

Brazos Valley Marine Corps League

April 12, 2021 (corrected at May 10 Meeting)

General Meeting at Cooper's Bar B Q

At 7:00 p.m., Sergeant-at-Arms Olivia Burnside, secured the facility, determined that all present were qualified to be so, posted the colors, and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chaplain Al Diaz led the detachment in prayer. Sergeant-at-Arms Burnside declared the meeting open for the transaction of official business.

Commandant Vallejo welcomed everyone, just in case he missed visiting with anyone upon arrival.

Commandant Vallejo altered the normal order of business due to the **presence of two speakers, Jeremy Williams, member and DVSO, and Sean Amo, from Dignity Memorial** with funeral homes in both Bryan and College Station.

Jeremy addressed the detachment regarding end-of-life preparations. He explained the differences between qualifying for burial in Arlington Cemetery and National Cemetery. He also explained what those who have retired from the Corps or FMF Corpsmen are eligible for regarding entombment / in ground/ or full military honors, dependent on rank. A primary point in his presentation was to have ALL critical paperwork in one folder in a place that your spouse and children know so that they will know how to proceed when calling to say, "My veteran has died." Some of the critical forms cited were DD214, DD215 (as applicable), death certificate (make multiple copies when you receive it), marriage certificates, any VA Disability Compensation Form = decision letter, etc. DOD Survivor Benefits, Tri-Care Benefits, etc. were also presented. Jeremy also sent a brief with many details via Benny. (Benny had not yet sent it out to everyone because he didn't have everyone's email. So, it is in process and should be in each member's inbox in the near future.) Jeremy shared a personal story regarding the passing of his step-father and his mother and how lack of preparedness left his mother in dire straits. The Carters later validated everything Jeremy shared with regard to preparation versus lack of same as they recently had a personal family situation reflecting lack of preparedness.

Sean indicated his company is the only provider authorized as beneficiary funeral provider for VFW, VA, etc. He asked how many members have already considered this topic or taken steps. Sean noted that only about 15% of folks actually think ahead and do something about it. He encouraged members to call him/ come in and talk for information – even if they choose to go elsewhere when the time comes. His concern was that people be informed and prepared. He also indicated his firm is able to file on

the family's behalf – navigate the challenging website. He is proud to be a son of a veteran and a father of a soldier. A hole in his heart (birth defect) prevented him from being able to join a military branch, despite several tries.

Benny added that we now have Section 28 for veterans in the **Bryan Cemetery** where plots are \$750 for a husband and wife. However, those plots are going up \$300 - \$500 in January. So, if you are considering purchasing a plot, now may be the time to do so.

Benny asked a question or two on behalf of two of our members currently hospitalized. Jeremy answered those questions and stressed that, "On the death certificate, it must say 'service-related death.'"

Mary Jean Holcomb presented information regarding **auxiliary versus associates**, explaining that this **detachment chose associate membership for spouses/family/friends** of Marines or FMF Corpsmen. Membership is \$35. Reasons for becoming an associate were provided as well as handouts available for further perusal. Some **reasons for becoming an associate** are: eligible to wear the official detachment uniform (red polo shirt and cover); easily recognizable when representing the detachment in the community; opportunity to serve in an appointed position; enables our membership to grow; etc. Joining prior to September means paying a prorated amount. Steve Ament added that he would really like to see our associates expand in number so that the detachment can tap into greater creativity these members provide.

Installation of New Leadership Team: Commandant Vallejo introduced Tony Poletti, Department Junior Vice Commandant of Department of Texas. The Vice Commandant is also a member of the Lost Pines Leathernecks Detachment, Bastrop, TX. Tony commented that through recent travels at the national level of the Marine Corps League, the greatest concerns are COVID, recruiting, and detachments being active. Therefore, he appreciated comments made earlier regarding growing membership and an active organization. Tony proceeded with the installation of the following positions:

Elected:		Appointed:	
Commandant	Steven Ament	Adjutant	Mary Jean Holcomb
Jr. Past Commandant	Benito Vallejo	Chaplain	Al Diaz
Sr. Vice Commandant	Glen Saunders	Sgt. At Arms	Olivia Burnside
Jr. Vice Commandant	Patrick (Red) McClung	PAO/Historian	Thorin Moser
Judge Advocate	Thorin Moser	Web Sergeant	Ed Holcomb
Pay Master	Roger Martinez	Information Officer	Doris Carter

Commandants Vallejo and Ament were addressed by Vice Commandant Poletti. Sgt. At Arms Burnside presented the new duly installed officers. Chaplin Diaz led the prayer. The colors (via the guidon) were transferred from Commandant Vallejo to Commandant Ament. Benny thanked everyone for the support

offered over the last two years, singling out Ed Holcomb, Thorin Moser, and Keith Stephens. Vice Commandant Poletti introduced the new officers to the detachment. Commandant Ament thanked Junior Vice Commandant Poletti for being here for us and presented him with a book, ***An American Knight: The Life of Colonel John W. Ripley.***

OFFICER REPORTS:

Adjutant Report: Commandant Ament indicated that the minutes from the 3/12/21 meeting were sent out. Could the membership agree to accept the minutes as posted? Jeremy Williams so moved; seconded ; minutes accepted as posted.

Paymaster Report: Roger Martinez presented the financial report for the organization, reminding membership that \$4000 of our present balance has been designated for scholarships while several thousand dollars has also been already allocated for the Benevolence Fund. He noted a \$350 donation from a member. Roger also noted that, should any member desire information about lifetime memberships, please see him. He has the information available; lifetime membership fees are determined by age group.

Chaplain's Report: Chaplain Al Diaz thanked Leonard Moore, Mike Ard, Ed Holcomb, Benny Vallejo, and Glen Saunders for diligently visiting/ calling our members presently in hospital or the Rehabilitation Facility. Doc Powell continues to be in ICU but is able to receive visitors. John Withers is recovering and is presently unable to receive visitors. (COVID testing, etc. must be administered first.) Leonard Moore's wife just had surgery today and is presently in recovery. Chief Deputy Caulder Lively (Brazos Valley Constables Office) is recovering and is in attendance. Dean Matter continues to recover but is struggling with caring for his father, who is on oxygen, and his two young daughters.

OLD BUSINESS:

Patrick McClung (Red) updated membership regarding the upcoming fundraiser on April 17 at **A & M Church of Christ**, College Station, TX on University for the family of a fellow **police officer** whose **daughter** recently incurred a **terminal cancer diagnosis**. Red indicated the CSPOA (College Station Police Officers Association) is leading a benefit on April 17 to help offset family expenses. There will be BBQ at \$10 a plate, T-shirts, and raffle items. Red is the liaison with our organization. He indicated that there are a couple openings for workers. If anyone is able to volunteer for a three - hour slot, please see him. He has tickets available for BBQ and raffle items. Red later stressed that the membership of BVMCL has already donated \$1200. So, he did not want members to feel as though they necessarily needed to do anything more.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jeremy Williams noted that **Ellen Fuller** brought information from **Elizabeth Dole Foundation regarding end-of-life planning**. There are plenty of handouts so feel free to help yourselves.

Paymaster Roger noted, and Commandant Steve Ament explained: **Dean Mater** incurred a motorcycle accident which has left him presently unable to drive, care for his father who is on oxygen, or care for his two younger daughters. The Detachment has already given \$500 to Dean. At this time, the detachment would like to **offer an additional \$500**. (Members have been taking Dean's Dad to various medical appointments.) Glen Saunders moved; Jeremy Williams seconded; motion passed. Paymaster Roger Martinez was tasked with addressing this matter.

Commandant Ament indicated he hoped to discuss various **fundraising options at next month's meeting**.

Commandant Ament queried members regarding familiarity with the **Brazos Valley Bombers**. He indicated we have an opportunity to host a Marine Corps Night at no cost to the detachment. We would have a table set up and be able to welcome folks as they are showing up for the game. He asked that membership think about this.

Related to public relations and fundraising, BVMCL has been a member of the **Brazos Valley Chamber of Commerce** and has participated in a number of events. As an organization, we considered whether or not we should continue to be a member of this organization. Through an anonymous donation covering the \$300 membership fee, we will continue to be a member of the Chamber. The anonymous donor was thanked.

Guest Vice Commandant Tony Poletti advised the detachment regarding **upcoming conventions**: State Convention in Waco at the end of June; National Convention in Springfield, Illinois. Tony indicated the current slate of state officers is up for election as this team had been assigned, not elected.

Commandant Ament awarded outgoing **Commandant Vallejo with a Certificate of Appreciation** (signed by the membership) for all he has done for our detachment for the past two years – tremendous growth. Al awarded Benny some **crayons and coloring book** to keep him busy as he sat in the 'back of the bus' during meetings. Steve also shared meeting Benny for the first time (during a Patriot Guard function at Independence Harley Davidson in College Station) where he shared information regarding the death of a buddy in service. Benny told him to come join us. Steve gave Benny a **pen and pencil set engraved with, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."**

Sergeant-at-Arms Olivia Burnside retired the colors. Chaplain Al Diaz led us in prayer. Senior Vice Glen Saunders appreciated everyone's participation and being here tonight. He further indicated we can't grow without membership assistance. Let other veterans know about BVMCL and encourage them to join. Sergeant-at-Arms Burnside declared the meeting closed at 8:23 p.m. until the May 10, 2021, meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jean Holcomb

Adjutant