

# MARINE CORPS LEAGUE



## Treasure Valley Detachment, No 878

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# Gazette



*"To care for him  
Who shall have  
borne the battle  
and for his widow  
and his orphan."*

*Abraham Lincoln*



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### TRICARE FOR LIFE ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

*From the Editor; The contents of this message is the private views and opinions of the Editor and does not constitute, formal views and/or opinion of our Treasure Valley Detachment Newsletter.*

With our new Democratic Administration in office it will be wise that we all take a hard look at our Tricare For Life, (TFL) and those still with Tricare Prime and other military medical benefits.

The new Administration is looking to cut back in areas of our medical benefits within the following years. For those with access to computers you can find out a lot at [www.mil.com](http://www.mil.com) and [www.washington.com](http://www.washington.com) and other website in reference to our government's proposed programs in cutting back in areas of medical benefits or increasing co-payments and etc.

It's been well noted in the Professional fields that the channel of least resistance, when it comes to cutting money out of the Federal and DOD budget the politicians will look toward the military, since they are the objective of least resistance. Why? You wonder? Simply put and no matter how offensive it might sound, we as military retirees or disabled military members feel secure in our benefits and to voice our displeasure would only cause us to lose what benefits we already have.

I had an encounter years ago with a retired Airman from Mountain Home and asked him to support the Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay, (CRDP) program. I asked him to write his Representatives and to help support the agenda at that time. He looked at me with that blank stare and said, "I don't want to mess up my retirement income since it's all I have."

"How sad". We still have military folks thinking this way. My fellow Marines if we don't take action today, Now! Then some where down the road you'll be regretting it. You won't lose what medical benefits you already have, but I guarantee you'll be paying a higher price for the co-payments and other medical benefits. Such as medications, hospital stays, etc. Please take time out of your busy schedules and write your Representatives and tell them your concern and their commitment and responsibility to protect our country's servicemen and women, the benefits we so rightfully deserve.

All we ask is to be compensated for our injuries and the years of hardship we as American fighting men and woman had to endure to fulfill our part of the contract. Now we ask our Government to fulfill their part of the contract.



## CHRISTMAS EVE in KOREA 1950

By Harold Kwan

On Christmas Eve 1950, I along with my, 2ndBn 11<sup>th</sup> Marine veterans were herded into a school gym in Mason, South. Korea

so we could get out of the freezing night cold air. There were no chairs in the gym. The place was crowded and you could not lay down. So we sat on the floor me and my buddy Gene, back to back, trying to sleep upright as best we could. This is how I remember Christmas Eve of 1950....

We landed on Green Beach on Wolmi-do (an island, just a causeway west of the city of Inchon, South Korea) on September 16, 1950. There wasn't much left of the island after five days of bombardment.

Today this island is an education and recreational center. The road leading to the park from the causeway is lined with concession stands and at the island's end of the causeway there is a midway, with a big Ferris wheel. If it wasn't for the stone sign marking the landing at Green Beach I would never recognized it.

When I got into Seoul, S. Korea during the latter week of September 1950 the city was devastated from street to street and house to house fighting. A few hours or a day before our arrival, buildings were still burning throughout the city.

I remember clearly a middle aged lady running down the street carrying on her head a chest of drawer and a baby strapped on her back and towing a youngster, who was carrying a good size bundle himself. I guess this was all the family's belongings that she could salvage from the devastation all around her.

By contrast, Seoul today is a bustling metropolis. I didn't see any signs of war except in the museums. Construction works could be seen all over Seoul. Freeways going every which way. Everything seems to be flowing along and the people seem to be always hurrying everywhere. At the latter part of October 1950, after the Seoul campaign we loaded aboard ships and sailed up the east coast of Korea and made a landing at Wonsan, North Korea. From there we went north up to the Tae Beck mountains and on to Chosin Reservoir near the Yulu River, the border between China and North Korea.

Winter caught up with us in the Tae Beck mountains. It wasn't a fun place to be in... during the day the temperature would get up around 10°. On a warm night, it would get down to -20°. The average temperature would hover around -30° to -40° when the winds came across from Siberia. The thing I remember the most was; during the night when you had to urinate outside in a tube...if you missed the tube the urine would be frozen before you button up your fly. The other remembrance was Gene and I as switchboard operators were huddling around a diesel burning stove. We were wearing our parkas and sitting on five gallon water cans, just arms length from the cherry hot burning stoves. Are backsides were freezing and the water cans we were sitting on was filled with water and was still frozen. Morning chow wasn't any different. In order to clean your mess gear in the 55 gallon boiling water drums you had to break the ice on the surface before dunking your mess gear in the hot water. →

Bless those *Grunts*. They only had the luxury of a foxhole dug in the frozen ground out in the open and eating their cold rations...If their rations wasn't frozen. By mid-November 1950, the Chinese Red People Liberation Army, (PLA), aka: Chinese Communist Force (CCF), about 200,000 strong were in the hills surrounding the UN forces. The UN forces were about 27,000 of which 25,000 were the 1st Marine Division, (Reinforced).

When the CCF launched their attack during the latter part of November we were cut off and surrounded in the Chosin Reservoir area. The bulk of our troops were about 14 miles south of Yudam-ni, the furthest north our UN forces went. On the southern tip of the Reservoir was Hagaru-ri, one of our major supply dumps. Supplies had to be air dropped in for the troops. The military had code names for everything, to keep the enemy guessing. As the story goes, one code name was; "*Tootsie Roll*," for delivering mortar shells. One day the call went out for more tootsie rolls. Evidently a trooper must have been a new guy in-country at the supply depot and took the request literally. The next day an air drop of tootsie rolls were delivered instead of the much needed mortar shells. Fortunately the tootsie rolls were put to good use. They were a source of energy for the troops receiving them and also were used by cutting the tootsie rolls to plug up bullet holes that punctured the vehicle's radiators. So not all was a total loss.

One morning at Koto-ri I was talking to the S-2, (Intelligent Officer). I asked him how we stood. He pointed to the north and said the enemy had that, and pointing to the west he said they got that side too, to the east he said half of that hill was ours and to the south, he said we had some control of the road during the day, but at night the enemy had control. I walked over to the 105 howitzer battery and noticed all six guns were pointing almost straight up, indicating they had been firing very close in. Two of the guns were pointing north, two were pointing west and two were pointing east. Evidently covering our troops advancing south on the road as we headed for Hagaru-ri.

Our troops from Yudam-ni, north of Chosin were battling all the way to Hagaru-ri. It took the lead units 59 hrs to cover the 14 miles and the last elements 79 hrs. This put the meaning to the headlines, "Retreat Hell". "We're attacking in the other direction."

Four steel bridging section had to be flown in and air-dropped into Koto-ri so the Engineers could span the 16 to 24 foot gap across the only road out, going down the mountain pass. The bridge had been blown four times and repaired four times. Now we had troops to protect the bridge while the Marines and UN forces made their escape to Hungnam and onto ships and safety to regroup. 91,000 North Korean refugees who voted with their feet rather than stay and live under Communist rule also were among the forces escaping from China and on into Mason, South Korea.

*Our Thanks to the Idaho Korean Assoc., who sponsored Bob Chester and me to Korea for a revisit this past Sept/Oct. We had a chance to revisit and dwell on the places from our past. Thank You! From one of the "Chosin Few."*



## February's Birthdays

Ester Griffith  
Mary MacConnell  
Lynn McAdams  
Virginia Smith

From all of us, from the Marine Corps League, Treasure Valley Detachment, #878 we wish you Ladies a very, very **Happy Birthday** and many years to come. Semper Fi



## Business Meeting For February, 2009

Our regular scheduled Treasure Valley Detachment business meeting is always scheduled on the third Thursday of the months in the Pavilion on Gowen Field...unless otherwise noted in our newsletter. The date and time for February's scheduled meeting is on the 19<sup>th</sup> at 1900 hours. Please be there. Your input is needed as always to better our organization....Semper Fi



## Dates of Interest for February

1<sup>st</sup>....1944~ The 23d & 24<sup>th</sup> MarRegt landed at Roi Namur, Kwajalein Atoll

2d....1968~ Operation Hue City, TET Offensive began in Vietnam

5<sup>th</sup>....1918~ The 1st Marine Replacement Battalion sailed for France in WWI

9<sup>th</sup>....1948~ The first Marine helicopters (HO35-1s) were delivered to the Marine Corps

13<sup>th</sup>....1943~ The U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve was formed

16<sup>th</sup>....1953~ Marine Capt Ted Williams, Boston Red Sox baseball legend & pilot of F9F Panther jet was shot up over North Korea and crashed his plane in friendly territory and walked away from his plane unhurt.

19<sup>th</sup>....1945~ The 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> MarDiv stormed ashore at Iwo Jima

23d....1945~ Five Marines & one Navy Corpsman raised the American flag on Mt Suribachi, Iwo Jima

25<sup>th</sup>....1861~ The Confederate Marine Corps was organized in Richmond, Virginia

28<sup>th</sup>....1991~ Operation Desert Storm ended with 23 Marines killed or died of their wounds later.



## Koffee Klatch

Our weekly Saturday get-together for coffee is a great way to meet your fellow Marines and chat about the old days and the experiences we all had to endure and overcome. We might be hardcore and brain dead at times but we do discuss politics and other governmental affairs as well as sports and local gossip. So why not join us for coffee and breakfast or just tell us your sea stories. Remember the third Saturday we have our wives for breakfast as well. We meet at Quinn's Restaurant on Vista Ave downtown Boise. Doors open at 0900, but some old timers still come earlier. See you there MARINES !

## LOST AND FOUND

Folks... please help in locating a DVD set in a metal container of WWII. Arnie Strawn loaned this WWII, DVD set out to someone in our organization and has forgotten who the person was. I know we sometime pass on things like this to our other members and we also fail to forget where it originated from. Who ever has the DVD set please bring it at the next Coffee Klatch or business meeting. Thank you. Editor





### VA NEWS OF INTEREST

- **VA planning to open a new clinic in Idaho.** *The Boise Veterans Affairs Medical Center has gotten approval to open an out-patient clinic in Mountain Home. The facility is expected to be open within the next year, said Grant Ragsdale, associate director of the Boise VAMC*
- **In the works is a program where by Veterans who in the past may not have had privileges at the VA hospitals (Cat 8), will be afforded those privileges.** *Hospitals are gearing up for the possible increase of out-patient demands at this time.*
- **Veterans who have more than one prosthesis are allowed extra clothing allowance and should contact their nearest VA office for more details**
- **Lou Gehrig's disease has been determined to be presumptive by the VA for any Veteran, without theater of operation determination. Should any veteran contact this disease they should contact the VA.**
- **Gold Star License Plates; Our VA Rep lobbied the Legislators on Jan 23d and is expected to be pass.** *If you know of any Gold Star Home you might pass this info on.*
- **The State of Idaho is coming out with a special Loto Game to help Veterans causes. Hopefully we will see this just before or around Memorial Day.**
- **Fish & Game news; There is a proposal before the IF&G Commission to support a free Veterans hunting trip. Under the proposal IF&G would grant a free tag to those chosen and there are opportunities being provided by private entities as well. More to come as I get the information.**



### OFFICERS, COMMANDANTS AND DETACHMENT MEMBERS

#### PRE CONVENTION;

Our pre-convention will be held in Salmon, Idaho on April 17-18<sup>th</sup>. Room reservations may be made at the Stage Coach Inn at 208-756-2919. We have 20 rooms set aside for the MCL membership until April 10<sup>th</sup>. Our contact there is Julie. Room rates are \$64.38 to \$74.22 per night, depending on size and /or location.

When making your reservations be sure to advise them of our group number.... #9997 and state that you are with the Marine Corps League.

The Eagles in Salmon will host our meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> and will provide us with a meal that evening for a nominal fee. Convention information will follow when details are available. The Pappy Boyington Detachment #966, Coeur d' Alene is the host this year. See you all there.....

Semper Fi Mac, Department Commandant



#### Medal of Honor Recipient Honored Col. James E. Swett, USMC

By Jim Schultz  
Saturday, January 24, 2009

Col. Swett was laid to rest Friday at the Northern California Veterans Cemetery in Igo, CA. Col. Swett, a fighter pilot, was awarded the Medal of Honor in WWII for shooting down seven Japanese bombers within 15 minutes on April 7, 1943. It was his first combat mission as a young First Lieutenant. Over the course of his WWII service, he was credited with more than 15 downed enemy planes and awarded two Purple Hearts, six Distinguished Flying Cross and 21 Air Medals.



### TAKING CHANCE

Starring; Kevin Bacon

HBO will be broadcasting the movie Sat., Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> at 8 pm. You have to see this movie. A true story.

### TO OUR READERS/MEMBERS

*If you have a story about your experience in combat or while in the Corps and would like to tell it in your newsletter. Please submit it to the Editor by mail or email. Try to keep it at least one page since the cost of mailing the newsletter gets a little expensive when I use more than three pages. Thank you.*