



# The Gator ALMAR



BEST NEWSLETTER 1999, 2000, 2001

<http://gatordet.tripod.com>

Gator Detachment of the Marine Corps League, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5845, New # ----> **352.222.7704**  
Gainesville FL 32627

Commandant: Bob Gasche 376-0402 NOV/DEC 2002  
Editor: Scott DuPree - ssgtd@bellsouth.net 336.5822

NEXT MEETING TUESDAY, January 28, 2003

Food will be available. As always, if you want to share a dish, bring it.

## TOYS 4 TOTS - December 14<sup>th</sup> at VFW

**HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP WITH TOYS FOR TOTS: On Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> we will be meeting at VFW 2811 at 1100 to get ready for the T4T party where we distribute toys to the needy children. The children will be there and they will receive their toys from our own Santa. Again, we can use all the help we can get. Come out for a couple of hours and support your detachment as we serve our community.**

### MESSAGE FROM COMMANDANT

The holiday "rush." We are all caught up in this frantic time of the year when thoughts turn to parties, gifts, travel, church programs and many other activities that consume our time of preparation and celebration.

We are fortunate as Marines that we add to the holiday cheer by participating in the many programs of our detachment. Toys for Tots focuses on helping needy children have a more joyful Christmas by giving them toys at our party on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Quite possibly we will never know just how much this means to a deprived child as they receive a bag of toys from our Santa.

Veteran's Day, the Birthday Ball, flag raising, the Homecoming Parade - all provided opportunities for us to honor veterans, promote Marine Corps traditions and serve our community in a positive way. We have done these before and shall continue to lead the way with our Marine pride exemplified year round. Honor, courage and commitment lie within us all as a band of brothers, committed to excellence.

Since we will have no detachment or staff meeting in December, I want to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you the very best of holidays. Your many

contributions throughout 2002 have enabled us to grow, to serve and improve the quality of life in Gainesville. Thank you for this service to our community and nation. Semper Fi and God Bless America. - Bob Gasche

### PEARL HARBOR DAY REMEMBERED

A portion of the November general meeting was dedicated to the remembrance of Pearl Harbor Day, December 7<sup>th</sup>. As long as organizations like ours continue to meet and continue to share the stories and collectively remember events such as this one, we are then fulfilling one of our missions for our members and the community.

### TOYS FOR TOTS

Our Toys for Tots committee chairman Carey Hill has been overseeing a program that has really taken off! We met Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> to prepare a great number of bags of toys. In addition to corporate sponsors, there are lots of businesses in the Gator community that are collecting toys. The toy collection has been fantastic. The ads have been run in newspapers, radio and TV. The Oaks 4 movie plaza had a showing of the new Harry Potter movie where the admission was a toy; we collected over 130 toys there alone. We will be helping many children with our program. As mentioned at the top of this newsletter, we will be at the VFW for distribution of these toys. Take a couple of hours and come help. You'll be glad you did.

## **M**EMBERSHIP

**PLEASE NOTE: Membership Dues are \$30.00.**

*WIVES: YOU MAY NOW BECOME ASSOCIATE MEMBERS!!* Members, please give consideration to a **LIFE MEMBERSHIP**. Upon payment of Life dues **anytime**, you become a member for the rest of your life. **You can pay at any time, as long as you are a member in good standing.** The fees are determined by age group.

Age 40 and below: \$250.00  
 Age 41 to 50: \$200.00  
 Age 51 to 60: \$150.00  
 Age 61 and up: \$75.00

**GOOD NEWS! YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY ALL AT ONCE. TALK TO THE PAYMASTER ABOUT MAKING INSTALLMENT PAYMENTS TOWARD YOUR LIFE MEMBERSHIP!**

If you consider the price of dues for the future years, this is a smart investment and you will always be in good standing with the Marine Corps League. The Gator Det has more than 30 Life Members now. Join the ranks!!

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**DELINQUENT MEMBERSHIPS** - With the exception of LIFE MEMBERS, each member must pay a \$30.00 annual renewal each year. This is due during the anniversary of the month that you joined the detachment. If you are in a delinquent status for one year, you will be dropped from the rolls of the Marine Corps League. If you are not sure when your dues are due or have other questions about due, just pick up the phone and call Adjutant/Paymaster **Fredrick Peterkin** at 222-7704.

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**FLAG RAISING**

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, Marine Fredrick Peterkin performed the duty of raising the Marine Corps Colors over the City of Gainesville. He was joined by a few leathernecks and supporters who, on that rainy Sunday, made sure the flag of our Corps flew in celebration for all to see. With a picture of him saluting on the front page of the local newspaper, it reminds us all that doing our duty is not always convenient, but it is still our duty. Semper Fi.

#### **MARINES PARTICIPATE IN VETERANS' DAY**

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, the skies were overcast but the veterans and other community members numbering in the thousands attended the annual Veterans' Day activities at Kannappaha Veterans Park. While the flyover was cancelled due to low clouds, the parachutists delayed their jump until there was some clearing. Speakers in the program included veterans and community leaders as the topic of the day was a salute to the women veterans. The Gator Det set up a tent (good for when it rained lightly) with recruiting materials and engaged many a Marine in conversation on the tarmac. The Gator Det also promoted two of its current programs, Toys for Tots and the Young Marines, showing our support for the community.

#### **A QUALITY BIRTHDAY BALL**

The Birthday Ball held on November 9<sup>th</sup> was a top quality Ball. Although it was only attended by approximately 40 Marines and guests, all present were treated to a night of music, ceremony and celebration. The prime rib dinner was great and our guest of honor shared his adventurous career in a well prepared speech. Although the Ball is our primary annual fundraiser, we ended up spending slightly more than we took in this year. We know where the excessive expenses were and we know the ticket price was a bit higher this year. We are Marines, so we learn from our experiences and move ahead all the wiser. To those who could not attend this year, you missed a very nice production, thanks to the thorough work of Ball Chairman Alan Gray. Everyone mark your calendars for the next ball, Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

#### **GATOR DET IN HOMECOMING PARADE**

The Gator Det once again had an entry in the University of Florida's annual Homecoming Parade. This year we had a Hummer, lent to us by Mr. Pat Brewster, pulling a trailer which had signs for the Gator Det as well as the Disabled Veterans of America and Toys for Tots. In addition, the Milton Lewis Young Marines unit and the Bulldog Young Marines (from the Reichert House) joined the GatorDet. This year there was only a few GatorDet members to carry on the tradition. We will work to make it a better event for us next year.

#### **MILTON LEWIS YOUNG MARINES UPDATE**

The Milton Lewis Young Marines continue to grow. We now have 12 youth enrolled and at least that many committed to joining our ranks after the first of the year. Additionally, we are distributing 3,000 fliers to 10 local elementary schools inviting those in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades to join us.

In the last month, our group has participated in the Veteran's Day activities, the Homecoming Parade and have had mention in the local newspaper. They will be assisting in the Toys for Tots preparation also.

As our group grows, we could use volunteers to help out at the training sessions. We now meet two times per month at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5916 NW 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Gainesville. Meetings are generally the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of the month, from 0900 to 1200. The next meeting is scheduled for January 11<sup>th</sup>. If you want to help out, contact Bob Gasche, Scott DuPree, or just drop by. Spread the word about this program.

#### **A SOLDIER'S CHRISTMAS POEM**

Twas the night before Christmas,  
 He lived all alone,

In a one bedroom house  
Made of plaster and stone.  
I had come down the chimney  
With presents to give,  
And to see just who  
In this home did live.  
I looked all about,  
A strange sight I did see,  
No tinsel, no presents,  
Not even a tree.  
No stocking by mantle,  
Just boots filled with sand,  
On the wall hung pictures  
Of far distant lands.  
With medals and badges,  
Awards of all kinds,  
A somber thought  
Came through my mind.  
For this house was different,  
It was dark and dreary,  
I found the home of a soldier,  
Once I could see clearly.  
The soldier lay sleeping,  
Silent, alone,  
Curled up on the floor  
In this one bedroom home.  
The face was so gentle,  
The room in such disorder,  
Not how I pictured  
A United States Soldier.

Was this the hero  
Of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho,  
The floor for a bed?  
I realized the families  
That I saw this night,  
Owed their lives to these soldiers  
Who were willing to fight.  
Soon round the world,  
The children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate  
a bright Christmas Day.  
They all enjoyed freedom  
Each month of the year,  
Because of the soldiers,  
Like the one lying here.  
I couldn't help wonder  
How many lay alone,  
On an old Christmas Eve  
In a land far from home.  
The very thought  
Brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees  
And started to cry.  
The soldier awakened

And I heard a rough voice,  
"Santa don't cry,  
This life is my choice;  
I fight for freedom,  
I don't ask for more,  
My life is my GOD,  
My COUNTRY, My CORPS."  
The soldier rolled over  
And drifted to sleep,  
I couldn't control it,  
I continued to weep.  
I kept watch for hours,  
So silent and still  
And we both shivered  
From the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave  
On that cold, dark, night,  
This Guardian of Honor  
So willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over,  
With a voice soft and pure,  
Whispered, "Carry on Santa,  
It's Christmas Day, All is secure."

One look at my watch,  
And I knew he was right.  
"MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FRIEND,  
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."

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Dan Brinsko - Sergeant at Arms  
Ben Kinard - Chaplain  
Norm Froescher - Public Affairs Officer  
Alan Gray - Military Historian  
Ann Zecca - Photographer/Librarian  
Bob Casey - Americanism and Education Officer  
Cary Hill - Toys for Tots Chairman

Your Gator Det Staff 2002 - 2003  
Bob Gasche - Commandant  
Gary Powers - Senior Vice Commandant  
Richard Lester - Junior Vice Commandant  
Scott DuPree - Jr. Past Commandant  
Ralph Lewis - Judge Advocate  
Fredrick Peterkin - Adjutant/Paymaster  
Ray Guyette - Quartermaster

Upcoming at Gator Det ...  
December 14, 2002, 11:00 a.m. - VFW Post 2811 - Toys for Tots party for the children  
January 11, 2003, 09:00 a.m. - Faith Presbyterian Church - Young Marines training  
January 23, 2003, 6:30 p.m. - SFCC Downtown Conference Room - Staff Meeting  
January 25, 2003, 0800 a.m. - District 2 Management Training  
January 28, 2003, 7pm - VFW Post 2811 - General Meeting  
February 1, 2003, 09:00 a.m. - Faith Presbyterian Church - Young Marines training

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“ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE”

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