



Commanders Comments.



In January, Bill Overton and I went to Washington DC to support our friend and newly elected Congressman, Anthony Gonzalez during the swearing in of the 216th Congress. As we stood on the corner of First and N Street, in the area known as Navy Yard, we couldn't help but notice the amount of construction going on. Whether we faced north, south, east, or west, tower cranes filled the sky. In each direction, there were beams being lifted, concrete being pumped high above the level of the street, and the sounds of jackhammers and wet saws chipping away at the past and making way for a better tomorrow.



As I begin to write this article, I am sitting on a plane making my way back from New York City. I spent the past few days roaming the streets of "the Big Apple", the lights of Times Square, the hundreds of thousands of people on the streets, subways, and buses, and the smells of countless restaurants permeating the air were quite noticeable. However, what caught my attention the most, was the similarity to sights and sounds I experienced in DC - tower cranes, cement trucks, and hard hats in every direction. Boring rigs cutting deep into the Manhattan bedrock so the buildings can be built taller and taller.

What does this all mean? Some people would refer to it as noise and air pollution, others as progress and a sign of a strong economy.

I recall being in Las Vegas for a machine tool trade show in 2008. I'm sure, most of you remember that 2008 was the beginning of the worst recession this country has seen since the Great Depression of the 1930's. This was quite apparent not only at the trade show but looking at the skyline of this normally thriving Nevada city. There was nothing thriving in 2008, and for several years to follow! The trade show was the worst I have experienced in my years in the machine tool industry, and massive construction projects came to a screeching halt. Tower cranes stood silent in the desert sun, girders, beams and steel mesh lay in piles, and the only movement on these jobsites was the oxidation eating its way into the surface of these dormant building materials.

What does all this mean? Is it a fluke, or does it mean that the current administration understands what it takes to not only stimulate economic growth, but to sustain it? You decide!

Consumer spending and personal disposable income reached an all-time high in December 2018. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the manufacturing job index is at its highest point since the start of the recession in December 2008 and construction jobs had a growth rate of nearly 12% over the past 2 years. Also, jobless claims reached their lowest point since 1969. Again, a fluke or perhaps the administration is doing the job it was elected to do. Once again, you decide!

I was recently speaking to a friend about the economic condition in the United States, and I was mentioning some similar statistics to those above. During the 2016 campaign, my friend was not a supporter of the Republican nominee. I would not call this person a “Trump-hater”, but definitely someone who had little to no faith in his abilities. From domestic to foreign affairs and policy, to economic growth and development, to his abilities as Commander-In-Chief, my friend was concerned. With retirement on the horizon, this person was worried that decades of investments, 401k and retirement funds would suffer deeply and delay retirement for an indefinite amount of time. However, based upon the sustained economic growth and the stock market reaching all-time highs, I am quite certain my friend no longer feels the same way. How about you? If you had to risk your investments, property values, retirement accounts, or even the security of our country, would you be willing to do so, just because you don’t like its leader?

I know some of you reading this are rolling your eyes due to my viewpoints, and that’s OK. This is the United States of America, and we have the freedom to share our opinions and points of view. A large percentage of my newsletter articles touch on some sort of political issue, but I share these with you for two reasons. One is because I feel it is important to point out certain factors that affect us all in one way or another. The second is I try to point out facts. These facts are sometimes intertwined with my interpretation, but I try to keep that somewhat limited. I am not a political science expert, and certainly not a Rhodes Scholar, but I try very hard to stay up on current events. I despise fake news, and don’t like when people spread information without verifying the facts. I like facts!

Now onto post business.

As normal, the post has been busy over the few months. Between wrapping up the holiday functions, to preparing for the spring and summer events, there is a tremendous amount of work that takes place behind the scenes, ALL done by volunteers. Our post would not be as beautiful and successful as it is, if we didn’t have such an incredible group of people working to make this happen. Some members visit the post just for the social aspect of it, however, there is a much larger group of members who know the meaning of 3345 is much deeper than just a social club. Our post is an extension of home, a place to have a few laughs, share a few stories, but even more so, a place where we witness each day, the true meaning of comradeship. Not just amongst veteran members, but Auxiliary and guest members as well. We witness this during work parties, during events, and most of all, during our Lenten Fish Fry’s. What an amazing group of people! Young and old, employed or retired, this band of VFW brothers and sisters pull together each year and spend countless hours putting on this event week after week, just to serve our members and the community.

Speaking of community, our post will be hosting a new event for Strongsville over the weekend of May 31 thru June 2. VFW Post 3345 will be hosting the Ohio Flags of Honor on The Commons, which is located at the corner of Rt 42 & Rt 82. The Ohio Flags of Honor is a travelling memorial dedicated to all Ohio service men and women who were killed in action during the Global War on Terrorism. The opening ceremony will take place at 6 PM on Friday, 5/31 and last for approximately 90 minutes. There will be a few brief speeches, followed by our keynote speaker, Col Maria J. Pallotta, USMCR (see Linda Burger’s article). The Strongsville Community Band will be providing music as a prelude to the event and continuing with various songs throughout the program. The program will also include the tolling of the bell, along with the reading of each name and placement of their honor flag. As of the writing of this article, 301 Ohioans were killed during the GWOT. Due to the importance and sanctity of this event, we will not be holding the Queen of Hearts that weekend. I ask each of you to place this event on your calendar, invite your friends and neighbors, and plan on attending this very important tribute to our fallen.

As I prepare to enter my seventh consecutive year as Commander of Post 3345, I want to thank each and everyone of you who work so hard to make our post a home. Thank you to all the volunteers, the officers and staff of the VFW and Auxiliary, and all of you who have provided me with such support and encouragement over the past six years. As I have shared in the past, there are times when I walk in there that I think about doing an about face, and heading to one of the local watering holes where I can escape, but as I said before, those times are very few and far between. I appreciate each and everyone of you, enjoy the relationships we have formed, and I look forward to an exciting and productive 2019-20.

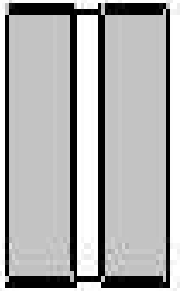
As always, I will wish you all a very safe and happy summer. May God bless you all and provide you with “fair winds and following seas” as you navigate through the waters of life. Each and every day, take a moment to be thankful for the freedoms we have as Americans and thank God there are and have been so many people willing to defend those freedoms.

Sincerely,

Commander Tim Zvoncheck



Sr. Vice Commander



Leaving at dawn to beat the traffic, do you remember that too?
Curled asleep on the back seat, do you remember that too?
The soundless dark, the empty road, do you remember that too?
And that child asleep, only eight years old, do you recognize as you?...

...Windows down on the coast road, wanting to be first to see the sea.
The whole world seemed a safe place, temporarily.
But it was never as simple as you thought, and you found out as you grew,
that up ahead your parents had borne the weight of all their worries and yours too.
All their worries and yours too.

British Summertime (Ben Watt/Tracey Thorn – ‘Everything But The Girl’)

Growing up, most of us had pure and boundless faith in our parents and their ability to protect us from anything bad. You had a booboo? Mom or dad would kiss it and make it better. Monsters under the bed? Mom or dad would check and make sure your bedroom was a monster-free zone...at least until tomorrow night.

When learning to walk, our parents encouraged us to come to them with their welcoming arms outstretched and a cheerful smile – making us unconcerned about the dangers of falling should our steps falter. The same held true with learning to ride a bike. On our first ride without training wheels, mom and dad were running along by our side, keeping our minds from worrying about falling, and instead allowing us to concentrate on how to balance ourselves and succeed at riding on two wheels.

While growing up, most of us never had to worry about where our next meal was coming from, whether we could get in to see a doctor when we got sick, paying the mortgage and utilities, etc.. These are all part of our lives now, but as kids, because mom and dad took on those burdens, we were spared from those stressors. We could just be kids – able to play, learn, have fun and enjoy our summertime! It wasn't until we got older and started facing these things on our own that we realized the awesome responsibilities our parents took on to raise us, which allowed us to spend our childhoods thinking of much happier thoughts instead of these “worries” that sometimes keep us awake at night in our adulthood.

“British Summertime” is a tribute to parents and how much they shield us during our developmental years from much of the anxieties and angst that the world rains down on us. By keeping many negative concerns from our consciousness, we were able to use our imaginations and think of the positive things in our rather sheltered lives. Eventually, as we matured and became more aware of the world around us, our parents’ efforts weren’t always able to keep the realities of life at bay; but until then, “the whole world seemed a safe place, temporarily.”

When contemplating this role that parents play in our lives – bearing “all their worries and yours too” – I believe that those who serve in the military take on a similar role for the population of our country in some respects these days. Generally, our fellow citizens have a somewhat detached view of the goings-on in the world in which our military is engaged, because for the most part, it doesn’t affect them. Sure, they are aware that our troops are deployed in places such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq – but what they’re fighting against isn’t something that causes most Americans much concern on a daily basis. People don’t change their minds about going to the mall or going on vacation to the beach for fear of an ISIS attack. The “bad” in the world just isn’t in the forefront of their minds.

Last year, I mentioned that during World War II, nearly 12% of the population was serving in the military in some capacity. All industrial efforts were aimed at turning out items that we could use to defeat our enemy, certain goods were rationed to support the war effort – everyone was VERY aware of the struggle our country was engaged in across the world. Almost every family had someone in the service or knew someone who was serving – it seemed everyone had some skin in the game. Daily, people were worried about how things were going – the thought of losing to the Germans and/or Japanese was a grave concern.

Since WW II, our nation's wars have no doubt continued to garner the attention of the American people. That was certainly true of Vietnam, the first war to be brought home to our living rooms every night on television. Then of course, September 11, 2001 stands out significantly as an historic date when a new type of enemy, not tied to any specific country or government, entered the fray. That event has had the most striking effect on our population in recent history – fear of another such attack has led to many changes in our lives - especially related to travel.

But today, nearly 18 years removed from 9/11, Americans don't spend too much time worrying about what's out in the big, bad world. They live their lives dealing with the events that relate to them on a personal level, not a global one. Since less than 1% of Americans are serving in the military today, they just don't have a personal connection to the risks and dangers that our service members face to protect them. In a way, that's great. Our military members do such a wonderful job protecting us here at home that they are almost invisible (and what they are protecting us from is too).

However, they shouldn't be invisible. We need to constantly keep them present in our thoughts and prayers, for the burdens we place on them – which they willingly accept – are significant. Our lives at home are relatively carefree **because** of them, but we know it's not carefree **to** them. The whole world is not a safe place, but it is a safer place because of their sacrifices. We all can be curled asleep on the backseat because up ahead, the military is bearing the weight of all their worries and ours too. Thank you to all who serve and have served; and as we approach Memorial Day, a special thank you in remembrance to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we could continue to enjoy our summertimes - and springs, falls and winters – with the carefree innocence of youth for a bit longer.

Tad Brown
Sr. Vice Commander





Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Strongsville Post 3345
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November 11, 2017

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Contact information: Tad Brown, Sr. Vice Commander

Cell: 440 376-7491

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Jr. Vice Commander

Dan Dallas



Greetings:

Friday Queen of Hearts will resume on the 26th. The time for the Queen of Hearts Drawing is being changed from 7:30pm to 7:00pm and the Winner Take All Drawing will be at 8:00pm starting on the 26th.

Upcoming events for May

For May we will have the Queen of Hearts drawing every Friday except for May 31st due to the Ohio Flags of Honor ceremony.

On Memorial Day, Tim Whalen will be performing at the Post.

Upcoming events for June

The sign up sheet for the Vets Golf Outing is posted in the Canteen for those golfers looking for a great game of golf and good times. This year the Vets Golf Outing will be on a Friday, June 21st.

This year we will be teeing off at Valleaire Golf Course. The course is located at 6969 Boston Road in Hinckley. Pretty much at Boston and Ridge Road. Boston Road dead ends into the course parking lot.

Cost for the Outing is \$75.00 per golfer. You'll get 18 holes and a cart. Food and beverages will be provided at the course and a steak dinner afterwards at the Post.

The Queen of Hearts drawing will be held on the following Friday's 7th, 14th & 28th. No Queen of Hearts on the 21st. due to the Golf Outing.

On Saturday, June 29th, Johnny R will be doing karaoke from 7pm until?

Additional Upcoming Events

Summer concerts are as follows: Saturday, 13 July Time Warp. Saturday, 03 August Crusin & Saturday, 24 August Ace Molar Band. All 7pm to 10pm.

I am working on another bus trip to Kelley's Island....I will keep you informed when I get it going. Please support our military and Veterans.

See you at the Post.

Dan Dallas
Jr. Vice Commander



Honor Guard

Don Kennett



We lost a very good friend and fellow Honor Guard member at the beginning of March. Walt Tomon has passed away, he will be missed by many of our members and friends. Also after 15 years of faithful and loyal service to the Honor Guard, Bob Puchmajer has decided to retire from the Honor Guard. He will also be missed from the team. The Honor Guard has provided either casket guard and/or grave side honors for over 10 veterans in the first quarter of this year which does not include our normal tours to Rittman.

Calendar for: April – May - June:

- Apr 4th – Tour of Duty at Rittman
- Apr 6th – Honor Guard Meeting
- May 4th - Honor Guard Meeting
- May 23rd – Tour of Duty at Rittman
- May 26th – Memorial Activity (USS Cod)
- May 27th – Memorial Day Activities
- May 31st – Ohio Flags of Honor Opening Ceremony (Strongsville)
- June 1st – Honor Guard Meeting
- June 2nd – Ohio Flags of Honor Closing Ceremony (Strongsville)

Respectfully Submitted,
Don Kennett, Honor Guard Commander

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A Veteran, Serving Veterans!



Taps



January 2019: **Gene Wallace, James Grabe,
Bob Crawford**

February 2019: **John Cesear**

March 2019: **Walt Tomon**

New Members: January 2019

Richard Boscarello Bernard McGivern

New Members: February 2019

Nicholas Schuld Bobby Gene Jackson
Berndt Palme

New Members: March 2019

Michael Toth Richard Weiss Walter Podbielski
Scott Mateosky Megan Grudzinski

Donations: January 2019

VFW National Home For Children	\$ 250
Strongsville Rotary—Chili Open	\$ 500

Donations: February 2019

VFW National Home For Children	\$ 250
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund	\$ 200
City of Strongsville	\$ 190
(Youth Sports Sponsor—Two Teams)	
Ride for Homeless Vets	\$ 100
VA Hospice	\$ 500
Woodland Cemetery Foundation	\$ 100
John Shepherd Scholarship	\$ 100
Polish Legion of American Veterans	\$ 50
(Program Ad)	

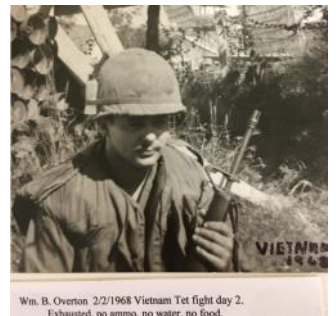
Donations: March 2019

Cleveland American Veterans Association	\$ 500
Strongsville Chamber of Commerce Homecoming	\$ 250
Child Safe Community Day	\$ 250
National MS Society	\$ 250
The Valor Home Ride with Valor Fundraiser	\$ 250
American Cancer Society Relay for Life	\$1,000



Service Officer Bill Overton

**Army 1st Cavalry
1967-1968 Vietnam**



Hello VFW members and friends:

Your Strongsville VFW has assisted several veterans and their families the past 3 months. We have donated food, clothing and other needs to veterans and their families in our communities.

We received information on March 25, 2019 about the Navy Blue Water Bill being approved.

We were advised to inform Navy veterans who served in Vietnam, to file claims immediately. Any Navy veteran who was in Vietnam and has one of the VA presumptive illnesses caused by Agent Orange, could be entitled to healthcare and other benefits. Go online, go to VA.gov agent orange presumptives; there is a list posted. Widows of Navy veterans who served in Vietnam could also be eligible for benefits if the veteran had one of the presumptives.

The following is information only.

Remember the hot shots some of us were given in Vietnam.

Gamma globulin injections are usually given in an attempt to temporarily boost a patient's immunity against disease. Being a product derived from bone marrow and lymph gland cells, gamma globulin injections, along with blood transfusions and IV drug use, can pass along hepatitis C to their recipients. Once hepatitis C was identified in 1989, blood banks began screening all blood donors for the presence of the virus in their bloodstream. However, since hepatitis C is known to have been present since at least the 1940's, a gamma globulin shot received prior to the early 1990's could put the recipient at risk of being infected.

We received a call from a concerned mom of 2 children who had collected too much candy from trick or treating. She asked if we could distribute the candy to less fortunate kids. When word got out, many members from our VFW wanted to participate. We guess about 30 to 40 pounds of candy was donated and repackaged. It was distributed to churches and food banks in our communities. The children and adults receiving candy were very happy.

I am very grateful for the generosity of our leadership and members of our VFW Post 3345. All are very generous and willing to help veterans and their families.

Bill Overton
Service Officer



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Canteen Manager

Bill Sopko



Winter is behind us and spring is here at last so lets put away the snowblower, shovel, boots and gloves and break out the gardening tools and enjoy the outdoors.

Don't forget when purchasing your outdoor supplies

consider Maria's Gardens and other veteran friendly establishments. Maria's has always been generous, supplying us with flowers and a tree/scrub or two, helping to enhance our grounds.

After working up a sweat, come on down to your canteen for some refreshments; maybe watch the Tribe or some nascar and help support your canteen.

I hope everyone has a Happy Easter, and good luck at the egg hunt. Next we have Mother's Day on May 12th, Memorial Day on May 27th and Father's Day on June 16th.

A reminder, your post is a smoke free establishment, that includes no electronic or vaping. If you must there is the Butt-Hut. Thank you for respecting the requests of our veterans and members.

Speaking of Thank yous, your auxiliary and members deserve one for putting on some great functions this past winter.

Before we sign off, another Comrade Walt Tomon "The Ambassador" as we tagged him, has left us. Always pleasant, greeting people coming in or leaving, offering help to anyone who needed it. Never complaining. If more people had a little "Wally" in them the world would be a better place.

Till we meet again Brother, Semper Fi, God Bless

Dave and Bill

short stuff. I was explaining the birds and bees to my son and he told me about the butcher and my wife.

Cash for Lionel Trains

Call Bob at (440) 759-2573



HOUSE COMMITTEE

Brent Newton



This is the end of fish-fry season. Thank you to all members and auxiliary members for helping with the prep, serving and most important the clean up.

I would like to have a work party this spring, including the auxiliary members, to help organize and clean out the garage. We will be throwing a lot of things that are not shelved and organized out. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Other than that be safe and have fun.

The Housing Committee



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Auxiliary

Bob DeHart



Spring is finally upon us! This winter seems like it flew by this year – No, I'm NOT complaining – it's great. But I AM sure that soon enough we'll all be complaining about how hot it is.

Remember if you haven't paid your dues yet they are past due and your keycards have been turned off. The good news is we have already reached 100% on membership, so those of you that have already paid I thank you. It's nice to get that out of the way earlier than usual.

This year instead of a grill like we did last year, we are selling tickets for gift cards. The tickets are \$5 each and you have the chance to win 8 different \$25 gift cards to local restaurants. We will pull 2 winners in May. That means \$400 worth of gift cards. The more tickets you buy the better your chance of winning!

I want to thank everyone that worked our reverse raffle the day before St Patrick's Day. It was a last minute event we decided to put together, but it all came off without a hitch as usual. The food was excellent, with several people telling us that it was the best corned beef they had ever eaten – now THAT'S saying something. That along with the potatoes, cabbage, and carrots (trust me there were carrots and they were great) made for a ton of food, with no one going home hungry.

We will be doing our annual Margaritaville / Pig Roast sometime in July this year (usually the 2nd weekend) of which there will be more information forthcoming. And for something different this year our golf outing will be on a Friday – Friday, August 16th to be exact – and at a new venue. This year it will be at Valleaire. They gave us a great deal to book ours and the vets outing both there. Mary Ann will have more info on this in the next newsletter.

I know I don't have to remind everyone about Memorial Day this year on Monday May 27th, but I will anyway. I'd love to see as much of our auxiliary as possible participate in these ceremonies and the parade this year. It starts early and it's a long morning, but well worth being here for it. It's a day for us to honor our fallen veterans. We should all make a "small" sacrifice to be here to acknowledge their very LARGE sacrifice.

Lastly, we had our April meeting and elections just recently. If you haven't already heard, here are your new officers for 2019-2020:

President	Mary Ann Almashie	Conductress	Barb Overton
Sr Vice President	Carol Soltis	Guard	Jackie Hercules
Jr Vice President	Frank Zullo	3 year Trustee	Linda Tobel
Treasurer	Denise Klusker	2 year Trustee	Nancy Marbry
Chaplain	Jeff Myers	1 year Trustee	Martha Chilkowski

I want to congratulate all the new officers and wish them all success in the year ahead. Mary Ann is a great choice to lead our auxiliary into the next year and beyond. Let's give her and everyone else all of our support. I also want to thank everyone who gave me the opportunity these last couple years as president. The reason this is such a successful auxiliary is because of the great people in it that are always willing to help and participate. I'm glad I got to "work" with such a great bunch of people and look forward to the year ahead.

As always, please continue to keep our troops in your thoughts and prayers.....

Bob DeHart
Auxiliary President

Our Members. Our Friends. Our Heroes.

Bill Gordon

Interviewed By Linda Burger

"I probably spent more time at sea than many of the Navy men at the Post!"



So says Marine veteran Bill Gordon, with a laugh. Bill entered the Service shortly after High School Graduation, on what he called the "Buddy Plan." "Two of my friends and I went to the recruiting office together," he explained. "One of them backed out but the other and I enlisted."

Bill's uncle, who served in the Marines, on Guadalcanal, was an inspiration to him plus, he added "I heard they were looking for a few good men."

After completing his Basic Training, Bill was stationed at Camp Lejeune, as a "Grunt" – Rifleman 0311 with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, Echo Company. He then began the first of his two Mediterranean tours, with the 7th Fleet.

"It was a six month assignment, dealing with Field Problems in the area," he explained. "We traveled to France, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Corsica and Greece. In Sardinia we actually supported the French Foreign Legion."

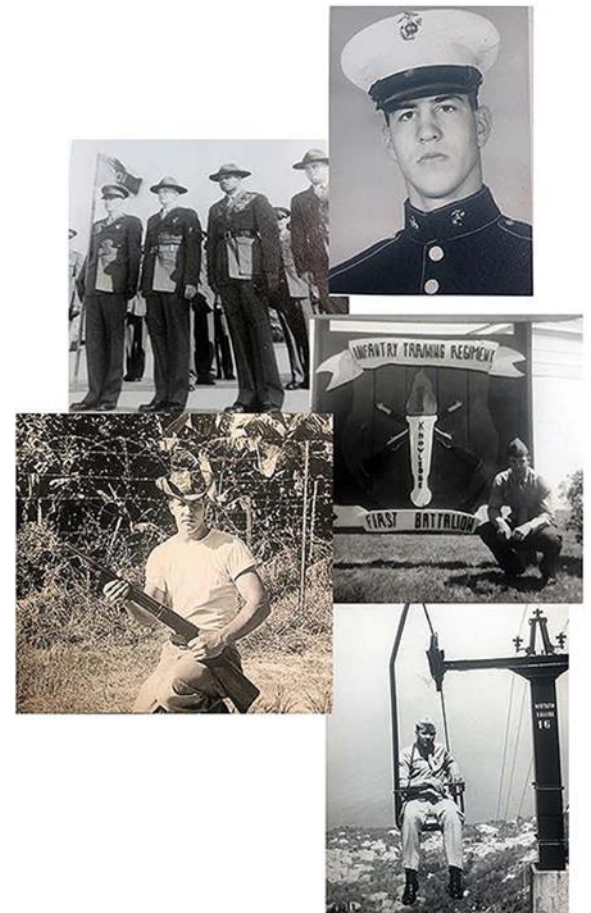
As an incredible coincidence, Bill's father was part of the crew that constructed the ship - the USS DeSota County – as commemorated by a plaque in the galley.

After returning to Camp Lejeune, Bill opted to attend Demolition School, instead of taking a leave. When complete, he discovered his Company had already left so he was re-assigned to India Company, which was leaving for the Cuban Missile Crisis.

"We spent the next 30 days, traveling back and forth from the tip of Florida to Cuba, all the while sharpening our bayonets," he recalled. "The level of tension was incredibly high."

After again returning to Camp Lejeune, Bill embarked on yet another "cruise" with the 7th Fleet, again to the Mediterranean, where they were responsible for "anything that might be happening in the area" including the Suez Canal crisis. "I was able to go out with the Helicopter group, and we flew up on a hill to watch the landings," said Bill.

This trip also included stops in France, Turkey, Rhodes, Athens, Greece and Genoa, Italy and again lasted six months. "At times, especially at night when sitting at the back of the ship, it was almost like being on a cruise," Bill reminisced. "Then, when we hit rough seas, with the water coming over the whole ship or when we were headed to a trouble spot, we'd remember why we were there!"



Another special on board memory was of the smokers – the boxing matches between the Marines and Sailors. “These were more than just exercise or entertainment, the winner won an additional day of liberty!” said Bill, who fought as a Light Heavyweight – “I was lighter than most opponents but faster, so I did alright!”

The slogan of Join The Service To See The World was certainly true for Bill who later elected to serve in Japan as part of a Military Police (MP) company at the 1st Marine Naval Air Base. Instead, though, he became part of the Air Delivery/ Air Freight service where they delivered food, vehicles and other equipment to the Philippines, Okinawa and Shoo Fly.

In 1964, Bill volunteered to go to Vietnam, to establish the air strip in Da Nang. “There were 200 Marines in the compound, which had previously been used by the French,” he explained. “The Army Special Forces were just five miles down the road, and there were groups of Mercenary Huns in the area.” Soon after, thousands of U.S. troops came through that air strip.

“Mostly I remember the heat and the sweat. It seemed like all we did was fill sand bags and dig trenches,” according to Bill. “And, add in the frequent attacks from the North, needless to say, we didn’t get much sleep at night.”

For his service, Bill received numerous awards including Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze campaign star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and National Defense Service Medal, among others.

After his discharge from the Service, Bill began working with Davio Corporation, which built tow boats and barges launched on the Ohio River. A few years later, he found his life’s work when he began working with Monumental Life Insurance Company. In the 20 years with the company, Bill advanced from Agent, to Sales Manager then District Manager, responsible for 14 states.



He later moved to USF&G, calling on independent insurance companies and when the company was bought out, worked as a Sales Manager for Central Reserve Life.

In 1996, Bill began with J L Thomas Company, a Life Brokerage Agency and is now “semi-retired.”

He can’t seem to stay away from cruises he and wife Pat still enjoy traveling and have enjoyed trips to Mexico, Cozumel, Belize, Bahamas, Spain and Italy. They have two daughters – Jacqueline (husband Curt) who have two daughters and Kerry (husband Patrick).

The family also enjoys boating and water sports, horseback riding and “sitting around the campfire.”

“It has all been a Great Life Experience,” summarized Bill. “Semper Fi!”

For a Marine who spent so much time at sea, we’re very glad you landed here and, we at Strongsville VFW Post 3345 salute you and are honored to have you as a Member.

Our Members. Our Friends. Our Heroes.

Colonel Maria Pallotta

Interviewed By Linda Burger

“Among all the honors, among all the postings, promotions, medals that have been awarded to me, the one that I take the most pride in is to be able to say ‘I am a Marine.’”



This quote, from WWI Marine General John A. LeJeune, has been an inspiration, a motivation and a fitting tribute for and to Colonel Maria Pallotta. “Marines really love being Marines, and being with other Marines,” she explained. “They are the most hard working, enthusiastic, dedicated people you will ever meet!”

Col. Maria grew up in a family with many relatives who served in the military at different times throughout the 20th Century. “It goes all the way back to my grandfather, Giacomo Pallotta, who was born in Italy, came to the U.S. and served in the Army during World War I,” she explained. “My Uncle Joe is a World War II veteran (Army), my Dad is a Korean War veteran (Army) and my Uncle Bob Legan is a Vietnam War veteran (Air Force).” Her other three uncles (Army) and one brother (Marine Corps) also proudly served their country during the Cold War era.

Family also greatly influenced Col. Maria’s later interests and successes, both in academics and sports. “My love of books came from my mother, and my love of sports came from my father,” she explained. “That, and my grandparents’ sacrifices as immigrants are what I am most grateful for – and of course, for being a Marine!”

A Holy Name High School graduate, Col. Maria was part of the first girl’s team to make it to the state basketball championship tournament. Her athletic skills, along with an excellent academic record and a “desire for adventure,” led her to apply to, and be accepted into the United States Naval Academy. As part of her education and training, she spent a summer training with each community of the Navy and Marine Corps. It was during a week at Quantico with the Marines that Col. Maria found her calling and realized what she was meant to be.

“What especially attracted me were the hands-on leadership aspects that were displayed, along with the outdoor environment and the physical demands of serving as a Marine,” she explained. “I was fascinated by both the challenge and the opportunities, especially since, at that time, there were so few women in the service.”

What started as a plan to serve for 5 or 6 years led to a lifetime of service. “I had the great good fortune to work in many exotic places alongside such amazing people, I just didn’t want it to stop,” revealed Col. Maria. “It all clicked, and I realized the Marine Corps is home to me.

“It is the best decision I have ever made and it has been an honor and a privilege to serve,” she added.

Col. Maria's first duty station was Okinawa, Japan, where she participated in operations in Korea, Thailand, Australia and mainland Japan, first as a Platoon Commander in the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group, then becoming the Command's Operations Officer.

Following service in California, Col. Maria then served as a senior English instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy. In addition, she was a staff platoon commander for the Leatherneck Marine Corps summer training program and the officer representative for the Varsity Women's Crew team. A former Navy rower herself, she "very much enjoyed working with the crew team. It is one of the most physically and mentally challenging sports," she added. "It's not very well known but the U.S. Women's Crew eight-oared shell has won the gold medal in every world competition in which they've entered since 2006."

In 2004, Col. Maria served with Transportation Support Battalion at Camp Lejeune, and from there she was deployed twice to Operation Iraqi Freedom, for which she was awarded the Bronze Star and the Navy Commendation Medal (third award).



"Being a woman in the Marines, or in any of the services, has been a challenge," she revealed. "We are a strong presence, though, and we have proven our abilities in combat and in every role within the military."

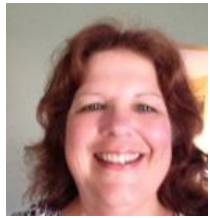
Presently, she is the Director of the U.S. Naval Academy's Center for Experiential Leadership Development (ELD), teaching leadership and ethics to midshipmen. "I love working with young people in their formative years, hearing and learning from their perspective," she explained, enthusiastically. "It keeps things fresh, and you see an attitude of – if you can do the job, go for it."

Col. Maria strongly encourages all young people to "do something positive with their lives" and, in particular, to consider the military as a viable career option. "Not only is this one of the best ways to serve our country, it is also a fantastic growth opportunity," she explained. "Through your training and experiences, you learn valuable life skills, have the chance to travel, and grow as a leader, and enjoy many lifelong benefits."

"The Marine uniform is unique, with a minimum of bells and whistles," said Col. Maria. "The focus is on the Eagle, Globe and Anchor, the symbol for what Marines have in common and, what we are most proud of."

"Becoming a Marine is like joining a new, extended family. Wherever you are, when you see a fellow Marine, you have found more than a friend, you have found a member of your family," she concluded.

Scuttlebutt publishing!



Newsletter publication: As a reminder, the Scuttlebutt newsletter and calendars have been switched to a quarterly electronic delivery – either as an email attachment we send to you, or by visiting the Post's website, www.vfw3345.com. Pictures from some events have been uploaded to the Post Website, check out the fun. I am still uploading pictures from various events held throughout the year so check them out and join in on the fun (Web and Mobile access).

Please send your electronic contact information, and any updates to your home address if something has changed, to svcdr.vfw3345@wowway.biz and we will make sure our email distribution list gets you added to it!

NOTE: if you include your birth month and day, we will also get you added to the birthday list. There is also a birthday book behind the bar at the canteen in order to add your birthday information.

I would like to thank Linda Burger for doing such an outstanding job in the "Our Members, Our Friends, Our Heroes" articles. What a great way to honor our veterans.

After almost 3 years as editor of the Scuttlebutt, it is time to retire from this position so this will be my last edition of the Scuttlebutt Newsletter and Email Blasts. Looking for a new job, interviewing and hopefully finding a job, along with the Auxiliary duties, will find me very busy going forward. Linda Burger has offered to takeover the Newsletter and email blasts. Reading any of her veteran articles shows the outstanding job she does and with being in the business of communications, this is right up her alley. Please join me in thanking her for stepping up into the editor position.

See ya at the post

Support our Troops!!!

Mary Ann Almashie



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April 5, 2019

1. **VA Ordered to Lift Hold on Blue Water Navy Appeals:** VA was recently ordered to lift its hold on Blue Water Navy appeals as a result of the recent Procopio v. Wilkie court decision. The VFW-supported Procopio decision clarified that Blue Water Navy Vietnam War veterans are eligible to receive presumptive disability compensation benefits for health conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange. After the decision was issued on January 29, 2019, VA requested a stay, which places a hold on Blue Water Navy claims and appeals while the agency deliberated whether to appeal the decision. VA's request to stay Blue Water Navy claims was denied and VA is now forced to start taking action on appeals. This means veterans affected by the Procopio decision may see activity on their appeals in the near future. The VFW urges Blue Water Navy veterans who receive notice of action on their claims to contact a VFW-accredited Service Officer at: www.vfw.org/NVS. The Department of Justice still has until April 29, 2019, to formally appeal. Moreover, the Procopio decision still leaves certain questions unanswered for Blue Water Navy veterans and others exposed to Agent Orange. This is why the VFW continues to urge for the swift passage of H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. Urge your members of Congress to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 299.

2. **VFW Testifies on Budget Request:** This week, VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Committee on Appropriations and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, VA, and Related Agencies. Alongside Mr. Murray was DAV and PVA who co-author the Independent Budget. Together, they advocated for increased funding for veteran health care and benefits. Specifically, the IB questioned whether VA has requested the funds it needs to properly implement the VFW-championed VA MISSION Act and sufficient funding to update VA's ageing infrastructure. The VFW also urged Congress to fix the unacceptable housing conditions at privatized military housing facilities throughout the country and repair military installations that were damaged by recent natural disasters. Read the Independent Budget. Watch the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing. Watch the House Appropriations Subcommittee hearing.

3. **Air Force and Marine Corps Still Recovering from Hurricanes:** In multiple congressional hearings this week, the Air Force and Marine Corps expressed the critical need for additional supplemental funding from Congress to rebuild base infrastructures and family housing after the devastation of Hurricanes Florence and Michael. Hundreds of service members and their families remain displaced after Hurricane Florence caused \$3.6 billion in damages at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Similar devastation occurred at Tyndall Air Force Base in October 2019 after Hurricane Michael caused \$3 billion in damages. Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson stated that the Air Force "had to stop 61 facility projects in 18 states because we don't have a supplemental [appropriations] to recover from this devastating storm." If additional funds are not made available in the coming months, the Air Force will have to cut 18,000 training and flying hours to fund reconstruction efforts. The VFW has called on Congress to prioritize disaster relief efforts for the affected military installations.

4. **First Female Fighter Pilot Nominated for Second Star:** On Tuesday, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein announced that Brig. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt was among the 23 general officers nominated for promotion to Major General. Despite finishing among the best in her flight training class in 1992, Brig. Gen. Leavitt was prohibited from flying fighters and bombers. However, in 1993, she became the first female F-15 pilot after the DOD opened combat pilot positions to women. Since then, she has logged more than 3,000 flight hours, including more than 300 combat hours between Iraq and Afghanistan. Brig. Gen. Leavitt was also the first female to command the 57th Wing at the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, Nellis Air Force Base, and currently serves as the Air Force Recruiting Service Commander at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. Learn more about Brig. Gen. Leavitt.

5. **MIA Update:** The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identification of one U.S. service member from WWII. Returning home with full military honors is:
-- Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Vincent J. Rogers, Jr. was a radio operator for the 38th Bombardment Squadron, (Heavy), 30th Bombardment Group, stationed at Hawkins Field, Helen Island, Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands. On Jan. 21, 1944, he was onboard a B-24J bomber that crashed shortly after takeoff. Interment services are pending.

To view this week's edition, visit: <http://www.vfw.org/actioncorpsweekly>