

2025 Convention behind us, 250th Birthday Ball to come.

Marines: I'm writing this just a few days after returning from the 2025 National Convention at the Hyatt Regency DFW **Airport**. For those who were there, you know why I smile when I say "airport." The hotel sits right alongside Terminal C, and with the construction outside, simply getting off the property for dinner felt like an operation in itself. But, as Marines always do, we adapted and overcame.

The Convention is more than business—it's the one time each year we gather as a League to handle important matters like budgets, Bylaws, and committee planning. But for me, the real reward is being in a room full of Marines and reconnecting with friends I don't get to see often. There's nothing quite like swapping stories, sharing successes, and simply enjoying the company of those who wear or once wore the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.

The Midwest Division was well represented at the Convention with 6 Departments having at least one delegate in attendance. Hopefully a North Dakota representative will be able to attend next year's Convention in Indianapolis. Thank you to those who were able to attend our mini meeting on Thursday at noon to discuss a few division issues.

I'm fortunate, as a National Vice Commandant, to sit up front during the sessions. From there, I could see and hear everything clearly. I know some in the back struggled, so my advice is simple: sit closer. It's easier to stay engaged, and as a speaker myself, I can tell you there's nothing better than being able to make eye contact with your audience.

This year also reminded me how important leadership transitions are. Four National Vice Commandants—Rick Thomason, Mike Flynn, Jerry Holt, and Randy Rigg—finished their service on the Board. Each of them gave their time, energy, and wisdom to strengthen the League. Their example is a reminder that we all need to be thinking about succession—who will carry the torch in our Detachments, Departments, and Divisions. Strong leadership doesn't just happen; it grows when we prepare for it.

As I write, the 250th Birthday of our Marine Corps is just around the corner. Whether you're attending a Ball, gathering with your Detachment, or simply calling a buddy, take time to say, "Happy Birthday, Marine." We've all earned it, and we all deserve it.

Semper Fi,

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