



The “Ooo Rah”



Newsletter of the Central Florida Chapter
1st Marine Division Association

Volume 21 Issue 6

November—December 2024

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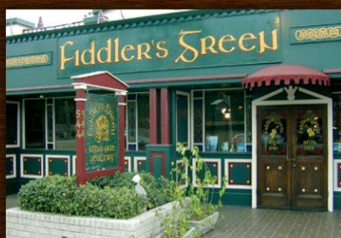
Newsletter Editor: Mike Galyean
(with a lot of help from Nancy)

<http://www.cfc1stmardiv.com/>

Next Meeting:
Saturday, Dec. 7
10:30 a.m.

Don't forget your toy!

Fiddlers' Green Irish Pub
544 West Fairbanks Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32789



PRESIDENT'S RAMBLINGS

Greetings Marines and Friends,

I am looking forward to our next chapter meeting on December 7! This is going to be one of our best meetings of the year, with the Marine Reserves joining us for Toys for Tots. (Don't forget to bring a toy!)



Our December program will be provided by the Quilts of Valor Foundation, Melissa Matthews speaking. Three Quilts of Valor will be presented to very deserving Marines. This is a very impressive ceremony and will make you proud to be an American.

As we wind up our 2024 year, I'd like to thank my fellow officers of the Central Florida Chapter for helping to guide our chapter through another very successful year. I know many were disappointed to not be able to attend a Marine Birthday "SOS Breakfast" this year, but, as it was explained before, we prefer to hold that event on the actual day of the birthday. That was not possible on Sunday. Next year's big 250th Marine Corps Birthday will fall on a Monday, and what better way to start the week than by celebrating the 250th Birthday with other Marines. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. Details will be announced soon.

Our annual reunion for the 1st Marine Division will return to the East coast next year. We will be meeting at the Sheraton Arlington, August 10 – 17. Even though we have stayed there recently, there will be new and exciting events scheduled... especially, to mark the Corps big 2 ½ centuries of existence.

I would encourage our Central Florida members to consider being nominated for one of the FMDA's officer positions for 2025-27. Talk to me if you need more information.

Semper Fidelis,
Mike

December Program Quilts of Valor Foundation—Presented by Melissa Matthews

We are excited to welcome Melissa Matthews to our December 7 meeting. Melissa will be representing the Quilts of Valor Foundation and is uniquely qualified for that role as she is the Central Florida QOV Group Leader for the Quilt of Valor Foundation.

A Quilt of Valor is a quality, handmade quilt that is machine or hand quilted. It is awarded to a Service Member who has been touched by war. The Quilt says, "Thank you for your service and sacrifice in serving our nation."

(Continued on page 3)



A Close Brush With Death at An Hoa Combat Base

By
Mike Galyean

were often dealing with issues stemming from racial distrust and unrest.

Karl Marlantes wrote a book in 2011 called Matterhorn. Matterhorn was hailed as a brilliant account of war" (New York Times Book Review). Karl Marlantes was a highly decorated Marine who fought in the mountainous jungles along the DMZ in northern I-Corps of Vietnam. One of the themes that ran throughout the novel was about the racial tension among some black Marines and some prejudicial officers with little patience toward them.

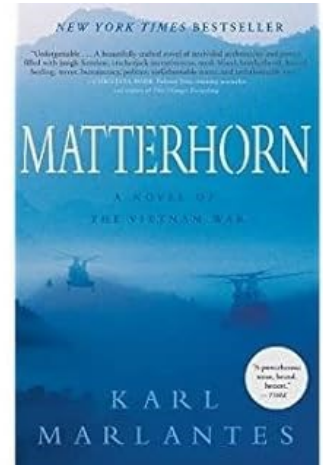
Reading Marlantes book really struck a chord with me because one of the closest times I came to dying in Vietnam was in a racial confrontation in the rear area of An Hoa combat base located in Quang Nam province of Vietnam in late 1969. Someone, probably accidentally, fired a round that went through the tent of a group of black Marines. (In the rear areas, folks generally kept to their own). The 20 or so Marines billeted in the tent went on a rampage. They were led by a particularly hot-headed black Marine and were all yelling that they were going to "kill every white beast at An Hoa."

As I was watching a movie in the staff & officers' club, word came that there "was trouble in the troop area." I grabbed my flak jacket and helmet and went running down the muddy path to the area, thinking that the others were right behind me. Wrong! When I encountered the group of armed, locked & loaded, black Marines, I was the only white face around. I knew immediately, however, that this situation had to be defused, or there was going to be considerable bloodshed. I also knew that there was a black Marine Captain in a nearby unit that was respected by everyone, black and white, who could get them under control. But, somehow, I had to contain this until he got word and would get there.

My initial approach was to be "investigative," but it didn't take long to realize that approach wasn't working. I could tell who the leader was, a Marine from another platoon who I only knew by reputation. I got in his face, threw my helmet down, ripped off my flak jacket and threw it into the mud with my helmet. I told him if he was going to start killing white Marines, he'd have to start with me. He and I stood nose to nose cursing each other, while all the other black Marines surrounding us were yelling for him to "shoot the white (expletive)" I knew, however, that none of them would do it, because it had now come down to me and him. As long as I could keep him yelling and cursing at me, that was more time for the Marine captain to arrive on the scene. Eventually, minutes? Hours? Seemed like an eternity... he arrived, and with his hand on my shoulder, said "LT, I'll take over, now." The situation was de-fused.

A couple of things happened later that night that I want to add. A black Marine had been put in my platoon several weeks before. PFC Jimmy Jones, had been kicked out of several other units because of his racial activism. I had a talk with PFC Jones and let him know that I was from Mississippi and had graduated from Ole Miss. I also told him that I'd thrown bricks and bottles when James Meredith integrated Ole Miss. I went on to let him know that, several years later, I'd been at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis 3 days after Martin Luther King was assassinated there, representing the YMCA and trying to bring peace to a violent Memphis. I told him the reason I was telling him all of this was to let him know that people can change. I'd changed from when I was a hot-headed college student. I also told Jones that, perhaps something he would do might mean whether I lived or died. But I knew for sure that what I did every day as his platoon commander would determine whether he lived or died in Vietnam. I suggested that we work together to make sure we both got home alive. I'm proud to say that PFC Jones performed to the standards I expected all my Marines to perform, and even carried my radio during my regular radio man's R & R.

It's pretty well-known that the Marine Corps is a microcosm of society. To an extent that is true even in a combat environment. During the late '60's and early 70's, especially following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, there was racial tension and even rioting in cities across America. There was discontent and mistrust among the black population and intolerance among those in power. Vietnam was not isolated from this discontent, and we

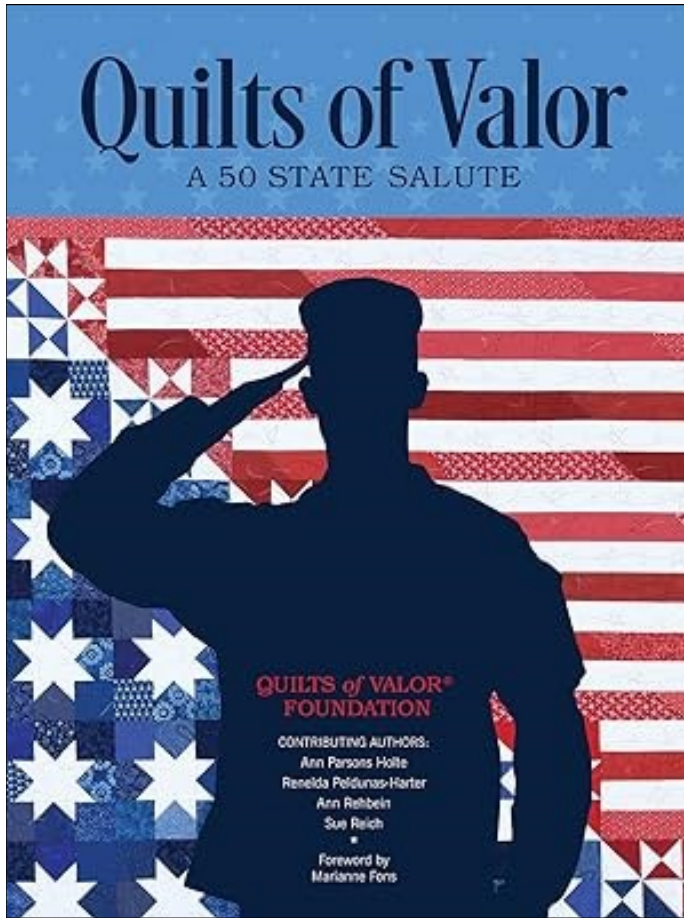


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"Black Liberation and the Vietnam War" —
from the National Museum of African American
History and Culture in Washington, DC

(Cont. from page 1, "Quilts...").



Rumor has it that several local Marines will be honored at the December meeting by the presentation of a beautiful heirloom quality, quilt of Valor. In addition to making these presentations, Melissa will give us the history and mission of the QOV Foundation.

Melissa was born and raised in the Orlando area. She is married to her high school sweetheart and is the mother of 3 adult children. After graduating from UCF, Melissa taught in the early elementary grades for 36 years. Fifteen of those years were at Durrance Elementary when it served Navy dependent housing. This experience contributed toward her work with the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

Melissa's uncle, Gordon Henry, was a navigator aboard a B-17 flying from a base in England. His plane suffered engine failure on take off near the end of WWII. The pilot was able to maneuver the plane over open land before crashing. The village was saved but only 2 crew members survived. Sadly, Gordon was not among the survivors. Her grandparents lost their only son, the youngest of their 4 children. This story made a profound impression on Melissa.

Central Florida QOV, as a subgroup of the Quilts of Valor Foundation, began in January 2020. They are a group of 50 quilters who sew together and independently, creating quilts to present to active duty and living veterans. The group also engages in fundraising activities to finance the making of our quilts. Their quilts' recipients are never charged for their quilts. They are gifts given as a token of respect and appreciation for their service to and sacrifices for the United States of America.

Don't miss this very impressive presentation!

(Continued from page 3—An Hoa)

During the incident described above, I looked past the group of Marines who had encircled me, demanding that I be shot, and saw PFC Jones sitting by himself strumming on a guitar and staying away from the rampaging threatening Marines. Weeks earlier, he'd probably have been at the front of the group. I went up to him after peace had been restored and thanked him for not getting involved. He told me, "You know, Lieutenant, that I couldn't come help you." I said I understood, but appreciated that he wasn't one of the ones wanting me shot. We shook hands. Also, after things had settled down, the leader of the black Marine group that I'd confronted came up to me and said, "Lieutenant, you know I could have shot you back there." I responded, "Yes, but you didn't and that's all that mattered."

I guess Karl Marlantes' novel really hit a nerve. We fought side by side,... whites, blacks, Latinos, but when we got to a rear area, when we didn't depend on each other for our lives, there was still tension. My Vietnam experience helped shape my belief of equality and respect... but, I'm sure others were affected differently... who knows why. I only know that when I look back on my Vietnam experiences and the many times I looked death in

the face, my experience at An Hoa is one that will stay with me, and I give thanks that I survived.



2nd Platoon,
Charlie Company,
1/5, Vietnam 1969



Through the gift of a new toy or book, Marine Toys for Tots' programs deliver joy and send a message of hope to American's disadvantaged children. To date, T 4 T has distributed 677 million toys to 301 million deserving children.

**DON'T FORGET TO
BRING A NEW,
UNWRAPPED TOY TO
THE DECEMBER
MEETING**

Mark Your Calendars



**SATURDAY,
December 7, ...**
Regular meeting,
CF Chapter FMDA

**Wednesday,
December 25 ...**
Merry Christmas!

Saturday, January 4, 2025 ...
Executive Committee mtg, TBD

Monday, Nov 10, 2025 ...
CF Chapter "SOS" Marine
Corps' 250th Birthday Breakfast.
TBD

**The Larry E. Smedley
Detachment of the Marine
Corps League—**
Monthly Meeting, 2nd Tues, -
7pm – 8pm
American Legion Post 243
491 W. Broadway St.
Oviedo 32799
Info: mclcf@gmail.com



**1ST MARINE
DIVISION
ASSOCIATION**

~IMPORTANT~

Central Florida Chapter members (whether membership is regular or associate) need to be members of the 1st Marine Division Association...contact the FMDA office or visit the website for membership information.

NEW Association website
give it a look!

www.1stmarinedivisionassociation.org

Address and contact information

1st Marine Division Association
P.O. Box 9000, Box #902
Oceanside, CA 92051

Open from Monday to Friday
08.00 AM - 16.00 PM PDT

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William Godfrey

Email wsgsr9454@aol.com

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760)763-3267

SgtMaj Marty Vasquez
760)763-3269

An Unplanned Reunion

An interesting event took place at our October meeting that is worth noting. We had two guests at the meeting, Nicole Aspinwall and Drina Black. After the introductions at the meetings' opening, they both realized that they had been in the same boot camp platoon 30 years earlier. I love to see these kind of unplanned and unexpected reunions take place



Left: Nicole Aspinwall
Right: Drina Black
October 5, 2025

PLT 4027
4th Recruit Bn.. MCRD
Parris Island, SC



249 th USMC Birthday Ball
Sponsored by the Central Florida
Marine Corps Foundation
November 2, 2024
DoubleTree by Hilton at Sea World



Terry Strasberg &
Sandy Trueira



Brian & Susan Finnigan



Chris Via
& Kendra Bloomer



Mike & Nancy Galyean



Carlos & Erika Cuevas



Barron Mills
& Trish Murphey



David Smith
& Frances Nevill



John & Linda Gionet



Mike Pomakis
& Alice Weinberg



Nancy with the "Oldest Marine"...
Sgt. Sallie Amato, 101 years young.



Michael & Michele Woodman

A special evening for Marines to celebrate their Corps. An inspiring Birthday message was presented by Lt.Gen. David J, Furness, USMC (ret)



A drink "tumbler" has been made available for our chapter members and will be for sale at the upcoming meeting. The cost will be \$20 and includes a second top fitted for use with a straw, along with 2 straws.



Election of Officers for the 1st Marine Division Association

The election of new Association Officers for the term August 2025 to August 2027 will take place by mail-in ballot just prior to the August 2025 Reunion. The future of our association depends on the quality of leadership elected into positions of various officer positions. Those positions are: President, V. President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sgt-at-Arms, Chaplain, Legal Officer, Deputy VP's East, Central and West.

In addition to being in "good standing" with the Association, Officers must be able to attend all Board meetings (twice a year minimum). The President and Vice-Presidents must be able to attend functions/activities relating to those positions. This means having the time and financial resources.

The Nominating Committee has begun the task of recruiting candidates for the various association Officers. You may be just the person we need. Contact Nomination Committee Chair, Mike Galyean for more info.

Visit our Central Florida Chapter Website!

Thank you, Rick Dreves!

[http://
www.cfc1stmardiv.com/](http://www.cfc1stmardiv.com/)

Ponce Inlet Printing Inc.

1726 S. Nova Road in Daytona
Beach, Florida, 32119

Contact
Mary Racila—386-761-3355

78th Annual Reunion 1st Marine Division Association 10 - 17 August, 2025

Hotel: Sheraton Pentagon City

Link: [https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/
reservation-link.mi?
id=1727800902471&key=GRP&questreslink2=true](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1727800902471&key=GRP&questreslink2=true)

Group Code: FI4539 (Foxtrot India 4539)

Reservations: 1-888-627-7101

Complimentary WiFi, Overnight parking \$15



The Central Florida Chapter

wishes to recognize and honor its members
now serving in the Corps Eternal



Plt.Sgt. Joe Adamik (2014)
Capt. John Adamson 2015
Sgt. Ray Bauer (2015)
Cpl. Chester Bened (2012)
Joyce Bowden, assoc. (2017)
Sgt. Tim Broughton (2013)
Sgt. Glenn Brown (2011)
Col. Harry Clarke (2013)
Amy Clarke, assoc. (2017)
Col. Richard A Connell (2022)
Pfc. John Cromwell (2010)
M.Sgt. Louis Curtis
Wade Curtis (2011)
Col. Ed Danowitz (2012)
1stSgt. Richard DeVasto (2019)
Sgt. Arthur Dreves (2019)
Plt. Sgt Robert Fincher (2014)
Olga Fincher, assoc. (2022)

Capt. David Fowkes (2021)
Capt. William Harwood (2010)
Lt.Col. Dick Holt (2008)
Carolyn Immerman, assoc. (2017)
Sgt. Wade Jones (2012)
Sgt. Joe Karlberg (2019)
1stSgt. Russell Kauffman (2023)
Cpl. John "Rick" Kennedy (2012)
Cpl. Louis Lang (2010)
Sgt. Maj. Les LeBlanc (2005)
Capt. Art Littlefield (2024)
C.W. "Bill" Marks (2014)
M.Sgt. Malcolm MacLean (2007)
GySgt. Rudy Miller (2008)
Capt. Ray Nielsen (2008)
Sgt. Donald Neiss (2009)
Col. Patrick Otoole (2018)

Pfc. Athanasse "Al" Parsons (2013)
Capt. Jack Paxton (2018)
MSgt Edward Payton (2015)
Sgt. Victor Petris (2015)
1Lt. Steve Reich (2021)
GySgt. Charles Ross (2013)
1Lt. George Schultz (2008)
Cpl Don Schyberg (2017)
Cpl. Michael Segura (2024)
Col. Bill Tate (2019)
Pfc. "Wild Bill" Taylor (2010)
Col. John Terry (2018)
LtCol. John Tomlinson (2014)
M.Sgt. Dale Wasson (2009)
Cpl. James Weinberg (2022)
Sgt. Carl Wenhold (2017)
LtCol. Erich H. Wieler (2022)
Col. Paul Wilson (2019)

Semper Fi, Ladies and Gentlemen.
You'll always be remembered.

MINUTES

Central Florida Chapter, 1st Marine Division Association
Saturday, October 5, 2024
Fiddler's Green Irish Pub
Winter Park, FL

Call to Order, Opening comments...10:35am..... Mike Galyean
 FMDA USAA Visa Application
 Flyer for VAREP 22 Challenge Fundraiser
 \$80 for website hosting, \$50 gift card to webmaster – Rick Drieves
 Park Avenue Jewelers – USMC item
 Opening Prayer Terry Strassburg
 Pledge to the Flag John Matthews
 Welcome to guests... Member Introductions – 23 in attendance
 Secretary's Report Susan Finnigan
 Treasurer's Report Carlos Cuevas

PROGRAM:

Vietnam: Then and Now Mike Pomakis

Business

- Report from Indian River Veterans Council John Matthews
- Marine Division Assoc. report. Mike Galyean
- San Antonio Reunion report
- Donation of \$1,017.75 + \$280 from challenge coin and photo sales
 Successful banquet thanks to addition of Recon
 Susan Finnigan MC of banquet + "Hawk" honored
 13 from Central Florida chapter attended
- Newly realigned association officers Mike Galyean
- 2025 Reunion - Sheraton Arlington, August 10 – 17 Susan Finnigan
- 2025 – 27 FMDA Nominating Committee Mike Galyean
- FMDA membership, a requirement for chapter membership Mike Galyean
- 1/5 Vietnam Assn/Chapter is folding its colors Mike Galyean
- Payment due for website hosting, repayment to Rick Dreves (card)...Mike Galyean
- Central Florida Marine Corps Foundation "Marine Weekend" Susan, Barron
 Nov. 1 – 2, Golf Tourney (Rio Pinar), Casino Night, Birthday Ball
 Double Tree by Hilton, 10100 International Dr.
 MC Ball, Nov. 2, 2024, **Table Sponsor**
 \$1,600, full page ad, 10 people - \$115 ea., 2 people to reception

Announcements

- **Local Veterans news Barron Mills**
 RS Orlando reactivated
 Navy Ball October 12th
 November 2nd – Ruck Sack March Camaraderie Foundation
 Veterans Beer Club – Networking opportunity, October 23 – Sanford Brewing
 Ivanhoe Brewing – November
 American Legion 243 – Oviedo – Brad Sokoly
 Every Wednesday – Coffee Chat 9am to 12pm
 Chaplain's Garden
 November 2, 2024 – Challenge 22 Inc Winter Garden Post – Ruck Walk Winter Garden
 MCL – Meets at American Legion – John Gionet
 Meeting Tuesday October 8
 Vice Chair Mayor Veterans Advisory Council – Outreach with interviews for Veteran's Month
 World War II pin presented to Elmer Hawkins from John Gionet
- Park Ave. Jewelers ... Georgie. Unique creations for Marines. (see pendant and ring)
- **Next Chapter meeting: Saturday, December 7, 2024. "Quilts of Valor," Toy for Tots**
- Raffle drawing Greg Melnick
 Winners: Linda Gionet, Nicole Aspinwall, Linda Gionet, Linda Gionet, Bob Miller, John Matthews
- Closing (see back of agenda).....Terry Strassburg

Central Florida Chapter
1st Marine Division Association
746 McIntyre Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32789



In order to belong to the Central Florida Chapter, you must...

Be a member of the 1st Marine Division Association

World War II ~ North China ~ Korea ~ Cold War ~ Vietnam ~ Gulf War ~ Iraqi Freedom ~ War on Terror

Call the 1st Marine Division Association in Oceanside, CA at (760) 763-3268 or email june.oldbreed@fmda.us for information

Central Florida Chapter

Select Membership type: ____ Regular (\$20) ~ ____ Associate (\$20) ~ ____ Life (\$200) ~ Active Duty(\$10) ____
____ New ____ Renewal

PLEASE PRINT:

(Rank / Grade) (First Name) (Middle Initial) (Last Name)

Number and Street or P.O. Box #)

Spouses name

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

I was with: (list two units, max) _____
(Company - Battalion - Regiment/Squadron - Group)

WWII ____ China ____ Korea ____ Cold War ____ Vietnam ____ Gulf War ____ Iraqi Freedom ____ War on Terror ____

Email address: _____ Phone No. (____) _____ Recommended by _____

Please enclose \$20 for Regular / Associate Membership; \$200 for Life Membership; \$10 for Active Duty
Make checks payable to: Cent. Fla. Chap., 1st Mar. Div. Assoc.. ~~~ Return to Mike Galyean, 746 McIntyre Ave., Winter Park, FL 32789
You can now pay on-line by using PayPal. Go to the chapter website at <http://www.cfc1stmardiv.com/>