

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

Vol. 81 No. 3 • SUMMER 2025

SEMPER PARATI



The Magazine of the Marine Corps League

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS

**Modern Day
Marine 2025
Opening Ceremony**

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

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www.va.gov/sign-in-changes



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of Veterans Affairs

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- Video
- Collections
- Case Studies
- References



EVENTS



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The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



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U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Christopher J. Mahoney, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, participates in the ribbon cutting ceremony at Modern Day Marine, 2025. (USMC photo: Lance Cpl. Kiara Rawls)



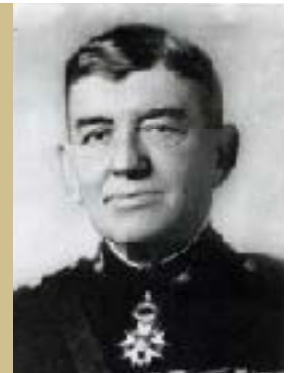
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Please visit the Marine Corps League Library's Convention tab (www.mcleaguelibrary.org/convention/) to review the approved changes to the League's Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. The Bylaws and Admin Procedures documents are being revised and 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

A Call to Action



MARINES: This article will be a call to action. I have been working on ideas on how to spark growth within our ranks. It is not an easy task. What I am proposing to all 55,000 members is to create a 30-second video on your phone. Have another friend film you or lean it against something, and I want you to tell the world why you joined the MCL, why it is important to you, to have purpose and give back to Marines, veterans, and your community. Once you have content worth sharing, send it to our PR committee via

email (videos@mcleague.org). Once our team has it, we will start to create a marketing plan that may include things like social media posts, and a video collage for our YouTube channel. Our PR folks are very creative, so let's get on this and start filling our ranks. You never know, we may run some of these videos at the Mid-Winter Conference and National Convention. Like 'Joker' said in *Full Metal Jacket*, "We'll make you famous."

Speaking of marketing, our outside marketing company has finished its first year and it's time to analyze the results and adjust fire to see if we do this again. We had more than 500k in traffic on each campaign, along with three social media influencers at our Modern-Day Marine Expo in Washington, D.C. in April. The expo was fantastic and very well received. Thank you to all of our volunteer staff. I can't say it enough, but I'm so proud of each of you. It's a lot of time on your feet and walking the convention center. Each one of you contributes to the overall success of the expo.

Lastly, I wish to thank you for reelecting me as your National Commandant. I will always work on moving the MCL forward and setting up the next slate of officers up for success. Remember the two most important days are the day you were born and the day you found out why! **Semper Fi!**



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The Magazine of the Marine Corps League

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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO

BOB BORKA

Telephone Game



MARINES: Remember the telephone game? One person tells another person some information. That person tells another person, but the message changes a little. By the time it goes through several people, the message turns out to be different than the original version. Is it on purpose? Likely not. We tend to recall memories differently and while we do our best to pass on correct information, it often tends to be a little different than originally intended.

During the Spring of 2025, I spoke at seven division conferences and four department conferences. I appreciate the opportunity to pass the same message across the U.S. Our hope is that these opportunities for excellence are passed to our members to keep people informed. I had the opportunity to sit with many of our adjutants, paymasters, and commandants and the dedication of our volunteers is consistently amazing! Thank you for your servant leadership to our members.

One of the great things we rolled out this spring is the new database portal. All members who have an email address in the system can log in and update their phone number, email, and mailing address. The new portal is especially helpful for detachment paymasters. Please check out the training video found in the MCL's online Member Library. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

ROB BROOKS, USMC (RET).

Continuing the Legacy



MARINES: As we close on Modern Day Marine 2025, not only can we celebrate an amazing event that has grown from its inception and continues to blossom into one of the greatest military expos this nation has, but we also celebrate the continued contributions of amazing Americans who give of themselves without asking for payment in return. The Military Order of the Iron Mike Award, which is given to an individual who has contributed the most to the United States of America and the Marine Corps, was awarded this year to Bryan Clark, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Defense Concepts and Technology at the Hudson Institute. Not only has Clark had an accomplished naval career, but his current career has furthered cemented him as an expert in naval operations, electronic warfare, autonomous systems, and military competitions and wargaming.

This year's recipient of the Dickey Chapelle Award, an award given in honor of the late war correspondent and to a person who best exemplifies her intrepid spirit and has substantially contributed to the morale, welfare and well being of Marines and their families, was presented to Mallory Shelbourne, Deputy Director and Reporter for USNI News. Shelbourne's dedi-

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page

cation to journalism started early in life leading her to graduate from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and the American University's School of International Service. Her career has taken her from being the managing editor of "Inside the Navy" reporting on the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps budget and acquisition process, to jumping on the defense beat, where she covered politics and transportation policy for the Hill and now covers a wide variety of Navy and Marine Corps topics from

acquisition to international naval operations.

As one door closes another opens and we now continue to look forward to events that celebrate YOU. After my brief at this year's Mid-Winter Conference, some of you have taken my challenge and are keeping me busy creating events on our mobile app. I extend this invitation to everyone. If you have an event on the horizon reach out to me and let's get it on our app for all to see. I hope to see all of you at our National Convention in Texas. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Power of Social Media: Promoting the Marine Corps League

MARINES: Social media platforms like Facebook, X, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn are invaluable tools for the Marine Corps League. They help promote the League's mission, improve communication between detachments, support recruitment, share fundraising ideas, and showcase community involvement. Engaging with the national page allows detachments to amplify their stories and inspire members across the country.

National Public Relations' Role

The League's National Public Relations team is dedicated to sharing the missions, successes, and achievements of members. They don't direct or dictate detachment practices; rather, they serve as a platform to highlight members' incredible work. Every shared story strengthens the League's message and showcases members as the best recruitment tool.

Do's and Don'ts for Social Media Posts

To ensure posts can be shared on the national page, members should follow these guidelines:

- **Uniform Check:** Confirm uniforms adhere to MCL guidelines. A quick buddy check ensures posts reflect professionalism and respect.
- **Professional Image:** Avoid posting photos that include guns, alcohol, or smoking. These elements prevent the League from maintaining a professional appearance in line with active-duty



values.

- **Protect Youth Privacy:** If children are involved, ensure media release forms are on file before sharing photos. Prioritize their safety and privacy.

A Unified Mission

The Marine Corps League's social media presence fosters a sense of camaraderie and connection. By sharing stories and engaging with the national page, members contribute to the League's legacy and inspire others. Social media is more than a tool—it's a way to celebrate the dedication and impact of every member.

At its core, public relations is about influencing, engaging with, and building meaningful relationships across all communities and platforms to shape public perception of our organization. It's our collective mission to find innovative and creative ways to showcase—especially through social media—how we continue to serve.



Follow the League's national Facebook page and showcase

your detachment's achievements to the wider Marine Corps League community. Together, we can amplify our message, strengthen our connections, and share the stories that make us proud to say, **Semper Fi!**

Limited Edition
250th Anniversary Hoodie!

250TH ANNIVERSARY
THE FEW, THE PROUD
USMC
MEN'S HOODIE



Official 250th
Anniversary
Patch On
Sleeve



Embroidered
Eagle, Globe
and Anchor
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on Front

Embroidered
USMC Motto and
Slogan with Emblem
Appliqué on Back

SCAN
HERE TO
SHOP



COMMEMORATING 250 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Now you can pay tribute to the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps with our **250th Anniversary "The Few, The Proud" USMC Men's Hoodie**, an original design available only from The Bradford Exchange.

Crafted in an easy-care black knit fleece, the hoodie features a large appliqué patch of the official branch emblem on the back, framed with branch motto and slogans, plus the year established, in golden embroidery. An official embroidered appliqué patch adorns the right sleeve in honor of the 250th anniversary and an embroidered branch insignia is proudly displayed on the front. Other details include an embroidered flag patch on the left sleeve, light gray thermal knit lining in the hood, kangaroo pockets, rib knit cuffs, hood drawstrings and a full front zipper. Available in 5 sizes, Medium to XXXL. Imported.

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MCL AUXILIARY

DOTTY SANNING

NATIONALMCLA.ORG

Service to Others



MARINES: Over the past few months, I've had the honor of attending several division conferences and department conventions across the country. While each event has its unique character, I've noticed a unifying thread: wherever there's an active auxiliary, there's a strong sense of camaraderie. In locations without an auxiliary presence, it's often a Marine's wife, daughter, sister-in-law, or daughter-in-law stepping in to ensure the hospitality room is welcoming, registration runs smoothly, and banquet tables are beautifully decorated.

When we were chartered by the MCL in 1937 as the women's branch of the MCL (and we still operate under that very same charter today), our mission was clear, and we continue to pursue it. We are dedicated to making a difference. At the Midwest Division Conference in Sioux Falls, that is just what we did. We made a difference for Marine Stephanie Abbott by hosting a baby shower for her.

Generally, auxiliary units work with their detachments when invited, wherever and whenever possible. Many of the strongest detachments in the country have the support of a vibrant and active auxiliary unit. Likewise, strong auxiliary units typically enjoy a productive relationship with their detachments. While our procedures may differ in some ways, our shared goal remains the same: to support, assist, and encourage one another.

The auxiliary actively supports the MCL Foundation at both the national and department levels. This includes contributing to scholarship programs and hardship and disaster relief funds. We also support the Young Marines program, with many auxiliary members serving in or assisting with various roles. Additionally, the Youth Physical Fitness Foundation often sees our volunteers helping at sponsored meets. Although the League's Boy Scout Eagle Award Program doesn't



During the Midwest Division Conference in Sioux Falls, the Auxiliary held a baby shower held for Marine, Stephanie Abbott, of Iowa.

involve auxiliary members directly, we proudly run a parallel program to recognize Girl Scouts who achieve the prestigious Gold Award. Many of our members also play a significant role in Toys for Tots, as well.

The auxiliary continues the mission of service to others by collecting and sending care items to deployed troops, as well as bringing comfort items to VA hospitals and nursing homes. We dedicate countless hours volunteering in VA facilities and share our volunteer hours with the League at the end of our reporting period. We are always ready to help.

To our Marines and Associate Members, I invite you to spend time with us and learn more about what the auxiliary can offer. As our membership changes, some of us no longer have a spouse in the League or may be the descendant of a Marine – we still want to know how we can best support your detachments. Let us be part of your continued growth and we serve our communities. **Semper Fi!**

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TERRA Search Promise

As a Marine Corps Infantry veteran who served from 1982 to 1992, I have a great love and respect for all MIA/POWS.

Once I heard about TERRA Search Promise and their honorable mission to help to find missing U.S. military remains all over the world in the conflicts that the USA has participated in over the last 100 years, I volunteered to help in any way possible. I am currently an outreach and education volunteer for TERRA Search, and I am looking forward to participating in future recovery missions very soon.

Let me tell you about TERRA Search Promise, it is our country's first veteran-owned, non-profit organization dedicated to recovering and repatriating our nation's missing in action from past conflicts. Sadly, to date, there remain more than 79,000 unaccounted U.S. service members.



TERRA Search's bold vision is twofold. First, to increase the Department of Defense's capabilities in the number of field missions conducted. Second, to ensure current and next generations of veterans keep the nation's promise to "Never Forget". The mission is important by not only contributing to the nation's effort, but for providing real purpose to a veteran and affected family members.

To conduct a mission, TERRA Search Promise is formally partnered with the DOD's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The two organizations work together to determine what missions are a

good fit for TERRA Search Promise, inclusive of timeframe availability and cost considerations. Once contracted, background and historical information regarding the service-member is shared and planning begins.

During planning, a call for volunteers - no experience necessary - is posted on TERRA Search's website and social media. Additionally, the team enlists those with critical necessary skill sets such as medical, EOD, and prior archaeology experience.

TERRA Search Promise is a win-win for our nation and our veteran community at large. We strive to bring closure to families who have long been awaiting for any news of their lost loved one, our dream is to find as many U.S. MIA remains as possible. **Semper Fi!**

Sgt. Michael L. Emerson

U.S. Marine Corps Infantry 1982-1992

Life Member of the Marine Corps League

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4—13 Apr 2026
Philippines—WWII in the PI

14 – 27 Apr 2026
"Saigon to the DMZ" 60th Anniversary VN Battlefields

19 – 27 Apr 2026
Turkey—WWI Gallipoli

24 Apr – 7 May 2026
NEW WWII Operation Market Garden: "Holland to Berlin"

16 – 25 May 2026
WWI Battlefields of France

31 May – 13 Jun 2026
D-Day & Battle of the Bulge

29 Jul—9 Aug 2026
Guadalcanal 84th Return

1 – 14 Aug 2026
Vietnam "Delta to the DMZ"

CHIEF DEVIL DOG

JEFFREY JONES, 61ST CHIEF DEVIL DOG

More Than Just a Dog



MARINES: During my travels across the country to division conferences, department conventions, and department conferences, I have noticed that many Marine Corps League members think of me as JUST A DOG! While it is true I am the 61st Chief Devil Dog, or, in real-world terms, I am the CEO of the Military Order of the Devil Dog, Inc., I would like to emphasize that I am a Marine Corps Leaguer first.

All Dogs within the Military Order of the Devil Dogs are first and foremost a Marine Corps League member. I have “worked the chairs,” not just sat in them, of the Department of North Carolina, including two terms as department commandant. During that time, the Department of North Carolina had 56 detachments and approximately 2300 Marines. All that being said, if you are talking about MCL ideas and I walk up you don’t have to stop talking. I have experience and ideas that I could contribute.

In the past all chiefs have been in charge of the Chief’s Carved Staff. The first Chief’s Staff was retired by the 51st PCDD Don Garland during his time in office. The new Chief’s Staff is made from wood that was brought back by PDD Terry Hightower of the North Carolina Pack. The 54th PCDD Mike English organized for Marine Bill Howrilla of Pennsylvania to carve the new Chief’s Staff during his time in office. After the new Chief’s Staff was complete, PCDD Mike English anointed the staff with water retrieved from the Devil Dog Fountain in Belleau Woods, France. In the past, the Chief’s Staff has been kept securely in the Dog House at Mid-Winter Conferences and at the National Conventions. During my tenure, it is an honor to carry the Chief’s Staff to all the growls that I attend, giving dogs across the order an opportunity to take in a piece of Military Order of the Devil Dog history that they may have otherwise not been able to see.

It is an honor to be a Devil Dog!!! **Semper Fi!**



From left, 4th Honorary Chief HCDD Jack Severn, 61st Chief Devil Dog Jeffrey Jones, and 51st Past Chief PCDD Don Garland.



61st Chief Devil Dog Jeffrey Jones and the Chief’s Carved Staff.



Top section and middle of the Chief's Carved Staff. Dedicated by the 54th Chief, Mike English. Wood brought back from Belleau Wood, France. Carved by Bill Howrilla.



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NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE

BRUCE RAKFELDT

Get Ready for the National Convention – Let's Do Our Homework!

MARINES: The National Convention is almost here, and excitement is building! It's always a special time to reconnect with old friends, forge new bonds, and celebrate the camaraderie that makes our organization so unique. While the convention is filled with fun, fellowship, and meaningful moments, there's also important work to be done—and it starts before we even arrive.

This year, there are 30 national bylaw and administrative procedure proposals submitted for review. These proposals are now available on the National website under the 'Convention' webpage. It's essential that all attendees take the time to download, read, and discuss these proposals at their detachment meetings. Doing so ensures that when these items come up for a vote on the convention floor, you'll be well-informed and ready to contribute to the discussion.

Some of the proposals are quite detailed and may take time to digest, which is why early preparation is key. Remember, each proposal represents the time, effort, and dedication of fellow members who submitted them with the intention of strengthening and improving our organization. We owe it to them—and



to ourselves—to give their work the attention it deserves.

One of my personal goals this year has been to work closely with every department to ensure their bylaws are current and compliant. This has proven to be a more complex task than anticipated, but progress is being made. I've had one-on-one conversations with every department judge advocate, and they are

all aware of the steps needed to bring their bylaws up to date. I'm optimistic that shortly after each department convention, we'll see all 47 sets of bylaws finalized and approved.

As we prepare for the convention, let's continue to support one another and stay focused on our shared mission. And as always, let's keep our overseas Marines and all our military brothers and sisters in our thoughts and prayers. Take care of yourselves and each other. I look forward to seeing you all soon! **Semper Fi!**

JUNIOR PAST NATIONAL COMMANDANT

WARREN "GRIFF" GRIFFIN

Let the Birthday Begin

MARINES: We are now in the 250th Anniversary Year of our Marine Corps. We should be the leading entity coordinating this historic event. That is one of the main platforms for our existence. Last year I had an opportunity to request that the USS Constitution, the oldest active Navy vessel, help us in celebrating our birthday. On 6 June, the Marine Corps League was invited to board this ship for a turn-around cruise around Boston Harbor. During this cruise, its cannons fired on three occasions. 100 members representing our League took advantage of this opportunity, and most have never had the opportunity to ride on this ship as it travels out to sea. It was the Marines who served on board the Constitution during the War of 1812 that made our history. In August 1812 in a battle with the HMS Guerriere, Lt. William S. Bush was killed becoming the first Marine officer killed in combat. So, traveling on board the USS Constitution is a definite link to our history. A fabulous way to kick off our year's celebration. And yes, it will be a year of celebration culminating on November 10th.

Programs like this happen when people dedicate their time and make the proper inquiries. Surprisingly, programs or events which you may feel are out of reach really are not. Ask and you shall receive – we hope.



Every event that the departments plan to honor the 250 not only foster our obligation to maintain the history of the Marine Corps but it also provides a great opportunity to serve as a recruiting tool. When nonmember Marines see what we are about, there will be a desire on their part to join with us. Marines are a special breed. There is a certain pride that we all maintain, reach out and let others

share in our pride.

To reiterate, all departments should by now have contacted the Office of the Governor to establish a formal Marine Corps Birthday cake cutting at the State Capitol. If your department has not done this, please make the formal request immediately. This is good public relations for the League and your elected officials.

I am looking forward to our National Convention in Grapevine, Texas. The Department of Texas has gone out of its way to ensure you will have plenty to enjoy. The more active you are at these events the more of a value you are to your members back home. Share experiences, share ideas and share in the fun. **Semper Fi!**

Honoring the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps



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This fine collectible is not legal tender and bears no monetary face value. Design subject to change.

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From their founding at Philadelphia's Tun's Tavern in 1775 until today, brave Marines have answered their nation's call to service. The Bradford Exchange Mint is pleased to salute their unparalleled legacy of valor with the exclusive *250th Anniversary of the USMC Proof Coin*. The United States Marine Corps stands as a powerful symbol of American strength and dedication to global security, embodying courage and excellence in every mission. Their legacy of honor and sacrifice has shaped the nation's values and inspired service worldwide.

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NATIONAL SR. VICE COMMANDANT

RUSS MILLER

Family Focused

MARINES: A recurring phrase heard at MDM '24 & '25 from both the SMMC and CMC has been, "Recruit the member, retain the family." Those of us that served pre-9/11 definitely remember our drill instructors telling us as we inventoried our new gear, "If the Marine Corps wanted you to have a spouse or a family, they would have issued you one.... Now look in that seabag! Is there one in there? NO!! So, you don't need one!" So much has changed since then. In the last 25+ years, our active duty and reserve brothers and sisters have served multiple (sometimes very long) deployments away from their families. Something that I hear repeatedly from these younger, prospective members is that they have been away from their families far too much already and are looking for a place where they can spend more time doing things together, not less.

Many of you have heard me share the story of little Johnny, who comes home from school excited to spend time playing catch with his father. Unfortunately, his dad brought some work home with him that must be completed before an important deadline. Little Johnny repeatedly interrupts his father asking to play catch. Finally, dad exasperatedly opens a magazine and tears out a page with a map of America on it. He tears the page into pieces and tells Johnny that when he has taped it back together, they will play.



Minutes later Johnny, who is far too young to know where all of the states go, returns with the map completed. His dad looks down with amazement and asks how he did it so fast? Johnny replies that on the other side was a picture of a family having a picnic and that when he put the family back together the states fell right into place.

While a membership meeting is not the time or place for children to be involved, planning a family fun night, gathering for a potluck and some cornhole would be a great opportunity to get to know one another and learn how we can better mentor these younger families through the pitfalls of life that many of us have already faced.

If you want to know how to make an apple pie, you find a recipe from someone else that has already made great apple pie. So, talk to other detachments and find out what their recipe has been for reaching younger members with families and share your recipe with others and 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

The Essence of Inspirational Leadership

MARINES: With the right mindset, your purpose becomes a guiding force used by the foundation you built to inspire others. Never underestimate yourself because everyone has the opportunity to inspire as a leader.

Lt. Gen. John A. Lejeune wisely said, "Leadership is the sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that enables a person to inspire." Inspirational leaders are not born overnight. It's not about perfection, but about showing up consistently and doing your best. Some days your best might not feel like enough, and that's okay. Reason why it's okay, you are not alone in strengthening the family. You have to surround yourself with people who are going to lift you higher. These people are your team.

Be that leader who encourages hope and inspiration. A true leader is not found in power, but discovered in goodness, character, and service. When leadership contains these qualities, it inspires ambition within the team to encourage members to grow and seek out new roles. We all know we need more Marines to rise up because I have noticed, and I am not alone, detachments and departments struggling to fill leadership roles throughout the country.

I understand change and growth cannot happen overnight. But if I can make a difference to one or two Marines, it's a start. If you have a positive mind, it will find opportunities in everything.



A negative mind will fault everything. Ultimately, the extent of what you are truly capable of achieving is linked to your willingness to act. Embrace your purpose, lead with unwavering character, and inspire those around you to unlock their fullest potential.

What does all this have to do with the Junior Vice position? Well, we have to start somewhere and where better than with leadership. No one person can change everything, just as no one person is bigger than the League. We are a family, and I have a responsibility to help us grow, to keep us together, and to make sure our members stay valued. I write this from the heart because I believe in what we're doing. In October 2024, we lost 3,677 members. In October 2023, we lost 3,909. My ultimate goal is zero members dropped. Realistically, let's aim to cut that number in half this year. Together, we can make that happen. To reach this goal, I am challenging all Department Junior Vice Commandants to stay connected with your detachments. I know some of you are already doing this and I want to sincerely thank you. Your efforts are noticed and deeply appreciated. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

COL BILL DAVIS, USMC (RET) CEO/NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUNG MARINES

National Young Marine of the Year

MARINES: Seven years ago, my family came to America in search of a better life — a life of opportunity, stability, and purpose. I was young, adjusting to a new culture, language, and lifestyle was not easy. I felt like an outsider trying to find where I fit in this new world.

Then I found the Young Marines. Or maybe, the Young Marines found me.

This program has shaped me into who I am. I've learned what it means to be a leader, to work as part of a team, and to push forward when things get tough. I've gained self-discipline, confidence, and responsibility to serve something bigger than myself. Above all, I've gained a second family — one that believed in me, even before I believed in myself.

Recently, I had the honor of speaking at the MCL Mid-Winter Conference. As I looked out into the audience, I wanted to recognize the members who actively volunteer with the program. To my surprise, half the room stood up. That moment left me speechless. It was a powerful reminder of the deep bond that exists between our two organizations — and of the incredible potential we have when we work together.



From left, National Young Marine of the Year 2024-25 YM/ Sgt. Maj. Susan Suber, YM/Sgt. Maj. Chingiz Bahadur, NED/CEO, Young Marines Col. Bill Davis.

So, how do we elevate the Young Marines program with the help of the Marine Corps League?

We do it by building stronger bridges. The MCL isn't just our support system — you are our mentors, our connection to the very legacy we aspire to uphold. The more involved you are in our units, the more we learn what it means to live a life of service.

We do it by promoting opportunities for growth. The MCL can open doors for Young Marines — by offering scholarships, career guidance, leadership, and access to a network of professionals/veterans who want to see us succeed. Many of us are thinking about military careers, public service, or becoming leaders in our communities.

My mission is simple; to spark passion in the hearts of Young Marines across the country, and to strengthen the bond between our program and MCL Members. I know what it's like to be a recruit looking for purpose. I know how life-changing it can be when someone believes in you. So MCL Members - I ask you all to fully invest in our future leaders.

Thank you for believing in us and investing in our future. Let's continue to walk side by side from generation to generation. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES LIAISON

JOHNNY BAKER

Young Marines of the Marine Corps League

MARINES: The Young Marines of the Marine Corps League and the Marine Corps League are partners in America's youth. The Young Marine program teaches the youth of our nation to lead a healthy and drug-free lifestyle, focus on their leadership, their citizenship through community service, and become productive members of the American society. The partnership of our two organizations is paramount in the success of the Young Marines.

As the 64th Past National Commandant and your current MCL Liaison to the Young Marines board of directors, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many MCL members that have stepped up to volunteer as adult leaders in the Young Marines of the MCL. Without your volunteerism, the youth in your areas may not have the opportunity to become the men and women that they can be under your guidance and leadership. But we need the MCL more involved. The MCL currently has over 1,100 detachments around the country and only about 200 Young Marine Units, and not all are affiliated with the MCL. We recently chartered a new Young Marine Unit in the Houston area. The MCL is heavily involved with that new unit. There are 18 YM units waiting to get their charters. Half of those 18 possible new YM units are being started by the MCL. The MCL can really make a difference.

I want to thank the more than 1,900 adult volunteers throughout



the country that are adult leaders in the Young Marines. These 1,900 adult volunteers are working with about 3,700 youth from the age of 8 through 18. It is such a rewarding responsibility that you have placed upon yourselves to volunteer to help our nation's youth. Each of you that are adult leaders with the Young Marines is what America is about. With over 200 Young Marine units, you do make a difference in our nation's youth.

And finally, every time that you are around a YM unit, see them conducting a color guard, or performing community projects, please stop and talk to them and their adult leaders. Thank them for dedicating their daily lives in becoming a better person. They are always setting the example for other youth to follow, and they should know that each of us truly cares. By the way, do the same for the adult leaders and thank them, too. They also need your encouragement and support. Remember, we all should stand ready to help the Young Marines in their core values in leadership, teamwork, and discipline. After all, it is what we stand for. **Semper Fi!**

DIVISION REPORTS

Passing the Torch



Dave Englert

**NVC, Central
Division**



MARINES: Congratulations to the thousands of elected and appointed officers that have been installed into office this year. By now, I'm confident you've learned your jobs and have consulted the Guidebook for Detachment Officers, National Bylaws, and National Administrative Procedures which are available in the Member Library. These documents, as well as a turnover folder from your predecessor should give you a good starting point to perform your duties in an exemplary manner, rating a "job well done" when your tour of duty is over.

Once you've got the basics of your duties in hand, it's time to ask yourself a question. "Who will be my replacement at the end of my tour of duty?" If you're fortunate, your detachment has a plan in place for movement up through the chairs and you know

who to train. If not, reflect on who you would nominate to take over when the time comes. If no one comes to mind, then it's up to you to start mentoring someone for the position. You may even need to recruit new members to begin filling positions. Start the process now. Mentoring can be as simple as showing someone what you do and showing them that they could do the job.

Granted, not all of you were presented with a turnover for your office. Be the one to make the difference and break that cycle now. Gather materials you feel necessary for the completion of your job. Manuals, charts, list of websites, contacts, emails lists, a personalized how-to guide for your detachment... basically, anything you would have found handy. Decreasing the learning curve of your successor will allow you to be proud when they do a great job.

As we did on active duty, we must be ready to pass the torch. We all have a shelf life and need to pass that torch before our "best by" date. Selecting and mentoring your successor is a rewarding experience providing for a legacy of change and excellence. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclcentdiv.org

Something to Think About



Rick Thomason

**NVC, Mideast
Division**



MARINES: I am not a scholarly person, nor do I profess to be a person of great knowledge, but I do read. I have always enjoyed reading National Geographic and have been a subscriber since 1969. Science fiction also gained my interest, so I naturally gravitated toward books written by Isaac Asimov. The man was a visionary. His book on robotics and the future of a world run by robots, or as it is called in the 21st century, "Artificial Intelligence", is coming to be. He created three rules for his robots.

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Most of you have seen the movie series 'Terminator'. Are we that far away from the reality of an AI that can learn to adapt the program it is running to accomplish the goal assigned?

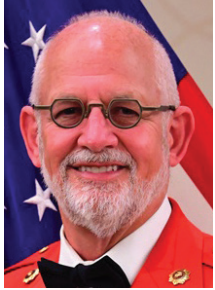
What if the goal has no limitations on adaptation? One of Isaac Asimov's books was adapted to a movie, 'I Robot' that addressed that issue. Robots learned to overcome the "three rules" through adaptation. We, as Marines, have learned to improvise, adapt, and overcome as a way of life. Those are our three rules we live by. What if AI learns to do the same. Where will we as Marines belong in the new world. Isaac Asimov said, "Never let your sense of morals prevent you from doing what is right." The art of war has few morals. Either your enemy dies, or you die. Let's hope we never become the enemy of AI. I fear we will not win.

Many articles have and will be written about the last 250 years of the Marine Corps and our illustrious accomplishments. The next 250 years will be in the hands of your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Provide them with the tools they need to be productive individuals that respect humanity but are not blind to the hazards of life. Let them be free thinkers but guide their decisions through leadership skills you learned in the Corps. Set the example they will emulate and try to exceed. You now control our future. **Semper Fi!**

MOY Program Questions: MOY@mcleague.org

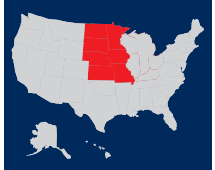
Division Website: mclmideast.com

Stay connected. Stay significant. Stay Marine.



Jim Maevers

**NVC, Midwest
Division**



MARINES: As your NVC I was honored to attend the Modern-Day Marine event in Washington, D.C. this year. My role was to assist attendees through registration and direct them to the expo floor. Throughout the event, I witnessed active-duty Marines—from PFCs to general officers—alongside civilians and exhibitors, all moving with purpose. Each person was there to accomplish something meaningful, contributing in their own way to the mission of protecting our nation.

I truly enjoyed interacting with the attendees and working alongside the registration team. But after the event, I felt something unexpected—a sense of insignificance. It struck me that my time of serving in a meaningful way might be over. I shared these feelings with a few members of my Marine Corps League detachment.

Their response was clear: “You’re still making a difference. The League needs you, and so do others.”

That conversation reminded me of something every Marine faces at some point: the question of “what now?” After the last formation, many of us miss the structure, purpose, and connection that service brought to our lives. That’s exactly where the Marine Corps League steps in. It offers more than just camaraderie—it offers a way to continue serving, leading, and living with purpose.

The League provides real opportunities to stay engaged—through mentoring younger veterans, supporting programs like Toys for Tots, honoring fallen Marines, or stepping into leadership roles within the organization. These aren’t just events, they’re missions. And as Marines, we thrive on mission.

Too many veterans feel forgotten or irrelevant after active duty. But in the League, you’re not done—you’re still needed. Your experience, your commitment, and your example are valuable to others. Whether you’re organizing a community event, participating in a parade, or visiting a hospitalized veteran, you’re showing what it means to be a Marine for life.

In MCL, you don’t just keep the legacy alive, you continue to build it. You remain significant, connected, and mission driven. The eagle, globe, and anchor never fade, and, through the League, neither do you. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: midwestdivisionmarinecorpsleague.org

New England Division Conference/ Modern Day Marine



Pat Maguire

**NVC, New
England Division**



MARINES: The 2025 Quad State Convention and New England Division Conference in Portland, Maine, was a tremendous success—and for that, we owe a heartfelt thank-you to the Department of Maine.

We were honored by the presence of national leadership, including Bob Borka, Russ Miller, JD Jones, and Dottie Sanning. Our National Chaplain, Howard Schaeffer, also joined us and led a powerful Division Memorial Service Saturday morning. His presence added depth and meaning to a solemn and important part of our weekend.

A special highlight was our guest speaker, Colonel Dan O’Brien, USMC (ret.). His keynote address was nothing short of outstanding. His words captured the room and left a lasting impression. In our earlier conversations, I mentioned that someone

would undoubtedly ask him, “What detachment do you belong to?” He took that to heart—so much so that one of the first things he shared at the podium was that he had submitted his application to the Marine Corps League before even traveling to the conference. We are proud to now call him one of our own.

As I reflect on my first term as your vice commandant, I want to sincerely thank each of you for your support, encouragement, and trust.

No rest for the motivated! I returned to Rhode Island on Sunday afternoon, handled some quick laundry, and was back in the air Monday morning enroute to Washington, D.C., for Modern Day Marine. Once again, the event was a great success—well-organized and impactful. The growth of Modern Day Marine each year is a powerful reflection of how far the League has come. I was especially moved by the active-duty Marines who approached me to express their appreciation for the League’s work with veterans and their families. Moments like that remind us why we do what we do—and how important it is that we continue. I hope to see many of you in Texas!! **Semper Fi!**

Event Information: bostonsempferfi.org
Division Website: mclnederlanddivision.com

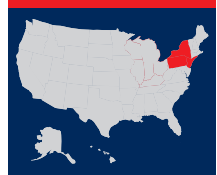
DIVISION REPORTS

From Membership to Mentorship: Sustaining the League's Future



Robert Ziltz

NVC, Northeast Division



MARINES: I want to focus on what may be the most critical part of our broad, long-term strategy to secure the future of the Marine Corps League: building a culture of mentorship.

While recruitment brings new members in and training gives them tools to succeed, mentorship keeps them engaged, motivated, and growing. Mentorship bridges the gap between potential and performance, between participation and leadership. It is not a formal program or one-time event. It is an ongoing commitment to guide, support, and invest in each other.

Every Marine in the League has the capacity to mentor. Whether it's helping a new member understand our customs, encouraging someone to take on a new role, or simply listening and offering perspective, these small acts can have a last-

ing impact. Mentorship is not about having all the answers—it's about being present, being patient, and being invested in someone else's development.

Importantly, mentorship benefits both parties. It helps newer members gain confidence and understanding, while seasoned members remain engaged and purposeful. It strengthens our relationships, reinforces our values, and deepens our sense of belonging.

Let us not overlook the opportunity this creates for leadership succession. When we mentor with intention, we are preparing future leaders who are not only willing to serve but ready to do so with competence and confidence. We cannot afford to wait until positions are vacant to begin this process.

I challenge each of you to identify one Marine in your detachment to mentor over the next year. Share your experience. Ask questions. Invite participation. Be a coach, not a commander. If every leader in the League commits to this simple practice, we will not only improve retention—we will create a vibrant, forward-looking organization where every member sees a future for themselves.

This is how we move from surviving to thriving. This is how we live up to our motto—Semper Fidelis—not just in words, but in action. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: nedmcl.org

What is it you're looking for?



Mike Flynn

NVC, Northwest Division



MARINES: I am betting all of us who write articles for Semper Fi Magazine ponder what to write about each in each issue. Would you like to see us write about? Is there something you've been mulling over that could benefit our membership? All of our emails are listed in the National web site. Let us know so we can discuss things you wish to hear about.

This quarter, most detachments have already held elections, and it is pretty normal for several new officers to be on board. The first question is what do I do now? For me, the first thing is understanding your role. Whatever your position, jr. vice, chaplain, sgt. at arms, or commandant, thoroughly read your position description. Understand what your detachment expects of you. Really, this is almost a prerequisite before you run for office or are

appointed into the position. However, I recognize it's not unusual to be asked to take on the role during your respective detachment meeting without much preparation.

After that, understand the resources available to you. Start with the bylaws and administrative procedures at the detachment, department and national levels. Get into the Member Library on our National Website. You'll see everything on the national level. Besides the By-Laws and Administrative procedure, scroll down a little to the Guidebook for Detachment. All the basic requirements are there and it's quite thorough. Then go through the Training Section. The League has done a great job to lay everything out for you.

Where we struggle is when someone in an office does none of the above. It is very difficult to be successful utilizing this method. Not too many of us are savants, we're Marines, after all. Take the time to learn and understand your role. The payoff is when we do understand our role, the number of members we can help is unlimited. Besides our camaraderie, isn't it helping others why we're in this? Never be afraid to ask. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mcl-nwdiv.org



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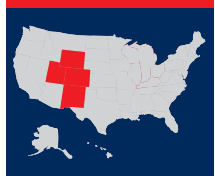
DIVISION REPORTS

Membership and Retention



Tom Krueger

NVC, Rocky Mountain Division



MARINES: Membership and retention lie at the heart of any successful organization. In addition to recruiting, we must retain our current members.

First, we must sign up that new member. From the first time that individual walks through the door we must make them feel welcome. Simply because things were done one way, doesn't mean that there are not better ways to do things. We as the 'old guys' need to listen to and understand where newer members are coming from. When we first meet these individuals, we need to carry and conduct ourselves as Marines and be professional. That first impression is a pivotal moment, 'do I join or not.' Potential members are drawn to the MCL not for the benefits, but for the camaraderie. This can be nurtured by making members feel welcomed and informed. This can include welcome emails, wel-

come aboard pamphlets, or assigning a mentor. Just don't overload them—finding a balance that respects the members' time is essential.

Let's talk now about retention. Retention is often less expensive and more sustainable than acquiring new members. It costs significantly less to keep an existing member than to recruit a new one. Moreover, members will become leaders for the organization, enhancing its reputation and attracting more members. If the member feels like they are respected for their input, their hard work they will be more likely to renew. Each new member that walks in the door has those ideas and causes they are passionate about. As detachment leaders, we must take the time to listen to them, and we can even ask them to spearhead an initiative they may have. Acknowledging detachment members or rewarding them for their hard work fosters loyalty. The Marine Corps League has an awards program and, as the detachment commandant, you are authorized to award various accolades to your membership. Show your members they are appreciated for their hard work.

It's our duty to teach and educate our new Members that some day they in turn will be the leaders of this great organization.

Semper Fi!

Division Website: rockymountainmcldiv.org

Try AI Tools to Help with Planning



Jerry Holt

NVC, Southeast Division



MARINES: I often find it challenging to come up with a worthwhile topic for these Semper Fi articles. So out of desperation, I thought I would see if AI could come up with a magic bullet to provide advice on recruiting and retention. There are a number of AI tools available that will produce similar results, but I use www.chatgpt.com. (You can perform a google search for "AI tools similar to chatgpt" to find alternatives. The same query in different tools will probably produce different responses, but you can cherry-pick the portions you like best).

Here is the prompt I used for ChatGPT: The Marine Corps League is a Veterans Service Organization.

60% of their members do not pay annual dues because they are Life Members.

The average age of League members is over 60.

Many older members no longer attend meetings because of their health and age

One focus on maintaining and growing membership is recruiting new, younger members.

Many of the new members we recruit only maintain their membership for one or two years.

How do we keep in touch with older members and retain new members?

The response was very detailed, and included sections in "Staying connected with older members", "Retaining New, Younger Members", and "Bridging Generations." Each section contained a number of specific recommendations, and concluded with "Would you like help drafting a communication strategy, newsletter format, or onboarding template based on these ideas?"

By responding 'yes' to this question, I ended up with a newsletter and recommended content; a 'Welcome Aboard' package; and member survey to solicit feedback. The responses were both practical and thorough.

If you are planning a meeting, a community event, or preparing for a fundraiser, these tools can generate useful guides to help cover all the bases. One caution, if you use these tools to quote statistics or specific events, they are sometimes inaccurate.

Semper Fi!

Division Website: seddiv.org

The End of my Tour of Duty as your NVC



Randy Rigg

**NVC,
Southern
Division**



MARINES: It has been an honor to serve the membership of the Marine Corps League, Southern Division, and the departments of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas that make up the division. I know that in working with the department commanders that we have made great improvements in the operation of the entire division.

During the last months I have been very busy on your behalf:

In February attended the board of trustee meeting during the MCL Mid-Winter conference in Washington, D.C. This is one of the few times that the members of the board can all meet in the same room face to face leading to the development of good personal relationships within the members of the board.

In March, I presided over the Southern Division conference in Oklahoma City where the membership selected my replacement. It was also an opportunity to conduct training sessions for the membership and to discuss the business of the division. During the weekend the interaction between detachments and departments within the division leads to an exchange of ideas so that all may succeed.

In April, I attended (as a volunteer) the Modern-Day Marine Expo in Washington, D.C. and assisted by walking the floor, providing information for the visitors, and thanking exhibitors for their participation. The Modern-Day Marine is sponsored jointly by the MCL and the Marine Corps Association, making it a premier event for those making the decisions on where our military is going in the future.

In May, I attended the National Youth Physical Fitness meet in Little Rock, AK which is part of a primer youth program sponsored by the MCL. Teams from across the country gather together annually to see which team and individual young athletics take home the top honors. This program was developed years ago based on the premise that any student, regardless of age or physical abilities, can compete... which leads to more healthy American youth. The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion has designated May as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month which coincides with the timing of our National Youth Physical Fitness meet.

I wish the membership of the Southern Division all the best in the years to come. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: southernmcl.org

Growth Through Responsibility: The Measure of a Leader



Joe Uribe

**NVC,
Southwest
Division**



MARINES: Leadership is a journey—one that every Marine, active or retired, understands begins with personal responsibility and the willingness to grow. After nearly two decades in the Marine Corps League, I've seen firsthand that great leaders come in many forms. Some are born with natural charisma, while others are forged through challenge and adversity. But none rise without first assuming responsibility.

Too often, we hesitate to step forward, believing someone else may be more deserving. But leadership isn't necessarily about being ready—it's about being there and knowing that things need to be done. It's about taking that leap and learning through the process. The Marine Corps ethos—"Honor, Courage, Commitment"—teaches us being a Marine often means doing more with less and always rising to the occasion. Our Corps taught us to improvise, adapt, and overcome. Those lessons never leave us.

In every detachment, department, and division, our League is filled with Marines and associate members who have stepped forward to lead. And in doing so, they've honored a proud legacy of character. The Marine Corps instills in its leaders' essential traits: justice, judgement, dependability, initiative, decisiveness, tact, integrity, enthusiasm, bearing, unselfishness, courage, knowledge, loyalty, and endurance. These are not simply words—they are the foundation of every decision we make.

Of the Marine Corps' eleven leadership principles, one stands out as the keystone: Know yourself and seek self-improvement. This principle reminds us that no Marine—no leader—is ever complete. Growth is continuous. We must be honest with ourselves, own our flaws, and seek opportunities to improve. That is the true mark of strength—not pretending to know everything but striving to become better every day.

Though we are veterans now, the responsibility to lead by example hasn't just vanished. Our communities still look to us. Our junior, and, at times, senior members still need our guidance. And we still carry the torch of those core values that shaped us into who we are.

Never stop learning. Never stop growing. And never forget to always set the example. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclswdivision.org

Two Hundred and Fifty

By Michael J. Haas

Two centuries and five decades have passed,
Since men lined up for enlistment.
Tun Tavern was abuzz as sunlight cast,
What appeared is a force beyond description.

Where fourteen-hundred were needed,
A force of three-hundred was raised.
We became the smallest force fielded,
Setting the stage for a future yet blazed.

Tenacity and ferocity built the image,
While order and discipline guided the spirit.
Building character through early assemblage,
Then training and doctrine without limit.

Marines were issued leather gorgets,
It was meant to keep our heads erect.
Leatherneck became a name hard to forget,
We then engaged Barbary Pirates with no regret.

Defending Washington, DC in Eighteen Twelve,
We displayed our marksmanship
in battle for New Orleans.
Storming Chapultepec Castle earned our
blood stripe honoring the felled,
Ceremoniously celebrated in our Hymn with esteem.

Battles were fought with grit and honor,
Oorah! was adopted as our battle cry.
Semper Fidelis became our lifelong motto,
Decried as "Tuefel Hunden" as we
charged the German fray.

On Peleliu, Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima,
Japan felt the Marine Corps fury.

The raising of Old Glory on Mount Suribachi,
Drove a stake into Japan's seigneury.

On the Korean Peninsula we rubbed their nose in,
Having six divisions and five air wings in store.
Both Inchon and the frozen Chosin,
Witnessed the ingenuity and resolve of the Corps.

Viet Nam posed a different viewpoint,
With Da Nang, Hue, and Khe Sahn under fire.
The Marine Corps pressed our own counterpoint,
With fury and decisiveness at the point of our spire.

Then came Beirut in Nineteen Eighty Three,
Two Hundred Forty One dead from a cowardly act.
A suicide bomber to our sovereign U. S. Embassy,
Reducing it to ashes in an unresolved slap.

In liberating Kuwait on February Twenty Eight,
Significant contributions of the Marines were felt.
"Six Days in Fallujah" highlights that checkmate,
The fortress of Operation Phantom Fury was dealt.

We were deployed after 911,
For humanitarian needs at the pile.
Traveled to Afghanistan and Iraq to quell aggression,
As a global terror network continued to revile.

Even today we're deployed to our borders,
Engineers, Expeditionary and Ground
force along the side of Border Patrol.
Protecting our way of life and liberty
through Executive orders,
We are here today doing our duty
and giving the world our soul.

Happy 250th Birthday Brother and Sister Marines, Chaplains and Corpsmen!

24K Gold-Plated USMC 250th Anniversary Commemorative Challenge Coin



FRONT

Shown larger than actual size
of 2 inches in diameter

Raised-relief imagery
features 3 Marines:
Continental, modern
combat, and in
Dress Blues



250 YEARS
1775-2025

2-inch solid
metal coin plated
in 24K gold on
both sides



REVERSE

- 24K gold-plated, solid metal challenge coin with hand-enameling on both sides, minted only for this monumental anniversary
- Bold imagery, symbols, and designs are accurate, authentic, and officially licensed by the USMC
- Honors all United States Marines, past, present, and future



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Limited to 5,000 Complete Collections

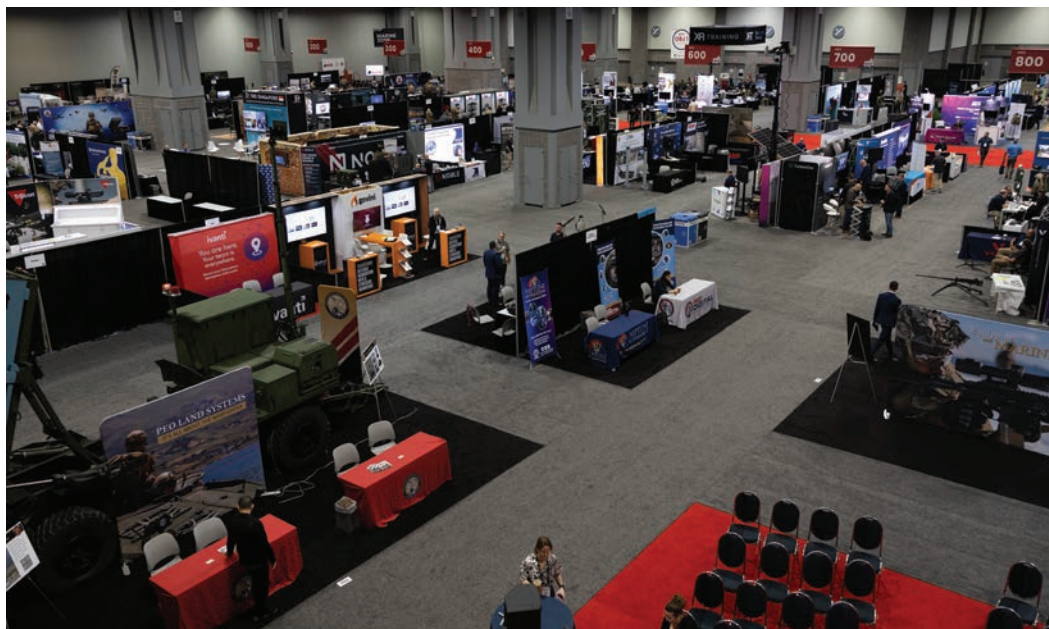
Strong demand is expected for this prestigious 250th anniversary commemorative challenge coin, minted with no shortcuts, no compromises on quality. Plated in 24K gold, this solid metal challenge coin with hand-applied enamels honors all United States Marines for all time. Start your *USMC 250th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Collection* with "The Few, The Proud" at \$49.99 (plus \$6.99 shipping & service per coin; see bradfordexchange.com). Subsequent editions will be shipped automatically, about once per month at the same low price. There's no obligation; you may cancel at any time by notifying us. Your risk-free purchase is backed by our unconditional, 365-day money-back guarantee. Don't wait, return the coupon today!

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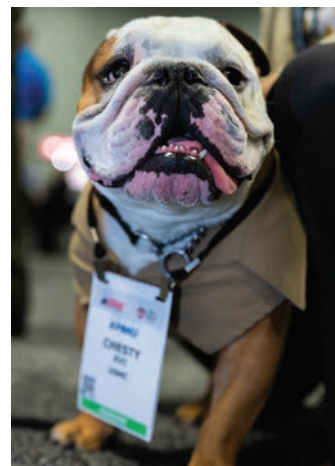


From left, TJ Morgan, Mr. Shelbourne, Mallory Shelbourne, Gen. Smith, Lt. Gen. Charotti. The 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric Smith (middle right) presents the Dickey Chapelle Award to Mallory Shelbourne, deputy editor and reporter for U.S. Naval Institute News (middle), at the Modern Day Marine Gala. (USMC photo, Lance Cpl. Joshua Bustamante)

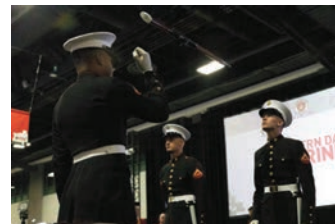
2025 Dickey Chapelle Award Presentation



Representatives from military, government, and industry attend Modern Day Marine 2025. MDM is a military exposition exclusively organized for the Marine Corps to showcase the newest technology and warfighting innovations. (USMC photo, Lance Cpl. Ellen Guo)



U.S. Marine Corps mascot Cpl. Chesty XVI at Modern Day Marine. (USMC photo, Lance Cpl. Kiara Rawls)



The Marine Corps Silent Drill team performs at Modern Day Marine at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C., April 29, 2025. (USMC photo, Lance Cpl. Kiara Rawls)

2025 Tree of Lights

Sponsored by the
*United States Marines
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.

Tree of Lights Registration Form

Person or Organization sponsoring Light:

Address: (Where receipt and thank-you letter should be sent.)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

TYPE OF GIFT:

☐ IN HONOR OF: _____
(LIST NAME AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON SCROLL OF HONOR*)

☐ IN MEMORY OF: _____
(LIST NAME AS WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON THE SCROLL OF HONOR*)

☐ YEAR-END GIFT to the UNITED STATES MARINES YOUTH FOUNDATION
* Please, one name per light.

TYPE OF LIGHT:

_____	\$500 Red Light
_____	\$250 Gold Light
_____	\$100 Blue Light
_____	\$ 50 Green Light
_____	\$ 25 White Light
_____	\$ 10 Clear Light

If you would like an acknowledgement letter sent to the family of the person you are honoring, please let us know where and to whom you would like it sent.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

Please make checks payable to:

**U.S. Marines Youth Foundation
P.O. Box 284
Quantico, VA 22134**

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



Arlington National Cemetery, Memorial Day 2025. National Commandant TJ Morgan, National President Dotty Sanning, and Chief Devil Dog Jeffrey Jones present a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

UNITED STATES MINT

2025 UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 250TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN

AVAILABLE ONLY IN 2025

To honor the Marine Corps' illustrious history, we're thrilled to unveil the **2025 United States Marine Corps 250th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Program**. This limited-edition program will include a five-dollar gold coin, a silver dollar, and a half-dollar coin. Don't miss your chance to honor the Marines' legacy and be a part of history.



www.marine250.com/commemorative-coin



USMC Half-Marathon Weekend in Fredericksburg, VA. The Det. members manned an information booth near the Navy Federal Credit Union booth. Runners from many states and nations exhibited their mental and physical endurance as they took on this new two-day challenge in May, 2025 rooted in history, tradition, and the spirit of the Marine Corps. They got their legs moving on a 3.1-mile course Saturday morning by running the Semper Fred 5K as a warm-up. Then they completed the Half-Marathon on Sunday. The Jack Maas Det. 1379 encouraged all during the both races.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Officers of the Northeastern Det. 304, Scranton, PA. From left, seated, Adjutant Michael McLane, Comdt. Joel Sofranko, Paymaster John Dailey, second row, Trustees James Casella, Ed Erb, and Susan Maldonado. Sgt. at Arms William Coolbaugh, Jr. Past Comdt. Scot Hartman, Senior Vice Comdt. Joseph Wentline, and Judge Advocate Richard Kane.



Marines from Cape Fear Det. 1070, Wilmington, NC await the arrival of the 2025 "Honor Flight" veterans into Wilmington International Airport. Joining the Marines is UNC Wilmington mascot, Sammy the Seahawk.



Phil Moser (left) member of Det. 1311, Woodstock, GA receives the Distinguished Citizen Award - Silver from Department of Georgia Comdt. Rex Delk.



Members of the Sgt. Walter P. Ryan Det. participated in the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Remembrance event held at the Veterans Memorial Park, in Tampa, FL in March 2025. From left, R. Bruce Marshall, Rob Becker, Ron Essick, Mike Hernando, Walter Whale, and Larry Westxorr. The lone bugler is Sal DiFonzo.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Det. 346 has a long history of supporting requests from the Kenosha Amazon community and raised the flag for the first time at the Kenosha-based HGW3 along with Marines from Fox Co., 2/24 from Milwaukee, WI. Although the det. was asked to retire the aged garrison flag from MKE1, after inspection it was determined that the flag needs a good cleaning and was serviceable. The Marines of Detachment 346 plan to clean the flag and donate it to the Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery in Union Grove.



Sgt. Walter P. Ryan Det. Comdt. Ron Essick pins on Det. Member Mike Hernando's service dog's, Lucky, a new rank insignia during his service promotion ceremony. adjutantt Jack Skelding is in the background reading Lucky's promotion warrant.

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.

H F A V J B R X M C Y C Z C G L M H K T Q J P Q K Z V N P D
 E C P S Y X O G O U H T Z A Q K Y K D K C W P C B L F D E X
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WORD LIST

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 SERVICE

LEATHERNECK
 HEAD
 BULKHEAD
 LADDERWELL
 DECK

ATTENTION
 FIREWATCH
 DUTY
 REPORT
 FORMATION

NAMED IN HONOR OF

Marine Corps League Detachment #241

The Original name of the organization was the Hudson - Mohawk Detachment, Marine Corps League. On 29th Sept. 1925 at the request of the Commandant of the U.S Marine Corps, Major General John A. Lejeune, himself, an organization meeting was held by captain Bertrand T. Fay USMC.

The first meeting was held in January 1926 at which time the members received their charter. The first commandant was Christopher Cunningham. In February of 1945 the membership voted to change the name in honor of one of its hardest workers who was killed in action on 26 July, 1944 on Guam during World War II.

William Dale O'Brien was born in Albany, NY on 13 October 1902. He graduated from Union University (Albany) Law School in 1926 with a L.L.B. degree. He was commissioned a second lieutenant MCR on 23 April 1926 and rose to the rank of first lieutenant on 25 July 1931. He resigned his commission due to pressure of business and received an honorable discharge on 10 May 1939.

William O'Brien became a member of the Hudson-Mohawk Detachment shortly after its organization in 1926 and, for more than 12 years, served as its judge advocate. He also served the

Department of New York in the same capacity for two years. He was also the Deputy Secretary of State and Counsel for the Division of Corporations, State of New York. Through his hard work among legislators, was responsible for the many bills passed by the New York State Legislature, which put the Marine Corps League on the same level and entitled to the same benefits as all the other veteran organizations. Immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack, he applied for re-enlistment and, on 5 March 1942, was accepted. He was assigned to active duty on 20 June and reported to Quantico, VA. where he was appointed the post of legal and public relations officer.

He requested overseas duty and, on 7 Dec 1942, was detached to the Third Marine Division, FMF, Camp Elliott, San Diego. He took the post of division legal officer and was promoted to captain on 31 Jan 1943. He went overseas in February with the Third and in October, at Guadalcanal, he was assigned the additional duty of camp executive officer. He accompanied the division to Eniwetok in June 1944 and participated in the initial landings on Guam on 21st July. Captain O'Brien's death from enemy gun fire occurred five days later on 26 July 1944. He is buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu Hawaii.

REUNIONS

50th Reunion for Platoon 164

DATE: 04 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Parris Island, SC. Parade Desk
CONTACT: Edward Knoebel 808-391-4618, kneobeleg@icloud.com

Marine Air Base Squadrons-49

DATE: 06 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Earlville, MD
CONTACT: Col. Chuck McGarigle (ret.), (609) 291-9617 or (609)284-2935, col_of_mar_ret@comcast.net

1ST BN, 1ST MAR, VIETNAM (1965-1971)

DATE: 15-18 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Fredericksburg, VA
CONTACT: Douglas Craig (215) 779-1325, evcraig552@gmail.com

35th Reunion of the Bulk Fuel Association

DATE: 15 – 20 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Hyatt Place 220 Rudy Circle, Nashville, TN
NOTES: 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

3rd Battalion 26th Marines Regiment 2025 Reunion

DATE: 23 – 25 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Cape Cod Irish Village & Emerald Resort 35 Scudder Avenue, Hyannis MA 02601
NOTES: Reserve your room before July 21, 2025, 508-394-9300. Use Block Code 3/26 Marine Veterans
CONTACT: Robert DeLuca, (508) 317-4668, namduke@comcast.net

Save the Date!
Sat. October 4th.
4th Annual USMC Sgt. Mecot Camara Memorial Ruck
All Events at Pipestem State Park Resort

OCT. 3rd Friday 6:00pm
J & J Music & Karaoke
Black Bear Grille

OCT. 4th SATURDAY
8:30am Mecot's Ruck
Noon: Cookout at Finish Line
7:00pm Rock House Road Band
Black Bear Grille

Reserve your room now by calling 304-466-1800. Military and Senior Discounts apply. Coupon code: "Ruck25".



Hosted by MCL Detachment 1461 Beckley, WV

americanbrotherfoundation.org



Marine Corps Engineer Association (MCEA)

DATE: 24 – 26 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Hampton Inn Stafford/Quantico, 2965 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA 22554
CONTACT: Lt. Col. George Carlson USMC (Ret.), (931) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org
INFO: www.marcorengasn.org

VMFA 115 Reunion All Years

DATE: 25 – 28 SEP 2025
LOCATION: Charleston, SC
CONTACT: Jerry Smeltzer 843-514-2246 and Patti Kaas 717-422-6796
INFO: www.115marinereunion.com

2025 CACO/CAP Reunion & 250th USMC Birthday Celebration

DATE: 6 – 10 NOV 2025
LOCATION: Holiday Inn Riverwalk Arlington, 217 N. St. May's, San Antonio, TX 78205
NOTES: Reserve room-Checkout - 11 NOV - Hotel Direct 210-224-2500 or Call Center 877-424-2449 Code – (CAP) Deadline for reservations and registrations is 30 AUG 2025
CONTACT: Mark Morales, (601) 918-5008, mrmo@bellsouth.net.
Info: <https://cap.vet/2025-reunion-registration>

4th Annual USMC Sgt. Mecot Camara Memorial Ruck

DATE: 3-4 OCT 2025
LOCATION: Pipestem State Park Resort, Pipestem, WV
NOTES: Friday, Food & Music; Saturday, Ruck March, Cookout, Party.
LODGING: Call (304) 466-1800, use reservation code "Ruck25" for discount.
INFO: www.americanbrotherfoundation.com

FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION (FMDA) 75th Reunion

DATE: 15-19 OCT 2025
LOCATION: Meeting and Banquet at the Courtyard By Marriott, 450 MarketPlace Mile, (317) 839-0400; second accommodation, Residence Inn, 2585 Perry Crossing Way, (317) 742-2160, Plainfield, IN (outside Indianapolis).
NOTES: All veterans, especially Vietnam veterans who served in Regiments of the 5th Marine Division which was activated in 1966, are invited and encouraged to attend.
CONTACT: Chuck Jarvis, 317-509-9745, cjarvis@IU.edu

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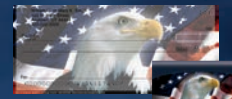
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In 2026, the Marine Corps League and Military Historical Tours (miltours.com) will offer the battlefield tour for a Marine Corps League Member as the winner of the League's Tour raffle. The winner will receive a trip for two.

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.

Mail completed tickets and a check for the full amount to Marine Corps League, P.O. Box 1990, Stafford, VA 22555-1990. You may buy as many tickets as you like. Please feel free to make additional copies of these raffle tickets if you wish to purchase additional chances!

2025 Tours

1-11 Aug

Guadalcanal 83rd Op. Watchtower

6-18 Aug

60th Anniversaries of I-Corps
Vietnam Battlefields

6-19 Aug

"Vietnam Delta to the DMZ"

5-18 Sept

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

1-8 Oct

Battlefields of France & Belgium:
Waterloo-WWI-WWII-Dunkirk

21-29 Oct

MHT's Civil War "North to Gettysburg"

22-29 Oct

Birth of American Democracy
"Boston - Yorktown"

Continues Next Page

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2-13 Dec

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Laos & Cambodia, 13-18 Dec.)

1-8 Dec

Pearl Harbor & WWII Sites

2026 Tours

23-30 Mar

Victory in the Pacific & IJAA's 81st
Anniversary of Iwo Jima

4-13 Apr

Philippines – WWII in the P.I.

14-27 Apr

“Saigon to the DMZ” Vietnam War

19-27 Apr

Turkey WWI Gallipoli Campaign

20-30 Apr

Special Thailand WWII Expedition

20 Apr-3 May

Marine Corps League tour of
Vietnam “Saigon to the DMZ”

24 Apr-7 May

Operation Market Garden: Holland to Berlin

31 May-13 Jun

82nd Anniversary of D-Day &
Battle of the Bulge & Paris

16 – 25 May

108th Anniversary of WWI 1918 –
Historic French Battlefields

Mid-Winter National Conference Registration

February 26th-28th, 2026

Sheraton Pentagon City

900 South Orme St, Arlington, VA 22204

Phone: 703-521-1900

Rate: \$131.00 per night plus tax Parking fee: \$10.00

Pre-Registration: \$10.00 Registration at the Conference: \$12.00

Deadline for Pre-registration is February 4, 2026

Online registration is available at mcleaguelibrary.org/conference

Please print the following information as you would like it to appear on your badge.

Name: _____ Name: _____

Title: _____ Title: _____

Dept & Det: _____ Dept & Det: _____

MODD Title: _____ MODD Title: _____

Pedigree & Tag #: _____ Pedigree & Tag #: _____

Pack & Pound: _____ Pack & Pound: _____

MCLA Title: _____ MCLA Title: _____

Dept & Unit: _____ Dept & Unit: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Banquet

Beef @ \$65 # _____ \$ _____

Chicken @ \$65 # _____ \$ _____

Vegetarian @\$65 # _____ \$ _____

Total # _____ \$ _____

Total Registrations # _____ \$ _____

Total Banquet # _____ \$ _____

Grand Total Due \$ _____ **Check/MO #** _____

Please make all checks payable to **Marine Corps League**

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND DUES PAYMENT REMINDER

It's time to renew your membership. August 31st is just around the corner. All annual memberships expire in August. If you are an annual member, your dues are due now.

Don't wait and don't forget.

Fill out the form below and provide it to your detachment paymaster along with your annual dues payment. While you're at it, please remind your fellow members it's time to renew. It is a good idea to renew early so that, when life happens, you're already paid up.

Remember, you are paying ahead, not paying behind. Membership makes your detachment strong and doing your part, like paying dues on time, helps keep it that way. Please do not procrastinate. Square it away today.

Please fill out the form and provide to your detachment paymaster along with your annual dues.

RENEWAL FORM



Please fill out this form and give to your Detachment Paymaster along with your annual dues.

Member Number: _____ Detachment Number: _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Join Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ ☐ Home ☐ Cell ☐ Work

Email: _____ Dues Total: _____

Please mail this form, along with your annual dues, to your detachment paymaster or give it to them at the next meeting. Detachment contact information can be found in our locator.

is a member in good standing of

This card is good for a period of sixty days from



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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
P.O. Box 1990, Stafford, VA 22555-1990.***

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All other use is prohibited.

is a member in good standing of

This card is good for a period of sixty days from



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 Fi, 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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All other use is prohibited.

***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
P.O. Box 1990, Stafford, VA 22555-1990.***



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.



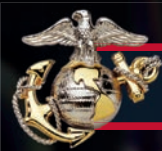
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"USMC 250th Anniversary Tun Tavern" Illuminated Sculpture



250 YEARS
1775-2025

**Tavern
lights up!**

**Color-changing
illumination**



Impressively size of
9.75" L x 5" H x 3.75" W.

Fine collectible.
Requires 3 "AAA" batteries, not included.

Some 250 years ago, November 10, 1775 to be exact, in an establishment known as Tun Tavern on the cobbled streets of Philadelphia, the United States Marine Corps was formed by special decree of the Second Continental Congress. Today, a commemorative marker identifies the location of this foundational meeting, but our master artisans have now made it possible for you to show your appreciation for the USMC. In honor of this landmark event in the history of the Corps, we are proud to present the "USMC 250th Anniversary Tun Tavern" Illuminated Sculpture.

Hand-crafted and hand-painted.

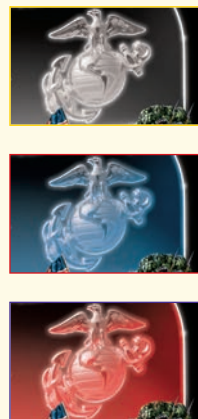
Officially licensed by the United States Marine Corps, this artisan hand-crafted tribute uses detailed sculpture and

alternately colored lighting to pay homage to the Marines' long history. It includes a fully sculpted building, miniature figures, a clear acrylic backdrop with color-changing lights, and much more.

Not available in any store .

Given the once-in-a-lifetime nature of such a milestone 250th anniversary celebration, USMC tributes such as this are likely to be in high demand across the entire country. Act now to reserve yours at the \$129.99 issue price, payable in four easy installmentss of \$32.50 (plus \$18.99 shipping and service*), backed by our 365-day unconditional guarantee. *Send no money now.* Simply complete and mail the Reservation Application or visit us online today.

**Red, White and
Blue Color-
Changing Lights!**



SHOP TODAY AT BRADFORDEXCHANGE.COM

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Innovative Art and Designs of Enduring Value

The Bradford Exchange

9210 Maryland Street, Niles, IL 60714-1322

YES! Please reserve the *USMC 250th Anniversary "Tun Tavern" Illuminate Sculpture* for me as described in this announcement.

SEND NO MONEY NOW.



Scan
Here

Signature

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Address

City

E-Mail

Name (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Apt. No.

State

Zip

*See bradfordexchange.com. All sales subject to acceptance and product availability.
Allow 2-4 weeks after initial payment for shipment.

14-02443-001-E26401

MODERN DAY MARINE®



SAVE THE DATE

April 28-30, 2026

Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C.



moderndaymarine.com