



MARINES IN TRANSITION

A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Marine Executive Association

November 2008

In This Issue

- Message from the MEA President 1**
- Members Elect New Board of Directors 2**
- Board Appoints Secretary 2**
- MEA 2009 Board of Directors 2**
- Firm Believe in the MEA: My Transition Story 3**
- Interview Preparation: Five Steps for a Successful On-Site Interview 4**
- Who Were You With?. 5**
- Join an Association .. 7**
- Upcoming Events 8**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marines and Friends of the MEA,

I humbly accept the opportunity to serve as your MEA President. We've maintained our brotherhood and tradition of "once a Marine, always a Marine" and this organization's true essence to provide mentorship and assistance in the transition of all Marines. Together, we can make our motto, "Marines helping Marines," resonate throughout the globe.



Our camaraderie is unmatched and uniquely identified by our devotion to Corps and County. I believe we can raise the bar even higher with our outreach to all career communities; entrepreneurs, blue collar tradesmen, light blue technical and starched shirt executives. This expansion will require each one to reach one, especially our young enlisted and diverse Marines. As we expand our chapters and connect with other associations that are helping marines we will fortify an interlocking web of support. For example: Marine4Life, Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, and our Wounded Warrior Regiment are all necessary to demonstrate our commitment that we take care of our own.

We are all volunteers, and the satisfaction of helping Marines is unmatched. Current members, bring other members and partners into action so they can feel the joy of helping a brother in need of your expertise, encouragement, and camaraderie. Prospective members, join your local chapter and get engaged with your Marines, send care packages and help in anyway you can!

Semper Fi,
Vonzell Mattocks, MEA President

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**View the complete
listing of MEA
officers and
committee members
on MarineEA.org.**

MEMBERS ELECT NEW BOARD OF DIRECTOR

Members of the MEA recently voted to elect the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers who will guide the organization through 2009-2010:

- **Chip Justice**, 2007-2008 Chairman, became Chair Emeritus.
- **Jim Gough**, 2007-2008 President, became Chairman.
- **Vonzell Mattocks**, 2007-2008 Vice President, became President and will become Chairman in 2010.
- **Tim Murphy** was selected by the members to be Vice President and will become President in 2010.

Under the MEA By-Laws, the Vice President is elected for a three-year term. At the end of the first year, the Vice President becomes the President, the President becomes the Chairman and the Chairman becomes the Chair Emeritus.

BOARD APPOINTS SECRETARY

The Marine Executive Association Board of Directors appointed **Barett (Bear) Byrd** to the position of **MEA Secretary** at the November 14, 2008 board meeting.

As Secretary, Barett Byrd retains certain corporate records, prepares and publishes records of MEA Board meeting minutes, provides notice of meetings, and certifies MEA election results.

FIRM BELIEVER IN THE MEA: MY TRANSITION STORY

By Robert E. Soto

I'm Robert E. Soto, Sergeant Major, USMC, Ret and a Marine Executive Association Member since 2003 which is when I started to transition from the Corps. I have a Secret Clearance and in the Corps, worked as a Senior Enlisted Advisor and Aviation Supply Manager. In the corporate sector, I have worked as a Senior Research/Management Analyst and Project Manager. Currently, I work as a [contractor] Program Manager in support of the Marine Corps mission." This is the typical 30-second introduction at an MEA job-networking event, but the only missing portion of the introduction is what employment position the attendee is interested in. These days, I attend the MEA job networking events for the camaraderie. I also attend because this is where I received my first job opportunity after leaving the Corps so perhaps I can do the same for another Marine by collecting resumes and further contribute to the goals of the MEA organization.

In August 2004, I attended an MEA job-networking luncheon where I was surrounded by [mostly service retired or transitioned] people, looking to network for a job with Marines that were in the same boat as myself. The MEA job-networking event was not only the opportunity to network; it was a luncheon that changed my life. To make a long story – short – I sat at a table that allowed me to introduce myself and network with others. I reflected back to the seminars and luncheons that I attended in the past and was ready to pitch my 30 second commercial. Instead, the people to my left and right seats asked me a series of questions that [unbeknown to me] were interviews.

By the time I left that luncheon, I received an offer to interview in Crystal City, Virginia. After the interview, I accepted the offer as a Senior Research Analyst in support of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, Integrated Logistics Support (ASAALT, ILS). It was nice to feel the comfortability of having a position held for me while I waited for my transition and release date in November 2004. Close to a year later, I was offered another position to support the Marine Corps, which I accepted, and I continue to work with the same group of people; they too are believers in and supporters of the MEA.

This luncheon changed the course of my life. I felt very relaxed transitioning from the Marine Corps and was astounded about the camaraderie that existed in the corporate sector. I recommend that transitioning Marines attend MEA Job Networking Events no matter what state you reside in! And, don't let the title of the association concern you...

In reality, the Marine Executive Association is an organization that assists transitioning Marines, **of all ranks and grades**, by providing them with the right tools and techniques needed for the corporate/civilian work force following their tour of duty (whether 4 years or 30+ years). Equally, these tools help the candidate strengthen their contention for open positions within the network. I am a firm believer in transition networking and the Marine Executive Association. Don't become concerned by the term, "Executive." To MEA members it means: "Marine, We'll Help You - Help Yourself, No Matter What!"

INTERVIEW PREPARATION: *FIVE STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ON-SITE INTERVIEW*

A successful on-site interview begins as soon as the interview has been scheduled. The level of knowledge you have about your potential new employer will determine whether you will receive an offer after the interview.

Here are five interview preparation tips that have proven consistently successful:

One. Know where you're going, and be on time - if possible, a day or two beforehand drive to the place of interview in similar conditions (e.g., drive-time traffic) to determine the best route and to gauge the effect of traffic on your commute. Ask the interview scheduler about parking - it will do you no good to be early if you have to spend 30 minutes hunting for a parking spot! If it's a large company with multiple buildings, make sure you know exactly where you need to be and whom you should ask for. Keep the interview coordinator's telephone number handy (along with your cell phone or quarters for a pay phone) in case you get lost or delayed.

Two. Spend some time reviewing your resume - sure, it sounds silly, but most resumes are in chronological order and we tend to think experientially. Be prepared if the interviewer says "tell me about what you enjoyed about your role from 1997-1999". Take a few extra copies of your resume to the interview - this will show that you're prepared, and may even help you gain favor should one of the interviewers not be as prepared.

Three. Study the job description and have several questions prepared for the interviewer(s). An interview table has two sides, and every job seeker has a mission to accomplish: To walk away with a solid understanding of the company, the position, the responsibilities and, ultimately, whether this is a company and opportunity you want to pursue. This is your time to dig in, learn more, and show that you're genuinely interested in exploring the company and position. Microsoft's Bill Gates suggests using the following four questions in interviews:

- "What do your customers think about your products?"
- "Where do your competitors win business from you, and why?"
- "What new markets are emerging?"

Continued on next page 8



WHO WERE YOU WITH?

By William R. Miller

A few years ago I was strolling with my wife through a fall festival in a small Kansas town. I was wearing a red ball cap with an eagle, globe, and anchor logo on the front. I noticed another man with a similar hat as he passed us in the crowd. He stopped, turned to me, and said, "Who were you with?"

"1st Marine Aircraft Wing, MASS Duce [Marine Air Support Squadron 2], Dong Ha on the DMZ [demilitarized zone], '68-'69. You?" I answered without thinking.

"2/5 [2d Battalion, 5th Marines], Hue City, Tet '68, Semper fi," he said and walked on. "Who was that?" my wife asked.

"Just another Marine," I said. Just another Marine, what an understatement I thought.

At other times that day, I saw a cruise jacket, a sweatshirt, and two more ball caps all representing the Marine Corps. I saw the emblems of no other Service. Since then I have become more aware, and I have noted that I see Marine Corps bumper stickers and rear window decals, not Army. I see Marine Corps flags outside homes, not Air Force. And I see Marine caps and jackets, seldom Navy.

I started counting, and I actually see about 20 Marine symbols to each display of the other Armed Forces. Yet, the Marine Corps is still the smallest of the Services. Could it be that "once a Marine, always a Marine" is true? Could it be that there is a greater pride in having been one of the few?

For the last 5 years I, too, have asked the question, "Who were you with?" I have always gotten an answer; no one has ever asked, "What do you mean?"

Marines understand the question. A few times the ball cap has represented a son or daughter. But even their parents know the units with whom their children are serving. The pride of their being with the Marines is also in the parents.

This year, at the same festival, I met four Marines. One young man said he spent the Marine Corps birthday, 10 November 2004, in Fallujah with 1/3; the second had helped the 2d Marine Division take Kuwait City in 1991; and the third served with me in Vietnam, only farther south at Chu Lai in 1970. But the one that I remember the most was the man in a worn, faded cruise jacket, walking slowly with a cane, and being passed by the crowd.

I walked to his side, slowed to his pace, and asked, "Who were you with?" He stopped, turned, stood up straight, and looked me in the eye. "5th Marine Division, Iwo Jima, 1945," he said. A chill went through me and I knew I was in the presence of a history maker. "Thank you," I said. He smiled and said, "You?" As we talked I told him that I had been an air control officer in Vietnam and that my son had just completed three tours in Iraq with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 2. Then before I knew it, he was thanking me. He continued to tell me how much harder it is today to tell who the enemy is and how much he admires our young Marines.

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WHO WERE YOU WITH? *CONT.*

Today I teach biology at Baker University in Kansas, and I often tell my students that they have not yet had history happen to them. They do not remember Pearl Harbor or know what happened at the Chosin Reservoir or even where to find Con Thien on a map. At times I get to tell them about Marines whom I have met and the history they helped make. But still it is hard for them to understand what an injured Army captain I met on China Beach meant when he told me, "The most beautiful sight in the world is a Marine F-4 rolling in hot with snake and nape."

These events are not just part of history; they are history. Had their results been different, the world would be different. "Who were you with?" says more than "Where were you when . . . ?" or "What were you doing when . . . ?" It says participant not spectator. It says Marine.

So the next time you see an eagle, globe, and anchor on a hat or shirt pocket ask the simple question, "Who were you with?" Listen to the answer of a unit, a place, and a time and think about that moment in history. But more than that, listen to the pride saying, "I am a Marine."

Dr. Miller served with the 1st MAW, Marine Air Control Group 18, MASS-2 in Vietnam from 1968-69. He is currently working in the Department of Biology, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS.

New Law Authorizes Veterans' Salutes During National Anthem



Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applied to members of the armed forces while not in uniform.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official head-gear.

The most recent change, authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed on Oct. 14.

The earlier provision authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008.

JOIN AN ASSOCIATION

By Joe Riggio

Why join an association organization? It provides you with an immediate network and a focus. You will begin to have access to people in all levels of organizations, from Presidents, CEO's, secretaries and all functional areas. You will accelerate the process if you volunteer to do something for the organization like their newsletter, membership drive or fill some other need that they have. Dive in and do it!

How do you start to join? Ask yourself what profession are you in or want to be in. Then ask your own network if they know of a local or national group that they would recommend. You can also search the yellow pages, look on the Internet or check at your local library resource center for help. There are thousands of associations that you can select from.

When I went into the financial management field I joined the American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC) www.asmc.org. It is a huge network, 140 chapters worldwide with members from all Military services and agencies. I ended up as president of the Washington DC chapter, which opened up many doors for me to help others. What fields are you in or want to be in? Once you decide look for an organization that is in that field. Check the associations out and then pick one and join!

Before I transitioned out of the military service I joined the MEA. This is another huge network especially now that I moved up as the director. Jobs are there for the taking and more important to me there are big opportunities to help others in their transition.

You can do the same thing with the organization of your choice. What are you passionate about? What organization can you join to help you network with other people like you or that you want to be like? You just need to decide and take action today!

Another good reason to join an association organization is you find out who knows what. This can especially help you if you are going into a new field of work. You can find out what certifications you need, what is the best way to get them, and who can help you. You can also look for a role model and ask them to be your mentor. This can also get you the "inside scope" about what jobs will be opening up.

If you do a great job as a volunteer and make things happen that can be your interview for a job. People in the association organization will see what you are doing and can consider you for a job in their company. Social Organizations are a great way to network too and you can also get the same benefits as an association organization. Did I mention you could have fun in these organizations too? What a concept, enjoying your transition through life and feeling good about what you are doing!

Remember just decide to join an organization that is bigger than you and contribute your time and effort to their cause! By helping others you will be helping yourself! Next thing to do is network, network and network!

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Upcoming Events



December 8, 2008
NNMC Bethesda Networking
Breakfast

December 12, 2008
MCB Quantico Luncheon

January 9, 2009
Henderson Hall Luncheon

January 15, 2009
Camp Pendleton MEA Meeting

January 22, 2009
NNMC Bethesda Networking
Breakfast

**View a listing of events on
the MEA Calendar**
www.calendar.marineea.org



INTERVIEW PREPARATION *CONT.*

Four. Learn as much as you can about the company - use Internet search engines to gather as much information as possible: History, size (number of employees, number of locations, revenue), leadership biographies, positioning within their industry. Talk to friends - they may know someone who works for the company, and they may be open to answering "day in the life of" questions that aren't available through internet research.

Five. First impressions still count! Within the first 15 seconds, the interviewer will have assessed your appearance, bearing, enthusiasm, and confidence. It's quite possible that the people who will interview you are equally uncomfortable interviewing - the more prepared you are, the better impression you will make on them and the more comfortable they will be. Make them comfortable, and make it count!

WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS



The MEA's need for volunteers is ongoing. If you can help Marines in transition by volunteering to assist in a Marine in Transition support area, please contact
Tim Murphy at vp@marineea.org or at 703-980-3878.