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Following a Marine tradition, the cutting of the Marine birthday cake falls to the oldest and youngest marines in the room. Jack Bartman, Division 9 bus operator, watches Pena Glen, the youngest marine, cut the cake with a sword. Glen receives a surprise later when re discovered David Palm, Division 7 maintenance manager, was at the celebration. Palm was Glen's gunnery sergeant during Glen's 12-week basic training.



Photos by Ned Racine

Division 9 Event Marks Veteran's Day, Marine Corps' 232nd Birthday

- All service branches represented in Veteran's Day celebration

By NED RACINE

(Nov. 13, 2007) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 held its fifth Marine Corps Birthday celebration, Nov. 9, and paid tribute to all members of the armed services.

More than 50 Metro employees met in the new Division 9 break room to hear veterans speak of the importance of their military service.

After a color guard from the Marine 3rd Air Naval Gunfire Liason Company in Long Beach presented the United States flag, Jack Gabig, general manager, San Gabriel Valley Sector, thanked the veterans in attendance and anyone whose family member had served in the United States armed forces.

Gabig also introduced Harry Baldwin, City Council member from the City of San Gabriel and member of the Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office.

Flags lined two sides of the break room, acknowledging each branch of the United States military, including a flag commemorating those who are prisoners of war and missing in action. As with previous celebrations, veterans swapped memories and cut a cake in honor of the Marine Corps'

232st anniversary.

Despite the gaily decorated cake—complete with the Marine Corps seal—the morning event turned somber as it commemorated the sacrifices of those who served and those who did not return.



Richard Hunt, general manager, San Fernando Valley Sector, presents a certificate to Sam Harper, UTU, victor in a barbecue cook-off with Doug Middleton, Division 9 transportation manager. Those attending the Veteran's Day celebration were able to eat the winning and losing entries.

Richard Hunt, general manager, San Fernando Valley Sector, chose to attend the Veteran's Day celebration over another event. An Air Force veteran, Hunt read a piece titled "What Is an American?" from *Stars and Stripes* magazine; a piece Hunt has kept for 37 years. "This is my way of saying 'thank you' to the veterans."

"I do have a profound appreciation for the people who served our country in uniform," Hunt said. He reminded his audience that when he served in Southeast Asia, it was not popular to serve in the military. "Every time I needed encouragement . . . I would read it," Hunt said, emotion in his voice.

Robert New, director of Purchasing, an Army veteran and volunteer at Veterans Administration facilities in Westwood and San Diego, spoke on how veterans are valuable leaders and motivators.

Sal Llamas, Division 9 assistant manager, Maintenance, read a proclamation from President Bush on the importance of Veteran's Day. Llamas is a former Marine who served two tours of duty in Iraq.

Llamas, who recalled he had served on a number of burial details, also explained the origins of "Taps." "Taps" is always played when military veterans are laid to rest and every day at "lights out." "Taps" was first played on a battlefield in 1862.

After "Taps" was played, The audience shared a moment of silence to honor fallen veterans.

John McBryan, Division 9 maintenance manager, a former Marine and one of the organizers of the Veteran's Day event, noted that he and other Division 9 veterans are kicking off a fund raising effort in 2008. They hope to erect a permanent memorial in a corner of the break room to honor all military veterans.

The Continental Congress established the Marine Corps on November 10, 1775. The Marine Corps currently has approximately 177,000 active troops.