

# Commandant's Message

## September 2008

Fellow Marines:

Another summer has come and gone with the final summer holiday, Labor Day. August saw the loss of another Charter Member, Jim Satterwhite, whose memorial service was held in Henderson on August 30<sup>th</sup>. I want to personally thank all our members who participated in any aspects of this three-week ordeal in providing assistance to Jim's wife, Peggy. I know how much she appreciated everything you all did for her in her time of need. As I mentioned in last month's message, we will never know the exact time and place the Supreme Commandant will issue our final PCS orders to home. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be prepared and ensure our loved ones are properly cared for after we leave.

August has also been a very historical month on the political scene. The National Democratic Party has formally announced its candidate for President of the United States, Barack Obama the first African American ever selected by any party to be its nominee for the highest elected position in our country. And the Republican Presidential candidate, John McCain has selected the first-ever female Vice Presidential running mate for the Republican Party, Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska. As you should well know, the Marine Corps League does not endorse political candidates like other veteran's organization and for good reason. However, it does encourage its members to exercise their constitutional right to vote in the general elections in November, as do I. No matter which party wins the election this year, it will be one for the history books.

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, President Bush signed into law the Hubbard Act, which eliminated a 65 year old loophole for service members who were discharged from the military before the end of their contracts because they became "Sole Survivors" (last male in the family due to the death of parent or sibling also serving in the military) that denied them their veteran's benefits. The new bill waives payback of enlistment bonuses and allows for transitional health care and access to the GI Bill and other veterans programs. This bill is effective retroactively to September 11, 2001.

I also had the pleasure of attending the 59<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division Association this Labor Day weekend in our nation's capitol. The highlight of the weekend was being guests of General Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps at Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, where President George W. Bush was the guest of honor for the final performance of the 2008 season and his last as President of the United States. General Conway was also the guest speaker at the banquet and he gave an inspirational talk about how the young Marines of today truly look upon the Iwo Jima veterans as real living heroes and that one reason they fight so hard today is so they won't let the Iwo Jima and other heroes of the past down. While at the banquet I also had the opportunity to speak with our own Marine Corps League National Commandant, James R. Laskey. I told him about our Detachment and he said he was impressed with all the North Carolina Detachments and how they have helped to increase membership and new Detachments. Before leaving he honored me by giving me one of his personal challenge coins, which I will treasure.

As we enter the fall, let us continue to work toward recruiting new members, expanding our treasury and disbursing of funds to and lending our time and talents to current and former Marines and their families in need.

Semper Fi

*Joe Goodrow*  
*Commandant*  
*September 2008*