



News and Information from Cañon City
and the Greater Royal Gorge Region

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Marines salute veterans on America's birthday

Debbie Bell
The Daily Record

FLORENCE — Their hearts for service shining through, almost a dozen members of the Marine Corps League Royal Gorge Detachment grilled and served lunch to about 150 veterans and their caretakers at the Bruce McCandless Colorado State Veterans' Home on the Fourth of July.

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Detachment member Bill Purdue summed up the group's feelings about Saturday's event.

"This is the least we can do for them," Purdue said.

Less than a year old, the local detachment already has about 60 members and has adopted the veterans' home for fundraisers and other projects.

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"This is just one of our ways of showing our support," said member Ron Bates. "When we started, our platform was community involvement. We're just trying to do different things."

Bates said Saturday was the first of what could become an annual Independence Day barbecue at the home, which currently has 96 residents – five of whom served in the Marine Corps.

"I love the cross section of older and younger guys here," Bates said. The youngest detachment member present was 39, while the oldest, 85, was the only woman member there, Bobbi Alger. She now serves as historian for the local MCL.

Entertainment

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"I think this is a lot of fun," Alger said. "But, I'm a flag waver from way back. Being a veteran, we have to get the word out as much as we can."

Alger served in World War II in aviation supply.

Photos

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"We had to be sure everybody had parts, so those planes were in the air," Alger said. "Sometimes a plane could be grounded because they didn't have a 25-cent part."

George Hollibaugh, one of the five Marine residents at the home, served in Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. He said the chance to socialize with other Marines brought memories flooding back.

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"Whenever the Marines get together, it's always good," Hollibaugh said.

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Jim Barrows, veterans' home activities director, said the staff and residents appreciated Saturday's event.

"This is wonderful, especially on the Fourth of July," Barrows said. "They always enjoy seeing other people. We are really blessed that we have so much involvement here from our military groups."

The barbecue was just a first step at the home for the Royal Gorge Detachment. The group is organizing its inaugural fundraising golf tournament for July 18 at Sumo Golf Village; players and sponsorships still are welcome.

"You don't have to be military to play," said detachment member George Button, who also serves as administrative assistant to the director of nursing at the home. "Just come out and play."

Cost for the four-person scramble is \$75 per person, which includes golf, use of golf cart, lunch and prizes. Registration deadline is July 15. Call Button at 429-4277 to register or for more information.

All proceeds will go to the residents' fund at the veterans' home.

"Those funds are used for whatever the residents want," Barrows said. "We can take them to dinner, go fishing, do an overnight somewhere. It could be entertainment or movie nights. We have a lot of fun here with everybody, and a military group makes it so special."

The local MCL is planning its second Formal Ball to celebrate the 234th birthday of the United States Marine Corps on Nov. 10. That same day, the detachment will honor veterans' home Marines with individual cakes.

"There are some awfully lonely people out here," Bates said of the residents. "Anything we can do for them, we will."

For more information on the group, visit www.RoyalGorgeMCL.com.

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