

**1ST MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION
DESERT CITIES MITCHELL PAIGE MOH CHAPTER
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DECEMBER, 2011 NEWSLETTER

***TUN TAVERN TEAM EXPANDS TO 29 MEMBERS
Gene McClendon joined the TTT in November.***

***Wes Ahlgren Mike Bales Carl Brooks Harry Covert Mac Dube
Paul Ehline Dave Franklin Charlie Garbarini Sam Huttenhower
George Hatzidakis* Dean Hunter Carl Lewke Jimmie Martin
Gene McClendon Jim Olson Marilyn Paige Dick Partee Jack
Rabinowitz Bill Ross Henry Sanchez Ray Schum Bob Shepard
George Stettler Jim Sullivan Dale Turner Quint Villanueva
Michael L. Walker Myrl Wallace Linn Wiley***

****RIP***

CHRISTMAS SEASON MESSAGE

By QUINT VILLANUEVA

The year is rapidly coming to a close and the big question is, where did it go? Seems like 2011 arrived only yesterday. Time marches on and it seems like the older we get the faster it marches.

I'll take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to all those members who gave of their time and money in support of our Chapter's programs.

We gained a few new members in 2011 and lost three of our beloved members: George Hatzidakis, Larry Seaward and Elmer Stone who participated actively in Chapter activities right up until they departed.

The New Year will provide us with new opportunities to use our imagination for creating ways to support Marines and Marine families. I strongly urge each of you to become involved not only by making financial donations to Chapter programs but also by becoming actively engaged in the programs and by serving on the Board. Chapter elections will be held in February, so feel free to contact any board members for more information.

My very best wished to all of you for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year

DECEMBER MEETING

Our annual Christmas Luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 15th at the Desert Falls Country Club. LtCol Piddock and SgtMaj Reaves, 3 / 4, who we supported with socks and baby wipes while deployed to Afghanistan, will be our guests of honor.

This is the luncheon where we invite our wives to enjoy a pre holiday luncheon. Each lady will receive a Christmas gift from the Chapter. Space is limited to the first 48 RSVP's.

Please bring at least one unwrapped toy - for a boy and a girl. We will deliver the toys the next day to the AFYMCA at MCAGCC, 29 Palms. These toys will go to needy Marine families at the base. (Believe it or not, Toys 4 Tots does not distribute toys to the Marines at the Combat Center at 29 Palms.)

NEW MEMBER

Please welcome Richard Kussman aboard! He saw our signs at the Oktoberfest and stopped by to sign up. He served in 1953 - 1957 as a Captain with the 1st and 3rd Air Wings.

ANNUAL MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Last November 5th we were invited to celebrate with the 7th Marine Regiment at their Marine Corps Birthday Ball at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, Indian Wells. The Chapter was well represented by Marilyn Paige, Darla & Mike Holquin, Cynthia & Dean Hunter, Linda & George Moffatt, Susan & Dick Partee, Melanie & Buddy Sklar, Louise & George Stettler, Karen & Jim Sullivan and Yolanda & Quint Villanueva.

On November 10th the Chapter also supported and attended the annual Marine Corps League JROTC Birthday Luncheon at Miracle Springs Resort, DHS. LtCol Bryan Neal, XO, 7th Marines was the Guest of Honor. BGen Fritz Payne, the only living Marine fighter Ace from WW II was honored as the oldest Marine present - 100 years old. The Chapter presented Carl Lewke with a \$500 donation for the JROTC Cadets.

WOUNDED WARRIORS NEW LIBRARY, COMBAT CENTER

We donated new books for their new library. Books were

ones from the Commandants Recommended Reading List for Marines. The Chapter donated books recommended for Corporals and Sergeants. Books were delivered on November 3rd to the Wounded Warriors Headquarters.

MITCHELL PAIGE MIDDLE SCHOOL, LA QUINTA

The school held special assemblies to honor Veterans Day. Marilyn Paige was the Guest of Honor. Carl Brooks and Pete Van Vechten were guest speakers and talked about the meaning of Veterans Day. *Thanks Pete and Carl!*

EMERALD DESERT RV RESORT, PALM DESERT

They invited us to attend their Veterans Day ceremony at their Palm Desert resort. Pete Van Vechten represented the Chapter and talked about the importance of Veterans Day.

WHERE WERE WE IN DECEMBER 2002 BEFORE THE IRAQ WAR?

By: Col. Mike Walker, USMCR (Ret.)

Iran was actively pursuing nuclear weapons. The ayatollahs were firmly In power. Iran and Syria were allied and their influence in the Middle East growing. The two were using Lebanon as a puppet state. Saddam was in power. As he told the FBI after being capture, he was waiting for the end of the UN Sanctions “to reconstitute his entire WMD program.” He had a limited supply of chemical weapons and biological weapon “seed stock.” The ISG reported that he could have restarted the production of biological weapons in two months and chemical and nerve agent weapons in six months.

Saddam was financing Hamas suicide bomber attacks against Israel, granting sanctuary to al Qaeda fighters who fled Afghanistan after 9/11, provided refuge to Abdul Rahman Yasin, the mastermind of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and supported the Ansar al Islam terrorist organization that, according to the LA Times, had links to al Queda and followed the extremist Islamic beliefs of bin Laden. Things were not looking good.

WHERE WILL WE BE IN DECEMBER, 2011?

Iran is still pursing nuclear weapons but the economic sanctions have been increased in the last nine years and its economy is fragile. The ayatollahs are isolated and probably at their weakest point since taking power in 1979. The Green Revolution of 2009 has shattered the façade of democracy and they face an active Sunni insurgency. The pro-Iranian

Syrian government of Bashar Assad is ready to topple any day. Hezbollah in Lebanon may be at the height of its power but is deeply worried about

The consequences of the Arab Spring and the fall of Assad.

Saddam is dead. The chemical and biological weapon programs in Iraq are finally destroyed. No Iraqi government money goes to Hamas. Yasin has disappeared, a presumed KIA during the war. In 2005, Al Quaeda declared the war in Iraq as the...greatest battle of Islam in this era” and in 2006 Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan declared, “We fight for Iraq.” They lost the “greatest battle” and Mullah Omar is on the ropes in Afghanistan. The Marine Corps played its role in an outstanding manner. It was critical to our victory. Things are looking a lot better then they were in 2002.

CONCLUSIONS

Would it have been better if we kept some forces in Iraq? I certainly think so. Is that failure? In a word, no, but it is a setback. We still have a strong presence in Persian Gulf with willing allies. While we will not have a permanent military presence in Iraq, that does not mean we cannot train with and assist the Iraqi military in the future. We already do this effectively with many friendly militaries where we do not have bases. More importantly, we still have huge forward deployed military stockpiles and forces in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. We need to keep building on our friendship with Iraq, as it will only make our allies stronger in the face of Iranian aggression.

TAPS FOR TWO FORMER MEMBERS

Roger Collins and Art Seay passed away recently to report for duty on the streets of heaven. Seay was a charter member of the chapter.

SEMPER FIDELIS & BEST WISHES FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Jim Sullivan, Editor

Officers & Directors

**Quint Villanueva, President
Jim Sullivan, Sec / Treas.
Carl Brooksff**

**Richard Partee, Vice President
Henry Sanchez, Chaplain**