



# MARINE CORPS LEAGUE - SOUTH COAST DETACHMENT

# SEMPER FLYER

## NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Marine Corps League South Coast Detachment 022

January 2016

## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT



*Pete Hammer-Commandant*

### Dear Detachment Members, Friends & Supporters,

Let me first acknowledge and say a Special Thank You to our fellow Marines, Al Ehlow, Tom Vetter, and Bob Harhay for bringing me on board and mentoring me during my past eight years as a member of our Detachment. Your Friendship and their Support underscore the meaning of "Semper Fidelis" and that of being a United States Marine. We as a Detachment have continued to forge our indelible bond and in doing so have been able to provide the Outreach to those fellow Marines for whom we serve. In the end, we are all about "Taking Care of our Own." I trust in the eyes of our "Plank Holders," and since inception in 1974 John Duffy, Bob Piel, and Al Ehlow feel we have done them proud.

Since being installed as your Commandant in June of last year, I shared with and made a pledge to you, our Membership, that I would attempt to "Move the Needle" on four fronts in an effort to advance our MCL-SCD Flag. These four areas are as follows: Increase Membership & Attendance at Meetings, Raise our Detachment Profile, Provide meaningful Outreach to those Marines in need, and Raise Funds, as necessary, to be of service to our Constituency. Over the past six months, I believe it is fair to say that we have made meaningful progress in each of these categories. There is still lots of work to be done, but as a United Team, with "Boots on the Ground," we can accomplish so much more.

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## REMEMBERING MARINE AL "ACE" EHLOW

On July 17, 2015 at age 77 we lost a great Marine, Past San Clemente Police Chief, Past MCL-SCD Commandant-Plank Holder and Friend to his battle with cancer while vacationing with his Wife Marilyn in Paris.

It is as a result of the "Above and Beyond the Call" efforts by our fellow Marine Ray Shearer in Indianapolis, upon learning of Al's falling ill, he saw to it the Ehlovs were immediately surrounded by Marines from the Embassy and Attaché's Office to assist them in their time of need.

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## OUTREACH FOR LCPL MICHAEL PENN AND HIS FAMILY



*From Left: Tom Vetter, LCpl Penn, Pete Hammer, Col Willy Buhl*

Within the last two months, it was brought to our attention by LtGen Larry Nicholson the CG of III MEF (Okinawa) that a young Marine, LCpl Michael Penn, part of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines-Camp Lejeune, then training in Okinawa, was diagnosed with Grade 4 Brain Cancer, had undergone emergency surgery in Japan and was on his way back to Balboa Naval Hospital-San Diego with his Parents Todd & Tina Penn.

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## Message from the Commandant

I would encourage each of you, even if you cannot attend each meeting, to rally to our cause and become involved. Recruit New Members, Volunteer at our various Outreach & Fundraising Events, and most of all, help us "Make a Difference" in the lives of our Fellow Marines. Let's form up and move out.

Please take a look at what we have accomplished in the last six months and contemplate what it is You/ We can do during the course of 2016 to "Make That Difference. How we fare is up to You.

## Semper Fidelis,

### Pete Hammer-Commandant

THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE-SOUTH COAST DETACHMENT  
"BAND OF BROTHERS"



*Cannons 240th Marine Corps Birthday Dinner Celebration*

## NEW MEMBERS

### WELCOME ABOARD!

Col Willard Buhl	Chad Schiel
Mickey Christianson	GySgt Robert Shake
Mike Lipscombe	David Rothenbuehler

## Al "Ace" Ehlow

Marilyn and Al were even contacted by the then Commandant, General Joe Dunford and Past Commandant General Amos.

With Al's passing our Marines worked tirelessly to provide comfort & care for Marilyn and her two sons who had just arrived from the States. Due to the intense and tireless actions of these and other Marines, while cutting through all the administrative red tape, the Ehloes along with Al's casket were able to board the same plane a few days later to be met by Mike Brennan at LAX. Upon arrival, arrangements had previously been made for the transport of Al's Flag draped casket to the mortuary. The Family, with a Care Package of Food & Beverages available, were driven directly to their home in San Juan Capistrano by Mike.

Other Detachment Members came to Marilyn's aid to assist in the funeral arrangements and also help to make sure she received all the benefits to which she was entitled. Paperwork wise and administratively this was a challenge, but with a high degree of perseverance and determination, Marilyn and her Team of helpers prevailed.

In remembrance of Al, with broad representation by our Detachment, we provided Sprays of flowers for both the Funeral and Memorial Service. The Detachment also hosted a Family Dinner at the Cedar Creek Inn in San Juan for the Ehlow Family. With Marilyn's resilience, she in the true Ehlow tradition persevered and attended our Detachment BBQ at San Onofre Beach Camp Pendleton and the Cannons' 240th Marine Corps Birthday Dinner Celebration as our guest. True to the meaning of the words "Semper Fidelis," Al and his Family have never been forgotten.

## RAISING THE DETACHMENT'S PROFILE

During the course of the Summer & Fall our Detachment was involved in several outings which helped raise our Profile, and enabled us to distribute Detachment literature and applications. In particular, we had a presence at the 5th Marine Car Wash held at the Doheny Village Hand Car Wash-Capistrano Beach, and had a booth at the Veteran's Resource Fair at Capo Valley High School as sponsored by Assemblyman Bill Brough and State Senator Pat Bates.

We also had a booth at one of the Dana Point Concerts in the Park where we exchanged donated one pound blocks of cheese for any kind of contribution. This effort raised a few hundred dollars.

The highpoint during the Fall was the Honor The Valor Football Game at Dana Hills HS where Bob Harhay was a Marine Veteran Team Captain who was honored along with other Service Members at this outing. Several of our Detachment members turned out to salute Bob and also man our Detachment Booth. A great time was had by all.



*From Left: Bob Bobst, Ben Williams, Bob Harhay, Pete Hammer, Ken Sears*



### Outreach for LCPL Michael Penn

Upon arrival he would undergo a month long package of radiation and chemotherapy. During that time members of our Detachment which included Col Buhl, LtCol Tom Vetter, SgtMaj Harkins and I made a total of four trips to visit the Family. During our visits we delivered two \$100 Gas Gift Cards to help the father defray the costs of 80 mile round trips for therapy each day. We also delivered Starbucks Pastries, Candies, Cookies, Subway Sandwiches, etc.

SgtMaj Harkins made the arrangements and drove Michael and Family to an MCRD Graduation in his recently acquired, President Bush "Vintage" Limousine (Procured from Tom Vetter). LCpl Penn and his Family are now back in their Hometown of New Orleans and in February he will move to M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston to undergo more advanced therapy. Our Thoughts and Prayers are with Michael and his Family.



*Green Shirt-LCpl Penn, SgtMaj Jim Harkins*

## OUTREACH & FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

During the Summer we held our Annual BBQ Extravaganza at San Onofre Beach aboard Camp Pendleton which was attended by Detachment Members, Family, Friends plus upwards of 90 Marines, Wounded, and their Families. Rod & Gloria Rodriguez & Family, Brud & Sonia LeTourneau, Nancy Jenkins, Mike Brennan, Ken Sears, Judge Pam Isles, Jeff Williams-O'Shea's Brewing Company, and so many others helped make this outing a "Smash Hit." Rod & Company served super delicious ½ Pound Hamburgers & ¼ Pound Hot Dogs. Judge Isles provided the Salads and Sheet Cakes. The beer was on the house and offered by O'Shea's. Nancy Jenkins procured all the items, set up, and ran a very successful raffle. Lots and lots of winners. Thanks to All for providing such a great time.

During 2015 we, along with the Armed Forces Retirees Association-California (AFRAC), provided a meaningful amount of funding for SgtMaj Harkins' Saddleback Young Marines Program. The Mission of the Young Marines Program, which includes boys and girls ages 8 through high school, is to positively impact America's future by providing quality youth development. Monies given to this group were used to help defray the costs of various outings, transportation costs, and meals.



*Young Marine Observe Memorial Day in San Clemente*

As we approached the Holiday Season, our 1st LAR experienced the tragedy of a rollover of one of their vehicles during training aboard CP where one Marine was killed and 18 others badly injured. Courtesy of our Detachment and Ken Sears, our injured Marines & Families were given snacks and soft drinks to help them through this difficult time.

With our Detachment offering to Support, as best we could, the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines who receive very little assistance, we sprang in to action. Coffee and Starbucks Pastries were delivered at 0800 on each of these Holidays (Thanksgiving & Christmas Day) to the Marines who were on duty and had the watch. At our invitation, some 25 of our 2/1 Marines, Spouses and Kids attended the Waterman's-Dana Point Harbor Thanksgiving Dinner. Virtually all came away with Gas Cards, Commissary Gift Cards, and Free Raffle Items. Our Detachment also delivered lots of Gifts, Coffee &

Hot Chocolate, Pies, plus Candies & Cookies in time for the 2/1 Christmas Party. This too was a big hit and well received by the 2/1 Command, Marines and their Families.

Our Detachment also supports the School of Infantry (SOI) with the "Gung Ho Award" (Engraved K-Bar/Top Graduate's Name Inscribed on blade) which is made available and presented at each Graduation of the Advanced

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### **Outreach & Fundraising Efforts**

Infantryman Training Course and the Anti-Tank Training Course to the Top Graduate as selected by his peers in each class.



*"Gung Ho Award"*

*From Left: Mike Brennan, SOI Instructor, Pete Hammer*

Marine and Detachment Member Paul Littlepage brought some unexpected Christmas Cheer to one of our Disabled Veterans by making a virtually new electric wheelchair available. SgtMaj Harkins was kind enough to do the pickup and delivery honors.

## **NOTIFICATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

As of this date our Detachment has its own Web Site: **[www.MarineCorpsLeagueSouthCoast.org](http://www.MarineCorpsLeagueSouthCoast.org)** up and operating with the availability of Social Media like Twitter, Meet Up, and Facebook, etc. on line and available. The Web Site will allow us to impart information and at the same time receive donations.

For six months prior to the Web Site being conceived and coming on-line, Terry Rifkin-President & CEO and the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group were kind enough to allow our Detachment to have a Web Page on their Site which was very helpful. Our MCL-SCD also thanks the DPSG for including our Organization and those that we serve and support in some of their functions such as the Concert in the Park and Thanksgiving Dinner at Waterman's. A Big Shout Out to Terry and the DPSG.

Our regularly scheduled meetings have now ***moved to the 3rd Tuesday of every month*** and continue to be held at the Elks Club Lodge. 1505 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, CA 92672. The Social Hour for those who wish to partake, commences at 1800 and the Business Meeting at 1900.

### **DETACHMENT OFFICERS**

*Commandant - Pete Hammer*

*Senior Vice Commandant - Burton Brown*

*Jr. Vice Commandant - Rudy Arrieta*

*Adjutant - Chad Schiel*

*Paymaster - Ken Sears*

*Judge Advocate - Mike Brennan*

*Chaplain - Bob Harhay*

*Sergeant-At-Arms - Jim O'Neill*



Mailing Address:

Marine Corps League-South Coast Detachment

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**Phone: Pete Hammer Commandant (949) 378-7984**

***If you wish to support our Cause, please Donate via our Secure PayPal Link.***

*The Marine Corps League is a Congressionally Chartered Non-Profit Organization covered under IRS Ruling 501 {c} 4 Group Exemption Number 0955 and the South Coast Detachment under Employer Identification Number 33-0450163.*