



February

2010

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Issue 2

BLACK MARINE NEWSLETTER

We Served, We Endured, We Perservered

*We don't gossip, we don't pass on Bum Scoop,
We sometime Bulls- -t,
We Tell Sea Stories
But, you always get
"The Word"!
"That's what we Do!"*

Purpose:

This Newsletter provides information about Black Marines, to Black Marines as Black Marines see it.

Topics are:

- ***"Muster"*** To give account for all persons on the Mailing List!
 - *Illness, Deaths, etc.*
 - ***"Events"***, Provide notice of scheduled events relative to Marines!
 - *Reunions, Meetings, Conventions, etc.*
 - ***"Notes from the members"***
 - ***"Mailing List Additions"*** To list new Marines added to the Mailing List or other changes affecting the lists.
 - ***"Sea Stories and down right Marine Lies"***
No jokes, because we just don't know any! (Smile)
-



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Muster:



All present and counted for, Sir/ Mam!

1. **Freddie Melvin, 1st Sgt. USMC (Ret.)** passed away January 27, 2010. He is survived by his wife Mrs. Flora Melvin.



Sick Bay

1. We have a Marine who has reported to Sick Bay. MGYSGT: Wm. Edward Carter is resting at home after being treated for a Heart condition.

I've been speaking with Ed since his heart attack and he's on the path to recovery and authorized us to let you know that he is progressing. His wife Jackie has become Nurse Jackie and she is determined to get Ed back to the Ed of ode.





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News From The Membership and Other Sources:

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We as Black Marines have contributed so much to the History of our nation. I believe that one month a year should not be the focus of our contribution.

We should be out front to show more of what we have contributed because there is still a great effort not to acknowledge what we as members of the armed forces of America contributed to the defense of this nation. What we did and are doing is not only history but is our legacy! We as Black Marines must preserve it and assure that those that follow us continue the legacy. More over there are many Blacks that are not military people that should be acknowledged for their contribution and not just in February.

So I would like to say congratulations to all of you wonderful Americans.

Semper Fi,

Bobby Wallace

The Gator

The First African-American Veteran

Patient:

During February, we honor the achievements of over 41 million Americans of African heritage. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) reports that Joshua Williams was the first African-American veteran patient. He was admitted to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which is now the Dayton, Ohio, VA Medical Center, in March of 1867.

Ever heard of Joshua Williams?

Joshua Williams was the first African-American treated for his wounds in what is known today as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

His is an important name in the history of American Veterans.

Joshua Williams was the first African-American Veteran ever admitted to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which is now the Dayton, Ohio, VA Medical Center.



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Joshua Williams was admitted to the home in March of 1867. He lived out the remainder of his life—three more years—there. The cemetery where Joshua Williams lies is now known as the Dayton National Cemetery.

By 1869, his wound affected the entire left side of his body and doctors at the National Home classified him as totally disabled for pension purposes—which was \$8.00 per month.

Abraham Lincoln authorized the creation of National Homes to care for disabled, injured, and sick soldiers who fought to preserve the union, including those who served with U.S. Colored Troop (USCT) regiments. The National Homes was the precursor to today's Department of Veterans Affairs, with 153 medical centers and nearly 300,000 employees who care for all Veterans.

Approximately 180,000 African Americans served as volunteer soldiers in 163 US Colored Troops units, comprising roughly 10% of the Union Army during the Civil War. Of the 198,000 African Americans that served in the Union forces, 36,847 died.

Joshua Williams served as a private for the Union forces in the Civil War and received

Approximately 21,000 Union veterans were admitted to four 'homes' between 1866 and 1881, and of that number, 195 were US 'Colored' Troops. *To learn more about Joshua Williams, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at*



<http://www1.va.gov/health/African-American1.asp>.

Related links:

Source: Military.com

a serious leg wound. His military service records described him as 6 feet 1 inches tall, "copper" complexion, brown eyes, and curly hair. He was listed as "free."

The Golden Thirteen

February 16, this date in 1944 celebrates "The Golden Thirteen." This was the first African-American naval officer-training group in America. In January of that year, the naval officer corps was all white. There were some one hundred thousand African American enlisted men in the Navy,

Pension was \$8.00 a Month



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yet none were officers. In response to growing pressure from American civil rights organizations, the leaders of the Navy



reluctantly tackled commissioning a few as officers. Sixteen Black enlisted men were summoned to Camp Robert Smalls, Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois, they were:

Jesse W. Arbor, Samuel Barnes, Philip Barnes, Dalton Baugh, George C. Cooper, Reginald Goodwin, James E. Hair, Graham E. Martin, Dennis Nelson, John W. Reagan, Frank E. Sublett Jr., William S. White, Charles Lear, Lewis Williams, J. B. Pinkney, and A. Alves. All had demonstrated excellent leadership abilities as enlisted men. The pace was demanding and forced the sixteen men to band together so that all could succeed. During their officer candidate training, they compiled a class average of 3.89, a record that has yet to be broken. Although all passed the course, in March 1944, 13 of the group made history when they became the U.S. Navy's first African-American officers on active duty. 12 were commissioned as ensigns; the thirteenth was made a warrant officer. They became known as the "Golden Thirteen." They were often denied the privileges and respect

routinely accorded white naval officers and were given menial assignments. Only one of the Golden Thirteen made a career of the Navy. The others made their marks in civilian life after World War II.

Reference:
Library of Congress
101 Independence Avenue S.E.
Washington D.C. 20540
Provided By:



Jimmy Richardson (USMC)

"That's what we do!"



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MCRD Montford Point Marine Association, Inc. San Diego Chapter #12 and Los Angeles Chapter #8 attended the Black History Celebration.

The Commanding General Brigadier General Ronald Bailey, MCRD Recruit Depot San Diego gave opening remarks.

The film of ""The Marines of Montford Point "" Fighting for Freedom"" was shown and enjoyed by all.

MGYSGT Robert D. Reid USMC Ret (Chapter President LA Chapter) was the guest speaker.

He made remarks on the Training, at Montford Point Camp, during his career.

Many active duty marines, retired veterans and friends attended this program and were well received.



"Working Together Works"
L. E. (Michael) Johnson
USMC (Ret.)



Dedication of New Miramar National Cemetery:



MGYSGT. Robert D. Reid USMC Ret (Chapter President LA Chapter)



The Department of Veteran Affairs Dedicated the New Miramar National Cemetery Groundbreaking, today 30 January 2010 with Maj. General Anthony L. Jackson, Congresswoman Susan A. Davis (53rd District, California), Steve L. Muro (Acting Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs), Brig. General Robert Cardenas (U.S. Air Force Ret.) gave opening remarks on the importance of our veterans in the San Diego area. The new Cemetery will sit



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on 314 acres located at 5795 Nobel Drive, San Diego Ca. 92122. Others in attendances were many veterans groups, such as VFW, American Legion, Marine Corp League, Montford Point Marine Association, an many others. In 1862, in the midst of Civil War, President Lincoln's signature enacted a law authoring the establishment of national cemeteries" ... for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country" Fourteen cemeteries were established pursuant of this legislation.

Provided By: L.E. (Michael) Johnson
USMC Ret.



**IWO JIMA Commemorative
Banquet 2-20-2010**

The Montford Point Marine Association Inc. members of the San Diego Chapter #12 and Los Angeles Chapter #8, attended the 65th Anniversary Memorial Service Banquet, of the Marines Landing on IWO JIMA.

Saturday, February 20, 2010 at 5:00 PM. location the South Mesa Staff NCO Club Ballroom MCB Camp Pendleton, California.

There was an Iwo Jima Memorabilia Display at the rear of the dining hall. The call to order was by Banquet Chairman MSgt Bill Behana, USMC (Ret. Lieutenant Colonel Larry Annals, USMC (Ret.) was the Master of Ceremonies. The Theme of the program is: After 65 years the Fallen and Survivors are honored.

Guest of Honor was Major General James J. Mc Monagle; USMC (Ret.) Special Guest was Major General Anthony L. Jackson Commanding General of 1st Installation Marine Corps West. He gave remarks on the service of these great men that had falling and



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Survivors, one of the greatest fights in history. There were many other Military Associations in attendance as well, **3rd, 4th, 5th Marine Division, Marine Corps League, VFW, American Legion and the Montford Point Marine Association.**

More than 4300 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who were diagnosed in service as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but got low military disability ratings, have won an agreement with the Department of Defense to upgrade those ratings retroactively to 50 percent.



The higher rating will represent an important win for this group of veterans mentally scarred by war. It will mean, from date of discharge, eligibility for disability retirement and access to TRICARE, the military’s triple health insurance option, for the veterans, spouses and dependent children.

Any out-of-pocket medical costs since discharge also could be paid retroactively, and these soon-to-be-designated disabled “retirees” will gain access to discounted shopping and recreational services on base. Sparking the agreement is a class action lawsuit brought by the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) which contends that the services illegally denied retiree status and medical benefits for years to these veterans who were diagnosed with PTSD then separated as unfit for service. Service Physical Evaluation Boards (PEBs) would ignore the disability rating schedule used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which requires a minimum 50-percent rating for PTSD victims, and routinely separate their members with ratings as low as 10 percent.



A board decision that keeps ratings below 30 percent lowers personnel costs. Instead of immediate annuity and lifetime TRICARE coverage, veterans rated below 30 percent get only a lump sum severance pay.

Judge George W. Miller of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims agreed to stay a final ruling in the case of *Sabo, et al v. United*

PTSD Vets Win Retirement Deal

PTSD Vets Discharged Since 2002 Win Retirement Deal:



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States after DOD agreed to cut a deal. Seven veterans were named as original plaintiffs in *Sabo* but the claims court expanded the scope of the lawsuit to a class action. Defense officials gave NVLSP the names of 4300 veterans who should be invited to apply to have their ratings reviewed and upgraded, but there could be more.

Misty Sabo, wife of former Army Sgt. Michael Sabo, an original plaintiffs, said she was “totally excited” to learn of the agreement this week. Five of their six children are disabled with bilateral cleft lip and palate, which creates hearing, dental and speech problems and requires multiple surgeries. Family medical bills, said Misty, are enormous.

Michael Sabo, 31, had served in the Army more than a decade when he was diagnosed with PTSD after two tours in Iraq where he routinely went on patrols that exposed him to multiple explosions and live enemy fire. After Sabo’s first 13-month tour in 2003-2004 he suffered recurring nightmares, severe headaches and mood swings. In the middle of his second tour, which again exposed him to explosions, mortar attacks and small arms fire, he returned home on emergency leave to care for his children while Misty underwent surgery. While home, in Fountain, Colo., near Fort Carson, Sabo nightmares, severe headaches and violent mood swings intensified and, the lawsuit contends, “severely impacted him and his family.”

He sought medical help and was diagnosed with PTSD and Post-Concussive Syndrome. In February 2008, the Army separated him as unfit with a 10-percent disability rating and a modest lump-sum severance.

Misty said she was stunned that the Army rating was only 10 percent for a condition that ended his career and changed his life so

dramatically.

“He was just thrown to the wind,” she said. “I didn’t care at the time,” said Michael, in a brief phone interview.

“I kept telling him, ‘This doesn’t sound right that somebody would get hurt like you and not get a retirement,’ ” Misty said. “He said, ‘Well, what do you want me to do, fight against the Army?’ And I said, ‘Yep.’ At the urging of a local advocate for veterans in Fort Carson area, Sabo agreed to have his name added to the NVLSP lawsuit being prepared.

By October 2008, under pressure from Congress, DOD did revise its guidance to the services on rating PTSD to adhere to the VA rating schedule. Meanwhile, Congress ordered DOD to create a special board to review any service-generated disability ratings of 20 percent or less brought forth by veterans who were separated as medically unfit since Sept. 11, 2001. Thousands have applied to this panel, called the Physical Disability Board of Review. So why bring a class action lawsuit specifically on behalf service members separated for PTSD?

Bart Stichman, co-executive director of NVLSP, said the deal with DOD forced by the court will expedite the rating review process for these PTSD cases upon application, and will guarantee those 4300-plus veterans a rating upgrade to 50-percent for at least six months. After that, the case will be reviewed again and the disability rating confirmed, increased or reduced.

A Class Action Opt-In Notice Form is being mailed to these veterans and must be returned either by fax or postmarked before July 24, 2010. Veterans who don’t get a notice by mail but believe they might be eligible can get more information online at: www.ptsdlawsuit.com.

The deal will not benefit tens of thousands



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of veterans diagnosed with PTSD over the last 30 years, only those discharged with a rating for PTSD of less than 50 percent after Dec. 17, 2002, and before Oct. 14, 2008.

As the dates indicate, the deal doesn't include even all PTSD veterans discharged since Sept. 11, 2001. That's because the lawsuit was brought under the Tucker Act, which has a six-year statute of limitation from the date a complaint is filed against the government, which was in December 2008.

Misty said a doctor at Fort Carson finally prescribed proper medication for Michael after some terrible times. Though he is able to work, every day remains a struggle due to memory loss, headaches and nightmares. "It's very hard for him, and us, because he has no memory," said Misty. "Yesterday was our daughter's birthday. He totally forgot. He doesn't like to be around people, which makes it really hard with a big family...And he does not sleep because of the nightmares. "I have heart disease," she said, "and just before he was discharged I found out I have MS [multiple sclerosis]. So I've been without my thyroid pills or any medical care." When the family qualifies again for TRICARE, she said, "I can start taking better care of myself to take care of my children."

Tom Philpott | January 28, 2010



Cervical Cancer :

Cervical cancer was once the number one cause of death from cancer in women. Thanks to cervical cancer screening with the Pap test, the number of women in the

United States who develop cervical cancer has dropped a great deal.

With cervical cancer screening doctors can find cancer early or treat changes in the cervix before they develop into cancer. The VA provides gynecologic care, including routine pelvic exams and cervical cancer screening, to eligible women veterans. VA recommends that all women talk with their health care providers about cervical cancer screening. VA understands the health care needs of women veterans and is committed to meeting these needs.

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of veterans. Their number will increase in the next 10 years, and VA health care will be there for them. Find out more about VA health care for women veterans at [Women's Health](#).

Military.com

VA Budget Request a Record \$125 Billion:

The \$125 billion VA budget request sent to Congress includes \$60.3 billion for discretionary spending (mostly health care) and \$64.7 billion in mandatory funding (mostly for disability compensation and pensions). Overall an 11 percent increase over last year.

"VA's 2011 budget request covers many areas but focuses on three central issues that are of critical importance to our Veterans – easier access to benefits and services, faster disability claims decisions, and ending the downward spiral that results in veterans' homelessness," said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki.



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Reducing Claims Backlog

The President's budget proposal includes an increase of \$460 million and more than 4,000 additional claims processors for veteran's benefits. This is a 27 percent funding increase over the 2010 level. Approximately 1,800 of the additional claims processors are already working at the VA and were hired with funds from the Stimulus bill. Their positions are being made permanent.

The 1,014,000 claims received in 2009 represent a 75 percent increase over the 579,000 received in 2000. Shinseki said the Department expects a 30 percent increase in claims – to 1,319,000 – in 2011 from 2009 levels.

A major reason for the increase is VA's expansion of the number of Agent Orange-related illnesses that automatically qualify for disability benefits. Veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicides during the Vietnam War are likely to file additional claims that will have a substantial impact upon the processing system for benefits, the secretary said.

In order to meet the expected increase in claims and back pay owed to those who are now covered by Agent Orange presumptive conditions, the Budget requests an additional \$13.3 billion to pay claims for the current budget for Fiscal Year 2010. According to VA, long-term reduction of the backlog will come from additional manpower, improved business practices and an infusion of \$145 million in the proposed budget for development of a paperless claims processing system, which will play a significant role in the transformation of VA.

Military.Com

I Forgot He Was Black,

Recently on a television news show, Chris Matthews made the statement, "I forgot he was black," in reference to President Obama.

Now thinking back, how did you feel about that? How did you interpret his statement? Did you find it offensive? Think about it.

I want to think that I understood what he was saying. I think that he was realizing Dr. King's dream: A man will be judged by the content of his character and not by the color of his skin.

If we don't allow our emotions to overpower us and if we really think about what Chris was saying when he made that statement, maybe, we can believe that his intent was not malicious.

I want to believe that he was saying that for about an hour or so, he saw President Obama as the president, not a black president, or a bi-racial president, but that he saw him as an American president. I would like to think that he saw him as the president of the United States of America and that he forgot about the color. The color was not a focus or a concern for him for at least that hour.

Think about this, what if all of us could do that. What if we all could see people, each other, as people? What if we just saw each other as Americans and not hyphenated Americans. Now let me carry this a bit further: What if we could see each other as Earthlings.

Let me stretch this out to the absurd, or maybe it is not so absurd. What if the people of this planet could see each other as Earthlings, thereby eliminating all of the racial, social, cultural, class, tribal, state and country barriers?



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I wonder what would happen if we were invaded by some race of individuals from another planet. What would we do? Would we continue to bicker and snipe and hang on to our petty prejudices or would we come together to repel this invader from "outer space"?

Ok, I got carried away for a moment and yet it is something to think about. Maybe Chris Matthews is on to something. This time it was only for an hour or so and maybe next time it might be for three hours or more and then maybe half a day and then.....well who knows?

Maybe we could all practice that, we could forget that the other person-- or persons-- is black or white or brown or red or yellow. I don't know if it is possible and yet it might be fun to "try". For the next few days, test yourself. See a person as a person and not a color. See a person as a person and not an ethnicity. Practices, suppressing that first thought about race, color or national origin, and only see the person. Who knows, we may find out we can get along and we really do like each other.

Now, don't worry, because I am certain that if that happened we could come up with some other reason to be biased or prejudiced. We could make up some excuse to exclude rather than include. Or, to paraphrase a comment made by Rodney King, *maybe we could all just get along.*

Billy Woods

The Gunny

www.whatdidesay.com



THE WRONG FUNERAL

****AN ABSOLUTE MUST READ****
this is really beautiful....

God doesn't make mistakes. He puts us where we are to be.

They say there are no mistakes, for everything there is a purpose.

Makes you think. Enjoy! We'll never know where our paths will take us!

Consumed by my loss, I didn't notice the hardness of the pew where I sat. I was at the funeral of my dearest friend - my mother. She finally had lost her long battle with cancer. The hurt was so intense; I found it hard to breathe at times. Always supportive, Mother clapped loudest at my school plays, held box of tissues while listening to my first heartbreak, comforted me at my father's death, encouraged me in college, and prayed for me my entire life.

When mother's illness was diagnosed, my sister had a new baby and my brother had recently married his childhood sweetheart, so it fell on me, the 27-year-old middle child without entanglements, to take care of her. I counted it an honor. 'What now, Lord?' I asked sitting in church.

My life stretched out before me as an empty abyss. My brother sat stoically with his face toward the cross while clutching his wife's hand. My sister sat slumped against her husband's shoulder, his arms around her as she cradled their child. All so deeply grieving, no one noticed I sat alone.

My place had been with our mother,



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preparing her meals, helping her walk, taking her to the doctor, seeing to her medication, reading the Bible together. Now she was with the Lord. My work was finished, and I was alone. I heard a door open and slam shut at the back of the church.

Quick footsteps hurried along the carpeted floor...

An exasperated young man looked around briefly and then sat next to me.

He folded his hands and placed them on his lap. His eyes were brimming with tears. He began to sniffle. 'I'm late,' he explained, though no explanation was necessary.

After several eulogies, he leaned over and commented, 'Why do they keep calling Mary by the name of "Margaret?"

Because, that was her name Margaret. Never Mary, no one called her 'Mary,' I whispered. I wondered why this person couldn't have sat on the other side of the church. He interrupted my grieving with his tears and fidgeting. Who was this stranger anyway?

'No, that isn't correct,' he insisted, as several people glanced over at us whispering, 'Her name is Mary, Mary Peters.' 'That isn't who this is.'

'Isn't this the Lutheran church?' 'No, the Lutheran church is across the street.'

'Oh.' 'I believe you're at the wrong funeral, Sir.'

The solemnity of the occasion mixed with the realization of the man's mistake bubbled up inside me and came out as laughter. I cupped my hands over my face, hoping it would be interpreted as

sobs. The creaking pew gave me away. Sharp looks from other mourners only made the situation seem more hilarious. I peeked at the bewildered, misguided man seated beside me. He was laughing; too, as he glanced around, deciding it was too late for an uneventful exit. I imagined Mother laughing.

At the final 'Amen,' we darted out a door and into the parking lot. 'I do believe we'll be the talk of the town,' he smiled. He said his name was Rick and since he had missed his aunt's funeral, asked me out for a cup of coffee.

That afternoon began a lifelong journey for me with this man who attended the wrong funeral, but was in the right place. A year after our meeting, we were married at a country church where he was the assistant pastor. This time we both arrived at the same church, right on time...

In my time of sorrow, God gave me laughter. In place of loneliness, God gave me love.

This past June, we celebrated our twenty-second wedding anniversary.

Whenever anyone asks us how we met, Rick tells them, 'Her mother and my Aunt Mary introduced us, and it's truly a match made in heaven.'

Yes, I do Love God. He is my source of existence and Savior. He keeps me functioning each and everyday. Without Him, I would be nothing. Without him, I am nothing, but with Him I can do all things, through Christ that strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

REMEMBER, God doesn't make



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mistakes. He puts us where we are to be.



LaVeda Bennett USMC (Ret.)

Montford Point Marine Association:

<http://www.montfordpointmarines.com>

Veterans Benefits, News and Information:

Visit this website for information regarding veterans!

<http://www.veteransnetwork.org> or <http://www.veteransnetwork.net>

Dave Culmer is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Veterans Foundation.

Support These Internet Sites

www.16centsaday.org

www.shoptoearn.net/jarheadenterprises

- www.ytbnet.com/6721*

WWW.JACKIESTRAVELSTORE.COM

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<http://www.ytb.com/travelwbreez>

What I like about the Marines Corps:

I like the fact that Marines are Marines first ...regardless of age, race, creed, color or sex and national origin or how long they served or what goals they achieve in life.

Websites of Interest to Visit

ACES Museum honoring Black and minority veterans of World War II and their families

<http://www.acesmuseum.org/main.html?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.acesmuseum.org%2Findex2.html>

Distribution Request:

We ask that you provide a copy of this Newsletter to fellow Marines who do not have access to e-mail. Also, if they have access to a Fax machine we will fax a copy of the Newsletter and other information to them. Tell them to send their fax number to 352-259-2435 or 949-364-4300.



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Bill Woods

**“The Gunny”
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Bobby Wallace

“The Gator” 352-259-2435