

Marine Corps Celebrates 237th Birthday

By: Paul Waterstradt

On the 10th of November every year, the Marine Corps pauses to celebrate the founding of the Corps in 1775 by hosting a “birthday party”. This year is no exception to that tradition for Marines both active duty serving around the world and those who once served. It is said that once a Marine always a Marine and that saying holds true today as Marines celebrate the 237th birthday of the Corps. This is especially true for one Marine who is a member of the “greatest generation”, a veteran of World War II. This Marine served in the Pacific and was part of the invasion of two islands, Peleliu and Okinawa and was part of the Japanese invasion force that was staged for an anticipated invasion of the Japanese homeland. Henry (Hank) Timmreck attended the birthday party on Saturday, 10 November, his story in his own words follows as recorded by his daughter:

“THE MAKING OF THIS MARINE (or so my dad says.)

“If I miss some of the dates, forgive me, it’s been a long time in coming.

When I was 15 or 16, my folks took me to see the movie Wake Island. It was a good story until the sergeant in charge sees the Japanese landing. He says to his troops, don’t shoot ‘til you see the whites of their eyes. That was the beginning.

After I reached 17, my enlistment started. It was a long haul until we reached San Diego. We arrived at midnight and this old gunny sergeant met us. When he spoke the whole train station rattled. I thought “Geez, I left my mother’s apron strings for this?”

Boot camp went as Marine boot camps go. I was stationed at the San Diego Naval Hospital until I reached my 18th birthday. I was then transported to Camp Elliot for “machine gun training.”

I was then shipped overseas with the Third Amphibian Battalion. I fought on Peleliu and Okinawa. I remember being in a line of tanks crossing a muddy area and watching one of our tanks stop dead and just sit there. I told my Sergeant that I thought they were stuck and I was going to go back and pull them out. He told me to just leave and follow the other tanks. I told him (with all respect, of course) that I was the driver and that I was going to pull them out. I hooked on to them and pulled them from the mess they were in. They then took off under their own steam and hadn’t gone more than 30 yards when a mortar hit the very spot they were stuck in. I guess I was put there for a reason.

When the war was over and I got out, I tried my hand at a few things. I ended up enlisting in the Marines again during the Korean War. I spent a year in and because I had accumulated enough points during WWII, I decided to become a civilian again.



I moved to Detroit, got married and had three children. I packed up our family and moved to Alpena to try my hand in a business venture. While we were there I started a boy's outfit that I called the "Devil Pups." (The Marines were nicknamed the Devil Dogs by the Germans during the war.) We had almost 100 boys in that club. Some of the parents were not very happy with the connotation of "devil" to describe their boys. By the time I thought that I should probably change the name we ended up moving back to Detroit. We were only in Alpena for a couple of years, long enough to know the business wasn't taking off like we planned.

I started up another kids outfit again. The folks I was in contact with in Washington suggested I call them the "Young Marines." That became the name that stuck. We camped and marched and had a good time. I was awarded a plaque a number of years ago, as the founder of the Young Marines.

My kids were sung to sleep by my own rendition of the "Marine Corps Hymn." Because of that, my son, two of my grandson's and my granddaughter enlisted in the Marines. It's in the blood. Semper Fi. "

Henry (Hank) Timmreck is this Marine and we are grateful to have him amongst us. Hank is now 86 years old and his mind is as sharp as ever. It takes him a bit to get around these days but, he does OK with the aid of a walker.

As part of the tradition of the birthday celebration, the youngest and the oldest Marine in attendance are given the honor of cutting the birthday cake. As it turns out, Hank's granddaughter, Nicole who served her country as a Marine and veteran of Afghanistan was the youngest and her grandfather, Hank the oldest. It was a family reunion and surprise as Nicole has just gotten out of the Marine Corps and had just arrived home from her stateside duty station of Cherry Point, NC. Her brother is just completing a Med Cruise with the Marine Corps and her father who was also at the party also served as a Marine. The cake cutting tradition was even more meaningful as these two cut the cake.



In addition to celebrating the Marine Corps birthday, the Yagle Brothers Detachment also installed its new officers for the coming year of 2013. This too is a time honored tradition with the Marine Corps League with the following members installed on 10 November: Paul Waterstradt; Commandant, Bill Tetzlaff, Senior Vice Commandant; Ed Dietz, Junior Vice Commandant; Dave Bieganowski, Pay Master; Dave Kopera, Adjutant; Bernie Kuerth, Sgt At Arms; Gene Dixon, Chaplain and Miles Gerberding, Judge Advocate. The Young Marines group started off the ceremony by bringing in the "colors".

The members of the Yagle Brothers detachment of the Marine Corps League are proud of Hank and all the Marines who once served or who are now serving. We want to thank them for their service to our country one and all as we pause to say "Happy Birthday Marine Corps", "semper fidelis", always faithful.

Information about the Yagle Brothers detachment of the Marine Corps League may be found on their website at: <http://www.yaglebros165.org>