711) for more information.



**YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE** -- *We need to step up for this cause*

We are slowly but surely making progress. If you would like to volunteer to help with the unit, you can get an application online at [www.youngmarines.org](http://www.youngmarines.org) by clicking the "Volunteer" link and clicking "View our Registered Adult Application here." If you are unable to get it online, please contact me and I will

send you a paper copy. We truly need volunteers to step up to help this program.

I look forward to getting this unit up and running, and I hope more Marines will step up and assist us in this journey.

Semper Fidelis,  
Michael W. Sherman Jr.  
Commanding Officer - Hillsborough Young Marines  
Blackberry: 813-541-3452  
E-mail: [shermanmw@verizon.net](mailto:shermanmw@verizon.net)

Visit our Website at [www.mclriverview.org](http://www.mclriverview.org)

**MILITARY NEWS*****How do I apply for veterans benefits?***

Assistance in filing applications for benefits from the VA may be obtained through any State Veterans Service Officer. Veterans Service Officers assist veterans, their dependents and widows in filing claims for all federal VA benefits. Locations and phone numbers may be found under "State Government, Veterans Service Officer" in the Yellow Pages of your phone book. The VA also operates a toll-free number for general questions, 1-800-827-1000, or TDD 1-800-829-4833.

**MARINE TIDBITS:**

"A Gunnery Sergeant is the Marine Corp's answer to Vince Lombardi with a hangover." Attributed to Lynn Ashby in a Marine Corps Gazette article in November 1996.

Semper Fi Sid

**INITIATIVES FROM LAST MEETING:**

**Discussion:-**

Standing report of committees.

**Thanks/Awards:**

Marine of the Year: Debra Steele  
Thank you to Everyone. It is an honor.



Cake Cutting: Sid Atwater Guest Speaker, Tony Donofrio – Oldest Marine and Mike Sherman – Youngest Marine.



Detachment Marine of the Year: Debra Steele.



Veteran's Day at the VA.



Ruskin's Veteran's Day Parade, November 14, 2009

## HEROES OF THE MONTH



### **The Horse Marines**

In 1909, with China on the edge of a bloody revolution, a detachment of US Marines stationed at Peking mounted stumpy-legged Mongolian ponies and set about watching over US citizens living outside embassy quarters. The Peking Marines, however, weren't the only Marines stationed in China during this period. Marines of the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment numbered up to 1500 men and were spread out from Peking to Shanghai to Tientsin (Tianjin). But it was the Peking Marines who instituted a mounted unit. A fixture in China service from 1909 till 1938 they liked to refer to themselves as "the world's only Horse Marines."

The mounted detachment was organized shortly after the Chinese Revolution of 1909, but it was not officially recognized as a formal unit in the legation guard until February 1912. First commanded by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt David Randall, USMC, the Horse Marines distinguished themselves for snappy courier service and crowd control during the revolution. The mounted Marines also made a tremendous impression on the Chinese. Since "face" counted a lot with Asian people, it was decided after the revolution that the "face" created by the mounted detachment was too good to lose. The mounted detachment also continued the courier service of delivering dispatches to other legations (i.e. Russian, English, French, and Germans).

Originally, the detachment consisted of sixteen men: one sergeant, three corporals and twelve privates. After the revolution, Col. Dion Williams, USMC the Commanding Officer of the Embassy Guard received permission to increase the authorized strength of the mounted detachment to one officer, two sergeants, one corporal, five privates first class and 23 privates.

In addition to the general routine of drills, inspections, and parades, the mounted detachment was assigned the duties of

taking a census of the American citizens residing in and around Peking. Peking was divided into four districts. Because horsemen could navigate the narrow streets in the hutongs of Peking that motorized vehicles could not, they patrolled the city. Each squad of the detachment was assigned a specified district to cover. The district was patrolled weekly to observe any changes of addresses that might not have been reported to the Embassy. Once a year the men visited concentration points for inspecting and renewing of flares that were used as distress signals, as well as instructing citizens within the district in their use.

In times of trouble, Americans residing in Peking were called into the Embassy compound for protection. By day, the American flag with a blue signal pennant beneath was hoisted on the Marine Corps' 310 foot radio tower within the compound was the signal for the assembly. At night the display of red and blue lights from the same tower was the signal for assembly. Four shots from the field gun within the compound warned Americans to watch the tower, the highest structure in Peking, for danger signals. Even so, it was sometimes necessary for Marines to go out and bring American citizens in. This job was turned over to the mounted detachment.

During the rifle range season, the detachment kept one man at the range. He set up camp about a quarter of a mile from the main cantonment area. It seemed no one wanted a stable close to them. This Marine would pick up dispatches at the main camp, ride across country to the Legation compound, deliver the dispatches, pick up more, and return to the range.

The men of the detachment wore the usual Marine uniform of khaki for summer, forestry green for winter and blues for dress. They wore riding breeches, boots, and spurs instead of issued trousers. Like other Marines of the guard, because the thermometer dropped to zero and below in Peking, they wore fur hats in the winter.

The detachment was armed with one machine gun, three BARs, three Thompson machine guns and twenty rifles. Every man was armed with a .45 colt automatic and a cavalry saber. The members of the MG crew did not carry rifles. The detachment had its own scarlet guidon.

The saddle used by the detachment was the same type that was used in the Civil War by the US Army. Additionally, the saber the Marines used was the standard issue US Army cavalry saber. A blanket roll consisting of a complete change of cloths including shoes was secured to the cantle of the saddle. Saddle bags containing toilet articles and mess gear was carried on the near side, and grooming gear, feed and was carried on the off side. In addition to that, the saber was attached to the saddle on the off side and a rifle boot was attached on the near side.

The detachment had three races each year; two flat races of a mile and quarter, and either a steeplechase or a paper hunt. The first three places were awarded cups and prize money.

The detachment was equipped with the best veterinary facilities in North China. Veterinary care was carried out by members of the detachment who were able veterinarians. They were fit to cope with any illness of the animals which might arise. The shoeing of the horses was done by a Chinese blacksmith and was inspected by the Sable Watch (a member of the detachment) on duty at the time. All horses were stabled in the Quartermaster Compound within the American Legation.

Although the Mongolian ponies were small (as compared with horse in the United States) they could cover a surprising amount of ground in one day and still be fit to travel the next day, "They had one cardinal virtue; they were as tough as a ten-cent steak," said one Marine. Some of the ponies were given American names: Pat, Blackie or Nellie while others were named more with more colorful names—SubMarine, Whiskey Bill, Moonshine or Syosett.

The men who rode in the mounted detachment were selected not only because of their light (physical) weight, but for their knowledge of horsemanship (if they had any) and their clean service record.

While the Marine Corps had, from time to time during the past, used horses and mules as mounted patrols in Nicaragua and Haiti as well as on patrols of ammunition depots the mounted detachment in Peking was different. The mounted detachment trained as a cavalry unit. All members ran the pistol and saber course for record. This included the US Navy pharmacist's mate who accompanied the detachment on their cross-country rides and maneuvers.

Over the years, many Marine officers commanded the mounted detachment. Among them was the renowned "Chesty" Puller, who later became a legend in the Corps. As commander, Captain Puller, "put his Horse Marines through their paces daily, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, leading them on long cross-country rides with small dust storms boiling in their wake. He rode into areas where the Japanese were training, in an effort to observe details of their tactical work."

Of these rides, Private Wayne Burnside was to recall, "We rode across farmland, plowed field, and jumped mud fences. We quite often ended up at the brewery outside town. The brew master would bring out a wash tub full of ice and bottles of beer."

The Horse Marines always played the "enemy" in field exercises when the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment had exercises. Because of their élan and smart appearance they were always allowed to gallop back to the city at the conclusion of the exercise. They would always be the first Marines back and therefore the first Marines in the bars and brothels.

From another account: "There was also a weekly sunset parade for the American colony of the ancient city---about 3,000 strong---followed by the Colonel's reception. A battalion of infantry and the cavalry detachment put on the show with the

Horse Marines finishing it by passing in review first at a walk, then a trot, and finally at full gallop with sabers flashing."

The last mounted unit of these "China Marines" was retired in March 1938 when the detachment, numbering one officer and thirty marines, was reviewed for the last time at Peking's Breckenridge Field. With the Japanese patrolling the city, US Army authorities decided to disband and dismount the Horse Marines, shunting half the personnel to Tientsin while transferring the remainder to other Marine units in China. A colorful chapter of Marine history ended that day.

Semper Fi Sid



# December 2009

**Marine Corps League Detachment 1226**  
 One Marine Way P.O.Box 1831  
 Riverview, Florida 33568

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 League Mtg 1930 MCLA Mtg @ VFW 1930	2	3	4	5 1630 Toys for Tots / Tampa Bay Lightening Game
6 Yard Sale	7 1630 Toys for Tots / Tampa Bay Lightening Game	8	9	10	11	12 1900: Herb Donica's Toys for Tots Party
13 Yard Sale 1100 Toys for Tots / Tampa Bay Bucs Game & Bike Run at Brandon Harley	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Yard Sale	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Yard Sale	28	29	30	31		
		Look Ahead:				