



# In FOCUS

## Newsletter

Issue 3  
November 2013

### Message from FMF Chairman



By  
Walt Suhre

Autumn is definitely upon us here in beautiful Augusta, Missouri. Chill in the air, leaves turning whatever magnificent colors Mother Nature chooses, and the fireplaces in The Lodge roaring. I hope you are enjoying this change of seasons wherever this issue of In FOCUS finds you. And I hope you are making progress on accomplishing your SMART goals. Make Sir Winston Churchill's admonition your way of life - "Never, never, never give up."

In September we completed our ninth FOCUS course. We proudly served 24 Marines and one Army vet. By week's end, one Marine echoed the sentiments of the other 23, remarking of the Army vet, "Hell, he's a Marine. He just wandered into the wrong recruiting office." Congrats to all!!! Now get to work using the tools you acquired at FOCUS. Make wise choices and move forward. Call any of us whenever we can help, or even just to chat.

HAPPY 238<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY!!! How great is it to be a part of such a legend? I encourage you to make a daily visit to the FORUM for many reasons, not the least of which is to



### Happy Birthday Devil Dogs

We all know that the Marine Corps was officially established on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775. But was this the actual birth date of the USMC? And was this actually the first organization of marines for the fledgling Continental States of America? Maybe not.

In the eighteenth century, the concept of a sea-going fighting regiment spread to the British Colonies in the new world of America. In 1740, the British crown raised a regiment of 3000 American colonists to fight aboard British ships in her war against Spain. Colonel William Gooch took command of the regiment and the outfit became known as "Gooch's Marines".

In 1754 during the 'Seven Years War', American colonist marines serving aboard British ships trained the sailors to fight, enforced discipline aboard ships, and were the 'first to fight' when engagement with the enemy ensued. They served as the sharpshooters from the ship's lookouts, and spearheaded the boarding parties for action on enemy ships.

As the American independence movement gained momentum in the 1770's and the initial engagements occurred that led to the Revolutionary War in 1775, General George Washington organized marines in August, 1775 for sea-going operations off the New England coast. These were infantry men from his army that he drafted for the marines. By October 1775, three types of marines were fighting for independence: Washington's marines, state's marines, and privateer marines.

## Walt's Welcome (cont)

visit "This Day in Marine Corps History," so ably compiled and posted by our Forum Administrator, Merlin Clayton. And while you're there, drop in a comment on what's up with you. Each of us is blessed with being instilled with the Marine Corps values – Honor, Courage and Commitment. I'd like to suggest a fourth value – Pride. It's associated with our Corps everywhere: "The Few, The Proud . . ." and "We are proud to claim the title of United States Marines." Wear that title – United States Marine – proudly. You earned it and you deserve it. It will hold you in good stead for life.

One organizational change to report. Your Board of Directors has created the Development Committee which will be under the able direction of Ted Kretschmar. Yes, it takes money – lots of it – to pursue our mission, and Ted will be up to the task.

Once again, HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOCUS MARINES, and Godspeed!

Semper Fi,  
Walt



## FOCUS September 2013

Marines and Corpsmen from across the country embarked on a life-changing week at the FOCUS September 2013 session. Topics covered throughout the week, ranged from character development and interpersonal relationships to financial management and career-building strategies. Guest speakers like John O'Leary shared his life's remarkable story with our warriors. We were also fortunate to have Justin Constantine, Board Member at Wounded Warrior Project, as our guest to share his struggles and accomplishments.

Inclement weather put a damper on some of the ATV rides on the first day, but the class participated in several recreational activities during their stay, including horse therapy sessions, light PT, fishing, team-building games, and, of course, the ever-popular potato canon. A large bonfire greeted the group each night, providing a relaxing environment to socialize and regain that sense of camaraderie that many miss.

The mentoring of our Team Leaders helped to create the critical support network for our "FOCUS Marines". They discovered life-long friendships with fellow warriors who truly understand their daily struggles and can share their accomplishments. These FOCUS Marines are back home. Many things, however, have changed for the better. They're making a difference in their own lives by striving to reach their personal goals. They are reaching out to others by seeking out volunteer opportunities and finding fellow Marines and Corpsmen that will also benefit by attending the FOCUS program.

FOCUS Marines... You embody the true mission of the FOCUS Marines Foundation. We are so proud!

## “Devil Dogs”

(Cont from Page 1)

Then on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775 in an obscure watering hole in Philadelphia called Tun Tavern, the Continental Congress Maritime Committee drafted the “Rules and Regulations of the Navy of the United Colonies”. In the resolution, provisions were established for the Navy pay list and grades which included the establishment of two battalions of the Continental Marines. Thus the "Continental Marines" became an official fighting force of the Continental States of America even though the legacy had begun generations before, and we regard this as the birth of the United States Marine Corps. However, the "United States of America" was yet to be established, and therefore the establishment of the "United States Marine Corps" was more than two decades later, on July 11, 1798.

In 1789, the first session of the United States Congress convened to take on the task of governing the United States. One of the tasks was to create a Naval force to protect against the scourge of Barbary pirates on the eastern seaboard. However, it wasn't until 1797 that Congress actually acted and authorized the building of three ships for a U.S. Navy, all of which would carry a Marine fighting force.

A year later a Massachusetts congressman, Samuel Sewall, proposed the official organization of a Marine Corps to support the Navy on amphibious operations. After months of debate, both bodies of the U.S. Congress passed the Marine Corps Act, and on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1798, President John Adams signed “An Act For Establishing and Organizing a Marine Corps” of regiment strength.

Thus, after a 15 year hiatus, the ‘official’ birth of the United States Marine Corps occurred on this date, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1798. The following day, the President appointed William Ward Burrows the Major Commandant of the new Corps, who established his Headquarters in Philadelphia, at that time still the capital of the new nation.

The Marine Corps was under the direct command of the Commander and Chief, therefore they were acknowledged as the “President’s Troops”. Samuel Sewall, having championed the cause for a Marine Corps in the U.S. Congress, is rightfully credited as the “Father of the U.S. Marine Corps”.

**July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1798 was the official Marine Corps Birthday from 1799 until 1921 when, by an act of Congress, it was changed to November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775.**

Even though the U.S. Marine Corps was officially established by this act of congress in 1798, several near death experiences occurred throughout our history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of our Presidents tried to merge the Marine Corps with the Army or eliminate our Corps all together. This occurred for the first time in 1810, just 12 years after the USMC was established, under President Thomas Jefferson. More recently in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Presidents Truman and Eisenhower were strong advocates for the Army and lobbied for the elimination of the Marine Corps as an independent military service.

Joe Rosenthal’s picture of the Iwo Jima flag raising may have done more to preserve the Marine Corps than any possible act of congress. When this photo proliferated the print media in 1945 it epitomized the fighting prowess of the U.S. servicemen on both battle fronts, and especially endeared the Marines as the “first to fight”. As a result, the Marines of the late 40’s and early 50’s were more popular than any president, and thus, acquiescing to public demand, efforts by U.S. Presidents of this era to eliminate the Marine Corps were abandoned.

**Happy Birthday Devil Dogs!**



## Lew's Fishing Tackle

One of the most anticipated and talked about activities at every FOCUS session is the fishing derby that our Marines enjoy at camp. They get the opportunity to go out on the beautiful 40 acre lake at the FOCUS camp and fish for crappie, bass, bluegill, and the elusive monster of the deep. On the following evening, they enjoy the bounty of their harvest at our fish fry.

Our FOCUS fishing excursions took a giant leap forward earlier this year when Lew's Fishing Tackle of Springfield, Missouri began donating fishing rod/reel sets, and lures for the event. However, Lew's didn't stop with just one set of gear for the derby. They continue to donate rod/reel sets at each session for all our FOCUS Marines to take home with them for their personal use.

Lew's has also established an American Hero product line of rods, reels, and other equipment in honor of this generation of warriors protecting our freedom. CEO Lynn Reeves says his company's decision to give back to veterans is probably the easiest one his management team has ever made. "We have an obligation to those who have served our country, and this is one small way that the folks at our company can say 'thank you,'" he explained.

A portion of all sales of the American Hero line will be donated to various veteran's programs which include fishing events as part of their curriculum. Details of the American Hero program can be found at <http://www.lews.com/news>.



## FOCUS Support

No FOCUS session would be possible without the overwhelming support of our local community. At any given session we have more than 120 people from various organizations supporting our FOCUS participants. Below are highlights of just a few of these organizations.



### St. Charles County Ambulance District

Every FOCUS session presents challenges; not the least of which is the health and well-being of scores of wounded warriors attending our camp.

To help address health care needs, we are fortunate to have the volunteer services of the paramedics from St. Charles County Ambulance District (SCCAD) on the premises of every FOCUS session to assist in the caring of our participants, and to provide emergency treatment if needed.

These men and women volunteer their personal time off to “stand by” if the need arises at our FOCUS sessions. The fully licensed paramedic volunteers come from 16 EMS stations representing all of St. Charles County Missouri.

In addition, SCCAD provides an advanced life support ambulance on premises during our FOCUS sessions. On many occasions it’s been necessary to transport one of our participants to the hospital for emergency treatment. Thanks to the support of the highly trained and certified SCCAD paramedic volunteers, we’ve been able to address all of our medical situations successfully.

Not only do the volunteers from SCCAD provide medical support, they also provide several delicious meals at the sessions. Stephanie Ashford coordinates up to 30 volunteers to provide nutritious home cooked meals with all the fixings during our week at FOCUS. The meals provided by Stephanie and the SCCAD volunteers are consistently the favorites of our FOCUS Marines.

If providing medical support and meals for our Marines weren’t enough, the volunteers of SCCAD reach above and beyond the call of duty. During the holiday season, they adopt families in need, to insure that they have a joyful Christmas Holiday season. Many of our FOCUS Marine families benefit from the SCCAD Holiday program.

FMF is indeed fortunate to have the support from local community organizations like SCCAD. These groups help to insure the success of the FOCUS program.





## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WOUNDED WARRIOR REGIMENT

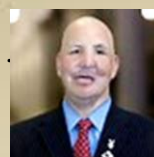
The USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) stood up in April 2007 and immediately began to assume responsibilities for non-medical wounded warrior care. The mission of the WWR is to provide and facilitate assistance to wounded, ill and injured Marines, and their family members, throughout the phases of recovery.

In the aftermath of a wound, illness, or injury, a Marine may require assistance with identifying the resources available to support them through their recovery. To help the Marine navigate from recovery to reintegration, WWR works to surround them with a specialized care team. These individuals are part of the first line of offense, helping the Marine and their family navigate their recovery mission.

The District Injured Support Coordinators (DISCs) are an integral part of the Wounded Warrior Regiment's (WWR) support structure. DISCs are the WWR Commanding Officer's representatives in the civilian community. They are located throughout the country to help wounded, ill or injured Marines transition from Active Duty or Reserves to Veteran status. They provide support and problem resolution, including non-medical care management.

The regional DISCs work closely with FMF to help identify Marines in need of the support provided by our FOCUS program.

If you know of a Marine who needs help, please contact the WWR representative Sergeant Merlin German at the Wounded Warrior Regiment Call Center at (877)487-6299.



### **Guest Speaker** **Lt. Col Justin Constantine**

FOCUS is blessed to have inspirational speakers for each session to show, by example, what it means to overcome adversity. Lt. Col Justin Constantine, USMC, is our most recent speaker which embodies this message.

On a routine combat patrol in Iraq, Justin was shot in the head by an enemy sniper, causing catastrophic damage, destroying his jaws and much of his face. Thanks to the heroic efforts of a young Navy Corpsman, and his own warrior spirit, Justin is alive today to tell his story of overcoming adversity.

Through his journey of courage, injury, resilience and triumph, Justin demonstrates that we are all stronger than we think we are. His personal story of recovery and success is a testament to the power of the human spirit, and the message he shares applies to all our FOCUS participants. All leave inspired, ready to adapt, improvise, and overcome!

For more details on Justin's journey, visit his website at [www.justinconstantine.com](http://www.justinconstantine.com).



NMCRS Combat Casualty Nurses  
Greta, Kim, Patti, & Sue

## “Thanks for Asking”

By Chaplain Troy K. Todd, LCDR, CHC, USN

Over the past year at differing times I have gone to a small gym to exercise and have seen young men who have been injured. I have seen those who have visible wounds, a damaged eye, damaged limb, and those with prosthetic limbs. I have seen the visible wounds and yet I understand that there are those who have the invisible wound, one that lies deep with them carrying the name of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury. I have seen some veterans with a therapy dog that is specifically trained to offer them assistance for various symptoms.

Recently while I was stretching and doing my assigned knee exercises, a young man came in and struggled to maneuver forward, having a crutch under each arm. His wound was visible, apparent critical damage to his lower legs. As the young man struggled to move beyond the entrance door he dropped his keys and had a despondent look upon his face.

My first thought was to bend down and quickly pick up the keys and give them back to him; this would have been a simple gesture of kindness on my part. But for some reason I did not immediately respond or react as I typically do.

Instead, I felt compelled to look the young man in the eyes and ask for his permission. I simply said, “Would it be okay if I get your keys for you?” He

spoke words that sank deep within my heart. His response to my question was a simple, “Yes,” followed by “*thanks for asking.*”

“Thanks for asking”: those words permeated within me. Too often do we pass someone and without giving it much thought treat them as inferior. Frequently people assume that a person is not able to do something because they appear disadvantaged or physically impaired.

Hear those words again, “Yes, thanks for asking.” Before we make a move to help, why don’t we stop, take the time to look the person we desire to help in the eyes and then ask for their permission? When we ask for their permission, we empower them. We give them control to respond with a yes or a no. When we don’t ask, we are potentially seeping power from them.

As I navigate around the local area, I will do my best to first and foremost give ample attention to treating our wounded and disabled veterans and disabled citizens as people who have the power to make their own choice. I need to keep working on seeing the world through their eyes so that I can better understand how to respond with kindness rather than pity, empowering them instead of reemphasizing their disability.

I wonder if there is not a cry for understanding that channels from deep within those who are wounded or who have disabilities that sounds as follows: “Thanks for asking. Thanks for empowering me with self-worth and dignity. I don’t have a disabled mind, give me a chance and I will show you.”

Max Lucado offers the following timeless reminder, “You are valuable because you exist. Not because of what you do or what you have done, but simply because you are.”

As we navigate through life with a new vision for those around us, when times get tough and days grow long remember to, “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you”... (Psalm 55:22a)



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FOCUS Group 9/13

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9/11 Memorial at FOCUS

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