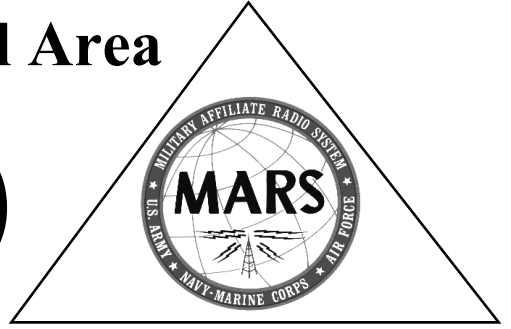


NAVMARCORMARS - Central Area

The TRIAD

“Dedicated Volunteers - In Unity Of Purpose - Serving DOD”



December 2006

“Proudly Serving Those Who Serve”

Volume III, Issue 8

U. S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE Toys For Tots Program

Colonel William L. Hendricks USMCR (Ret)

Toys for Tots began in 1947 when Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR and a group of Marine Reservists in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children. The idea came from Bill's wife, Diane. In the fall of 1947, Diane handcrafted a Raggedy Ann doll and asked Bill to deliver the doll to an organization, which would give it to a needy child at Christmas. When Bill determined that no agency existed, Diane told Bill that he should start one. He did. The 1947 pilot project was so successful that the Marine Corps adopted Toys for Tots in 1948 and expanded it into a nationwide campaign.

That year, Marine Corps Reserve units across the nation conducted Toys for Tots campaigns in each community in which a Marine Reserve Center was located. Marines have conducted successful nationwide campaigns at Christmas each year since 1948. The initial objective that remains the hallmark of the program today is to "bring the joy of Christmas to America's needy children."

Bill Hendricks, a Marine Reservist on weekends, was in civilian life, the Director of Public Relations for Warner Brothers Studio. This enabled him to convince a vast array of celebrities to support Toys for Tots. In 1948, Walt Disney designed the Toys for Tots logo, which we use today. Disney also designed the first Toys for Tots poster used to promote the nationwide program. Nat "King" Cole, Peggy Lee, and Vic Damone recorded the Toys for Tots theme composed by Sammy Fain and Paul Webster in 1956. Bob Hope, John Wayne, Doris Day, Lorrie Morgan, Tim Allen, Kenny Rogers and Billy Ray Cyrus are but a few of the long list of celebrities who have given their time and talent to promote Toys for Tots. First Lady Nancy Reagan served as the national spokesperson in 1983. First Lady Barbara Bush served as the national spokesperson in 1992

and in her autobiography named Toys for Tots as one of her favorite charities. From 1947 through 1979, Marines collected and distributed new and used toys. On Reserve drill weekends during October, November and December, Reserve Marines refurbished the used toys. From Christmas 1980 through the present, Marines have collected and distributed only new toys. Three factors dictated this change.

First, the Secretary of Defense's Total Force Program, introduced in the 1970s, assigned Reserves a greater role in America's defense posture. As a consequence, Reservists had to dedicate every minute of weekend drill time to honing and polishing combat skills. No time was available to refurbish toys. Second, public awareness of the health and safety aspects of toys that developed during the 70s made distribution of used toys legally inadvisable. Third, distributing "hand me down" toys does not send the message Marines want to send to needy children. The goal is to deliver a message of hope, which will build self-esteem and, in turn, motivate needy children to grow into responsible, productive, patriotic citizens and community leaders. A shiny new toy is the best means of accomplishing this goal.

In the late 1980s, the Marine Corps determined that a non-profit charity was needed as an integral part of the overall national Toys for Tots program. Based on this need, the Secretary of Defense, in August 1991, authorized the Marine Corps to recognize and work with a charity committed to supporting Toys for Tots. Based on this approval, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation became an operational organization in September 1991 and has been the fund raising and support organization for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program since that date.

The Foundation was able to satisfy (Continued on page 5)

Comments From Around The Central Area

From NNN0ASG ONE MI: In view of the NNN0ASG IL billet now being vacant, NNN0ASG ONE MI is Acting Central Area Director; however, all records have been sent to NNN0ASA VA, and all subsequent records are to be sent to NNN0ASA VA until further notice. Be sure to info NNN0ASG ONE MI when such records are sent to NNN0ASA. If record transfers are made electronically, send also electronically, copies to NNN0ASG ONE. This enables me to keep tract of what is going on. All message traffic that normally is addressed to NNN0ASG, for example, ECOM exercises, EEI messages, is to continue to be addressed to that station. Thus when this billet is again filled, the incoming Director will have these copies on hand and be able to refer back to them. When sending in Quarterly Reports, info NNN0ASG ONE MI. Finally, may all of you have a most enjoyable Merry Christmas, and may the new year bring you all the best.

Minnesota Navy-Marine Corps MARS

From NNN0GAZ MN

As is the case in other Region Five states, Minnesota is in the midst of its fourth quarter emergency communications exercise. Murphy and propagation seem to be holding hands as finding a frequency capable of long term sustained use is a challenge to all hands. In our monthly newsletter, the Minnesota MARSGRAM, we've introduced a feature called Test Your NIMS Knowledge, a monthly question about some aspect of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This monthly test is meant to encourage members to complete the NIMS IS-100, -200, -700, and -800 courses required to possess a Department of Defense Disaster Identification Card. In August, a few of the Minnesota MARS member stations as well as the MDS station were affected by a hailstorm with hailstones the size of baseballs and grapefruits. The storm affected an area from just southwest of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro over to the city of Northfield Minnesota – a corridor approximately 30 miles long. This storm system lingered throughout most of the day on August 24 and resulted in a deadly F3 tornado that was on the ground for 33 miles in the later afternoon hours. With the exception of the area directly affected by the tornado, most damages have been repaired. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from members of Minnesota Navy-Marine Corps MARS.

From MISSISSIPPI NNN0GBA writes: We just recently have added two new Tango members and both are active. Other than that, things are pretty normal. Would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year from the Mississippi Area.

COMMUNICATOR OF THE QUARTER

From NNN0AS4 GA

Here it is the end of another quarter. For State Directors that means ensuring that the QAS is prepared and submitted on time. The monthly frequency usage report is also on time and it is also a time when the State Director has the privilege and honor of selecting the Communicator of the Quarter. Are you ready? How are you going to select the person? Well let's see.... Oh yes, I have not given it to so and so for some time. Or, we just had a new station come onboard and maybe he/she should get it. Then there is good old "Joe" he checked into the net the other night and if we give it to him, maybe he will start checking in more often.

Think about it.... As State Director you are the only one who can bestow this honor on a member!!!! What if you were called and asked, "Why did you select this person?" What would be your answer? Do you have a good reason?

The selection of Communicator of the Quarter SHOULD go to your best, outstanding member!

You should have established the criteria for such a selection and then follow it even if you give the award to the same station more than once a year. Only you can decide on the criteria... Here are some broad suggestions:

1. Checked into the most nets during the quarter.
2. Performed in an outstanding manner as my assistant For (whatever).
3. Acted as NECOS on several nets.
4. Was outstanding as NECOS for the ECOM exercise this month.
5. Volunteered to take the nets several times when the NECOS or ALNECOS did not show up.
6. Completed correspondence courses.

OK, now you are set and the selection will be one that you, and the member can be proud of...

Navy-Marine Corps MARS News from Illinois

From NNN0GAP IL

In mid November, Illinois Navy Marine Corps MARS ran an ECOM Exercise involving the four Navy Operational Support Centers, involving communications support to the centers following the simulated occurrence of a bitter cold snap encompassing the northern third of the state. The mission of Illinois Navy MARS was to assist centers in passing traffic relating to (continued on page 3.,column 2)

**Happenings in Michigan Navy-Marine Corps MARS
From NNN0GAY MI**

Michigan held their first ECOM Exercise in several years in December. It was held in conjunction with the Lake Michigan Sector of the United States Coast Guard. The Exercise went very well. We thank Wisconsin and Ohio for their assistance which was especially helpful in passing traffic. We are looking forward to our next Exercise in February. More of our members are becoming RTTY and MT-63 proficient. The MT-63 permits us to pass traffic under deteriorating conditions with solid copy. We have increased our recruiting efforts to obtain new members for the program. Although we have lost two members over the last three quarters, we have gained six new members. Our new member training is going quite well. We will work to continue to have success in this area. A bulletin board for the state is also being currently developed. It will provide a means to distribute information to the Michigan membership as well as permit those in the region to see what is happening in Michigan. We look forward to an exciting new year for Navy-Marine Corps MARS. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

**Georgia Navy-Marine Corps MARS
From NNN0GAM GA**

I joined Navy Mars as a Tango station in February 1983, and just like any other Tango, I depended on the older stations to guide me in handling Traffic and routing traffic. In the early 80's there was a huge amount of traffic coming out of Okinawa, Japan, and there were always the NMAT three's coming out of Parris Island, SC, not to mention all of the huge assortments of 3rd Party traffic within our Region as well as Admin Traffic. All this had to be done the right way.

During all those early years there were always older members that were Mentors. This is where NNN0PSX came into view. He was always there with the right answers and he became our Georgia Mentor, and still is in fact. As time went along I became NNN0GAM in October 1998, and Curtis was still there as always with good suggestions. Curtis then became our Region Director and stayed there for many years. This year Curtis retired back into the normal ranks of a MARS Member. I am still NNN0GAM and when I needed a GAM TWO this year, Curtis jumped in to help just like he has for the last 24 years. Many years have gone by since 1983, But NNN0PSX is still out there doing what he loves to do and that is MARS, helping all of us here in Georgia with proper procedures. BZ goes out to Curtis for being there for us, **and** as our New GAM-Two.

As we all know there has been some sort of a crazy interference on the frequency (NCI). Our 4D4B/4D2B Georgia Nets were on NCI, so we had to move our nets to

(Continued from page 2., **From NNN0GAP IL**)

natural gas line breaks resulting in disruption of utilities, primarily heat to the effected areas. Emergency communications nets were called following the state's regular morning and evening traffic nets on four occasions. Stations in the vicinity of the Support Centers were tasked with passing simulated emergency traffic back and forth involving actual hard copy messages which were FAXed, telephoned, Emailed or conveyed by messenger to the centers.

In all, eight Illinois stations participated in the exercise, four of which checked in to all four ECOM nets held. Band conditions were extremely poor forcing abbreviated nets in the evenings which were picked up the following mornings. The regular Illinois primary and secondary net frequencies, as well as the national emergency frequency, were used. An approximately equal amount of traffic was passed digitally via the MDS and by voice. Digital communications were generally good during all phases of the exercise. Traffic included over 14 messages replete with an EEI and the required ECOM administrative traffic. Three consolidated SITREPS were passed as well.

The exercise was extremely challenging during the very poor propagation conditions we have been experiencing during this low point of the 11 year solar cycle. The upside was the participating stations got a lot of practice in relaying voice traffic and using other means as an augment to traditional MARS HF communications. It was felt that an additional benefit was the renewal of NAVMARCORMARS liaison with other naval activities in the state. The primary points of contact in the operational centers were the center chief petty officers who all provided a high level of cooperation and appreciation for our efforts.

(Continued from column 1.) NBI. That seems to be working out very well so far. I wish I could find some information in regard to what this signal is and where it is coming from, and what kind of mode it is. It has a signal strength here at this station of a continuous 40 db over nine.

I do not think an interference report would move them, but it would be interesting to find out just what and where this signal comes from. Seems like some sort of Weather Fax, or some kind of Multi-Plex Data signal. If any station has any information on it, please E-MAIL me at nnn0gam@navymars.org. Wally/GAM

Blessings, and all good wishes for great good health, for joyous family gatherings, and for a very Merry Christmas! And may your New Year be full of happy surprises!

The next issue of The TRIAD will be during the third week of January 2007. May we hear from you?! We do need articles for The TRIAD.

Region Five Navy-Marine Corps MARS

From NNN0GAZ MN

Greetings from your neighbors to the north, members of Navy-Marine Corps MARS Region Five. Presently every state in Region Five has either completed or is in the process of completing their fourth quarter emergency communications exercise. Exercises have included scenarios involving airports, early winter snow/ice storms, port disasters and passing mixed group traffic. The members of Michigan Navy-Marine Corps MARS participated in a joint exercise with the United States Coast Guard, passing traffic between Coast Guard stations in Michigan and Wisconsin. With every state in Region Five conducting emergency communications exercises, keep in mind many of the mailboxes will be involved in passing traffic related to these exercises. If you are not directly involved in passing exercise related traffic, please keep your time connected to a mailbox to a minimum – don't remain connected to read routine administrative messages if you see that there are higher precedence messages waiting for distribution on your state mailbox, someone may be waiting in line to connect so they can handle the exercise related traffic. In addition, avoid connecting with region relay mailboxes. These switches are especially busy as they process and forward traffic to state and region staff as well as exercise participants. Your cooperation will help us maintain reliability, speed and security in our communications.

Propagation has also created challenges for Region Five in recent weeks. Many states are utilizing multiple frequencies and multiple operating modes to conduct their nets and pass traffic. Please keep in mind that many of the secondary and tertiary frequencies are shared with other states in Region Five creating the need to adjust net schedules so that all can utilize the frequencies and conduct nets. For some states having access to the secondary and tertiary frequency may be the difference between being able to conduct a traffic net or having to suspend operations because there is no other frequency available to them. The cooperation of all concerned is expected and appreciated.

A new Region Five website is now on-line at a new location. You can access the site and its resources by going to the National Navy-Marine Corps MARS web page, click on areas – find Central Area and then select Region Five. Many thanks to NNN0AS5 Five, Bob Reid (NNN0XYA), for updating and maintaining the Region Five website.

News from Indiana NAVMARCORMARS

From NNN0As everyone has probably noticed, we're approaching the sunspot minimum. This presents some particularly interesting challenges for Indiana, as our primary net time is 0130Z (0030Z in the summer). Mid-summer, this is well before sundown, but by mid-winter, it is well after sundown. As the sunspots become fewer, our

primary frequency (NCL) becomes useless after darkness, and we generally move to our secondary frequency (NBG). Lately, even NBG is too high to support NVIS propagation, and we have had to move the net to our alternate frequency of NAE.

For those who haven't tried operations that low – which antennas work and which don't? Long wires (hundreds of feet in length), resonant inverted vees (fairly large at that frequency) and non-resonant antennas fed with parallel feedline radiate well for NVIS propagation. Inverted vees or dipoles resonant at 3 or 4 MHz, but fed with long lengths of coaxial cable, fall in the "don't work well" category.

The minimum of the sunspot cycle is expected in 2007, so we still have a few months to go before things improve – until then, it's time to figure out how to use what we have available.

Not all states, of course, have nets after darkness falls. But for those who don't have to deal with this problem, consider this question: How will you provide night-time ECOM support this winter?

State of Ohio Readiness for Quarterly ECOM EXERCISE

Greetings from The Buckeye State!

We here in Ohio are getting ready for our Fourth Quarter ECOM EXERCISE, "WHITE BLANKET".

The Northwest corner of the state is in charge of this exercise, and the following stations have been working hard to prepare all the groundwork for this exercise: NNN0AYV, NNN0BBZ (who is also NNN0GBN TWO), NNN0QAV, NNN0SWA, NNN0XOQ, and NNN0EIK.

All are welcome to check into this ECOM EXERCISE. We are doing EEI, SITREPS, and Health and Welfare messages during this exercise. We are hoping to break our record for messages sent and received and to keep our message skills sharp in case a real emergency should arise.

KARENSUE, NNN0GBN OH.

My sincere thanks and deep appreciation to you who have taken the time to contribute so greatly to this issue of The TRIAD: Dennis, NNN0GAP IL, Paul, NNN0GAQ IN, David, NNN0GAY MI, Tim, NNN0AS5 & NNN0GAZ MN, Karen, NNN0GBN OH, Jack, NNN0AS4 GA, Wally, NNN0GAM GA, Bob, NNN0GAT KY, Roy, NNN0GBA MS. And Lee, NNN0GBL NC, and Jim, NNN0ASG TWO AL for articles for the January issue of The TRIAD.

A Christmas Adventure With Grandma

(This story was sent to me by two of my hometown friends; author unknown)

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true. Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous!

Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go." "Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous, cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough, and he didn't have a coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat!

I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes," I replied

shyly. "It's ... for Bobby." The nice lady smiled at me. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas. That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it - Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers. Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby. Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team. I still have the Bible, with the tag tucked inside: \$19.95. He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find Christmas under a tree.!

Would you like to read completely through the Bible during 2007? There are several approaches to doing this for your consideration. If you decide to read ten chapters a day, starting with the very first chapter, it will take you 119 days to completely read through the Bible. Averaging ten chapters a day you would finish on 29 April 2007. Keep in mind you don't have to read all ten chapters in one sitting. Have a morning and an evening reading time.

Reading, averaging, five chapters a day you would read completely through on 26 August 2007.

If you want to take the entire year to read through the Bible, you can do so by averaging slightly more than 3 chapters a day.

If you have read the entire Bible in the KJV, you might want to try a different version during 2007. There is a New KJV; the NIV (New International Version) and the New ASV (American Standard Version). You might want to visit a Christian book-store and look at some of the versions of the Bible in stock and choose one with which you would feel comfortable. Give it a try during 2007!

Merry Christmas!

"Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas..." In homes all across America where there are young children, the excitement over Christmas and Santa Claus and presents will be building increasingly as the days go by. Parents will revel in the child-like enthusiasm of their young family as they long impatiently for Santa to make his annual home visits.

The Mothers and fathers cannot help but be drawn back to their own childhood and the excitement over Christmas and all the pageantry, the decorations, the manger scenes, the Christmas plays, and sometimes snow and riding sleds down hills and streets, and the Christmas-eve candlelight communion services. Then, finally, Christmas morning and the race to the Christmas tree and the presents!

For sure **you** can remember Christmas mornings and the days leading up to them when you were young enough to believe in Santa Claus. There must be a certain Christmas that stands out in your memory above all the others. Those Christmas plays wherein we acted out the role of the shepherds, the wise men, the angel, Mary and Joseph and sometimes a small live baby---but usually a doll---were a joyous part of the Christmas season. And it has to be said, the two week vacation from school made the Christmas season all the more joyous.

In Sunday School and in church, the lessons and the sermons focused our minds and hearts on the real meaning of the season, and our parents helped by emphasizing that Christmas is much more than presents and Santa Claus, and that we needed to keep in mind why our Lord chose to come into this world and live for a while among us.

"The Times, They Are A-Changin," wrote Bob Dylan, and we have seen this in a dramatic way over the years. Values, neighborliness, Sabbath observance, deaths of loved ones and our own process of growing old, and much more, have had an effect on each one of us. However, there are some things that never change, upon which we can always count: The Ten Commandments, the Sermon On The Mount, and

all the promises our Lord made throughout Holy Scripture, and His unconditional love for us that never falters, never fades, but is always there for us. He does not love the sins we commit, but He loves us!

He demonstrated His love for us by leaving His glory behind and coming into this world to live among us so that, in due course, He would purchase our salvation for us through His suffering and death on the cross. This is the glory of our Christmas celebration, that God loved us so much He was willing to sacrifice His Son so we could, through our faith in and acceptance of Christ as our Lord and Savior, have eternal life.

In His love for us, our Lord does not prohibit anything, **except** those things than can damage and destroy us. Whenever we are self-centered, we are fencing our Lord out of our lives. When we are Christ-centered, our lives revolve around our Lord and we are in fellowship with Him. Our greatest Christmas present we can give is to give ourselves more fully to our Lord in loving obedience and in loving service to others. This is entering into the fullness and the joy of celebrating Christmas. Thus, may all of you have a blessed, Merry Christmas!

In Appreciation Of Charlie, NNN0LUK KY From NNN0BTG KY

As we approach this Christmas season once again, my thoughts as well as the KY MARS family, turn to those who are no longer here to celebrate this joyous season with us. Charlie NNN0LUK is missed by all of us here in KY. He was an inspiration to us all and a wonderful source of information which he would gladly share with all who asked, Charlie was my mentor; he took me under his wing and most of what I learned about MARS I learned from Charlie. But most of all Charlie was my dear friend. Charlie will live on in the minds and hearts of all of us who had the privilege of knowing him and working with him as Navy-Marine Corps MARS members. God bless you Charlie from all your NAVYMARS family.

The **Central Area Newsletter** is published for the enjoyment and edification of Navy-Marine Corps MARS members. The contents **do not** reflect official Navy positions. EDITOR: Ben NNN0JQC/NNN0ASG EIGHT. 3301 Shannon Rd, Albany, GA 31721-1541. E-Mail: nnn0jqc@navymars.org. Central Area Director NNN0ASG IL: ITC (SW/AW) Michael Jeffries, USN. Assistant to the Central Area Director: Dave NNN0ASG ONE MI. Director Region Four: Jack NNN0AS4 GA. Director Region Five: Tim NNN0AS5 MN. **This is your Newsletter.** In order to keep it going your input is needed and encouraged.

In times past we have had items listed for sale or trade, and, members have listed certain items they were seeking for their radio shack.. Please keep in mind that you can list items you may want to buy, sell or trade in the TRIAD. E-mail us.

(USMCR TOYS FOR TOTS continued from page 1)
the five needs identified by the Marine Corps.

First, the Foundation could provide toys to supplement the collections of local units that had fewer Marines due to military cutbacks of the 80s and 90s. Second, the Foundation could arrange and pay for the creation, publication, manufacture and distribution of promotion and support materials to Toys for Tots coordinators - something the declining budgets prevented the Marine Corps from doing any longer. Third, the Foundation could enable individual and corporate donors to Toys for Tots to take a charitable deduction on their income tax returns. Fourth, the Foundation could enter into contracts with corporations to conduct promotions, which would produce royalties for Toys for Tots. (Needs three and four were two important elements of this charitable endeavor that the Marine Corps, as a federal agency, could not fulfill). Fifth, the Foundation could ensure that the Toys for Tots program operates in compliance with IRS regulations, state laws and regulations and charitable standards.

In 1995, the Secretary of Defense approved Toys for Tots as an official activity of the U.S. Marine Corps and an official mission of the Marine Corps Reserve. In 1996, the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve expanded Toys for Tots to cover all 50 states by authorizing selected Marine Corps League Detachments and selected local community organizations (generally veteran Marines), located in communities without a Marine Reserve Center, to conduct toy collection and distribution campaigns in their communities as part of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program.

In 1997, the Marine Corps celebrated the 50th anniversary of Toys for Tots. In 1999, the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve delegated authority to the President, Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to approve and manage local Toys for Tots campaigns conducted in communities without a Reserve Unit.

2001: Despite the trauma the nation experienced as a result of the 911 attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, the economic downturn and the anthrax scare, the 2001 U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Campaign was the second best in the previous 54 year history of the program. Local campaigns were conducted in 388 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This was the most extensive coverage to date.

The Marine Toys for Tots Foundation celebrated its 10th anniversary as the fund-raising and support organization for Toys for Tots in 2001. The highlights of the year were that the Foundation had its most successful campaign to date plus was ranked #289 in the 2001 "Philanthropy 400". This was the first time the Foundation earned a ranking in the "Philanthropy 400". In 2002, Charity Navigator awarded the

Foundation a 4-star rating and the Chronicle of Philanthropy ranked the Foundation #267 in the "Philanthropy 400".

In 2003, the DMA Nonprofit Federation named the Foundation the "Outstanding Nonprofit Organization of the Year" for 2003. The Chronicle of Philanthropy ranked the Foundation #341 in the "Philanthropy 400". Starburst ranked the Foundation website #9 of the "Top 100 Toy Websites". Reader's Digest, in the November 2003 edition, named Marine Toys for Tots Foundation "America's Best Children's Charity". In the December 2003 edition, Forbes included Marine Toys for Tots Foundation in its "Gold Star List" of charities.

During 2003, the Foundation assumed full responsibility for managing the after action reports for all local Toys for Tots Coordinators. Despite the continuous worldwide war on terrorism, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the mobilization of 35% of Marine Forces Reserves and the Presidential election which siphoned a great deal of America's disposable income, the 2004 Toys for Tots Campaign was the most successful to date. Local campaigns were conducted in 481 communities - the most extensive coverage to date. Marines distributed more than 19 million toys to 7.5 million needy children.

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation supplemented local toy collections with 8.8 million toys valued at \$40.9 million. The Foundation also distributed to local coordinators promotion and support materials valued at more than \$700,000. Importantly, the 2004 campaign enjoyed the most extensive visibility at the national level in the history of the program, due in large part to the support of ABC TV and radio.

During the 2005 Toys for Tots Campaign, local Toys for Tots Coordinators distributed 18.5 million toys to 7.5 million needy children. Concurrently, local campaigns were conducted in 516 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico - the most extensive coverage ever. Although the number of toys distributed was fewer than the 2004 campaign, local coordinators reached 7.5 million children; hence the 2005 and 2004 campaigns are the two most successful campaigns in the history of Toys for Tots.

Over the 58 years of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, Marines have distributed more than 351 million toys for 166 million needy children. This charitable endeavor has made U.S. Marines the unchallenged leaders in looking after needy children at Christmas. Over its 15 year life span, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation has supplemented local toy collections with more than 64.5 million toys valued at more than \$344 million; plus has provided promotion and support materials valued at over \$3.9 million.

A Christmas Lesson

By Tom Krause

"Is there a purpose? Why are we here?"
A little boy asked as the yuletide drew near.
"I really do hope that someday I will know
the reason we stand out here in the snow,
ringing this bell as people walk by,
while thousands of snowflakes
descend from the sky."

The mother by
just smiled at her shivering son
who would rather be playing and having some fun
but soon would discover before evening was done
the meaning of Christmas
the very first one.

The young boy exclaimed, "Mother where does it go?"
"All the pennies we collect - every year in the snow."
"Why do we do it? Why do we care?"
"We worked for these pennies,
so why should we share?"

"Because once a baby - so meek and so mild
was born in a manger - so humble the child
the son of a King - was born in this way
to give us the message
He carried that day.

"The present God gave the world on that night,
was the gift of his son to make everything right.
Why did he do it? Why did he care?
To teach about loving
and how we should share."

"The meaning of Christmas, you see my dear son,
is not about presents or just having fun
but the gift of a father - his own precious Son
so the world would be saved
when his work was all done"

Now the little boy smiled - with a tear in his eye
as snowflakes kept falling from out of the sky -
rang louder the bell as the people walked by
while down deep in his heart
at last he knew why.

**Merry Christmas To All
And To All Happy New Year!**

The Wonder Of It!

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door;
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or it decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp--
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics, the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal?
I would love to hear Your take;
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake."

"And why's everyone so quiet,
So somber? Give me a clue?"
"Hush child," said He,
They're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you."

Judge not!

Ouch, that hurts!

(From Archie, a friend with whom I grew up back in our
home town in Kentucky. Thanks, Archie!)