

Semper Certior

Official Newsletter of the Jack Maas Detachment 1379 Marine Corps League



April 2026

“People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.”

George Orwell, *Notes on Nationalism*

Mike Chmielewski, Newsletter Editor

Same Team. New Mission.

JACK MAAS DETACHMENT 1379 OFFICERS, 2025 – 2026



Robert Icolari
Commandant



Jason Heirwarter
Sr. Vice Commandant



Mike Chmielewski
Jr. Vice Commandant



Ronnie Edwards
Judge Advocate



Michael Diamond
Jr. Past Commandant



Steve Hansen
Adjutant



Virgil Young
Paymaster



Mike Remington
Chaplain



Bob Singer
Sgt. At Arms



Bill Anderson
Public Affairs



Ernie Bartosh
Historian



Andy Dorman
Quartermaster



Sam McDonald
Quartermaster



Sean O’Gorman
Web Sergeant

DETACHMENT UPCOMING EVENTS

April

- 13 Detachment Officer's Meeting, 18:00; Hope Presbyterian Church.
- 18 Detachment Meeting, 10:00; VFW Post 3103.
- 18 BBQ Fundraiser, 11:00-16:00; Moose Lodge.
- 23 STP Dinner, 18:00; Don Julio's Mexican Restaurant.

May

- 11 Detachment Officer's Meeting, 18:00; Hope Presbyterian Church.
- 16 Detachment Meeting, 10:00; Moose Lodge. Breakfast, 09:00 before the meeting.
- 16-17 Marine Corps Half-Marathon; Fredericksburg Expo Center.
- 21 STP Dinner, 18:00; Location TBD.
- 25 Memorial Day Ceremony; Fredericksburg Veterans Monument.
- 27 Cigar and Bourbon Tasting, 19-21:00; Moose Lodge.
- 29-30 Department of Virginia Spring Conference; VFW Post 3103.

Breakfast at the VA Health Care Center:

Several members get together for coffee and/or breakfast at the Canteen in the VA Health Care Center, 10432 Patriot Highway in Spotsylvania every Thursday morning. Feel free to swing by if you'd like to socialize outside of our monthly meetings; folks show up anytime after 08:00. Just look for the Vets wearing Marine Corps gear and pull up a chair!

LtCol Roy Elrod USMC (Ret.) Memorial Lunch:

Here's another opportunity to mingle with other Marines. Join us at 11:00 for lunch at the Great American Buffet in Central Park, the first Tuesday of each month. At the March meeting, "Skip" Lucado gave a presentation on finding and restoring old headstones, including one belonging to a Marine who served as a sniper in the rigging of the old sailing ships, possibly during the war of 1812.

Officer Elections:

We will conduct elections for Detachment Officer positions during our April meeting.

Cigar and Bourbon Tasting Event:

Commandant Robert Icolari is planning to hold a Cigar and Bourbon tasting event for those who are interested at the Moose Lodge Picnic Pavilion on Wednesday 27 May, from 19-21:00. Cigars are available for purchase from Hog Head Tobacco Shop. The tasting will feature four Kentucky bourbons paired with hors d'oeuvres. Participants will receive a rocks glass. Attendance is open to members of the Moose Lodge and members of the Jack Maas Detachment, and limited to 40 participants. Please RSVP to Robert: ricolari@gmail.com.

Marine Corps Half-Marathon:

The Detachment will operate a recruiting booth at the Fredericksburg Convention Center, 2371 Carl D. Silver Pkwy, during the weekend of 16-17 May. Details and sign-up sheet to be discussed at our April meeting.

Pistol Shooting Competition:

At the 17 January detachment meeting, the members voted to sponsor a pistol competition this year, with the costs covered by the fees paid by the attendees or donations so that no detachment funds would be required. Commandant Icolari is trying to identify a shooting range that we can use. We're looking for about 5 Marines to be on the Pistol Shoot Committee to help plan the shoot. In particular, we need help locating any certified Range Safety Officer that can help plan the course(s) of fire and ensure safety at the shoot.

Fred Nats Game:

The Detachment is planning another get together at the Fred Nats game on Saturday, 5 September. Cost will be approximately \$40 per person, which will include ticket and food (hot dogs, hamburgers, sides, etc...). Kevin Brown is coordinating and will provide updates and details.

Detachment Picnic:

The Detachment will hold our annual picnic, catered by Jeremiah Burns, at the Moose Lodge 1655 Picnic Pavilion on Saturday 17 October.

Field Trips:

The Detachment is considering trips to visit Chesty Puller's grave site in Saluda VA, and a visit to Tun Tavern in Philadelphia PA. Stay tuned for details as our plans progress!

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE UPCOMING EVENTS

Mid-East Division Conference:

17-18 April 2026 at Rehobeth Beach DE. See Sheri Moore for more information.

Department of Virginia Spring Convention: (update from Jason)

29-30 May 2026, @ VFW Post 3103, 2701 Princess Anne St., Fredericksburg VA. Jack Maas Detachment is hosting the conference, and we'll need lots of help manning the registration table and the hospitality room on Saturday 30 May at the VFW Post. Look for sign-up sheets and more discussion at our April meeting.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE NATIONAL RECRUITING AWARD

Recruiting is the life's blood of any organization, and the League has a special award for MCL members who excel at recruiting new members. Any member that recruits 5 or more new regular members (new associate or honorary members don't count) between 1 July and 30 June is eligible to earn the **National Junior Vice Commandant's Award for Recruiting**. The detachment paymaster tracks the recruiter for each new member and must submit a document to the MCL National Junior Vice Commandant by 10 July each year if any detachment member is eligible to receive the award.

As of 22 March 2026, we've had 16 new members join the detachment since last July 1st. Unfortunately, no member is yet eligible for the NJVC Recruiting Award. However, Mike Remington just leaped to the head of the pack of detachment recruiters with his recruitment of 3 new members who were sworn in at the 3/21/26 detachment meeting! He's followed closely by

Bill Anderson and Kevin Brown, each of whom have recruited 2 new members. Six other members have recruited 1 new member, and no single recruiter was identified for 3 other new members.

If you know of any Marines who haven't joined the detachment yet, get them to join and become one of the pack of recruiters who are in the hunt for the NJVC Recruiting Award!

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND SEMPER FI STORE

<https://www.mcleaguelibrary.org/>

<https://the-semper-fi-store.myshopify.com/>

MID-EAST DIVISION

<https://mclmideast.com/>

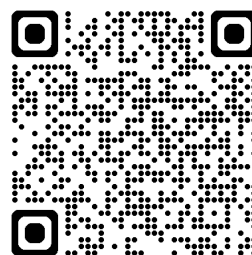
DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA

<https://virginiamarines.com/>

DETACHMENT INFORMATION

Detachment Website: jackmaasmcl1379.org
or scan the QR code using your smartphone:

Detachment Email: JackMaasDetachment@gmail.com



Membership:

New Members. If you know a Marine who is considering joining the detachment, tell him/her **NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN!** The MCL's membership year ends in the summer so we charge only \$25 for new memberships from 1 Mar. through 30 June instead of the \$35 new member fee charged during the rest of the year. The fee can be paid by cash, check or credit card at one of our detachment meetings. In addition, of course, the prospective member must fill out an application, provide proof of honorable service (copy of DD214 or retired ID) and be voted in by the members attending one of our monthly meetings.

Payment of \$35 Annual Renewal Fees by PayPal. We will begin accepting membership renewal fees for the upcoming membership year in July. That renewal fee can be paid by cash, check or credit card at one of our monthly meetings. In addition, renewals can now be paid through PayPal, an on-line payment system. To pay through PayPal, first, go to the PayPal app on your smartphone and search for "mcl1379paymaster@gmail.com" as the entity to receive the payment. Then enter the amount of \$35 to be paid into our operations account for a single year's membership (you can pay for multiple years with one payment). Also, make sure you put info in the "memo" or "notes" section explaining what the payment is for. Then hit the "send" key and your payment will be sent to PayPal for deposit to our operations account. When the Paymaster is notified of the deposit, he will let you know by text or email that it has arrived.

We currently have about a dozen members who have not yet paid their renewal fees for the current membership year. If you're one of them, please pay your renewal fee as soon as possible.

If you're interested in becoming a Paid Life Member (PLM), talk to Paymaster Virgil Young. To become a PLM and never have to worry about annual renewals again, you can make a single payment based on your age:

35 years of age and lower:	\$1,000
36-50 years of age:	\$800
51-64 years of age:	\$600
65-84 years of age:	\$400
85 years of age and higher:	\$100

If you haven't been to a Detachment meeting in a while, please join us at our monthly meetings! We meet at the Moose Lodge at 10:00 on the third Saturday of each month. We would love to see you again! And if you know any other Marines who might be interested in joining our brotherhood, bring them along with you!

New Member Spotlight:

by Virgil Young

Jesus Dominguez was sworn in as a new detachment member at the January 2026 monthly meeting.

Jesus is a first generation American. He was conceived in Cuba but arrived in the US with his mother and four older siblings in 1966, three months before his birth in Miami, FL. His family moved back and forth between Florida and Virginia while he was growing up, but he was living with an uncle in Manassas, VA when he graduated from the Osbourn Park High School in 1984. He followed an older brother into the Corps by enlisting in the delayed entry program a few months before his high school graduation. He started recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC two days after Thanksgiving in 1984. After boot camp graduation, he went to the Infantry Training School at Camp Geiger, NC. He was then sent to Naval Air Station, Millington, TN for specialized training, earning a primary Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of 7051 (Aircraft Firefighting and Rescue Specialist). He then spent one year assigned to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Futenma, Okinawa, Japan before transfer to MCAS, Quantico, VA. He later made a lateral move to the 4066 MOS (Small Computer Systems Specialist).

During his career, Jesus also worked at MCAS Beaufort, SC and served four years with the Combat Service Support Group 1, 29 Palms, CA. In addition, he spent two years on a special billet as a Command Career Counselor. When he was promoted to gunnery sergeant in 2000, he earned the 0659 MOS (Data Chief), and he served in that capacity during a tour in Kuwait during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003. His final duty station was with the HQ Service BN G-6, 2nd Force Service Support Group, Camp Lejeune, NC where he retired in November 2004 with 20 years and 5 days of service. Since his retirement, he has worked as a contractor supporting Marine Corps Systems Command at Quantico, VA.

While he was a corporal, Jesus had the good sense to buy a house in Fredericksburg, and he held on to it throughout his career. As a result, he and his family were able to move back into that house after his retirement from the Corps. His wife, Elizabeth, is a schoolteacher in Fredericksburg. Jesus and Elizabeth have three sons currently in attendance at three different Virginia colleges (VCU, VMI and George Mason), and Jesus' daughter from a previous marriage is living in New York City, NY.

Welcome to the Jack Maas Detachment, Jesus!

2026 Detachment Birthday Ball:

by Committee Chair Virgil Young

After the detachment members at the February meeting voted unanimously to host another ball this year, the ball committee met on 10 March and made some significant decisions. We determined that the Moose Lodge banquet hall will be available on 7 November and that they would again waive their \$750 rental fee if we hold the ball there. In addition, we agreed that the banquet dinner that Jeremiah & Sheila Burns provided last year was outstanding, and that if they are available, we want to use them again. After the meeting, Jeremiah said he could again provide a

banquet dinner for \$35 per person and that he also has that date open. As a result, we will hold the ball on 7 November at the Moose Lodge with Jeremiah's company catering the banquet meal.

The committee members reviewed a draft budget and decided to set a limit of 125 ball attendees this year. By reducing the number of attendees, we'll have more space per table in the banquet hall, and it will also reduce the rental expense for items with a per person cost, like tables, chairs, dinner plates and eating utensils. We also discussed the possibility of holding a silent auction fundraiser at the MCL VA Department Spring Conference our detachment will be hosting on 29-30 May at VFW Post 3103.

Challenge Coins:

If you are interested in owning a piece of our Detachment's (and Marine Corps) history, there are still a limited quantity of Jack Maas Detachment 250th Marine Corps Birthday challenge coins available for purchase. Coins are \$20 each, with a \$0.70 service charge per coin for credit card purchases. All proceeds will go towards our Birthday Ball this coming November.

Detachment Classified Ads:

We have moved the Classified Ads from the monthly newsletter to their own space on our website. We encourage all Members to patronize our sponsors whenever you can!

Detachment Quartermasters' List of Items for Sale:

We have also moved the Quartermasters' List to their own space on our website. If you see something on the list that you'd like to purchase, the Quartermasters will be available before and after the monthly meetings. They can take cash, check, or credit cards!

Detachment In Memorium:

Finally, we moved the In Memorium section of the monthly newsletter to its own space on our website. We will update and the In Memorium page on the website as needed.

Detachment Meeting:

We had a VERY busy meeting in March, which was well attended by 40 Members!



Our Detachment continues to grow and thrive, as we swore in three new Members; Eric Gallagher, Charmale “Charm” Gallagher, and John Bordeaux. Welcome aboard!



Charm Gallagher, John Bordeaux and Eric Gallagher are welcomed to the Detachment by Commandant Robert Icolari and Senior Vice Commandant Jason Hierwarter.

We also had numerous awards presented during the meeting, including a Detachment Service Medal for each member of the staff. Members of the Birthday Ball Committee received the MCL Distinguished Service – Bronze Medal.

Michael Diamond, Junior Past Commandant, received the Past Detachment Commandant Medal for his successful completion of one year in office. Michael is entitled to wear this medal plus three 3/16 inch bronze stars for his four years of service as the Detachment Commandant. Well deserved Michael!



Junior Past Commandant Michael Diamond is awarded the Past Detachment Commandant Medal by Commandant Robert Icolari and Senior Vice Commandant Jason Hierwarter.

George Fenton and Ernie Bartosh were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for their efforts in support of the annual Toys For Tots campaign. Great job, guys!



George Fenton is awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by Commandant Robert Icolari and Senior Vice Commandant Jason Hierwarter.



Ernie Bartosh is awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by Commandant Robert Icolari and Senior Vice Commandant Jason Hierwarter.

A Ribbon Order of Precedence Chart for Marine Corps League awards, as well as other information about awards, is available online in the Marine Corps League Members Library:

www.mcleaguelibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Ribbon-Precedence-Chart_Rev-2023.pdf

Sheri Moore, currently serving as Commandant of the Department of Virginia, provided an overview of the relationship between the Detachment, Department, Division and National organizations. She also provided a description of upcoming events, including the Marine Corps Half-Marathon and the Department Spring Conference in May. The Jack Maas Detachment will be front and center supporting these efforts! Our visibility at the Half-Marathon will be an excellent opportunity to recruit new Members, and the Department Spring Conference allows us to meet MCL Members from other Detachments across the state, as well as a potential fundraising opportunity. Come out and support our Detachment!

Also at our March meeting the Detachment nominated Members for office for the coming year. During our April meeting we will entertain more nominations and hold our election.



And we took time to celebrate our Vietnam Veterans who served with honor and distinction during the Vietnam War, especially those who were "in country". There were several ceremonies around the Fredericksburg area on Sunday 29 March in honor of National Vietnam Veterans Day.

Here's our tribute to our Vietnam Veterans:



Virgil Young, our oldest Vietnam Veteran present, cuts the cake with a Mameluke sword. Virgil served as an infantry officer with 2/9 in Vietnam, Jan 1967 - Feb 1968.



From L -R: Robert Icolari, Virgil Young, Bill Anderson, Steve Hansen, Sam MacDonald, Jim Smith, Clayton Hill, George Firehammer, Richard Spillman, Jeremiah Burns, "Doc" Holladay, Mike Remington, Bob Singer.

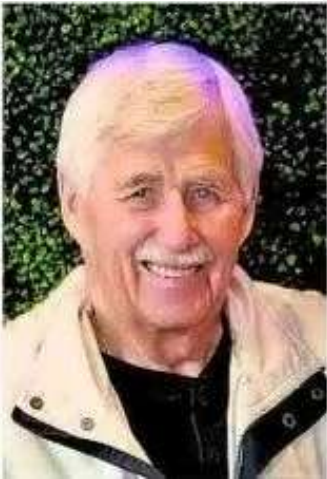


From L – R: Jim Smith, Sam MacDonald, “Doc” Holladay, Mike Remington, Richard Spillman, George Firehammer, Bob Singer, Virgil Young, Jeremiah Burns, Steve Hansen. Bob is holding an authentic Vietnam-era Steel Pot helmet.



Some of our Vietnam Vets gathered at Mission BBQ for a free sandwich on 29 March. L-R: Bill Anderson, Sam MacDonald, George Firehammer, Robert Icolari, Mike Remington, Steve Hansen.

Larry Shandor:



Our Detachment mourns the loss of our brother, Larry Shandor.

Larry passed away peacefully on March 4, 2026, with his son and daughter by his side. He was born on August 3, 1940, in Cambria County, PA.

A proud Vietnam Veteran, Larry enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps while still in high school and entered boot camp immediately after graduation. After his honorable discharge while stationed in Northern Virginia, he began his career as a Systems Analyst for the Department of Defense and made his home in Woodbridge. Larry and his wife, Diane, later settled in Spotsylvania.

Larry was an avid skeet shooter and hunter, and a dedicated member of the Fairfax Rod and Gun Club for more than 25 years. In retirement, he and Diane enjoyed fishing, playing bingo, and vacationing together, cherishing the time they shared.

Book About Col Maas:

Author Todd Vandivert is writing a book about our Detachment’s namesake: *USMC COL. JOHN "JACK" B. MAAS, Jr., A true story of a heroic ace fighter pilot in WW II and Korea.* The author has announced that all profits from the sale of this book will be donated to our Detachment!

STP Dinner:

STP stands for “Same Ten/Twenty/Thirty People”. We invite all members and their significant others to join us for future STP dinners; we choose a different restaurant to eat at, beginning at 18:00 on the 4th Thursday of each month. This is another opportunity to socialize with fellow Marines outside of our monthly meetings. If you’d like to recommend and coordinate an upcoming STP dinner - or dinners! - please contact Mike Chmielewski.

This month we gathered at Carrabba's Italian Restaurant, 1951 Carl D. Silver Parkway in Central Park:



In April, we will be dining at Agave Bar and Grill Mexican restaurant, 101 William St. in downtown Fredericksburg.

“War is brutish, inglorious, and a terrible waste... The only redeeming factors were my comrades' incredible bravery and their devotion to each other. Marine Corps training taught us to kill efficiently and to try to survive. But it also taught us loyalty to each other - and love. That esprit de corps sustained us.”

Eugene B. Sledge

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3 Bernie Rogan

11 Virgil Young

7 Paul Lozinski

16 David Laboissiere

9 Tabitha Bartley

30 Ron Eaton

MARINE CORPS HISTORY IN APRIL

- 1 Apr 1945 Operation ICEBERG begins with the landing of 1st and 6th Marine Divisions on Okinawa on Easter Sunday.
- 1 Apr 1946 The 3rd Marine Brigade was activated at Tsingtao, China, by redesignation from the 6th Marine Division which had been reduced to a strength commensurate with the peacetime needs of the Corps.
- 4 Apr 1967 Operation CHINOOK II ended in Vietnam.
- 5 Apr 2003 In Iraq, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force moved toward Baghdad from the east and southeast and engaged in what was described as "dismounted, hand-to-hand infantry combat" during the past 36 hours.
- 5 Apr 2004 Marines from 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, shut down access to the volatile Iraqi city of Fallujah in the opening days of Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. The purpose was to isolate and seek out insurgents holing up in the city following the murder and mutilation of four American contractors. The bitter fighting throughout the month left numerous Marines dead or wounded. The Marines were ordered to scale down attacks and eventually withdraw from the city before an all-out offensive could be launched. Although a tenuous cease-fire was in effect for Fallujah, a cleric-backed militia began spreading violence to several other cities, including parts of Baghdad, Kut, Karbala, and Najaf, in an area known as the "Sunni Triangle".
- 7 Apr 1958 6th and 8th Marines landed in Beirut, Lebanon.
- 9 Apr 2003 Corporal Edward Chin, 1st Tank Battalion, tightened a chain around the neck of a statue of Saddam Hussein in Al-Firdos Square in the heart of Baghdad, and pulled it down, inspiring an outpouring of joy and celebration by Iraqi citizens.
- 10 Apr 1959 Lieutenant Colonel John H. Glenn, Jr. was named as one of the original seven Project Mercury astronauts selected for space training. The seven astronauts, all volunteers, were selected by NASA from an initial group of 110 leading military test pilots.
- 11 Apr 1966 Operation ORANGE, southwest of DaNang, Vietnam ended.
- 12 Apr 1918 Marines of the 4th Brigade suffered their first gas attack on the night and early morning hours of 13 April when the Germans bombarded the 74th Company, 6th Marines near Verdun with mustard gas. 30 Marines died from the effects of the gas.
- 12 Apr 1975 Marines evacuated 300 American and foreign nationals from Cambodia during Operation EAGLE PULL.
- 15 Apr 1971 III MAF redeployed to Okinawa after six years of service in Vietnam.
- 18 Apr 1983 One Marine Security Guard was killed and seven were wounded when a car bomb exploded just outside the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Lance Corporal Robert McMaugh was standing guard at Post 1, just inside the front entrance when the bomb exploded outside the door. The explosion killed 61 people, including 17 Americans. LCpl McMaugh was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

- 22 Apr 1778 Marines from the USS Ranger accompanied John Paul Jones during the raid on the British port of Whitehaven, England, spiking the cannons of the fort, and setting fire to a ship.
- 25 Apr 1968 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines followed by 2/3 fought entrenched North Vietnamese Army forces on Hill 861, finally taking the hill after three days of fighting. Fighting continued through early May on Hill 881 as the 26th Marines came in to relieve the 3rd Marines.
- 27 Apr 1808 First Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon raised the American flag with seven other Marines as part of a force of Greeks and Arabs led by American Consul William Eaton, raised the United States flag for the first time over a conquered fortress of the Old World at Derna, stronghold of the Tripolitan pirates. Two Marines were killed and one wounded in the assault on the walled city.
- 29 Apr 1975 Thousands of U.S. personnel, foreign nationals, and "at-risk" Vietnamese were evacuated in Operation FREQUENT WIND from the U.S. Embassy by CH-46 helicopters in what would be the largest helicopter evacuation in history. Marine Security Guards Corporal Charles McMahan, Jr. and Lance Corporal Darwin Judge killed earlier in the day at the Defense Attache office compound at Tan Son Nhut, were the last U.S. service members to die as a result of enemy fire in Vietnam. It was 21 years after the first advisors arrived in Vietnam and nearly three years after the last combat troops withdrew from that country.
- 30 Apr 1975 NVA forces captured Saigon, ending the Vietnam War.

“You may fly over a land forever, you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life. But if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground the way the Roman legions did, by putting your soldiers in the mud.”

T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*

LCPL CALEB JOHN POWERS UNIT YOUNG MARINES

POWERS' PRIDE

by YM/Sgt Clevenger from the Lance Corporal Caleb John Powers Unit.



Another perfect PFT! One important aspect of the Young Marines program is how we positively encourage the importance of being physically healthy, strong, and fit. We measure physical fitness using the Physical Fitness Test (PFT), where Young Marines are given the opportunity to showcase just how far they can push themselves, and just how far they can go.

In our unit, one Young Marine stands out exponentially when it comes to physical fitness: **Young Marine Lance Corporal Lucas Hughes!** Last November, he managed to get an astounding perfect PFT (a 500), which is not only incredibly impressive, but is also increasingly rare. It takes strong morale and effort to successfully get a perfect PFT, and it is so revered that when you do, you get a shoutout in the Young Marine Esprit (the national magazine), a possible Social Media shout out, and a Perfect PFT ribbon to wear on your ribbon rack.

At the age of 12, Young Marine Lance Corporal Hughes once again broke records, when he completed yet another perfect PFT this February, this time, earning him a gold star on his ribbon (showcasing how many perfect PFTs he has gotten). Young Marine Lance Corporal Hughes not only showcases the spirit and physical merit of the Young Marines, but he also represents the courage and discipline of the program.

We look forward to the amazing things he's going to do and the amazing places he's going to reach in the program.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) eNews Winter 2026, Volume 2:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/VADVVS/bulletins/40a3d14>

Department of Veterans Affairs News:

<https://news.va.gov/>

See Your 2026 VA Disability Pay Rates:

https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html?ESRC=mr_260302.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=mr&utm_campaign=20260302

VA moves to speed up community care appointment scheduling:

https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-moves-to-speed-up-community-care-appointment-scheduling/?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=11MAR2026

7 Ways Veterans Can Protect Themselves From Scams:

https://www.ssa.gov/blog/en/posts/2026-02-19.html?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=11MAR2026

DD214; What You Need to Know:

<https://www.military.com/benefits/records-and-forms/dd214.html>

AROUND THE CORPS

USS Tripoli, 31st MEU Heading to the Middle East:

Ground Combat Element (GCE): Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3/1. Air Combat Element (ACE): VMM-265 (Rein); Logistics Combat Element (LCE): Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 31.

<https://news.usni.org/2026/03/13/uss-tripoli-31st-meu-heading-to-the-middle-east>

USS Boxer, The Second Amphibious Assault Ship Now Heading To Middle East:

With two Amphibious Ready Groups heading to the Middle East, there is increasing speculation that the U.S. might try to seize Iran's strategic Kharg Island.

11th MEU; GCE: BLT 3/5. ACE: VMM-163/VMFA-122. LCE: CLB-11.

https://www.twz.com/news-features/uss-boxer-the-second-amphibious-assault-ship-now-heading-to-middle-east?utm_source=beehiv&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=twz-newsletter&bhlid=89662c5c76d0308e52abd27a97ba2bef7557bf18

Vietnam Vets Return to the Battlefields They Left Behind 50 Years Ago:

https://www.military.com/daily-news/investigations-and-features/2026/03/06/twelve-vietnam-vets-return-battlefields-they-left-behind-50-years-ago.html?ESRC=marine_260310.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=marine&utm_campaign=20260310

Colonel John Ripley's Navy Cross for his Actions to Destroy the Bridge at Dong Ha Upgraded to the Congressional Medal of Honor:



https://www.military.com/feature/2026/03/05/john-ripley-marine-who-blew-dong-ha-bridge-receive-medal-of-honor.html?ESRC=eb_260309.nl&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eb&utm_campaign=20260309

“Here's to the drunken Marine,
With beer in his canteen!
You've heard of the Unknown Soldier,
But never an unknown Marine!”

John Ripley

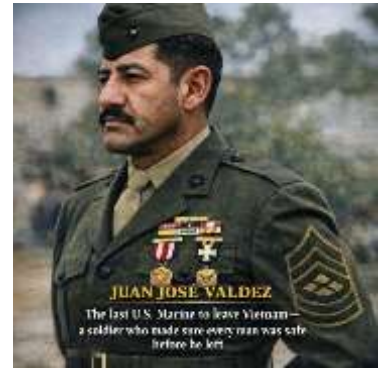
https://www.usna.com/press-release-archive?fbclid=IwY2xjawQZAvlleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFqUnljcDRiRFA0Tk4xUU Ruc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHtS3CUF8u7OcjhSMjT9SLYkmRXVloMOeVz72DKd30HpdfPzUVYnsFG4LDt4h_aem_dYdXcHM-bJd-Sodkwlprw



Master Gunnery Sergeant Juan José Valdez:

Master Gunnery Sergeant Juan José Valdez, known as the last U.S. Marine to leave Vietnam, passed away on February 15, 2026, after battling pneumonia.

During the final hours of the Vietnam War on April 30, 1975, Valdez was part of the evacuation from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. As helicopters were taking people out of the city, he made sure that all Marines under his command safely boarded first. Only after confirming that everyone else had left did he step onto the final CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter.



Valdez was born in 1937 in San Antonio, Texas, and served his country with dedication and responsibility. His leadership during that historic moment showed his commitment to protecting the Marines he served with.

For his service, he received several honors, including the Navy Commendation Medal and the Navy Achievement Medal.

He is remembered as a Marine who put the safety of others before himself.

Robert Mueller:



Regardless of your political preferences, we should honor the life and service of Robert Mueller, who passed away on 20 March. In addition to his role as Director of the FBI following 9/11, Mueller was a Marine Corps Infantry Officer in Vietnam with Hotel Company 2/4, the “Magnificent Bastards”, from November 1968 to 1969.

For his valor in combat, he was awarded the Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

<https://memoritree.com/memorial/robert-swan-mueller>

<https://www.wired.com/story/robert-mueller-vietnam/>

Modern Day Marine Expo, 28-30 April at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C.:

https://marinemilitaryexpos.com/attending-modern-day-marine-war-zone-newsletter/?utm_source=partner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=MDM26_Recurrent_WZNewsletter

Museum of the Marine:

The Museum of the Marine in Jacksonville NC will open on 8 June.

"No war is over until the enemy says it's over. We may think it over, we may declare it over, but in fact, the enemy gets a vote."

General James Mattis