



SITREP

LEHIGH VALLEY DETACHMENT 296

[HTTP://WWW.LVMCL.COM](http://www.lvmcl.com)

DETACHMENT MEETINGS:
Every 4th Wednesday @ 1930
EMAUS FIRE CO. No. 2
1017 Pennsylvania Ave
Emmaus PA 18049

CONGRATULATIONS

CHAPLAIN JOSEPH MALIA

DETACHMENT 296 MARINE OF THE YEAR

DETACHMENT OFFICERS

- *Commandant*
Jason Smith
- *SR Vice Commandant*
Howard Schaeffer
- *JR Vice Commandant*
John Eyer
- *Judge Advocate*
William Stoudt
- *Adjutant/Paymaster*
Ron Heckman
- *Chaplain*
Joseph Malia
- *Sergeant at Arms*
Milton Solares



This year, Chaplain Joseph Malia was chosen as Detachment 296 Marine of the Year. I asked this fine Marine to write a short bio (below) to give us an inside glimpse into his life in the Corps. Joe continues to serve both the Detachment and his community through the countless activities he devotes his time to. I, along with the Marines of Detachment 296, am honored to serve beside such an outstanding Marine. Thank you, Joe, for all your dedication and hard work.

Congratulations and Semper Fi Marine!



AN INSIDE LOOK AT CHAPLAIN JOSEPH MALIA-MCL DETACHMENT 296 MARINE OF THE YEAR

1965, early in my Senior year and the war in Vietnam was growing. Selective Service numbers were a topic of conversation amongst most of the guys in my class, as well as the rest of the high schools in the Lehigh Valley

In the fall of '65 one of my classmates mentioned that the Marine Corps had a delayed entry program and also an Aviation Guaranty program. I had to wait until after my 17th birthday before I could go see the Recruiter. When the time came, I went to see the Recruiter along with my Father, since he had to sign off because of being under 18. Signed under the Aviation Guaranty program.

I left for P I Boot Camp on June 15th, five days after I graduated from Notre Dame High School. As for most guys in this area, Philadelphia was the first stop for the recruit physical. Not sure but I think we took a plane to Charleston, SC and then the infamous bus ride to Parris Island.

I was formed with the rest of Platoon 3030 for eight weeks of Boot Camp at that time, since by 1966 the number of troops going to Vietnam were increasing rapidly and they needed replacements pushed through; the big need was for 0311 rifleman, grunts to replenish for casualties.

Since I was an Aviation Guaranty candidate, after Boot Camp and ITR at Camp Geiger and after Boot Leave, I reported to Memphis, TN Casual Company while waiting for class space to open up. You know the routine, they push you thru Boot Camp and then up the line they are not ready for the influx of trainees.

Because the Marine Aviation units were in dire need of Aviation Hydraulic Technicians, (MOS 6351), they took about 120 Marines waiting for schooling and set up an expedited training school in Jacksonville, FL., (Naval Air Station JAX).

Upon completion of Hydraulics school, I was sent to MCAF New River, (Marine Corps Air Facility), which was a Helicopter Base located next to Camp Lejeune. I was assigned to HMH-461 and our brand-new aircraft were the CH-53A and B Sea Stallion. 461 had transitioned from the CH-37 Mojave helicopters which were Twin Engine Radial Recip engine powered. The New CH-53's were equipped with two Turbine Engines. (The latest version of the '53 – the CH-53K has four Turbine Engines).

From January of 67 to December of 67, I remained at New River with HMH-461 learning to taking care of the CH-53 Hydraulic systems after training flights and routine inspections. Early December of '67 four of us from our squadron were sent to Santa Ana Air Facility in California for formal schooling on the Hydraulic systems of the CH-53. Three of the four of us are still very close friends today. The fourth guy just refuses to be contacted.

When we got back from California, one guy already received orders to head to Staging at Camp Pendleton. Grunt training that we all had to go thru before going to Vietnam. Four more of us received our orders in about 2 weeks. Till I went home on leave, went thru Staging at Pendleton it was April 1st, (April Fool's Day) when I landed in Da Nang, Vietnam. The next day we were transported to Marble Mountain Air Facility about 10 miles driving distance from the airport at Da Nang. Da Nang was the airbase where Marine Corps and Air Force Fighter / Reconnaissance and Transport fixed wing aircraft were located. Marble Mountain Air Facility was for Helicopters, UH-1 Huey's, H-34, CH-46 and CH-53 shared the base, along with Army units. I was assigned to squadron HMH-463

The serious part of the Tet Offensive was over by the end of March of '68 but security was high and the nerves tight till much later. Took my Aviation Gunnery training in May of '68 so I could qualify for Combat Air Crew. The Crew Chief, usually an Engine Mechanic, would fly with a specific aircraft each day they flew. They used Marines from the Hydraulics Shop, Air Frame Shop ('Tin-Benders' – metal repair), Avionics Shop and the Electrical Shop for Air Crew, so we did not fly every day.

TAD – temp duty station at Quang Tri which was about 10 miles from the DMZ. Our Squadron was used mainly for transport of supplies. My first air mission was to Khe Sanh. We were taking equipment out of there by June of '68. Only when there was a big operation on, need for a lot of Marines at one time, were the CH-53's used intentionally in a hot area. Although, since there were no front lines, you could be in a hot zone at any time during supply missions. Our helicopters were also used for transporting recovered downed aircraft.

We were used to transport small bulldozers also, so outposts could be quickly prepared and set-up.

In October of '68 I was transferred to HMH-462 at Phu Bai, (Southeast of Hue). HMH-463 and HMH-463 each had too many Marines going back to the States at the same time, so they exchanged troops to partially take care of that problem. Same type of aircraft and missions.

While in Vietnam I earned the Air Medal w/ numeral 6, Combat Air Crew Insignia w / 3 *, Vietnam Service Medal with one * and the Vietnam Campaign Medal (w / 1960 device). I also received the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal during my service.

I Left Vietnam in May of '69, sorry that it did seem like the job was not completed. I remember when I got back to Easton, Pa in May, I was freezing. Your body gets used to the 100 to 120-degree days and the blood thins. It felt like wintertime for a little while.

My last duty station was Cherry Point, NC. I was assigned to an F4 Phantom fighter training squadron.

Eventually went to Phantom Hydraulics school. Why they put guys who had spent years working on a particular Helicopter into a fixed wing outfit did not make any sense.

When I had about 6 Months left, I picked up an assignment to the Training Office. We had to keep track of Rifle Range qualifications, Physical Fitness Tests and testing for promotions.

I was promoted to Sgt E5 on my last day in the Corps. I actually had to wait until I stood in formation to get promoted before I could check out and leave, June 12th, 1970. I got out 2 days early because the 14th fell on a Sunday, (bonus).

My hydraulic and aircraft maintenance training helped first with Aviation Maintenance School and I received my FAA Aviation Powerplant (engine) and Airframe License. I only worked in Aviation for about 6 years and then eventually migrated to Pumps, Compressors, hydraulic systems / components and worked in applications and sales capacities for 38 years.

I first became aware of the Marine Corps League in the late '90's – joining in 1998. I have held the positions of Sr. Vice Commandant, Commandant and Chaplain.

THE MONTH IN REVIEW



CONGRATULATIONS COMMANDANT JASON SMITH...

Lehigh Valley Detachment 296 Commandant Jason Smith was awarded 2nd place department-wide for his outstanding service as Administrator of the Detachment Website. District 3 Vice Commandant Robert Hockenbury presented the award along with three others: Certificate of Participation to Jason Smith for participating in the Marine Corps League Website program, Membership Commendation to Lehigh Valley Detachment 296 for maintaining 102.3% membership from 1 JUN 2018 through 31 MAY 2019 and Certificate of Participation to Detachment 296 for participation in the Department of Pennsylvania Facebook program.



SCUTTLEBUTT FROM THE FLEET

Follow the link below to find out what is happening now in the FMF:

<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/07/26/the-new-sergeant-major-of-the-marine-corps-is-not-promising-you-a-rose-garden/>

If you would like to submit something to *The Sitrep*, please contact me via email or text. I welcome any input you, as a Detachment, may have. My apologies in advance if I have omitted any matters of importance for this month's edition and ask that you let me know if I have done so.

Semper Fi Marines!

Ria Mattix

dumagirl4@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Last month's meeting was held on Wednesday, 26 JUN 2019

Minutes are as follows:

A motion was made to accept last month's minutes.

In favor: 11

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0

Correspondence:

None

Report of the Paymaster:

Checking: \$10,396.23

Savings: \$3,376.99

Total: \$13,773.22

A motion was made to accept the report. The motion was seconded.

In Favor: 11

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0

Report of Members/Family Members Sick/In Distress:

Joe's brother-in-law Michael started liver cancer treatments.

Anna's son's wife has suffered a massive heart attack. Doctors are still trying to determine the cause.

John Eyer's father passed away.

Ski's father-in-law continues with treatment

Report of Officers:

Dues are coming up September 1st.

Upcoming events:

4th of July fireworks in Breinigsville

Car wash in Northampton Ace Hardware on July 20th. Howard is point of contact.

Standing Committees:

PR:

The Detachment Website and Facebook page are up to date. Thank you to everyone who submitted photos.

The Marine Corps Ball Committee will be meeting to discuss venues for the Birthday Ball. A price of \$50 with a cash bar and \$75 for an open/limited bar was agreed upon. Detachment would put the deposit down and then be reimbursed from the tickets. Attire is evening dress, suite and tie, or tux for gentlemen and evening dress or gowns for women.

Detachment picnic is set for August 17th. Price is free for members; family members half price and kids are free.

A vote was taken to determine whether to join the Emmaus Historical Society.

In Favor: 11

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Awards presented were as follows:

Membership Commendation – presented to Detachment 296 for sustaining 102% membership for year June 2018-May 2019.

Certificate of Appreciation -presented to Detachment 296 for participation in Facebook program

Certificate of Appreciation – presented to Commandant Jason Smith for maintaining Detachment 296 website.

Commandant Jason Smith was awarded 2nd place across the Department for the Detachment website.

Good of the League:

Question was raised as to whether-or-not Detachment 296 participated in the Eagle Scout program. A request was made that MCL Department of PA provide the Detachments with proper protocol for program.

A motion was made for Detachment 296 to host the next District meeting. The motion was accepted.

In Favor: 11

Opposed: 0

Abstentions: 0

Announcements: NONE

The meeting was declared officially closed until 24 JULY 2019.