

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

Vol. 81 No. 2 • SPRING 2025

SEMPER PARATI



The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



Celebrating

250 years

as Marines

Poetry for Marines

**Podcast
Ambassador**

Prepare for VA's sign-in changes

We're moving to a more modern online sign-in experience — to simplify your options and continue to protect your identity and benefits.



Here's what's changing for VA websites and mobile apps:

- After January 31, 2025, we'll remove the option to sign in with a My HealtheVet user ID and password.
- After September 30, 2025, we'll remove the option to sign in with a DS Logon username and password.
- You'll then have two sign-in account options: **Login.gov** or **ID.me**.

Note: Your health portal isn't going away. We're just changing the way you sign in.

Create your account now

Learn why we're making these changes — and how to create your Login.gov or ID.me account.



www.va.gov/sign-in-changes



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THE USMC "TRIBUTE TO VALOR" HEIRLOOM TAP HANDLES COLLECTION

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"United States Marines"

Shipment One
"Semper Fidelis"

Shipment Three
"Solid Wood Display Rack"

Tap handles measure 7.5" H
Display rack measures approx.
20" L x 4" D" W x 1.5" H

For more than 240 years, the United States Marines have distinguished themselves protecting our nation and its freedoms. So when it comes to honoring a brave Marine in your family or showing your patriotic support for the enduring heritage of the USMC, you'll want to do so in style.

Now, inspired by the vintage-style beer tap handles of the past, you can let friends know that your devotion to the Marines Corps runs deep with the USMC "Tribute to Valor" Heirloom Tap Handles Collection that's available ONLY from The Bradford Exchange.

Superbly handcrafted and hand-painted

This must-have collection features classic USMC logos and colors, as well as sculptures of soldiers, the Eagle, Globe and Anchor emblem, and more. And these impressively-sized tap handles—each measures 7.5" tall—are not only sculpted works-of-art, they're ready to serve as a proud tribute to the Corps! Each has the standard 3/8"-16 thread stainless steel fitting so they easily attach to your beer tap. Plus, when not in use, they can be affixed and displayed on the handsome solid wood, mahogany finish display rack that comes as Shipment Three.



Draw a cold one in honor of
the USMC with these real
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Heirloom-quality for generations to take pride in

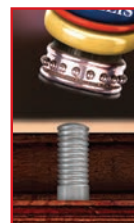
Begin your collection with Shipment One, the "Semper Fidelis" Tap Handle, featuring moving lyrics from the "Marines' Hymn" on its reverse side, yours for just \$49.99, payable in two easy payments of \$24.99 each*, the first billed before shipment. Subsequent shipments—including the solid wood Display Rack—will be sent about one every other month. Your second shipment will be the "United States Marines" Tap Handle. Each shipment includes our best-in-the-business, 365-day unconditional guarantee and you may cancel at any time.

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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

REVERSE OF THE "SEMPER FIDELIS" TAP HANDLE



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easily attaches to
your beer tap or
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a standard 3/8"
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SEMPER PARATI

The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



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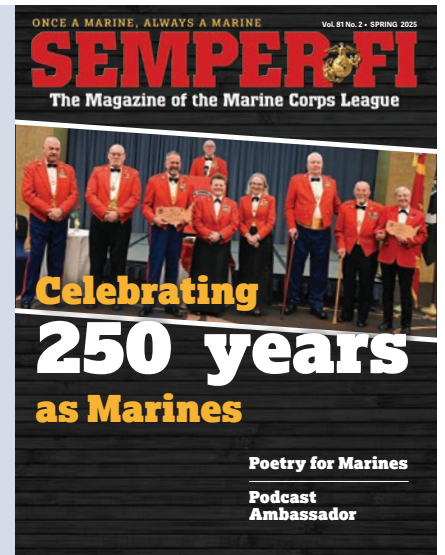
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ON THE COVER:

2024 National MOY Howard Schaeffer and 2024 National Associate MOY Carol McIntosh, both from Pennsylvania, receiving their MOY and AMOY plaques at the Mid-Winter banquet.



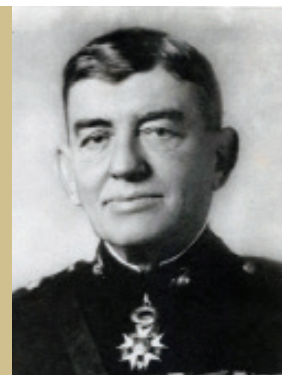
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Please visit the Marine Corps League Library's Convention tab (www.mcleaguelibrary.org/convention/) to review the approved changes to Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. The Bylaws and Admin Procedures documents are being revised and will be posted in the Member Library tab (www.mcleaguelibrary.org/member-library/). To submit a change to the Bylaws or Admin Procedures, please review AP Section 10020.

Founded in 1923 by Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune, the Marine Corps League is the only federally chartered Marine Corps-related veterans organization in the United States.



NATIONAL COMMANDANT'S LETTER

TJ MORGAN

What You Do Is Important



MARINES: I want to thank each one of you for what you do for the MCL, Veterans, and your community. It's important to note, the information you track and report on things like, funeral honors, community engagement, parade participation and VAVS volunteer hours, as well as all the time spent during the National Toys for Tots campaign, does not go unnoticed. I prepare a report quantifying all the time and present that to the CMC. It's important that the commandant sees what we do in the MCL. I can assure you

General Smith pays attention to what the MCL does, and he understands we play a vital roll in the outreach we have as a veteran service organization. Keep tracking your time and get it up the chain by years-end.

We are working on so many things in the MCL and, as your National Commandant, I report these things to you in what is referred to as a "white letter." I try to write them every 90 days, or so. That way, you get an idea of the day-to-day actions of the MCL and where we're going. If you haven't received any of these letters, ask you leadership.

Now, for 2025 and the National Convention in DFW! We have so many things going on. I ask that you travel to the National Convention and participate in all the events, briefings, and fun. 2025 is our semiquincentennial celebration. There will be a cake cutting ceremony at the banquet as well as a host of events put on by the Department of Texas. Please check out the convention website for more information.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you for all the well wishes I've received during my recent heath issues. I am a Marine and we are hard to take down. Men, it is always advised to get your PSA results and do not take them lightly. Early detection is the key to treating prostate cancer successfully.

Semper Fi!



SEMPER FI
The Magazine of the Marine Corps League

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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO**BOB BORKA****Veteran Service Organization**

MARINES: When the U.S. Congress chartered the Marine Corps League in 1937, it was intended that we assist veterans. Over time, we have done a remarkable job supporting the military, veterans, and families. The Marine Corps League recognizes the importance of engaging with the veterans in our communities across the United States. We will continue to grow and enhance our capabilities.

In 2024, we began a refresh of our VSO capabilities. In six months, we grew from four VSOs to 13 VSOs. Each person has had a different experience with the VA's onboarding process. Some, like your national executive director, are in "wait" mode while continuing to develop our program.

Our hope is to build this program to at least 10 division VSOs and 50 department VSOs totaling at least 60 accredited veteran service officers. While this still pales in comparison to the DAV or The American Legion; we are **The Few and the Proud**. I am looking forward to coordinating with you as well as developing the continuing education (CE) program held at the National Convention and the Midwinter Conference.

We are also working on volunteer service in the VA medical centers. Mugsy Marzano (in Arizona) is the chairman for VAVS and is developing the program throughout the United States. VAVS has a new name. It is CDCE – Center for Development and Community Engagement.

I hope to see you at a division or department event this year! **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF EVENTS**ROB BROOKS, USMC (RET).****Modern Day Marine 2025**

MARINES: Since its inception in 1981 as part of our National Convention held in Arizona, Modern Day Marine has been the premier military exposition for the Marine Corps' active-duty component. Moving to Washington, D.C. in 1982 and incorporating our first annual enlisted awards ceremony, Modern Day Marine has had an ever-growing and changing history. Branching out to be known as "Marine South Expo" and "Marine West Expo" hosted by 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, respectively, this event has continued to serve the needs of the entire Marine Corps community, finally planting firm roots at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. and cohosted with the Marine Corps Association.

Through our partnership with MCA we have grown this exposition

Continued on next page

**Honorary National Commandant**

Alfred M. Gray

General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

29th Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Continued from previous page

to an event where we bring together more than 400 U.S.-based defense industry and private-sector companies, key military decision-makers, and active duty members of the Marine Corps, as well as military members and representatives of allied nations. It's a multi-day experience fostering and promoting professional development, senior leader networking, strategic solutions, and advancements in technology, to name a few. As we capitalize on the success of last year's event, we're excited to see Modern Day Marine 2025 continue to expand beyond its humble beginnings as a way to serve the warfighting community. It's branching out to serve not only the spouses who sacrifice so much for their Marine (through our engaging Spouse Summit) as well as transitioning Marines with our Education and Employment Fair.

In support and celebration of the United States Marine Corps' 250th anniversary, we are extremely pleased to have the participation of several organizations including "The Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation, Inc.", a nonprofit organization whose mission is to rebuild and reestablish the famous Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, "Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps", a charity organization hosting the Semi-quincentennial birthday celebrations for the Navy/Marine team later this fall, and, for the first time, we will have a dedicated area on the main floor showcasing our illustrious heritage to remember where we came from, embrace how we adapted over the years, and look towards the future and continued success of the Marines and the Marine Corps. With the help of our amazing Marine Corps League volunteers, this will be the best Modern Day Marine Expo yet! **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Get Ready to Celebrate

MARINES: We are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps and United States Navy. According to www.homecoming250.org, the event will be held in Philadelphia. This is a perfect time to promote the Marine Corps League.

The Navy and the Marine Corps 250th birthdays will be celebrated in their birthplace – Philadelphia and the Delaware River, but will be celebrated nationwide in various locations, so check with detachment to find out dates and times of the event in your area. The occasion will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Marine Corps' founding on November 10, 1775, by holding the 100th Marine Corps Birthday Ball in the same Philadelphia ballroom where General Lejeune held the first USMC birthday ball.

It's a great time to promote the values and mission of the MCL to prospective members. The exciting news to pass on will be our Toys for Tots program that collected more than 30 million toys for children in support of community ser-

vice, veteran support, personal development, patriotic participation, educational opportunities, and networking. The celebrations of the Navy and Marine Corps 250th anniversary will be a major national media event. Join in the events and promote them on your social media platforms and outside media to draw attention to your detachments and the MCL.

February was Black History Month. Let's reflect on the Marine Corps tearing the down the walls of segregation and unifying our warriors. The first African-American recruits in the Marine Corps trained at Montford Point, eventually ending the military's longstanding policy of racial segregation. Their legacy has inspired and will continue to inspire future generations of all Marines. These types of monumental events show the diversity of our Marine Corps today as well as the diversity we want to promote and welcome into the MCL. The Marine Corps knows and promote that we are all different shades of the same color—Marine green! **Semper Fi!**



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NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MCL AUXILIARY

DOTTY SANNING

NATIONALMCLA.ORG

Supporting Our Marine Corps League



MARINES: I had initially hoped to begin this article with a warm greeting from the home of the three-in-a-row Super Bowl Champions Kansas City Chiefs. However, following in the footsteps of our past National President Linda Chamberlain, it's not quite our year. But hey, it's a Missouri thing!

Moving on, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Commandant TJ Morgan and the MCL for inviting me to attend the Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball hosted by the American Legion. As the auxiliary representative, it was an honor to meet and engage with such remarkable leaders from various industries and veteran organizations. I truly appreciate the opportunity to share an evening of camaraderie between the Auxiliary and the MCL at such an impressive, once-in-a-lifetime (for me) event.

Though it's supposed to be spring by now, we've had a couple of snow showers this week, so I guess Mother Nature isn't quite on board yet. For those of you who attended the Mid-Winter Staff Conference in Arlington, Virginia, I hope you brought home information to share with your divisions. Unfortunately, two of our auxiliary divisions—Mideast and New England—are currently without division vice presidents. While we do have auxiliary members in those areas, we could certainly use some help

getting them reorganized and active.

Years ago, when my husband, Alan, first joined the League, he encouraged me to join the auxiliary. I attended a meeting, and, from that moment, I knew I wanted to be a part of the women who support our detachment, Marines, and veterans in our communities. Now, 25 years later, I find myself in a unique position to continue that mission, only

with even greater responsibility. As our initiation reminds us, "Not all women have the privilege of serving in times of war or on the battlefield, but many have served their country well by caring for the home, the sick, and the wounded." This is the role we have embraced, and I am sure there are many women in your own families, detachments, and communities who would be a perfect



fit for our organization.

Although finding and retaining volunteers is becoming more challenging, there may be people in your circle who have the heart and ability to serve. They might not be the right fit for your detachment, but they could be exactly what we need in the auxiliary. Just think how much easier each of your programs and activities would be if you had an active auxiliary to help you. **Semper Fi!**

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NeTasha Loyd

National Big Flea
PNP Linda Chamberlain

Meet the New Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins is a Georgia native, former member of the U.S. House and U.S. Air Force Reserve chaplain

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins was sworn in as the 12th secretary of Veterans Affairs on Feb. 5, 2025, following his nomination by President Donald J. Trump.

A native of Gainesville, Georgia, Secretary Collins saw public service modeled by his father, a Georgia State Trooper, and mother, who provided care to local



Apology: Maintaining the MCL's Image is Paramount

By Bob Borka

MARINES AND MEMBERS: It is my responsibility to make sure photos used in our publication portray the MCL in the best possible way. When images used on the cover or inside the magazine do not conform to our standards, the buck stops here.

Recently, Semper Fi published a photograph of a miniature replica of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial taken at a 100th birthday celebration for a Marine. In the photo, two rifle barrels were bent and a person holding the flag was missing two fingers, mistakenly making it look like they were using ASL to sign "I love you."

There was no intent to embarrass or disrespect Marines past or present. I do offer my sincere apology to all the Marines for this faux pas.

Also in the magazine was a photo of a person wearing a Marine of the Year medallion in a polo shirt. Other magazine issues have had things like an advertisement for a cat wearing dress blues (V74N01 in 2018) that members did not like. Some mistakes will not happen twice.

Unfortunately, we do fail to recognize all the remarkable things accomplished across the League by eliminating hundreds of photo submissions that do not meet our publication standard. In the winter 2025 edition (V81N01), I edited the photo of the yellow footprints' poster to add red coloring over a person's pin on their cover. This was an effort to use an excellent photo with a correctable error.

We will continue to press forward with The Magazine of the Marine Corps League and look forward to your photo submissions. **Semper Fi!**

senior citizens. He earned a degree in political science and criminal justice from the University of North Georgia.

Collins earned his master's degree in divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and his community roots deepened in the eleven years he pastored Chicopee Baptist Church. In 2006, the people of Georgia's 27th State House District elected Collins to represent them. During his first term in the state legislature, Collins graduated from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School and established his own legal practice.

As a U.S. Air Force Reserve chaplain, Collins has ministered to our country's military since 2002. He completed a 2008-2009 deployment to Iraq while stationed at Balad Air Base. He remains a colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

Collins served as a U.S. Representative for Georgia's Ninth Congressional District from 2013-2021. While he is a public servant, attorney, and practicing military chaplain, he remains foremost a husband to Lisa and father to daughter Jordan and sons Copelan and Cameron. Lisa was a lifelong educator in Georgia's public schools, and the couple are actively involved at Lakewood Baptist Church. **Semper Fi!**

CHIEF DEVIL DOG

JEFFREY JONES, 61ST CHIEF DEVIL DOG

Updates from the Kennel



MARINES: I have been actively supporting the mission of The Military Order of the Devil Dogs as the 61st chief. As your chief I have been involved in and attended pound, pack and division growls. Everywhere I go, the dogs are highly motivated and are performing the mission of the order. We are doing well collecting bones for the Children's Hospital fund. I am very happy with the continued growth and support of Operation Chow Hound. Both charities are now able to accept donations made online using the Kennel website. The new OCH patches for Grapevine, TX are available in the quartermaster store with all of those proceeds going to the shelter in Carrollton, TX. The quartermaster also now has the original OCH patches to be included in the OCH pup kits.

The Kennel Management Application is going well with updates coming out very often. If you have not used this application yet, what are you waiting for? This is making every Dog Robber and pound and pack leader's job so much easier. If you have any questions about the KMA, PDD Jim Breen is very open to helping you, so you can do your job in a more efficient way.

The Kennel's application to start a 501(C)(3) foundation has been approved. We will be working on getting this up and working as soon as possible... it might be active by the time this article is published. It will open many doors for us including the ability to accept tax-deductible donations, apply for grants and discounts with technical advances and free computing programs. It will also enhance the order's credibility and trust in the eyes of the public and potential donors.

It is an honor to serve as your Chief Devil Dog. **Semper Fi!**



Andrea M. Ruiz, MSgt (Ret), 20th Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Carlos A. Ruiz, and CDD Jeffrey Jones.



Chief Devil Dog Jeffrey Jones, PDD Barb Deangelo, and Buddy.



Service Chief PDD
Joe Deangelo, CDD
Jeffrey Jones, Jr. Vice
Chief PDD Mike
Frances, Smart Dog
PDD Charles Minton



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NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE

BRUCE RAKFELDT

The Backbone of Organizations: The Importance of Bylaws

MARINES: I've been fielding many questions about bylaws recently, especially at the department level. It's time we had "the talk" about them.

In the world of organizations, bylaws are often the unsung heroes. These essential documents provide a framework for governance and operations, ensuring everything runs smoothly and aligns with the organization's mission and values.

Bylaws are more than just a set of rules; they are the foundation upon which organizations are built. They outline procedures for decision-making, define roles and responsibilities, and establish processes for resolving disputes. This structure is crucial for maintaining order and consistency, supporting the stability and credibility of the organization.

While bylaws set the overarching framework, administrative procedures handle the day-to-day operations. These procedures include guidelines on tasks like scheduling meetings, managing records, and handling finances, ensuring daily activities are conducted efficiently and consistently.

The key difference between bylaws and administrative procedures lies in their scope and purpose. Bylaws are broad and foundational, providing the structural framework for governance and major decision-making processes. They are typically more difficult to amend and require approval from the organization's members or board. Administrative procedures, on the other



hand, are more specific and operational, focusing on practical aspects and can often be updated more easily to adapt to changing needs.

As organizations grow and evolve, their bylaws must do the same. Regularly updating these documents ensures they remain relevant and effective in addressing current challenges and opportunities. This involves reviewing existing bylaws,

identifying areas for improvement, and making necessary amendments. Keeping bylaws up to date is not just about compliance; it's about ensuring the organization can adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

In conclusion, bylaws are not merely a formality but a vital component of organizational success. They provide the structure and guidance needed to navigate the complexities of governance. By keeping them current and distinguishing them from administrative procedures, organizations can maintain their integrity and functionality, ready to face whatever the future holds.

As always, take care of yourselves and each other and let's always keep our overseas Marines, as well as all of our military brothers and sisters, in our thoughts and prayers. **Semper Fi!**

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WAY DOWN YONDER

By James Bandy

Arkansas, home of my birth,
as the river flows, the mountains tall,
our campfire glows,
a happy childhood – sounds of joy,
hunting with Dad, let them bird dogs go,
the fishing ponds glow down below,
Mother's home-cooked meals,
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

Sweet youth as my bird dogs run
through woods of long ago.
Sweet apple pie on Grandma's old front porch,
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

The apples glow, watermelons ripe, land of cotton,
rabbits run wild, quails fly afar,
football nights full of cheer, cheerleaders so cute,
work done by Dad's watchful eye – all so sharp,
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

The open air, love of country,
rules of respect taught young, "yes, sir" "yes, ma'am",
all taught the old-fashioned way,
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

I stand as a young man, served my country,
no draft card burnt here, freedom so dear, all so clear,
a Marine do or die, I chose to take a stand so others can
feel freedom as I, so others don't die,
Brothers and I walk down narrow trails, enemy lurking,
all so dark (quiet as we go ... quiet as we go).
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

Homeland in disorder, homeland in disarray,
our flag – Old Glory – tested once again, draft cards burning,
the brave called so many names – none were kind in any way,
excuses flow in their twilight years, their long hair,
"on a high" to not walk down those narrow trails
filled with blood and tears.
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

A crack of a bullet followed by many explosives, body parts fly,
the area bursting in flames, the night jungle glows.
A jungle transformed into a hell-hole, trails no longer quiet,
as we go, good men fall ... now we few stand, the proud, the few.
Spirits partly broken, every step an effort on once a quiet trail,
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

Life experiences beyond those quiet trails, all so quiet,
the mind and soul yet in pain,
silent pain in our souls, we stand in reverence as we gaze
and grieve at our "Wall".
We remember those who walked those quiet trails.
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

The explosions, firefights, unknown battles faded, no one cares,
left behind, but lurking in our soul, visions of brothers
who visit our aging mind from time to time,
from those trails of long ago ... so long ago.
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

Life moves on – yes, life moves on.
The heavens have visited me with grace and gifts.
Was it because of walking those trails so long ago,
our visit to hell so long ago.
Way Down Yonder of long ago.

Life moves on – an angel sent my bride, 55 years since,
so much time has passed with so many gifts.
Our children – my salvation, rewards too many to list.

Life moves on – a new trail that glows with joy,
not despair, but of love,
not torments from the stage of battles,
now a new trail all so tender – soft and blessed.

Life moves on – with hope and happiness,
for when I say, "Way Down Yonder of Long Ago",
those trails of long ago, that journey –
all has been put to rest by God's kind grace.

So, when the time comes when I am put to rest,
my days of "Way Down Yonder" ... so many trails since past,
the Good Lord will send me "Way Up Yonder",
at that time, let's have a laugh, as we often did –
Way Down Yonder of long ago!

MCL FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

HOWARD C. SCHAEFFER

MCLFOUNDATION.ORG

Standing Strong for Our Marine Family

MARINES: The National Marine Corps League Foundation remains steadfast in our mission to support Marines, veterans, and their families. Through your generosity, we provide scholarships, emergency aid, and essential programs that uphold our core values. Your continued support ensures we honor our sacred commitment—taking care of our own.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our 2025

National Convention in Grapevine, Texas, this August! This gathering is more than an event; it's a chance to reconnect, celebrate our traditions, and strengthen our bond as Marines. Together, we will ensure our legacy of service continues.

Join us as we honor the past, support the present, and build for the future. Your support makes all the difference. **Semper Fi!**



YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

COL BILL DAVIS, USMC (RET)

CEO/NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUNG MARINES

Congratulate Our 2025 Young Marines Awardees

MARINES: Mid-Winter Conference was an outstanding time for engagement and meeting up with old and new friends. On April 26th, we hosted our Young Marines annual awards banquet at the Adult Leader's Conference in Dallas, with special guest National Commandant TJ Morgan. At the time of publication, we have not announced the national winners, stand by for that at the Modern Day Marine expo!



Volunteers are the life blood of the YM program. Each volunteer gives their personal time (and more) to guide and mentor our young Marines. Help us recognize and congratulate this year's division adult volunteer awardees:

- Division 1 – Leigh Willis, Southern Maryland Young Marines, MD
- Division 2 – Sara Owen, Volusia Young Marines, FL
- Division 3 – Dan Harrington, Buffalo Ridge Young Marines, MN
- Division 4 – Denise Courrage, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) Young Marines, LA
- Division 5 – Katheryn Waechter, Rocky Mountain Young Marines, CO
- Division 6 – Jose Escarsega, Camp Pendleton Young Marines, CA

We're proud of all our YM units and the work they do supporting their communities and developing young men and women into engaged citizens. This year the following units were selected as the best within their division:

- Division 1 – Nations's Capitol Young Marines, Washington DC
- Division 2 – Albany Young Marines, GA
- Division 3 – Greater Cleveland Young Marines, OH

- Division 4 – San Antonio Young Marines, TX
- Division 5 – Foothills Young Marines, CO
- Division 6 – Antelope Valley Young Marines, CA

Our program is focused on creating the next generation of leaders. Our most senior Young Marines compete for Division Young Marine of the Year, representing the six YM divisions across the country. Below are your division Young Marines of

the Year:

- Division 1 – YM/Sgt. Maj. Chingiz Bahadur – Potomac River Young Marines, DC
- Division 2 – YM/Sgt. Maj. Quinn Lawton, Upstate Young Marines, SC
- Division 3 – YM/Sgt. Maj. Abby Smith, Northern Kentucky Young Marines, KY
- Division 4 – YM/ Sgt. Maj. London Williams, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) Young Marines, LA
- Division 5 – YM/ Sgt. Maj. Tristan Begines, Lewis & Clark Young Marines, Ridgefield, WA
- Division 6 – YM/ Sgt. Maj. Akshaya Krishna, Sacramento Young Marines, CA

The winners were announced at the 2025 Young Marines Awards Banquet and on social media. Please reach out to your division volunteer, unit, and Young Marine of the Year to congratulate and recognize their contributions to the YM program for this year. If you need any help finding them, please contact us at yMDBS@youngmarines.org.

See you all at MDM or in Dallas in August! **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL SR. VICE COMMANDANT

RUSS MILLER

Tools for Connecting

MARINES: Another successful Mid-Winter Conference is in the books and hopefully we are all recharged and ready to finish the rest of the year as we look forward to our 2025 National Convention in Dallas in August, followed by the 250th birthday of our beloved Corps in November.

We are in a promising position this year to experience incredible growth across the League if we just capitalize on a couple of key opportunities that are right in front of us. First, we are already seeing a rise in the nostalgic sentiment so many Marines across the nation are experiencing, which we should tap into during our semi quincentennial celebrations. As we partner with the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation in organizing birthday cake cutting ceremonies across the nation, our hope is that we will continue to see Marines coming out to join us in celebration. Once that initial contact is made, we need to follow up with these Marines and FMF Navy personnel that may be hearing of the Marine Corps League for the first time. We'll have so many new opportunities to share "the best kept secret in the Marine Corps" just by virtue of our somewhat fanatical attitudes and enthusiasm. Out of that new exchange we can then share the next opportunity to connect with our brothers and sisters by providing them with some of the "service" of our veteran service organization (VSO.) Our veteran service officer program is undergoing a rapid reinvigoration across the country and it will also help grow our ranks. The VSO program will be one of the many tools in our toolbox to be used to



serve our current and future Leaguers. It has been so encouraging to see how quickly "Just Bob" and some of our existing VSO's have been able to spin this program back up and how many new servant leaders are stepping forward to grow the program at the division and department levels. Bravo-Zulu!! Continue to march!!

Lastly, while implementation of new technologies since 2020 has given us even more new tools as an organization, we should be reticent not to rely wholly on them in our day-to-day operations within the League. While they allow us to communicate more efficiently and effectively, we should be careful not to overutilize those technologies at the expense of connecting face to face and sharing a smile, a laugh, or a tear; over a coffee, a burger, or a beer. Just as Commandant Morgan has done with the national board of trustees, sometimes those newer members we hope to bring into our ranks just need a good old-fashioned squad bay pizza night more than they need one more conference call in their week. The law of attraction states, "you attract to you what you are," so remember to BE the type of MCL member you wish there were twenty more of in your detachment. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL JR. VICE COMMANDANT

DAVID PORTER

Reestablishing Your Purpose

MARINES: The transition of seasons allows us to move on to a new chapter. We need to be positive and focus on what is in front of us. Do not get bogged down in the past; learn from it but do not get stuck! There is a reason why the windshield is so large and the rearview mirror is small. The spring will bring new light and energy to restore us, and get us back on our feet. Sometimes we forget on how much of an impact we make by lending a hand, or even just an ear. Appreciate the small moments you often overlook and try your best to be kind and understanding to the people around you. When the purpose becomes a little clear we realize we are not just an organization that cares for our veterans, but we are a family. As part of a family, we are here to help our fellow brothers and sisters in a time of need.

We all have a choice to choose our purpose! To be Marines, we are warriors and civil servants, and with that we became wise, compassionate, empathetic, and kind to those that suffer. What better purpose is there than strengthening our esprit de corps, our ethos, and camaraderie to preserve what was started well before us.

I recently read Commandant Major General. John A. Lejeune's Marine Corps Order No. 29 (Relations Between Officers and Men [and Women]) 14 August 1920. One paragraph stood out:

"The spirit of comradeship and brotherhood in arms which has traditionally existed throughout the ranks of the Marine Corps is a vital characteristic of the Corps. It must be fostered and kept alive and made the mov-



ing force in all Marine Corps organizations"

Maj. Gen. Lejeune went on to lay the foundation as the founder and first commandant of the Marine Corps League in 1923. His passion for the Corps kept that spirit alive as he transitioned and continued for six years as the League's commandant, where he built the league's foundation for generations to follow. On 04AUG1937, the U.S. Congress chartered the organization as a veteran service organization.

It may look different from when Maj. Gen. Lejeune started his mission, but the League is as much alive as when it started. We adapt, we learn, and grow in our service thanks to the mistakes we made and lessons we learned from them.

We need to put others ahead of ourselves to grow. Great leaders don't lead for what benefits them. Be that leader who improves the lives of others. Remember your purpose. Our purpose is to carry that torch Maj. Gen. Lejeune lit.

I end this on a challenge. As I give you my all, I ask all the department junior vice commandants make an effort to reach out to the detachment junior vice commandants. We'll grow if we are communicating with each other. **Semper Fi!**

JUNIOR PAST NATIONAL COMMANDANT

WARREN “GRIFF” GRIFFIN

LET THEM KNOW WE ARE HERE!

MARINES: Our winter months are now behind us, so we can come out of our caves and greet the new outdoors. The more we are out in uniform, participating in events, the more we are promoting the League. I remember being asked by a member why I wore a shirt I had made with the MCL logo on the pocket. I explained to her that people will usually look at logos and this fosters conversation. Conversation can promote interest. Interest promotes membership.

Try reaching for the sky and don't let people convince you it probably won't work. This past Iwo Jima Day Ceremony at the State House in Boston, coordinated by member John MacGillivray, we honored Iwo Jima Veteran Joseph Cappuccio. This ceremony also acknowledges individuals who contributed fostering a positive image for our Corps or have supported our veteran community. Our guest speaker was Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps General Christopher Mahoney. Two of the awardees were Daniel Penny of New York and Paul Wahlberg of the Wahlberg family. As one would expect, the local press covered this event fully. Somewhat surprisingly, event coverage extended into New York, in at least the New York Post, and nationally on FOX News' Judge Jeanne. It was a simple ceremony that promoted the League, and invited people to join us from Boston and New York for a much-deserved tribute. This shows us any attempt to promote the League is a



good idea and worth the effort.

Many times, we find ourselves promoting the League within our own membership. Try reaching out to a new audience. Let those Marines who never heard of the MCL hear of us. We do so much good; don't be shy about promoting your good deeds. Within the veteran service community of our government, we had not been receiving credit for what we've done. This is why I established the position of Veterans

Administration Volunteer Services Coordinator. Now all the good projects we do is properly noticed by members of that community. This is important for us if we reach out for support from our government in the future.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of visiting many of our departments. The prospective of joining Marines in events that I could not find locally always let me know that we are a vast community, but we are all Marines! We always take pride in being the best, never having to say, "I almost was a Marine." People everywhere know this. If you reach out for community support, you will get it. People like to know they are helping the Marines. Use this to your advantage. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES LIAISON

JOHNNY BAKER

How We Help Young Marines of the Marine Corps League

MARINES: The Marine Corps League and the Young Marines are partners in America's youth to help them to lead a healthy and drug-free life, focus on their leadership, their citizenship through community service, and become productive members of the American Society. The YM is a youth education and service program for boys and girls, ages 8 through 18. The program focuses on teaching the values of leadership, teamwork, and self-discipline.

I've begun each article with the same paragraph above. It's imperative we continue to understand the YM mission. Each article shares the importance of the MCL's involvement with the YM program. But in this article, I want to share how detachments can get involved and make a huge difference on the youth and the communities we serve.

The YM headquarters staff consists of nine full-time employees: the National Executive Director/CEO Col. (Retired) Bill Davis and the Deputy Director/Chief of Staff Wilson Lee; then there is a finance director, administration director, communication director, training and education manager, project coordinator, and two support officers.

To provide the most accurate information about the program, they have revised their "How to Start a Young Marine Unit" guide. By the time you read this, you may have visited the YM booth at the Mid-Winter Conference and picked up a copy of the guide. If you are interested in receiving a digital copy of the guide, please contact Michael Huff at headquarters (800-717-0060 x215 or michael.hoff@youngmarines.org.)



He's happy to answer any questions about starting a new unit.

Even if your detachment cannot start a YM unit, each detachment can still support the program by supporting local YM units in your region. Each unit in your state would appreciate local cash donations. You can even designate a credit card donation to a YM unit of your choice via the "Donate" tab on the YM website. National headquarters also seeks your support in starting new

units as well as welcoming and appreciating your monetary donations throughout the year. They really appreciate all of the Divisions, Department, Detachments, and individual members that make check donations at mid-winter and the National Convention. I also encourage you to go to the Young Marines website (youngmarines.org) for more general information and other ways to be involved.

The YM Program is one of the key programs that National Commandant TJ Morgan is striving to improve this and every year. They are the "Young Marines of the Marine Corps League," so we share a responsibility in strengthening the YM program and encourage young adults to live a drug-free lifestyle, be patriotic adults, and prepare them to be future leaders of America. **Semper Fi!**

DIVISION REPORTS

Paymasters- The Core of the Detachment



Dave Englert

NVC, Central Division



MARINES: Without doubt, the hardest position to fill in a detachment is that of paymaster. Even in a small detachment, the paymaster's area of responsibility has a far-reaching impact upon the success or failure of the detachment.

Membership dues The paymaster is sometimes the only contact that members have with a detachment. Providing dues notices, collecting and forwarding dues with properly completed transmittals should be a seamless, hardly noticeable routine. Failing this, members are not renewed, new members don't receive membership cards or magazines, and the morale of the membership will suffer.

Financial Records Faithful documentation of all expenses and income are vital. Sloppy record keeping leads to accusations of misappropriation where none exists.

Transactions must be transparent and inline with detachment bylaws and state and federal regulations. Financial records should always be available for the detachment board of trustees to review and audit as necessary.

State and Federal Filings Typically, the paymaster will be the registered agent for state and federal filings. Form 990N/990EZ/990, even if completed by an accountant or outside entity, remains the responsibility of the paymaster, under the supervision of the board of trustees, to be completed and filed in accordance with regulations. As with the federal filings, the paymaster, under of the supervision of the board of trustees is responsible for completion and timely submission of state filings.

Advisory Position The paymaster should advise the detachment board of trustees on income and expense issues. It is vital to recognize when outside expert support is needed, especially for investments and purchases.

Continuity of Operations "At a minimum, a turnover folder with account numbers, necessary log-on/passwords, and locations of important information, and a list of contacts should be maintained. Additionally, other members of the detachment should become familiar with the responsibilities and routines of the paymaster's job. Invite your commandant over to see where all of your records are and should him or her how to do a transmittal. A good paymaster might not guarantee the success of a detachment, but a bad paymaster can ensure its failure. *Semper Fi!*

Division Website: mclcentdiv.org

Honoring Exemplary Service and Dedication



Rick Thomason

NVC, Mideast Division



MARINES: The Marine Corps League National Marine and Associate Member of the Year awards are the highest recognition given to a member of the MCL. This prestigious accolade is awarded annually to a Marine or associate member who has demonstrated exceptional dedication, service, and contribution to the MCL and their community. The award celebrates the recipient's embodiment of the values and principles of the Marine Corps.

To be considered for the National Award, a nominee must meet certain eligibility criteria that can be found on the MCL website under the *MOY Society* tab.

The nominee:

- must be a member in good standing of the MCL.
- must possess an exemplary service record demonstrating consistent involvement and contribution to the organization's activities and missions.

• should have a history of active participation in community service and outreach programs, reflecting the spirit of the Marine Corps in civilian life.

The nomination process for the NMOY and NAMOY involves several key factors:

- Nominees can only be submitted by a detachment in good standing with the MCL.
- The nomination packet should include a signed letter of recommendation from the nominee's commandant.
- Supporting documents such as certificates, awards, and photographs should be included to provide an overview of the nominee's contributions and impact.
- Documentation of adherence to the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct, both in and out of the MCL.
- Letters attesting to the nominee's professionalism and commitment to excellence in all endeavors.
- Documentation of contributions to community service and outreach programs, showcasing the nominee's commitment to making a positive difference.

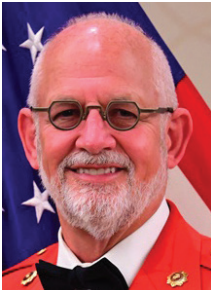
• Documentation of personal conduct that reflects the honor, courage, and commitment associated with the Marine Corps.

• Materials referencing their unwavering dedication to the MCL and its values demonstrated through consistent involvement and effort.

The NMOY and NAMOY are a testament to the extraordinary dedication, service, and leadership displayed by its recipients. It serves as an inspiration to all members of the MCL, encouraging them to strive for excellence and embody the values of the Marine Corps in all aspects of their lives. By honoring these exceptional individuals, the MCL continues to uphold its legacy of service, camaraderie, and commitment to the community and the nation. *Semper Fi!*

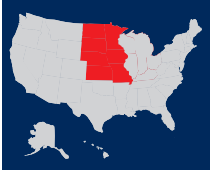
MOY Program Questions: MOY@mcleague.org
Division Website: mclmideast.com

Communication, Communication, Communication



Jim Maevers

**NVC, Midwest
Division**



MARINES: In the real estate industry, the success of an investment is often determined by three key factors: location, location, location.

I believe the success of any organization is determined by *communication, communication, communication*. Whether it's two people in a relationship or thousands of members in a nationwide organization, the ability to communicate effectively is paramount. Strong communication fosters unity, ensures goals are met, and enables an organization to achieve its mission successfully.

Detachment-Level Communication

At the Detachment level, our primary goal is to foster camaraderie, providing an environment similar to what we experienced in the Marine Corps. Keeping members informed of, and engaged in, meetings, social gatherings, and events is essential to

strengthening our detachments.

And, we never know what challenges a fellow Marine may be facing, and as Marines, we live by *Semper Fidelis*—Always Faithful. By maintaining communication, we ensure no Marine is left behind.

Today, we have multiple communication methods, and we must adapt to best reach our members. A well-rounded communication strategy should include:

- **Phone Calls** – Direct outreach for members less active online.
- **Text Messages** – Quick and effective event reminders.
- **Email** – Regular updates, newsletters, and official announcements.
- **Social Media & Websites** – Engaging platforms for information sharing.
- **Printed Newsletters** – For those who prefer traditional communication.

By incorporating multiple methods, we ensure no one is left out.

Department-Level Communication

At the department level, the goal is to ensure all detachments work together to improve the Marine Corps League's impact. Departments should:

- Provide timely updates on initiatives and events.
- Offer platforms for detachments to share best practices.
- Use digital and in-person meetings to foster collaboration.

Division-Level Communication

As your division vice commandant, my goal is to represent you and your detachments at the national level. I'm here to listen, support, and advocate for your concerns and ideas.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions that should be brought to the board of trustees, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Together, through effective communication, we will continue to strengthen the MCL and uphold the values of our beloved Corps.

Semper Fi!

Division Website: midwestdivisionmarinecorpsleague.org

Breaking Bread



Pat Maguire

**NVC, New
England Division**



MARINES: In the New England Division, past NVCs have established a tradition of hosting division dinners for members traveling to conventions or conferences. As division vice, I have had the privilege of continuing this practice, and it's something I deeply value. The division dinner is more than just a meal—it's an opportunity to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication our members put into the League and division.

The dinner is a small token of gratitude, but it holds significant meaning. On several occasions, we have been fortunate to welcome other members of the league, including those in various leadership roles. This gathering gives members from different departments a chance to sit down and engage in meaningful conversations. It's not often that people from various areas of the League have the time to talk to one another and share insights into their work.

Over the years, I've witnessed firsthand how these dinners have led to stronger relationships and collaboration. Conversations that start over a shared meal often spark new ideas, create mutual understanding, and build a sense of community.

I've seen members return to their respective departments with a renewed sense of connection, having realized how closely they are aligned, despite coming from different parts of the League.

The power of these informal moments cannot be understated. It's in these small, simple acts—like sitting down for a dinner together—that we create opportunities for growth and foster camaraderie among members. In the fast-paced environment of the League, it's easy to overlook these quieter moments. However, in my experience, it's often these small gestures that yield the most significant benefits for the good of the League as a whole.

In the end, it's not about the grandeur of the event—it's about the connections we make, the ideas we share, and the friendships we build. These dinners serve as a reminder that sometimes the best things come from the smallest gestures. **Semper Fi!**

Event Information: bostonsemperfi.org
Division Website: mclnenedivision.com



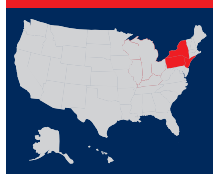
DIVISION REPORTS

How Do You Develop New Members Into effective Leaders?



Robert Ziltz

NVC, Northeast Division



MARINES: We have all seen them. New members in a detachment meeting, probably looking a bit uncertain, keeping quiet and hanging in the back of the room. And we have all heard the many tales of what can alienate a new member: being ignored, not being allowed to participate, being told “we don’t do that” when making suggestions. Or my least favorite practice: giving the new member an important job the first meeting that they attend.

Many detachments have taken steps to avoid pitfalls like the examples I cited and there are additional suggestions in the Guidebook for Recruiting, Retention and Marketing that I wrote about last quarter. There is one suggestion in particular that is not usually thought of to improve recruiting and retention, but it may be one of the most important member programs. I am

referring to the Leadership Training and Development program...

The League has an ongoing need for leaders at all levels. Our leaders come from within, and, at every level, our leaders when chosen by their peers are asked: “if elected, will you serve?” Good leadership requires more than a willingness to lead. Leaders also need specific skills and knowledge to be effective. A new member may have well developed leadership skills – they are Marines after all – and they may be willing to serve, but without working knowledge of the League, they are at a serious disadvantage.

Lack of knowledge is something that we know how to address. In the Northeast Division, several departments run in-person leadership schools every year. The courses are modular and can be taught in one day, over multiple days or even virtually. Holding instruction in-person makes the training a social event, building contacts, camaraderie, and friendships that are often more meaningful than the course.

Members, especially new members, are the most important asset the League has. Developing members into leaders makes sense, provides exceptional member value and insures the League’s future. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: nedmcl.org

Keeping Tabs or Keeping Up?



Mike Flynn

NVC, Northwest Division



MARINES: Everyone reading this is either a Marine, Corpsman, chaplain, veteran or family member of one of these. Or at the very least, loves the Corps and wants to keep up with what’s going in in the League. When we get together and meet new members, typically one of the first things we ask is what was your MOS? What did you do while you were a Marine? The MOS’s now are different than the MOS’s of old so sometimes those of us more experienced in life need to ask, what’s that? There are over 300 MOS’s spread out over 38 different categories... some for things that did not even exist in my day.

What I don’t hear being asked very often is what do you do for a living outside the Corps? We get together once a month and we love our camaraderie. It is not uncommon at all that a good percentage of our

friends are the very people we meet with in our detachments and pounds. We might be sitting right next to someone who might have knowledge of something you are seeking assistance with and not even know it.

As an example, I was looking to do some remodeling on my home. One of my fellow members is a project manager for a commercial construction company. Knowing this, I asked if he had a recommendation for a structural engineer. He had several and I was able to find one that is perfect for my project. Without that knowledge, I would be on Google and websites trying to pick someone on my own. That simple question saved me time and, more importantly, allowed me to have confidence in my choice.

We could list hundreds of examples. Ultimately, though, being able to share skills and knowledge with fellow members is a great way to be a better part of a detachment.

Sometimes retention can be just about knowing you have something to offer. The sense of helping that comes with that. It’s one of the best parts of being in any organization. Getting to know the person sitting next to you will always provide value to you and them. After all, it should not be about keeping tabs on each other and a score card on what we do. Let’s look beyond basic attendance. It should be about keeping up with who they are and what they bring to the League. I want to be part of a strong League that knows me. How about you? **Semper Fi!**

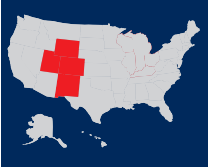
Division Website: mcl-nwdiv.org

Membership and Cohesion



Tom Krueger

NVC, Rocky Mountain Division



MARINES: As I sit and write this article every department is preparing for their conventions as well as division conferences. As we gather and conduct the business of the MCL, take time to remember what the Marine Corps League stands for and ask yourselves where I see or what I would like to see the department/division in the years to come. This can be accomplished by recruiting and retaining members. This should be a priority of detachments. I have found that prospective members always ask the same question. What do you do? Prospective members want to be involved with an organization that is active. This can be accomplished by going out in your community, parades or volunteering at the local veteran facility. Remember that old saying, "Build it, and they will come." Find out what interests new members and have them lead a

program within the detachment. This is an area a lot of detachments need to work on, as aging has (or will) be a factor before we know it.

Another issue some detachments have is cohesion. I say this, first, because we, as Marines, have big shoulders. We sometimes need to swallow our pride and work together to accomplish the task at hand, running the detachment according to the by-laws. I have seen a lot of infighting, and we need to learn to work together for the accomplishment of the mission.

Paymasters, take the time to seek training from fellow paymasters. The National website has training videos. Read the Detachment Officers Guidebook. These are just some of the tools that are out there to assist you during your time. Take full advantage of the knowledge of others and the resources available to you.

Honor and color guards, Take the time to read the Standard Operating Procedures. Follow the instructions that are listed and make the Marine Corps League and Marine Corps proud.

Semper Fi!

Division Website: rockymountainmcldiv.org

The Relevance and Survival of the Marine Corps League in a Changing Era



Jerry Holt

NVC, Southeast Division



MARINES: The Marine Corps League has long served as a pillar of support, camaraderie, and advocacy for Marines and their families. However, in an era where the veteran population is aging and fewer young people are interested in military service, we face challenges in maintaining our relevance and ensuring our survival. To continue our mission effectively, we must adapt to changing demographics, embrace modern technology, and expand our outreach to younger generations of Marines.

One of the most pressing challenges the League faces is the aging of its membership. Many of our active members are from the Vietnam War, Gulf War, and early conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As these Marines grow older, we must focus on recruiting younger veterans from more recent service periods. We need to adapt to demographic shifts, modernize our outreach strategies,

and expand our services to attract and retain younger veterans while continuing to honor older members.

Younger Marines often have different expectations and lifestyles that may not align with traditional League structures. To attract them, we should modernize our membership options, offering more flexible participation opportunities, virtual engagement, and professional networking programs. Emphasizing career development, mental health support, and family-oriented activities could make the League more appealing to a new generation of Marines.

Technology also presents an opportunity for the Marine Corps League to modernize. Many younger Marines prefer digital engagement over traditional in-person meetings at local detachments. By creating robust online communities, hosting virtual events, and leveraging social media, the League can connect with Marines across the country and provide ongoing support regardless of physical location. We are making strides in this area through the development of our mobile app, increasing social media presence, and our forays in working with a marketing company to improve our messaging, but much more needs to be done to accelerate our culture shift.

Ultimately, the survival of the Marine Corps League depends on its ability to evolve. By embracing modernization, expanding outreach efforts, and adapting to the needs of younger Marines, the League can continue to serve as a vital organization that honors, supports, and advocates for those who have earned the title of Marine. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: seddiv.org

DIVISION REPORTS

Division, Department, and Detachment Goals



Randy Rigg

**NVC,
Southern
Division**



MARINES: It's now a new year and I have finished reporting to the membership of the Southern Division on how well we did in meeting our goals in 2024. Those goals included the reduction in unpaid membership, increase in membership, on time Report of Officer Installation, on time IRS filing, and on time PLM audits. We had a number of challenges this year and were not able to maintain membership levels as we had in the past. This continuous decline, no matter how small, is a trend we need to reverse in all of our detachments to help keep them healthy and to keep us growing in the coming years.

By the time most of you have read this article, we will have completed the Southern Division conference in Oklahoma City. I want to thank the members of Sooner Detachment 559 for the excellent job they did in hosting the conference.

There are two main reasons we chose to host our conference in Oklahoma City.

First, we are gathered to conduct the business of the division in the way of communicating those programs we have made use of within the division. This is the best opportunity to highlight the programs of the MCL through "schools of instruction." The schools of instruction are presented by each department on subjects of importance to the MCL. This year, we highlighted the MCL Service Officer Program, Recruiting/Retention and Marketing, and Fiduciary Duty, Responsibility, and Compliance—all which helps detachments succeed. Also, during the conference, ideas are exchanged between units about the programs they use and how well they work. This exchange of information helps everyone use those same programs in their own areas.

Second, we caucus for the membership to meet, interview, and select those individuals that are going to represent the Southern Division for the next two years on the national board of the MCL.

Again, this year we in the Southern Division will have the opportunity to attend the MCL National Convention close to home in Dallas, and I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of you there. This will be an excellent opportunity for a lot of our membership to attend a national convention (as it's close to home) and be part of the decision-making process of the Marine Corps League. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: southernmcl.org

Embracing Change: A Marine's Call to Progress



Joe Uribe

**NVC,
Southwest
Division**



MARINES: The Marine Corps is built on a legacy of honor, courage, and commitment—values that remain unchanged through the decades. Yet, when it comes to processes and operations outside our cherished traditions, the old adage "because it's always been this way" can, at times, hinder progress. In today's evolving world, adapting our methods isn't about discarding our already set in place procedures; it's about enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

Modern challenges require modern solutions. Take, for example, the shift from postal services to email communication. Sharing documents online instead of mailing them not only speeds up processes but also reduces the risk of lost or delayed items. Similarly, transitioning from paper checks to electronic payments streamlines fee collection and accounting—essential efficiency improvements for an organization steeped

in history and tradition but facing contemporary realities.

Unfortunately, this resistance to change rears its ugly head at all levels of our organization more than I probably suspect. Some, not all, but some of our internal policies, crafted decades ago, now impede smooth operation rather than supporting it. Holding tightly to outdated methods can slow us down when agility and responsiveness are needed most.

Change is not a repudiation of our traditions; it is an evolution that can respect our past while preparing us for the future. Our history, filled with lessons of valor and sacrifice, remains a guiding light. But we must also be open to refining our processes to ensure they serve us well in a world that is constantly transforming.

As Marines, we are known for our adaptability and relentless drive to overcome obstacles. This same spirit should extend to our approach toward change. By embracing new technologies and updating outdated policies, we not only honor our legacy but also secure a more efficient and effective future for all who serve.

This is not a rebuke in any way, shape or form to the many great Marines in elected positions currently doing fine work for the MCL. This, in fact, is simply a note for leaders to keep in their toolbox.

Let us be the solution—not the problem. In acknowledging the need for change, we continue to lead by example, ensuring that the MCL remains strong, resilient, and ready to face the challenges of tomorrow. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclswdivision.org

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The Lost Art with Andrew Cox Podcast

By Jim Dickson

The Lost Art with Andrew Cox Podcast is the work of a retired, 25-year Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sergeant who recognized the need for a place that Marine Corps veterans could use to renew their camaraderie and talk about their experiences with other veterans of the Corps. Many of these men found it difficult to talk about these subjects with their families for whatever reasons. However, they would open up and talk around other veterans. Subjects run the gamut from life stories, war stories, and the problems veterans often face. Some of the men need to get things off their chest while others just want to talk. After all, military service is a big part of a veteran's life and sometimes wartime service is the most formative period of their lives. Not having someone to talk about it with can be very hard... harder than most folks realize. Returning to civilian life after time in the military can be difficult and civilians don't always understand, or even want to hear about it. When it's your own family, that can be particularly frustrating and painful. The bonds forged between comrades in arms often are very strong, and when these men leave the military, they go their separate ways in an enormously large country, often losing all track of each other. This podcast is an excellent way for them to reconnect.

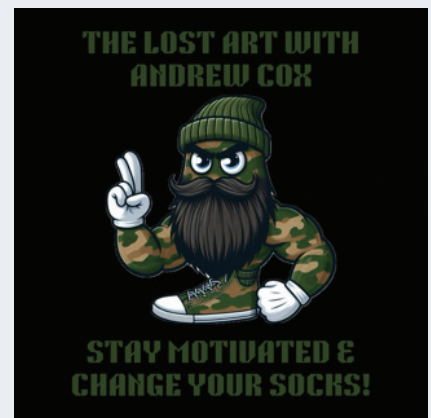
If a veteran has problems, the



Enjoying a brisk winter day in Sallisaw, OK.



Marine Corps League and TIL
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Podcast Logo



Wife Karleen receiving her Letter of Appreciation at retirement ceremony.

podcast is there to help; whether it be PTSD, problems with the Veterans Administration, or whatever. There is expert help as well as just someone to share experiences with. Not only does the podcast offer a talking place for Marine Corps veterans, it also is preserving those experiences for future generations. The Lost Art title refers to the military ideals of leadership, discipline, teamwork, and resilience. Virtues carefully cultivated in the military that are often sadly lacking in civilian life. The podcast strives to lead by example illustrating how it's done through veteran's stories.

This is not just for veterans, for there is much that a prospective Marine recruit can learn from these stories before their enlistment. They can

benefit from the experiences of the podcast participants to better prepare themselves for what lies ahead. For the veteran's family, this podcast offers a look inside the world of the military; a world foreign to most civilians. By helping them understand the veteran's experiences, they can better engage with them, strengthening family ties that otherwise may be frayed by a conspicuous lack of communication on this important part of a family member's life.

Sergeant Andrew J. Cox served in the Marine Corps from 1999 until his retirement in 2024. He started the podcast in December 2023 and currently has recorded 363 episodes and counting. The podcast's motto is fitting for a Marine sergeant, "Stay motivated and change your socks!"

For those who have never seen trench foot (AKA immersion foot) keeping clean, dry socks on is vital for a combat soldier and an easy thing to overlook during the stress of being under fire. Failure to do so can result in skin sloughing off the foot, a most serious medical condition that has even led to amputation in extreme past cases. Death from infection also occurred in the past.

Sergeant Cox served as a musician in the Marine Corps band where he played for many heads of state over the years. Starting out as a drummer, he became drum major, also handling the band's logistics. During the Iraq War, the band deployed as security to Camp Blue Diamond as a heavy weapons platoon. This was in Ramadi, Iraq and General Mattis's



Wife Karleen and kids Madison and Tayla enjoying vacation at Mt Airy, NC. Home of Andy Griffith.

Headquarters Camp. As Sergeant of the Guard, his duties included quickly inspecting the crater of every incoming mortar shell that struck the base, determining the direction the shot came from, and then shooting an azimuth for Marine counter-battery fire. During this stint he had two close calls with near misses by mortar fire. Once by shrapnel and once when he was headed for the spot a mortar shell would soon land... he was fortuitously called back by Sergeant Payton on a paperwork matter just in time to miss being hit. It was during this period that they found that local workers coming on base were gathering intelligence to help the enemy mortar crews place their shots precisely.

Sgt. Cox also served as a swimming instructor, a martial arts instructor, and a drill sergeant, eventually becoming senior drill instructor and staff non-commissioned officer for the water survival section. During this, he was honored for his leadership and for saving a recruit's life. The recruit



Performing country and western tunes at the KOA.

had a heart attack due to a previously unknown heart condition and the quick work of Sgt. Cox and another drill instructor saved his life. This just goes to show that you always have to be ready for the totally unexpected when in charge of other men. A lot of men would not have considered

a heart attack on a young recruit that had been through his military physical exams and the man would have died while they were thinking he was pulling a trick or something. This empathy and looking out for the well-being of his fellow Marines was behind his creating the podcast.

After completing his duty as a drill instructor, Sgt. Cox returned as drum major for the 2nd Corps Division Marine Corps band at Camp Lejeune, where they played all over the U.S. and Europe for the heads of the European countries. Upon returning to the U.S., he continued in the role of senior enlisted back at Camp Pendleton and Miramar Air Station finishing his career as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the School of Music.

The Lost Art with Andrew Cox Podcast is thus a legitimate "by Marines, of Marines, and for Marines" podcast. It can be found at thelostart.poddean.com or you can enter "The Lost Art with Andrew Cox" in your search engine of choice.

2025 Tree of Lights



Sponsored by the
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Youth Foundation, Inc.*

Proceeds Benefitting the
*Marine Corps League's
Youth Physical Fitness Program*

The Tree of Lights Program has been supporting the Youth Physical Fitness Program for over twenty years. Each year, Marine Corps League Detachments and Auxiliary Units as well as members of the greater Marine Corps family have the opportunity to sponsor lights in honor or memory of a friend or loved one or as a Year-end gift on the tree lit during the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Sponsors' names are recorded on the *Scroll of Honor* displayed at the ceremony and on the U.S. Marines Youth Foundation website:

www.usmarinesyouthfoundation.org

The 2025 Tree of Lights Ceremony is being held in the Medal of Honor Theater located in the National Museum of the Marine Corps on December 11, 2025, at 11:00. A catered lunch will immediately follow the ceremony on the 2nd Deck of the museum. Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by December 1st to: (540) 426-8629 or admindir@usmarineyouthfoundation.org.

Registration form on back →

Tree of Lights Registration Form

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☐ YEAR-END GIFT to the UNITED STATES MARINES YOUTH FOUNDATION

*** Please, one name per light.**

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Questions? Please call (540) 426-8629

*Forms should be received by December 1st to ensure inclusion on the Scroll of Honor displayed at the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Donations will continue to be accepted through December 31st. The final Scroll will be posted on the U.S. Marines Youth Foundation website:
www.usmarinesyouthfoundation.org*

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE

During the MCL Department of Colorado quarterly staff meeting in January 2025 at the DAV26, the Department Commandant Joe Meilinger displayed the Department's new flag.



Senior Vice-Commandant Sheppard of MCLo61 in Ocala, FL, along with Paymaster Potthoff, presents a 102-year-old Marine, Cpl. Aaron Levin, an Air Wing Marine during WWII, with an honorary membership into the Dept. of Florida MCL.

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ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Social hour that we had with 4th Anglico USMCR I&I and staff with members of our beloved Det. 068.



Cedar Valley Det. 099 supports the local recruiting office in preparing poolees for boot camp by attending weekly PT sessions. By bringing together the past, present, and future, we are living the concept of "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."



DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA AND GREATER GREENSBORO DETACHMENT 260 LAYS ONE OF THEIR OWN TO REST
The Greater Greensboro Detachment 260's Honor Guard, along with the Department of North Carolina Commandant, laid to rest Past Department Commandant and Greater Greensboro 260 member Percy "Suds" Sudsbury on 16JAN2025. The service was held at the Kernersville Moravian Church in Kernersville, NC, where friends, former colleagues, and church members remembered their time with Percy. He will be truly missed. Semper Fi Marine!

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Members of the Galveston County MCL 668 attended the Veterans Day program at Seawolf Park on Pelican Island, Galveston, TX this past year's Veterans' Day.



Flint Detachment 155 Michigan places Christmas wreaths on the graves of their members at Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, MI. 52 wreaths were placed.



Members of Pennndelphia Det. 306 in Philadelphia, PA.

Join Roll Call!

ALL MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MEMBERS MAY SUBMIT ROLL CALL ENTRIES

SUBMISSION DIRECTIONS

You may submit photos with short captions in email to semperfi@chipotlepublishing.com. Photos must not be more than 20MB in size.

Captions—Photo captions should briefly describe the event and list persons present in the photo(s) along with detachment number and location. Captions should be no longer than 60 words. Please do not include information about persons not present in the photo(s).

Photos—We cannot use photos that are inserted into an email, PDF or MS Word document. Please make sure each photo is a separate file in the highest resolution possible (specific criteria are in the instructions on the upload site).

Permission — For photos of youth under age 18, please visit the MCL Library for the "Photo Permission Form" under Scouting for the Photo Release Form.

Sorry—There are no guarantees of publication. The most common reasons for Roll Call rejection are: 1) the photo was blurry or too small in size, and 2) the uniforms in the photo did not meet regulations.

If you have any questions about uniform regulations, please contact Jim Powell of the Uniform Committee at the National website: www.mclnational.org.

NOTICE TO MARINE CORPS LEAGUE DETACHMENTS!

Please consider taking a group photo of your detachment's membership. Department and division conferences are another way to

capture some memories. We would love to include your photos in the **Semper Fi** magazine.

REUNIONS

Task Force Delta, Royal Thai Air Base Nam Phong, "Rose Garden Marines"

DATE: 12 – 16 MAY 2025

LOCATION: Spokane WA

NOTES: The last Marine combat unit
to leave the Vietnam theater.

CONTACT: Name, (602) 559-1406,
webmaster@namphong.vet

INFO: www.namphong.vet

Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (1966-1971)

DATE: 28 May – 1 Jun 2025

LOCATION: Myrtle Beach, SC

CONTACT: Dan Cantrell, 360-739-
6104, dancantrell1@yahoo.com

Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Vietnam Veterans (1965-1971)

DATE: 29 May – 01 Jun 2025

LOCATION: Embassy Suites by Hilton in
Downtown Des Moines, IA 50309

CONTACT: Jerry Moorehead, (515) 999-
2690, gamoorehead@msn.com

60th National Convention Montford Point Marine Association Inc.

DATE: 23 – 27 JUL 2025

LOCATION: Atlanta Hilton Hotel 253
Courtland St. NE, Atlanta, Georgia

CONTACT: Ron Johnson, 504-202-8552

35th Reunion of the Bulk Fuel Association

DATE: 15 – 20 SEP 2025

LOCATION: Hyatt Place 220 Rudy Circle, Nashville, TN

NOTES: Please call 615-872-0422 Ext 3, Code
G-USMC for your reservation before 15 AUG 2025.

CONTACT: H. Huston, 609-432-
4027, HHuston61@aol.com

Marine Corps Engineer Association (MCEA)

DATE: 24 – 26 SEP 2025

LOCATION: Hampton Inn Stafford/Quantico,
2965 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA 22554

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(931) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org

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THE MCL GEARS UP FOR THIS
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In 2026, the Marine Corps League and Military Historical Tours (miltours.com) will offer the battlefield tour for a Marine Corps League Member as the winner of the League's Tour raffle. The winner will receive a trip for two.

Tickets: Marine Corps League 2026 Battlefield Tour Raffle.

One Grand Prize: Trip for Two Free Tour.

These trips span the globe and military history. See the list below for a complete lineup.

Everyone who enters lends their support to League programs including Marines Helping Marines, Legislative Programs, Toys for Tots and more.

Raffle tickets cost \$5 per single entry or five tickets for just \$20! That's right, the more you buy, the more you save and the more you help the League. The drawing will be held at our annual Mid-Winter Conference Banquet in 2026.

You do not need to be present to win. Winners will be notified within 3 days of drawing if they are not present, and arrangements will be made with Military Historical Tours for selection of their tour prize.

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You need not be present to win.
Drawing will occur at the 2026
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MARINE CORPS LEAGUE 2026 BATTLEFIELD TOUR RAFFLE

One Grand Prize: Trip for Two Free
Tour to anywhere MCL's tour partner
(Military Historical Tours) travels.

**\$5 per entry or
5 entries for \$20**

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You need not be present to win. Winner
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Phone	
Email	

22 Aug-4 Sep
"D-Day to the Bulge" Normandy
Invasion & Battle of the Bulge

5-18 Sept
Rise & Fall of the Third Reich: Munich-
Berlin-Nuremberg-Dresden-Prague

19-30 Sept
All-England Tour "God Save the
King" WWII & 8th Air Force

1-8 Oct
Battlefields of France & Belgium:
Waterloo-WWI-WWII-Dunkirk

21-29 Oct
MHT's Civil War "North to Gettysburg"

12-25 Oct
U.S. Military & Civilian Women in Vietnam

22-29 Oct
Birth of American Democracy:
"Boston - Yorktown"

2-13 Dec
Vietnam Delta to DMZ Post Tour: 13-18 Dec
Laos & Cambodia

1-8 Dec
Pearl Harbor & WWII Sites

2026 Tours

16-23 Mar
Victory in the Pacific & IJAA's 81st
Anniversary of Iwo Jima

3-12 Apr
Philippines - WWII in the P.I.

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ON REVERSE SIDE



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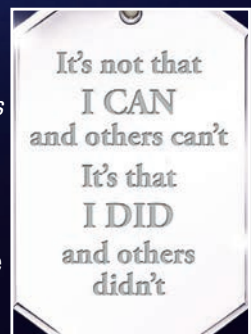
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Memoriam of the Fallen

By Michael J. Haas

Listen and hear the caissons rumble,
as the parade of our dead pass on.
Since the days brothers lined asunder,
we've showered their sacrifice in antiphon.

Originally simple flowers were spread,
songs were sung with grief and remorse.
Today the poppy is symbolically shed,
as we speak about honor running its course.

Unselfishly they answered the Almighty's call,
while promoting the freedoms we hold so dear.
Orders were given into the darkness they did fall,
time after time they traversed without fear.

Our Freedom is built upon the blood they shed,
while we silently mourned their losses each day.
Maybe a son, daughter, brother, sister, or friend each they bled,
with that solitary belief of Democracy never to stray.

Today we celebrate their lives and giving,
remembrance of the sacrifices they showed.
Etched in our hearts forever reliving,
the suffering and pain forever endured.

Lest we forget those whose suffering transcended,
far beyond the initial attack.
They too we honor their perseverance extended,
whose lives forever taken aback.

Remember always the sacrifices they made,
shaping our lives and our world intact.
Their duty and honor forever engrained,
in our hearts and minds never to diffract.

*Mike Haas is the Junior Past Commandant of L/CPL Christopher Adlesperger Det. 1316, Rio Rancho, New Mexico.
This poem was written for the May, 2025 City of Rio Rancho Memorial Day Program.*



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Full Name _____ Member Number _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Date of Birth ____/____/____ Join Date ____/____/____

Membership Type - Regular () Associate () Dual ()

Please indicate the amount enclosed: -----

Member's Signature

Upon completion, turn into your Detachment Paymaster with required payment.

**For Members At Large (MAL), remit this form with check or money order in the amount of \$30 to: Marine Corps League, National Headquarters
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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP - MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Full Name _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Date of Birth ____/____/____ Date of Enlistment/Commissioning ____/____/____ Date of Discharge/Retirement/Separation ____/____/____

Type of Application - New () Membership Type - Regular () Associate () Dual ()

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? () YES () NO If YES is checked, I agree to waive my rights under the Privacy Act and disclose the nature of the felony conviction for consideration of membership in the Marine Corps League.

() I hereby apply for membership in the _____ Detachment, Marine Corps League and enclose \$ _____ for one year's membership.*

-OR-

() I hereby apply for membership in the Marine Corps League as a Member-at-Large (MAL), and enclose \$30 for one year's membership.*

*Includes free subscription to *Semper Parvum*, The Magazine of the Marine Corps League

I hereby certify that I am currently serving or have served honorably in the United States Marine Corps, "ON ACTIVE DUTY," for not less than ninety (90) days and earned the Eagle, Globe and Anchor; or have served or am currently serving in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and have earned no less than ninety (90) Reserve Retirement Credit Points; or that I have served or am currently serving as a U.S. Navy FMF Sailor who has trained with Marine FMF Units in excess of ninety (90) days and earned the Marine Corps Device (clasp) or the Warfare Device worn on the Service Ribbon. If discharged, I am in receipt of a DD Form 214 or a Certificate of Discharge indicating "Honorable Service." ("Honorable Service" will be defined by the last DD Form 214 or Certificate of Discharge that the applicant received.) General Discharge under Honorable Conditions is acceptable. By signature on this application, I hereby agree to provide proof of honorable service/discharge upon request. I hereby authorize the National Executive Director, Marine Corps League to obtain an un-redacted copy of my latest DD Form 214 from the Marine Corps custodian of Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF), and/or verification of honorable service if deemed necessary to verify my eligibility for regular membership in the Marine Corps League. I understand the DD Form 214 may contain information such as military awards, training, and character of service.

(Sponsor where applicable)

Applicant's Signature (see reverse side)

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**Upon completion, turn into your Detachment sponsor with required payment. Applicants for MAL Membership, remit this form with check or money order in the amount of \$30 to: Marine Corps League, National Headquarters
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OATH OF MEMBERSHIP

"I, _____, In the Presence of 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 League, so help me God."

Signature _____

Incorporated by an act of Congress in 1937, the Marine Corps League perpetuates the traditions and spirit of ALL Marines who proudly wear or who have worn the Eagle, Globe and Anchor of the Corps.



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Mid-Winter National Conference



2024 National MOY Howard Schaeffer and 2024 National AMOY Carol McIntosh, both from PA, receiving their MOY & AMOY plaque at the Mid-Winter banquet. They are pictured with past National MOY's and National AMOY recipients. Left to Right: Front row: PNC Vic Voltaggio (2004); CDD Jeffery Jones (2018); Howard Schaeffer (2024); Lisa Solarczyk (2019); Alison Noger (2023); Franklin T. Mathers (2022); PNC Paul Hastings (1989); and Carol McIntosh (2024). Back Row: Rick Thomason (2020).



Oldest and Youngest Marines in attendance at the Mid-Winter banquet, PNC Paul Hastings (Maj, USMC, Retired) and LCpl Travia Jackson.



20th SMMC SgtMaj Ruiz is a thoughtful and well-prepared speaker whose command presence kept the audience riveted.



In celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, a cake cutting ceremony was held at the 2025 National Midwinter Banquet.



Marine Corps League Members at the 2025 National Midwinter Conference Banquet.

SAVE THE DATE



APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2025

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CENTER, WASHINGTON D.C.**



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