November is here and the weather has changed to cold blustery days now. Our Volunteer drivers escorted twelve veterans to Roudebush Hospital in Indianapolis and eleven veterans to the Danville VAMC. Any veterans that would like to schedule a ride to either of the Hospitals should contact me at 765-361-4133 at least one week in advance before your appointment. The phone lines were busy this month as we had fifty three phone calls into the office with twelve visitors this month.

Our Office Hours are as follows: Monday & Wednesday 9am to 12:00 and 1pm to 4:30pm then on Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 12:00 noon. The Veterans of Montgomery County receive each month $90,000 in benefits.

Marines and families of the fallen gathered  Tuesday to mark the 35th anniversary of the 1983 suicide bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 in what the Trump administration has called the “opening Salvo” in the global war on terror. “I think we all kind of grew up that day, because we knew the world had changed, Marine Commandant Gen. Robert Neller said at the annual ceremony of remembrance at the memorial for the fallen in Camp Lejeune, North Caroline.

The memorial bears the inscription “They came in Peace” and lists the names of the 220 Marines, 18 sailors and three soldiers who died as part of a peace keeping force in Lebanon at the time that was trying the midst of sectarian war. Most of the Marines killed in the attack were assigned to the 24th Marine Amphibious unit, based out of Camp Lejeune.

It was the worst single day for Marine casualties since the battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. The FBI later estimated that the suicide truck bomber who roared past sentries, who were forbidden by their rules of engagement, set off a blast equivalent to 21,000 pounds of TNT. On threat same day, another suicide truck bomber hit the French barracks, killing 58 French Paratroopers.

In his remarks at Lejeune Tuesday, Neller noted that “many would state that the event – the loss of those Marines, along with the French Paratroopers—started the global war on terror.”

Maybe that’s true, I don’t know, he said, “but I know it changed the way we say that world. It changed the way we looked at threats. It changed the way we operated—and those lessons learned carried through the rest of our time as Marines. And that impact of Beirut still shapes us today. “The Lejeune appearance was possibly the beginning of a long farewell to service for Neller, whose term as Commandant will end in the coming months. Neller said he had not been to the Lejeune ceremony before.

I realized I was getting near the end of this journey. It has been my honor to serve this Marines Corps and to serve with you” he said. When the barracks bombing occurred, Neller said he was a naïve young captain at The Basic School, the training ground for Marine officers in Quantico, Virginia.

He remembered someone telling him to turn on the TV, because the Marine barracks had just been attacked. “It was kind of like 9/11, he said. “They did what?”

Neller said the attack came at a moment of rebuilding as a nation, following the end of the Vietnam War, with a new President, Ronald Reagan in the White House

I know there are no words that can express our sorrow and grief for the loss of those splendid young men, “Reagan told the world from the White House lawn. “ Likewise, there are no words to properly express our outrage at the despicable act. But I think we should all recognize these deeds make so evident  the best nature of those who would assume power if they could have their way and drive us out of that area: “

Neller said that attacks forced the Marine Corps to rethink training and tactics.

“I think it changed how we all look at the world, “he said. “ I think it changed all of us and I think it made us realize that it’s a dangerous place out there and the reason our nation has Marines is so we that can go to bed at night and not have to worry about stuff like that”.

Military retirees, those who receive disability for other benefits from the Department of Veterans’ Affairs , federal retirees , and social security recipients’ will see a 2.8 percent pay raise in their checks in 2019.

On the local level Whitlock Place will be hosting a Veteran’s Day all you can eat Pancake Breakfast on November 10, 2018 from 8 to 10 a.m. at 1719 S Elm St. Crawfordsville.

Beginning in December on the third Tuesday of each month, from11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Veteran Health Indiana at the Roudebush VA Medical Center 1481 W 10th Street, Indianapolis Room C-1202 they will be holding free veteran legal clinics. If you need help with eviction/foreclosure issues, child support and family law, outstanding warrants/fines, restoring driver’s licenses and discharge upgrades you may attend at no cost and no appointment needed.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

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