

Marine Corps League



Ritual

Revised March 2026

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It was the purpose of the original Ritual Committee to compile a book for the membership of the Marine Corps League on the proper procedures for opening and closing meetings; to conduct initiations and installations; and to conduct funeral and memorial ceremonies befitting our departed Marines and FMF Navy Personnel.

Introduced at the National Staff Meeting, Arlington, VA, February 21, 1965, this Ritual was adopted in its entirety by a unanimous vote of the National Staff.

Officers of Detachments and Ritualistic Teams (where used) are asked to study their parts carefully, so that when a ceremony is to be conducted, it will be with the dignity befitting the Marine Corps League.

Issued by

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Revised - Updated - May 2025 Training and Leadership Committee

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FOREWORD

In revising the procedure for conducting meetings of Detachments, recognition has been given to the present-day status of the League as a full-fledged Veterans organization having National scope and dignity. It has also been recognized that some Detachments are comparatively small in membership and limited in size and adaptability of quarters. Nevertheless, the Committee felt that the importance of dignity of the various ceremonies of the League should not, to an unreasonable extent, be sacrificed for expediency. It was felt that with the passage of time acquaintance and knowledge of the various ceremonies will demonstrate the importance of dignity and solemnity of all official occasions conducted in the course of League business.

In the case of small Detachments, the ceremonies may be conducted by assigning more than one part to one individual, though this is not recommended. It is our intent that the applicant for membership receives a favorable and lasting impression of the League at the beginning of his/her affiliation. Complete information pertaining the League can be imparted in a Ritualistic Ceremony in a very short period of time if the entire Initiation Ceremony is used. Always remember that the World and the New Member will never respect or value the League in any greater degree than the League respects and values itself.

Persons not members of the Marine Corps League may be permitted to witness all ritualistic ceremonies, but they shall be excluded from the meeting during the conduct of other official business.

CONDUCTING A REGULAR LEAGUE MEETING

OPENING CEREMONY

It shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms to arrange the quarters, to place a Bible upon the Altar, and at the close of all occasions, he/she shall return all equipment to its proper place.

He/she shall also conduct the advance and retirement of the Colors. (Commandant may call for the Marines' Hymn at any point in the ceremony.)

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, secure the quarters and satisfy yourself that all present are qualified to be present during the deliberations of this Detachment/Department/National Session.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, Aye, Sir/Ma'am

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: The quarters are secured and all present are qualified to remain. *(If persons present are not qualified, the Sergeant-at-Arms will report accordingly. If conducting an open meeting, it would be assumed that visitors would be qualified to remain. If prospective members are present, they should be taken outside the meeting room until the point in the Order of Business where they will be called into the meeting to be initiated.)*

COMMANDANT: *(Shall give two raps of the gavel to call all to rise)* Sergeant-at-Arms, advance and post the Colors and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am

(Note: All Persons wearing League covers will execute a hand salute as Colors are advanced; those not covered will execute the civilian salute of right hand over the heart)

COMMANDANT: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: *(As to your religious preference, Uncover)*

Supreme Commandant, we ask Thy blessing upon all here assembled. We pray for guidance in our deliberations, and that we may here exemplify the principles and purposes of our beloved Marine Corps League. We ask Thy protection and blessing for all Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who have died in the service of their Country, and for all our members, both past and present. Grant that the Marine Corps League may grow and prosper in the humane purposes and principles upon which it is founded. Amen. *(Cover) (Commandant, by one rap of the gavel, seats the Detachment/Department)*

COMMANDANT: Sergeant- at- Arms, declare this meeting open for the transaction of official business.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: By authority of the Commandant of Detachment/Department of _____ Marine Corps League, I declare this meeting open for the transaction of official business.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Opening ceremony
2. Roll Call of Officers
3. Applications for membership
4. Balloting on applications for membership to be approved by a majority vote of those present and qualified to vote. Either a voice vote or secret ballot may be used.
5. Ceremony of Initiation (Full or abridged form depending on size of Detachment, time, and circumstances)
6. Minutes of previous meeting
7. Correspondence
8. Report of Paymaster
9. Report of any member or member's family sick or in distress
10. Report of Officers
11. Report of Standing Committees
12. Report of Special Committees
13. Unfinished Business
14. New Business
15. Ceremony of Installation of Officers. (At the proper time of year according to the National Bylaws)
***NOTE:** Installation meetings may be open to the public, if desired. If so, it is recommended that all regular business be omitted by a motion and the meeting adjourned following the opening ceremony.*
16. Good of the League
17. Announcements
18. Closing Ceremony

NOTE: TO RECESS A MEETING: *Chaplain will close the Bible. Sergeant-at-Arms will lead in a salute to the Colors and declare the meeting in recess.*

TO REOPEN A MEETING: *Sergeant-at-Arms will lead in a salute to the Colors. Chaplain will reopen the Bible. Sergeant-at-Arms will declare the meeting reopened for the conduct of Official Business.*

CLOSING CEREMONY

COMMANDANT: There being no further business, we will proceed to close. (Commandant gives two raps of the gavel for all to rise.) The Detachment/Department will stand silent in respect for our deceased members. (Chaplain, without orders, reads the names of recently deceased members.)

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, Retire the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am. (All persons wearing a League cover will execute a hand salute as Colors are retired. Those not covered will execute the civilian salute of right hand over the heart)

COMMANDANT: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: (As to your religious preference, Uncover)

Supreme Commandant, we humbly beseech Thee to bless what good we have accomplished and forgive that which we have done amiss. As we separate to go our several ways, we commit ourselves to Thy loving care. Amen. (Cover)

COMMANDANT: Senior Vice Commandant, perform the last duty of your post.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDANT: Marines the _____ Detachment /Department thanks you for your attendance, and requests you to secure new members, and further, that you favor us at every future meeting with your presence so far as your circumstances will permit.

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, declare this meeting of the _____ Detachment/Department, Marine Corps League officially closed.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: By authority of the Commandant of Detachment/Department, Marine Corps League, I declare this meeting officially closed until ____ (date of next meeting) when it will be reopened for the transaction of official business.

COMMANDANT: *(Gives one rap of the gavel) Meeting adjourned.*

MEMBERS - INITIATION CEREMONY

NOTE: The applicant(s) for membership is to receive complete information concerning the Marine Corps League upon admission to membership. *Great care should be exercised to the end that dignity, importance and value of membership are impressed upon the applicant's mind. If an abridged ceremony is used, it is important that the context and meaning is not lost in the interests of brevity. With brief practice, you will find that using the entire ceremony is not as lengthy as it would appear.*

COMMANDANT: We are now prepared to obligate the applicant(s) for membership in the _____ Detachment of the Marine Corps League. All present are requested to maintain a quiet and respectful decorum, refrain from smoking and such other conduct as may detract from the seriousness and solemnity of the occasion. Listen carefully and ponder well what you shall hear.

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will present such applicant(s) as may be seeking admission to membership in the Marine Corps League to the Altar.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am. *(Applicants are presented before the Altar.)*

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Sir/Madam Commandant, the following applicant(s) expressed a desire in the principles of the League and to be obligated as member(s). (Read names)

COMMANDANT: Applicant(s) you are here assembled to be obligated for membership in the _____ Detachment of the Marine Corps League. Here you will find Marines, FMF Navy Personnel, veterans of other service branches, and civilians who share the mottos, principles, and purposes of the United States Marine Corps and the Marine Corps League.

Let me assure you that the oath you are about to take can in no way conflict with any political or religious views that you may entertain. Let me further assure you that during the meetings of the League, no political or sectarian debate is permitted. We stand united by a common love of Country, a consciousness of having faithfully served here in the same camaraderie of fighting men and women and a sincere determination to continue that service by pursuit and practice of the purposes for which we are organized. In view of these assurances, and upon careful consideration, are you willing to accept the oath of membership in the Marine Corps League? If so, answer, I am.

COMMANDANT: *(Raps gravel twice for all members to rise.)* Raise your right hand and using your name where I use mine, repeat after me:

OATH OF MEMBERSHIP:

"I, _____, (pause so the applicant can repeat) In the Presence of our Almighty God,..... do solemnly swear,..... that I will uphold and defend..... the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America..... and the Bylaws and Administrative Procedures of the Marine Corps League..... That I take this obligation willingly..... and in good faith..... and that I will follow the directions and guidance..... of elected and appointed officers of the League..... That I will participate and support the missions and activities..... of the Marine Corps League,..... and that I promise to govern my conduct..... in such a manner..... that I will never bring discredit upon myself,.... Members of the League, or the Marine Corps..... So help me God. *(You may lower your hand)*

COMMANDANT: Chaplain, you will address the Supreme Commandant on behalf of these new member(s).

CHAPLAIN: *(As to your religious preference, Uncover)*

Almighty God, we ask Thy blessing on these who have now become members of the Marine Corps League, and upon the League itself, and upon those who are already members. Grant unto our beloved Country and to all Nations, the desire and determination to follow Thy guidance concerning peace, justice and brotherly love among men and women. Grant that all Nations shall forsake war and never again shall our Nations have war, but if war must come, grant that our cause be a just one and that we may possess the fortitude to fight with the valor and distinction shown by our fellow Marines and FMF Navy Personnel of times past.

Let none of us rise up in pride to think we are better than our fellow man and woman. Keep our League steadfast on its course and grant that its members may be ever mindful of the true meaning of our motto, "Semper Fidelis" by being "Always Faithful" to Thee, to our Country, to our League and to our fellow members, thus enriching the world because of our part in it. Amen.

COMMANDANT: Members, as Commandant of the _____ Detachment, I welcome you and declare that you now possess all the privileges, rights, and responsibilities as a member of the League.

COMMANDANT: Members, I introduce to you *(read names of new members)*. I declare a recess of _____ minutes that you may personally meet and welcome them to our Detachment.

RITUAL OF INSTALLATION

*The Installing Officer rises and inquires of the Detachment/Department or National Commandant. **

INSTALLING OFFICER: Before installing the newly elected Officers (and/or appointed Officers) of the _____ Detachment (Department of ____ or the National Board of Trustees) I wish to make certain inquiries. Have you the Charter of the Detachment (Department or Marine Corps League) in its proper place? (Pause for response)

COMMANDANT: We have, Sir/Ma'am.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Have the dues of the newly elected and/or appointed Officers been paid and have the annual dues for each of them been forwarded to the proper offices?

COMMANDANT: They have, Sir/Ma'am.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Have each of the incoming Officers been duly and properly elected or appointed?

COMMANDANT: They have, Sir/Ma'am.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will present the newly elected Officers (and appointed Officers) for installation.

SGT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am.

The Sergeant-at-arms will form the newly elected (and appointed) Officers before the Altar with the Commandant-elect in the center with the other elected Officers evenly divided on either side of the Commandant, with the appointed Officers in a second line behind the elected Officers and then reports).

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Installing Officer, Sir/Ma'am, I present to you, the newly elected (and appointed) Officers of the _____ Detachment (Department of _____ or National Board of Trustees), who desire to be qualified, obligated and installed into office.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Newly elected (and appointed) Officers, you have been chosen by your fellow members to lead them during the coming year. By their vote, your fellow members have indicated their faith and trust in your zeal, ability, and integrity. It is their belief that the earnest, honest and faithful discharge of your duties and responsibilities will vindicate that faith and trust. You should at once acquaint yourself with the laws of the Marine Corps League, the Department and the Detachment. Keep ever in mind the purposes of the League, conducting yourself as to exemplify those purposes in everything you do in your official capacity. Especially be vigilant to respect and honor your deceased Brothers-in-Arms. Never neglect an opportunity to advance the interests and welfare of the League and your Detachment, Department, or the National Organization. When your tour of duty has been completed, may it with justice be said that you helped to win the respect of the public, for the League, and your Detachment (Department or National Board of Trustees) and the admiration and gratitude of your fellow Members.

The Oath you are about to take cannot in any way conflict with any political or religious views you may entertain. In view of this assurance and considering what you have heard, are you willing to accept the oath of office? If so, answer, "I am."

INSTALLING OFFICER: *(Raps gavel twice for all members to rise.)*

You will raise your right hand and repeat after me, using your name where I use mine.

OATH FOR INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

I, _____, solemnly swear or affirm ... that I will bear true allegiance ... to the United States of America ... and to the Marine Corps League ... that I will enforce and uphold ... and will myself obey... the laws of the League ... I shall ever bear in mind ... the purposes and principles upon which ... the Marine Corps League ... and the _____ Detachment (Department) ... were founded ... I will subordinate myself ... to the best interests ...of my fellow members ...and the Marine Corps League... and will never personally benefit ... at the expense of the League ... or my Detachment (Department) ...in the slightest degree ...At the termination ...of my tour of duty ... I will surrender my office ... to my duly elected ...or appointed successor ...accounting for any property... that may have been entrusted ... to my care or custody ...all this I solemnly swear or affirm. **S o h e l p m e G o d .** (*You may lower your hand*)

INSTALLING OFFICER: Thank you; you may lower your hands. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Officers, with the exception of the Commandant, to their posts. (*Raps gavel once to seat the membership*)

INSTALLING OFFICER: Commandant, Sir/Ma'am, upon you reposes the highest and most important responsibility that can rest upon any officer of the Marine Corps League. ** (The Detachment is the most important unit in the League for it is composed of the membership, which is the very heart of the League. Without the Detachment, the other units of the League would have no reason for existence. The life and growth of the League begins with the Detachment).

*** To be used only in a Detachment installation - when installing a Department or National Officers, omit all words in parenthesis.*

Hold constantly before the eyes of your fellow members, the great principles for which the League strives. Lead and govern fairly and impartially. Strike quickly to prevent political, sectarian, or other improper debate in your meetings. Strive to promote harmonious interest and effort among your fellow members.

Be alert in supervising the work of your Officers. Require them to constantly bear in mind the obligation of their oath. Nevertheless, exercise a kindly attitude in all you say and do. Be quick to praise and cautious to admonish. To you is given the opportunity of so administering the affairs of the Detachment (substitute Department or League as appropriate) that it can and will improve in interest, work and growth.

Call upon your Staff of Officers for assistance and advice. With their help, formulate a progressive program for your term of office.

Do not accept your office lightly. Conduct yourself with the determination that the end of your tour of duty will mark a task well done. I congratulate you, Commandant, Sir/Ma'am.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the Commandant to his/her post.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am. (*Sergeant-at-Arms escorts the Commandant to the podium*)

INSTALLING OFFICER: Fellow members, I present to you the Officers you have chosen. I congratulate you on your selections and venture the opinion that they have been well made. Allow me to admonish you that you cannot now stand aside and expect your Officers to guide the destinies of this Detachment (Department or League) or to ensure its growth, success, and welfare. It is your duty to assist them in every way possible and to discharge your assignments cheerfully. Help your Officers make this Detachment (Department or League) an organization that the Marine Corps League and your community will respect and honor.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Sergeant-at-Arms, proclaim the Officers of the _____ Detachment (Department) of the Marine Corps League to be duly installed into office.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: By direction and authority of the Installing Officer, I proclaim the Officers of the _____ Detachment (Department of _____ or Marine Corps League) duly installed into office.

INSTALLING OFFICER: Chaplain, you will lead us in prayer?

CHAPLAIN: *(As to your religious preference, Uncover)*

Heavenly Father, Supreme Commandant, we beseech Thee to bless these newly installed Officers of the Marine Corps League. Grant, O Heavenly Father, that their guidance in our deliberations proves beneficial for a prosperous term of office. Make us, each one of us, ever mindful of our motto, "Semper Fidelis" and may our whole aim be - Thy will be done.

Amen. (Cover)

INSTALLING OFFICER: (Turns to the newly elected Commandant at the podium) Again, my congratulations to you. (As you speak, shake his/her right hand and as you continue speaking, hand the gavel from your left hand to his/her left hand). I present to you, Sir/Madam Commandant, this gavel as an emblem of your authority and responsibility. I trust you will always use it discreetly and wisely.

(At this time, if desired, the following Change of Command Ceremony may be performed)

INSTALLING OFFICER: Junior Past Commandant, you may now perform the last duty of your post.

JUNIOR PAST COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, center the Colors. All rise, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am.

(At this time, the elected Commandant, and the Junior Past Commandant march to the center and in front of the podium, facing the membership).

When the League Colors are brought forward by the Sergeant-at-Arms, both Commandants salute the Colors and remain facing the Colors. The Sergeant-at-Arms steps to the front of the Junior Past Commandant and presents him/her with the colors. The Sergeant-at-Arms gives a hand salute and steps back. The Commandants then face each other, and the Junior Past Commandant presents the Colors to the installed Commandant. Both Commandants then face to the Sergeant-at-Arms who gives a hand salute and the Colors are given back to him/her by the installed Commandant.

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, Post the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Aye, aye, Sir/Ma'am.

Upon command, the Sergeant-at-Arms returns the Colors to their proper place and both Commandants return to their posts. The installed Commandant conducts the rest of the meeting.

COMMANDANT: You may be seated. The ceremony is completed.

ORDER FOR RELIGIOUS FUNERAL SERVICES

(With this service being in a religious setting, it is customary for the male Marines and FMF Navy Personnel to remain UNCOVERED during the entire services. Note: Other religious preferences may be used and/or observed).

COMMANDANT: Members of the _____ Detachment, we are assembled here to pay Honor and Respect to one who has answered the final call.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, Supreme Father of us all, we come to Thee in this solemn hour with a realization of our utter helplessness. We are brought face to face with the inevitable fact of death. God of the Universe, be with us now, Helper of the helpless, Giver of eternal peace, Consoler of the disconsolate, take into Thine arms the soul of our departed brother/sister and mend the wounds of his/her bereaved family. Surround them with Thy loving kindness, give to their troubled hearts that peace and comfort which only Thou canst give. Amen.

COMMANDANT: We recognize that all people are God's children and that His power and authority extend beyond the universe. We know that our ways are not always His ways, and that by reason of the frailty of humans, we frequently depart from His way. It is not always given to us to understand His purpose. Often, we do not subordinate ourselves to Devine Power and teachings, nevertheless, from time to time, occasions like this bring us to a clearer understanding of our dependence upon God, and the futility of existence without Him.

He has seen fit to call our brother/sister Marine (FMF Sailor) to his/her final reward. We cannot understand why it should be now rather than later. We must bow in submission to the Divine Will and learn to say with a humble and contrite spirit "Thy will be done." As a symbol of the comradeship that grew from our common service for our Nation, he/she loved so well, we place this Marine insignia of the Eagle, Globe and entwined Anchor upon his/her breast. We shall ever cherish a memory that is lasting, until we, along with him/her, take our places in the silent halls of death.

CHAPLAIN: Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still water; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

COMMANDANT: Fellow members of the Detachment and all of you within the sound of my voice, think deeply concerning the things you have heard, give heed unto the promises and assurances of the Heavenly Father. Let them not be words without meaning. Ponder the inevitable fact that you surely will, and may soon be, called to your reward. Let the devotion of our departed brother/sister Marine (FMF Sailor) serve as an example to you in your association with your comrades and your fellow men. As he/she enters the Great Unknown, may you resolve to so govern your life that you may, and I am sure our departed friend will, hear from the Heavenly Father these words of commendation: "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of the Lord." Once more hear the consoling words of our Chaplain.

CHAPLAIN: Once more, O God, we come to Thee in prayer for our departed friend and brother/sister, and once more we beseech Thee to receive his/her soul into the joys of Thy Kingdom. Bowed down with grief and a sense of the futility of human existence apart from Thee, we are not always able to understand Thy divine purposes. It has pleased Thee to take from us our departed friend and to leave his/her loved ones without his/her loving companionship; nevertheless, help us to say with resignation and faith: "Thy will be done." Wilt Thou giveth strength and courage to complete the life we have yet to live/to fight the good fight with strength, courage and with a faith that through Thy grace, in Thine own good time we shall stand in the light of Thy love, face to face with Thee, when Thou shalt make all things known unto us? Grant us to know the right and to do the right. Bring to the hearts of the bereaved ones the peace and comfort which passeth all understanding.

Guide them and direct them in all their days, enable them to understand and to believe that this is not goodbye, and that yet in a little while they may reunite with him/her who has gone before, in happiness and peace forever. As we depart and go our several ways, continue to watch over us, and if it be Thy will that the time of our departure is delayed a while, may we be granted the strength and courage to face the coming days with fortitude. And now to Him who hath given, and who taketh away, we give honor, power and glory. Amen.

CHAPLAIN: Please join me in reciting the Lord's Prayer

(*) Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen. (**)

() Omit if Jewish, and (**) include if Protestant*

(The Chaplain will pronounce the Benediction)

May the Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee,
and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His
countenance upon thee and give thee Peace. Amen.

COMMANDANT: Members, please join me in honoring our Departed Marine (FMF Sailors). *(Commandant and members file past the deceased member and depart)*

Non-Religious Funeral Ritual

COMMANDANT: Members of the _____ Detachment, we are assembled here to pay Honor and Respect to one who has answered the final call. As a symbol of the comradeship that grew from our common service for our Nation, he/she loved so well, we place this Marine insignia of the Eagle, Globe and entwined Anchor upon his/her breast. We shall ever cherish a memory that is lasting, until we, along with him/her, take our places in the silent Halls of Death.

COMMANDANT: Fellow members of the _____ Detachment and all of you within the sound of my voice, think deeply concerning the thing you have heard, ponder the inevitable fact that you surely will, and may soon be, called to your reward. Let the devotion of our departed brother/sister Marine (FMF Navy Sailor) serve as an example to you in your association with your comrades and fellow men and women.

COMMANDANT: Members, please join me in honoring our Departed Marine (FMF Navy Sailor)

(Commandant and members file past the deceased member and depart)

CODE FOR FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

1. When not contrary to orders and regulations the extent that the Marine Corps League participates in a funeral depends on the expressed wishes of the deceased or the deceased family.

2. The Chaplain and/or the Commandant will confer with the Clergy and Funeral Director as to the time and place of the viewing and services and then will notify the Ceremonial Officer.

3. The Commandant will designate the Uniform of the Day to the Ceremonial Officer.

4. The Ceremonial Officer will contact the members of the Color Guard Unit and provide a squad to participate in the funeral.

5. The following are the prescribed types of military funerals.

Class A:

1. Escort at the Funeral Home
2. Pallbearers (Honor Guard)
3. Color Guard
4. Chaplain
5. Firing Squad
6. Bugler

Class B: Same as Class A (but no Pallbearers)

Class C: Escort at the Funeral Home

AT THE CEMETERY RELIGIOUS

COMMANDANT: Brothers and sisters, family and friends, we have come to the place of final rest of our departed brother/sister Marine (FMF Sailor) He/She is not here unless it be in spirit. His/Her earthly body, the house in which he/she lived, is all that is left to us. From the earth it came, to the earth we return it. It is a common end to which we all must come. With him/her, the golden bowl is broken, the silver string is loosened. He/She is no longer fettered with an earthly body. His/Her soul can soar through the infinite space of God's Universe. O, Death, where is thy sting? O, Grave, where is thy victory? And now, dear friend, we bid thee farewell. God, grant we meet again in our Celestial home.

CHAPLAIN: *(As to your religious preference, Uncover)*

Our Heavenly Father and Supreme Commandant, be Thou with us as we go our several ways. Keep our feet firmly on the path of righteousness. Protect and comfort the widow (widower) and children* of our departed friend, and finally, when our tour of duty ends on this earth, receive us unto Thyself, Amen. *(Cover)*

**Note: If no widow (widower) or children, replace with the Mother/Father as appropriate.*

(At this time the Honor Guard may do any or all of the following: Play Taps, Rifle Salute, and/or fold the American Flag that has been draped over the casket. They will then hand the flag over to the Commandant who will present it to the appropriate family member.)

COMMANDANT: On behalf of the President of the United States of America and a grateful Nation, we, the members of the _____ Detachment, Marine Corps League wish to present to you, this humble token of remembrance for services rendered by _____ (name of deceased). Thank you for his/her service to our Country.

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

(If conducted indoors, the service should be considered the same as being conducted in a religious setting, therefore, male Marines and FMF Navy Personnel shall remain UNCOVERED during the services. Other faiths, systems and practices should conform to their customs).

COMMANDANT: Sergeant-at-Arms, Advance the Colors. *(As the Colors advance, the audience is requested to rise.)*

COMMANDANT: All rise.

(The usual form for advancing the Colors is used or an adaptation may be made to suit the exigencies of the occasion)

COMMANDANT: The Chaplain *(Reverend, Rabbi, or Father, if a clergyman/priest is participating)* will give the Invocation.

CHAPLAIN: *(A clergyman or priest may give his (her) own prayer, but the Marine Corps League Chaplain should use the following prayer):*

As to your religious preference, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, we ask Thy blessing upon those here assembled, and upon those of our departed Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who have preceded us in death. Especially, Heavenly Father, we beseech Thee on behalf of those who died in battle with none of their dear ones to comfort them and with little opportunity to prepare to report before Thy judgment throne. For all of our fellow Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who faithfully served our Country and who sacrificed and bled that our people might have freedom, justice, and the right to worship Thee in their own way. We pray for Thy tender care and the everlasting hope that someday we may be reunited at Thy feet in Peace and that war and all the attendant evils will no more demand the sacrifice of the flower of humankind. Thou hast said unto us, "Greater love hath no man that he lay down his life for his friend." Reward those of our Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who have made the supreme sacrifice of their life, a way possible only with Thee, for we know Thy ways are just."

CHAPLAIN: Please join me in the Lord's Prayer

(*) Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen. (**)

(*) *Omit if Jewish, and (**) include if Protestant*

(At the conclusion of the Prayer, the Commandant will ask the audience to be seated.)

COMMANDANT: Please be seated.

(At this point a vocal solo may be used or a quartette/choir may be heard)

(If a speaker is to be used for a principal address, his/her address may be given at this time. The Commandant shall introduce the guest speaker. If no speaker has been engaged, the following address may be used. It may be given by the Commandant or a representative selected by him/her).

COMMANDANT: Memorial Day with its sad and sacred memories has come again. This day has been consecrated to our departed Marines and FMF Navy Personnel and dedicated to patriots. It gives us an appropriate occasion to dedicate and re-consecrate ourselves to the preservation of the fruits of their victories, and the sacred heritage that was purchased by their valor and sealed with their blood.

It is right and salutary that those who did sacrifice and die, or who did sacrifice and have since died, should be remembered and honored for the invaluable service they rendered to their Country and Humanity. Let the graves of the dead be strewn with flowers and wreaths of laurel and the memory of their noble deeds be revived again in oratory and song.

The impulse that inspired us to set aside this day for remembrance of our departed Marines and FMF Navy Personnel sprang from the grieving hearts of their family and friends. We cannot forget. The generations to follow us will not forget. Our expressions of love and sorrow will become an expression of gratitude and an acknowledgement of an incalculable debt to countless of generations of Americans.

We recall the glorious aspirations and hopes that filled their souls in times that demanded willingness to lay down one's life for his/her Country. Times filled with the spirit of freedom, patriotism and devotion. Now, on this occasion, we re-ignite the fires of patriotism, freedom and liberty, and again renew the vows of loyalty to the accomplishments that our noble dead have made in past years. Glorious are the dead who died for Liberty. Blessed are those whose blood was shed for the welfare of their fellowmen.

They lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved. Now they are at peace. It is our prayer that they may have Peace forevermore. They are at Peace, for in the roar of conflict, they found the serenity of death. Their memories will fill our land like a benediction.

It is for us, the living, to establish a society that will ban war, and permanently retain the freedom and equal rights of all men and women of all Nations. We must see to it that these honored dead shall not have died in vain. In the days that lie ahead and of the generations to come after us, we must, if we value freedom, justice and liberty, if we love our homes, if we believe that our Country stands as a living vindication of a popular government, prove our beliefs and our patriotism in the days of trial.

(At this point, special music may again be used. A patriotic hymn is suggested)

CHAPLAIN:

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before the Judgment seat. Oh! Be swift, my soul to answer Him! Be jubilant my feet; Our God is marching on.

CHAPLAIN: As to your religious preference, “Once more we turn to Thee, God of Hosts, in supplication for the Marines and FMF Navy Personnel who have answered their last call. Give unto them, we pray, thy peace that passeth all understanding. May their reward be that of the good and faithful servant. For ourselves, we pray that until the next memorial occasion comes again, we shall be guided in the cause of freedom, liberty and justice so dearly won by the sacrifices of our honored dead. May the generations yet to march down the corridor of the centuries to take our places, preserve the ideals and revere the memories of these heroic dead. Amen.

CHAPLAIN: Benediction (as to your religious preference)

May the Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make His face to shine upon thee,
and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His
countenance upon thee and give thee Peace. Amen.

(The Commandant should prescribe the uniform requirements so that all members are dressed in the same attire.)

PRESENTATION OF DETACHMENT/DEPARTMENT CHARTER
(AT AN OPEN PUBLIC MEETING)

OPENING CEREMONY: (Page 5 of the Ritual)

PRESIDING OFFICER: (*Presiding Officer rises and inquires of the Organizing Officer*) Before presenting you with your Charter, I wish to make certain inquiries. Are you prepared to or have you already elected Officers?

ORGANIZING OFFICER: Yes, Sir/Ma'am.

PRESIDING OFFICER: Will your Detachment hold regular meetings, preferably monthly and at a predetermined time and place?

(Department) Will you hold an annual convention in accordance with the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures and further hold at least three (3) quarterly Staff Meetings per year?

ORGANIZING Officer: Yes, Sir/Ma'am.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (*Read the letter from National Commandant and then read the Charter and present it to the Elected Commandant*)

By the direction of and by the approval of our National Commandant _____, I present this Charter to you and wish you every success on the continued growth of this Detachment/Department.

PRESIDING OFFICER: I will now give you, your elected officers and members, additional instructions. Each member who signed your Charter Application shall sign this Charter and then it should be framed. By Rule, this Charter, the National, Colors, and a Bible should be displayed at all League meetings. You must elect a Commandant, Senior Vice Commandant, Junior Vice Commandant, and a Judge Advocate. Your Detachment/Department Bylaws should specify whether you will elect or appoint a Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, an Adjutant/Paymaster or an Adjutant and a Paymaster and such other officers as necessary. If elected, they become members of the Board of Trustees of the Detachment/Department. Future elections must be held annually in accordance with the Bylaws.

(At this point, all members present should be given the Oath of Membership (Page 10); if Officers have already been elected, they may now be installed (Page 14)).

CLOSING CEREMONY: (Page 8 of the Ritual)

The Detachment Officers and members should acquaint themselves with the Marine Corps League Ritual and Marine Corps League Guidebook for Detachment Officers, National Bylaws, and Administrative Procedures of the Marine Corps League.

Detachment Officers should pay special attention to Detachment - Articles Five and Nine of the National Bylaws and Chapters Six and Seven of the Administrative Procedures.

Department Officers should pay special attention to Department, Articles Eight and Nine of the National Bylaws and Chapters Five, Six and Seven of the Administrative Procedures.

THE MARINES' HYMN

From the halls of Montezuma,
To the shores of Tripoli,
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea.
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
of UNITED STATES MARINE

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes,
You will find us always on the job-
THE UNITED STATES MARINES.

Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on heaven's scenes,
They will find the streets are guarded
by UNITED STATES MARINES.