

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

Vol. 82 No. 2 • SPRING 2026

SEMPER PARATI



The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



MODERN DAY MARINE 2025



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The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



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ON THE COVER:

Scenes from Modern Day Marine 2025: At top, USMC Brig. Gen. Matthew Tracy, center, the commanding general of MC Education Command, poses with the Commandant's Cup Wargaming Tournament award and fellow participants. (Lance Cpl. Steven Wells) Below, USMC Gen. Christopher Mahoney, APMC, addresses the crowd during the opening ceremony of Modern Day Marine 2025. (Lance Cpl. Christopher Prella)



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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

Mentorship: Carrying the Torch Forward in the Marine Corps League



MARINES: In my last column, I wrote about leadership. In this issue, I want to focus on mentorship.

Mentorship has always been woven into the fabric of the U.S. Marine Corps. From the moment a young Marine learns to lace up boots, that Marine is guided by those who came before—Marines who earned wisdom through experience, discipline, and sacrifice. The Marine Corps League exists to preserve that legacy, and mentorship is one of the strongest ways we do it.

Within the League, mentorship is more than giving advice. It is the active commitment of seasoned Marines to invest time, attention, and care in fellow Marines, veterans, and even the next generation who may never wear the uniform. It is about teaching honor, courage, and commitment by living those values every day. A mentor does not just talk about leadership; a mentor demonstrates it through service, accountability, and consistency.

For many Marines transitioning to civilian life, the loss of structure and brotherhood can be jarring. The Marine Corps League helps fill that gap. Mentors guide Marines through career changes, personal challenges, and moments of doubt. Sometimes mentorship is professional guidance. Other times, it is simply being present—listening, checking in, and reminding someone that he or she is never alone. That connection can be life-changing.

Mentorship also strengthens the League itself. When experienced members share their knowledge of Marine Corps history, traditions, and community service, they help ensure the League remains vibrant and relevant. Newer members bring energy and fresh perspectives, while mentors help anchor that enthusiasm in time-tested values. That exchange keeps the League strong across generations.

Most importantly, mentorship honors those who came before us. Every Marine stands on the shoulders of others—drill instructors, NCOs, officers, and peers who helped shape who we became. By mentoring today, we repay that debt. We pass the torch and ensure Marine standards and values continue to shine long after active service ends.

The Marine Corps League is not just an organization; it is a family. Mentorship is how that family endures. When one Marine takes the time to guide another, the legacy of the Corps lives on—one conversation, one example, and one act of service at a time. **Semper Fi!**



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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO

BOB BORKA

The HVAC and SVAC



MARINES: Someone called me the other day and wanted to talk about HVAC. While I am not a tradesman, I know a little - very little - about HVAC in terms of making sure filters are changed, vents are cleaned, airflow, and temperature regulation. Oh, and making sure to switch from air conditioning to heat. Wait, no, that's not it. The person on the other end of the phone was bewildered, shocked even, that I had no idea they wanted to talk about legislation.

The Marine Corps League is the only congressionally chartered Marine Corps veterans organization, chartered in 1937. I visited the Library of Congress and read the actual law books that chartered our organization. The Marine Corps League is also a plank holder organization of The Military Coalition, incorporated April 3, 1996. Website: themilitarycoalition.org

We are not sectarian, political, or partisan, but that does not mean we do not pay attention to what is going on with things relating to our veterans. I do turn on hearings in the background so that I can see and hear what is being said in Congress with a focus on veterans. A retired Marine in Congress once told me never to believe what I see and hear in the news. So I try to see and hear what they are saying in Congress and listen to the different viewpoints.

The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) has legislative, oversight, and investigative jurisdiction over disability assistance, memorial affairs, education and employment of veterans, Veterans Health Administration, general veterans' matters, and technology modernization, including Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM). The bipartisan committee consists of 25 members of the House of Representatives - 14 Republicans and 11 Democrats. Their website, veterans.house.gov, includes the topics they are discussing and a calendar of events.

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) is responsible for veteran-related issues ranging from the GI Bill, vocational training, housing, business loan guarantees, education, unemployment assistance, and medical and pension benefits. The bipartisan committee consists of 19 members of the Senate - 10 Republicans and nine Democrats. Their website, senate.gov, includes hearing schedules, links for veteran resources, and information on current legislation relating to veterans. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

ROB BROOKS, USMC (RET).



Looking Back to Step Forward

MARINES: As the Marine Corps reflects on nearly two and a half centuries of service, veteran Marines understand better than most that the past is never truly behind us — it is carried forward in discipline, identity, and purpose. Now, as the United States

Continued on next page



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approaches its 250th anniversary, we are presented with a powerful opportunity: not simply to commemorate history, but to use it as a compass for the future.

For Marines, history has never been about nostalgia. It is about continuity.

From the earliest days of the Republic to modern battlefields and humanitarian missions, each generation has inherited more than stories — we've inherited standards. Courage, adaptability, and commitment were not created in our time, and they will not end with it. They are living traits, sharpened by experience and passed along through mentorship, example, and shared hardship.

Veteran Marines occupy a unique position in this continuum. No longer standing the watch in uniform, veterans remain custodians of institutional memory. The lessons learned in Fallujah, Helmand, Okinawa, Beirut, and countless unnamed deployments are not relics — they are blueprints. They inform how we lead in our communities, how we mentor the next generation, and how we continue to serve without rank or billet.

The 250th anniversary of the nation is not simply a mile-

stone of endurance — it is a call to stewardship. Every challenge facing America today — social division, global uncertainty, technological disruption — echoes earlier moments in our history. The Marines who came before us also faced an uncertain world. They adapted from sail to steam, from trench warfare to maneuver warfare, from analog to digital battlefields. Their example reminds us that honoring tradition does not mean resisting change. It means applying timeless principles to new realities.

By sharing experiences, modeling resilience, and reinforcing the values that transcend generations, we can help ensure that the spirit which carried the nation through its first 250 years continues into the next. Our role is not to live in history, but to activate it — to ensure its lessons remain operational in boardrooms, classrooms, local governments, and neighborhoods.

As America marks this historic anniversary, the question is not whether the past still matters. It is whether we will use it. For Marines — past and present — the mission remains the same: honor what was earned, apply what was learned, and carry it forward. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

JOHN TAYLOR

Retention vs. Recruitment

MARINES: Recruitment and retention serve different purposes, but both are essential to the strength of the Marine Corps League. Recruitment brings in new members. Retention keeps those members active, involved, and committed over time.

Recruitment is the visible part of growth. It includes outreach, community events, social media, and simple word-of-mouth. We tell the story of who we are, what we do, and why membership matters. But bringing someone through the door is only the beginning.

Retention is what gives that growth staying power. Members remain involved when they feel welcomed, valued, and connected to something meaningful. Good communication, recognition, mentorship, and opportunities to serve all help turn interest into long-term commitment.

These two efforts depend on each other. Strong recruitment can grow the roster, but without retention, that growth fades quickly. Strong retention, on the other hand, creates the kind of culture people want to join. Engaged members are often



the best recruiters for MCL.

Consistency is what makes both work. Recruitment should not happen only when numbers are down, and retention should not be treated as an afterthought. Organizations grow when they stay visible, tell their story often, and

keep members engaged year-round.

When that balance is maintained, organizations avoid the cycle of short-term gains followed by decline. They build stability, continuity, and the kind of institutional knowledge that helps future leaders succeed.

In the end, recruitment opens the door, but retention keeps the organization strong. When leaders give both the attention they deserve, growth becomes steadier, morale stays higher, and the mission is carried forward by members who choose to stay involved. **Semper Fi!**

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Patriot Det. 1230 officers were installed Feb.18th at the Tri-Hampton Rescue building, Richboro, PA. From left, Paymaster Pete Palestina, Judge Advocate John Frain, Chaplain Bob Sundling, Sergeant-at-Arms Gus Cales. Trustee Jimmy Clendennen, Commandant Mike Clark, installer District 2 VC Jim Youells, Senior VC Neil Clark, Sr., Adjutant Mike Lecker.

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF VETERAN SERVICES

PHILIP DU

The Front Lines of Advocacy: Why We Do What We Do

MARINES: As Memorial Day approaches, Americans think of ceremonies. For the Marine Corps League, however, “Honor the Dead by Helping the Living” is more than a phrase. It is our mission, carried out daily by our VA-accredited national veterans service officers (VSOs).

I want to share two stories that show lives changed by service officers and the promise we make to never leave a Marine, or family member, behind.

The “Go-Forward” Plan

In Fallon, Nevada, National VSO Greg Harton took a call from a widow who was understandably lost. Her husband, a fellow Marine, had passed away in July 2025. She had spent weeks trying to navigate VA burial reimbursement and dependency and indemnity compensation claims through other veteran organizations and got no response until she met Greg.

Greg didn’t hand her forms. He built a “Go-Forward” plan. Although it was his first claim as a VSO, Greg recognized the veteran’s death was service-connected. He stayed on the phone with the widow and walked her through every step so her husband’s service would be recognized by the VA.

After Greg submitted the claim on October 3, the widow received full survivor benefits and retroactive pay by November 1. When they later met face to face - though most VSO work is done virtually - she donated \$500 to a local Toys for Tots program. Greg said, “This reminded me why we do what we do.”



The 90-Year-Old Marine

National Northeast Division VSO Richard Buck faced a different battle.

In August 2025, Richard received a call about a 90-year-old Marine suffering from conditions related to Camp Lejeune water contamination. The Marine was rated at 10%. Richard knew the clock was ticking, and he knew Camp Lejeune cases were rarely quick. Still, his persistence never wavered.

On February 10, 2026, the decision came back: the veteran was awarded 100% disability with Aid and Attendance. It meant this Marine could afford the care needed to remain at home with his family. As Richard noted, “It is an honor to give back to families in need and to see the system work.”

As Memorial Day approaches, we remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. We also remember the veterans who came home and the families who supported them. Thanks to our national VSOs, a widow was cared for and an elderly Marine can live in comfort. That is how we honor the bond of the Eagle, Globe,

and Anchor.

But the work isn’t finished. We need more boots on the ground. If these stories stir something in you, seek endorsement from your detachment and department commandants and become one of our VA-accredited national VSOs. You don’t need years of experience; you just need the heart to serve. **Semper Fi!**



NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MCL AUXILIARY

DOTTY SANNING

NATIONALMCLA.ORG

Bridge the Gap



MARINES: It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as national president of the Marine Corps League Auxiliary for the past two years. During that time, I have traveled from coast to coast, meeting Auxiliary members and Marines alike. Those visits have been among the most rewarding experiences of my tenure because they have reminded me how much good we can do when we work together. One experience especially stands out. I was invited to attend a division conference at the request of a division vice commandant. One detachment had expressed interest in forming an Auxiliary unit, but its members were unsure how to begin. That conversation highlighted a challenge we encounter far too often: interest exists, but connection does not.

Marines, it is up to you to help bridge that gap. Reach out to the women in your lives—your wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, granddaughters, stepmothers, stepdaughters, daughters-in-law, aunts, nieces, mothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law. Invite them to attend an event with you so we can meet them and share what the Auxiliary has to offer. We cannot help start a new Auxiliary unit unless we have the opportunity to meet the women who may want to form one.

Over the years, I have heard comments such as,



Southeast Division Vice President Becky Marcel, National President Dotty Sanning with Auxiliary member Inda Adams receiving her 40-Year pin and award.

“This is my night; I don’t want my wife involved,” or “She’s not a joiner,” even though that same woman may belong to her children’s PTA, a moms club, or a pickleball league. I ask only that you mention us to her or, better yet, invite her to a meeting or event. Let us introduce ourselves and allow her to decide whether the Auxiliary is right for her.

These same women may join your detachment as Associate Members, if permitted, but they are also eligible to form their own Auxiliary unit. Many of our members do both because women are excellent multitaskers. Once seven women express interest in forming an Auxiliary, give me a call. I will make every effort to arrange a visit and guide them through the process.

As Associate Members of a detachment, women may hold certain offices. As Auxiliary members in their own unit, they are eligible to hold every office. We make our own decisions about how we support veterans, our communities, and our respective detachments. Sometimes we meet at the same time and place; other times, we meet on different days. That flexibility helps families, especially those with young children, continue to serve together.

We each do our part, yet we work together for the greater good. *Semper Fi!*



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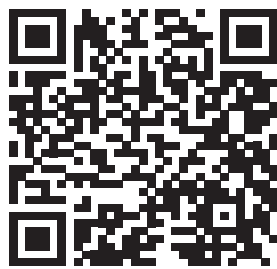
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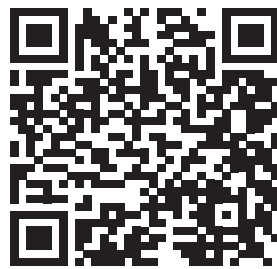
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CHIEF DEVIL DOG

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MARINES: Woof woof and welcome to spring! As we roll into our Division Conferences, Department Conventions, and Grand Growls, please remember to enjoy yourselves. There is always business to attend to, but at the end of the day this organization is about camaraderie and having fun, no matter what challenges are thrown our way. We must always keep the fun in the Fun and Honor Society, because that spirit keeps Dogs engaged, motivated, and coming back.

As an organization, we are in a good place, and we continue to move the Order in a direction. At the time of writing, we stand at 38 Packs and 198 Pounds across the country. While a few Pounds still require cleanup



due to noncompliance or inactivity, that process is part of strengthening the Order. Our Compliance Team is doing an outstanding job with the IRS and the League to keep us squared away, allowing us to focus on growth, service, and our members.

Taking care of our members must remain a top priority. The strength of this organization rests on

the Dogs who show up, support one another, and represent the Order with pride. Whether it is mentorship, fellowship, or making sure no Dog is left behind, we all have a responsibility to look after one another and maintain the standards and traditions that make this Order special.

Membership continues to perform excep-



Remembering our Brother, Jeff.



Hanging with the NJ Pack and Our Bits and Bytes Dog, PDD Chris Soldano.

tionally well. A strong membership drive that began just prior to the Mid-Winter Conference has brought us to 4,768 members, with only 13% delinquency as of February, well ahead of last year's pace. Recruitment remains vital to our future. Every new Dog brings fresh energy and new ideas and helps ensure the longevity of the Order. I encourage everyone to continue reaching out, mentoring prospective members, and sharing what makes this organization unique.

Equally important is commitment to service and giving back. Raising funds for the Children's Hospital Fund remains one of our most meaningful missions. These efforts reflect the heart of the Order and demonstrate that, while we enjoy ourselves, we

never lose sight of why we serve. Supporting these causes allows us to make a difference while honoring our traditions.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Order, look for Dogs within your Detachment to speak with or reach out to your Pound, which can be found on our website, www.militaryorderofthedevidogs.org, by using the Pound Locator. Membership is open to all regular members of the Marine Corps League in good standing with at least one year of membership.

Stay engaged, take care of one another, recruit the next generation of Dogs, support our missions, and, above all, have fun doing it.

Semper Fi!

NATIONAL SR. VICE COMMANDANT

RUSS MILLER

Share Your Story

MARINES: At this time of year, I always look forward to two things: Modern Day Marine and Memorial Day. Although Modern Day Marine is a lot of fun, getting to see all the new “toys” companies are developing for the Marine Corps to make what Marines do easier, more effective, and more lethal makes the tens of thousands of steps around the expo worth it. It’s also educational to be a fly on the wall and hear more about the direction our beloved Corps is headed and why. It’s not all about putting warheads on foreheads, but also about caring for our Marines and their loved ones, whether they are on U.S. soil training and spending time with their families, or abroad, away from those they love, and putting the skills they have honed to the test. It’s also encouraging to see that our Marines today are taken much better care of than when we were eating food from two wars ago, living in buildings constructed three wars ago, and firing weapons the Army and Navy decided decades earlier were sub-standard. But even under those circumstances, we still won battles, built families, and many are here to tell the stories today.

And then there’s Memorial Day. So many look forward to it as a three-day weekend, with barbecues, picnics, car shows, camping trips, etc. But for our Gold Star Families, this day more than most is a reminder of the ones they have lost. For some of us, it reminds



us of our buddies who may have made it home, only to die slowly from physical wounds, diseases that came from exposures, or battles still replaying in the mind until the mind just can’t view them one more time. I look forward to these two events each year because they bring me to Washington, D.C. While I’m there, I get to take moments to go to the Vietnam Memorial and talk to my big brother, whom I never knew. Were it not

for the Marine Corps League, I am certain I never would have met some of the Marines who fought alongside him and were with him when he died 58 years ago. An Army chaplain I knew a few years ago at the Fort Carson Warrior Transition Battalion made a profound statement to a group session one day that I hope will stick with you as it has with me: “The healing of your worry comes with the telling of your story.”

Remember to lift one another up, help those less fortunate than yourself, and keep striving to be the type of MCL member you wish there were 20 more of in your detachment. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL JR. VICE COMMANDANT

DAVID PORTER

Honoring the Past, Securing the Future

MARINES: The title “Marine” is earned, never given, and held dear to our hearts. It comes with a responsibility. We are charged with two duties: to look out for the brother or sister to our right and left, and to honor the memory of those who have gone before us. This foundation is what we pass on to the next generation. The Marine Corps is built on tradition and history, and that carries over to the Marine Corps League. We often use the word organization, but “tribe” feels more accurate. When we get our own house in order, we create an atmosphere people want to join. This does not mean the house needs to be a five-star hotel. A clean house isn’t about luxury; it’s about creating a welcoming environment where people feel they belong.

If you have ever felt like you started too late, remember it is never too late to make a difference. The best time to add value is right now. Search for opportunities to grow with the right mindset, dedication, effort, and strategy. That motivation will help secure the future for others to follow.

After a great Mid-Winter Conference, I know all of us are looking forward to Virginia Beach at The Founders Inn next year. At the Mid-Winter Conference, we reported that 4,867 members had been dropped, and 2,073 of them had reported to their final duty station. I am focused on turning our recent drop in numbers around. I know recruitment is crucial, but retention is what keeps



us alive. We need to stay on top of unpaid members.

Following the milestone of running the Marine Corps Marathon last year, Mike and I are launching a running team to keep our momentum and MCL’s legacy moving forward. This year, I am dedicated to seeing Mike’s and my story grow into something larger than ourselves. We have officially created a running team to amplify our presence

and mission, from creating a running shirt with a QR code on the back linked to the MCL website to recruiting volunteers for the marathon and possibly setting up a booth. We have built a strong relationship with Director Alex Hetherington of the Marine Corps Marathon to strengthen the friendship between the Marathon and MCL. We are doing everything possible to get MCL’s name out there, ensuring our legacy is seen at every mile on the course and in every community we touch. This will not be easy, but the more help we have, the greater the outcome.

If you have some free time, check out the members’ library at mcleague.org and the MCL app on your phone. Thank you for your support and friendship! **Semper Fi!**

USMC PERSONALIZED MESSENGER BAG



Actual Size is 16" W
x 12½" H x 3½" D

Versatile Messenger-style Bag
Crafted of Durable Canvas



Proudly Displaying Symbols
and Words of Marine Corps Pride,
and Burnished Metal Stars



FREE Personalization
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Superior Craftsmanship in a Custom Design

Exceptional craftsmanship is at the forefront of this classically styled messenger bag crafted of durable canvas in khaki, with contrasting faux leather trim, and fabric handles and an adjustable, removable padded shoulder strap. Front and center on the bag, you'll find a USMC emblem patch, "MARINES THE FEW THE PROUD Est. 1775," antiqued metal stars and, at no additional cost... your name, nickname or initials (up to 12 characters).

The stylish bag is ready to deliver with amazing versatility too, featuring two exterior flap pockets and an exterior slip pocket on the back, two inside slip pockets, an inside zip pocket, and an inside laptop pocket. Talk about always ready to serve... yes sir, it is!

A Remarkable Value... Available for a Limited Time

Our handsome personalized bag is a remarkable value at \$129.99*, and you can pay for it in 4 easy installments of \$32.50 each. To order yours, backed by our unconditional 90-day guarantee, send no money now, just mail in your Priority Reservation. This classically-styled canvas messenger bag is not available in stores, so don't miss out... inspire Marine Corps pride wherever you go and reserve yours today!

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SCAN HERE
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Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

*Plus a total of \$19.99 shipping and service (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 2-4 weeks after initial payment for delivery. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance. Product subject to change.

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NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE

BRUCE RAKFELDT

Command Presence Without the Firing Squad

MARINES: In every Marine's experience—whether on active duty or in continued service through the Marine Corps League—discipline is essential. Standards matter. Accountability matters. But leadership requires more than identifying a violation and imposing punishment. It requires judgment, restraint, and an understanding of the organization's long-term health.

Too often, discipline is treated as an end in itself rather than a tool. When that happens, the focus shifts from correcting behavior to asserting authority. The result may be short-term compliance, but it almost always comes at the expense of trust and engagement. Good leaders correct deficiencies; poor leaders attempt to correct people.

Due process is sometimes viewed as an obstacle—something that slows action or protects those who “should know better.” In reality, due process protects everyone involved, including the leader. Clear procedures, consistent application of the rules, and a fair opportunity to be heard ensure decisions withstand scrutiny and command respect. Even when a leader is substantively right, procedural shortcuts can turn minor issues into lasting grievances and erode confidence in the chain of command.

The MCL is a volunteer organization. That reality does not excuse poor conduct, but it does demand a thoughtful leadership mindset. Volunteers remain engaged because they feel respected and treated



fairly. When discipline becomes punitive rather than corrective, experienced members disengage, detachments lose momentum, and leaders find themselves managing decline instead of building strength.

Corrective leadership begins well before charges or formal action. It starts with clear expectations, candid counseling, and a willingness to address problems early—Marine to Marine. Mediation, mentoring, and education

are not signs of weakness; they are tools used by leaders who understand that preserving the unit is as important as enforcing the rules.

Every leader eventually faces a moment where action is required. When that time comes, the most important question is not, “Can I do this?” but rather, “Should I?” Will this decision strengthen the organization five years from now—or simply make today quieter?

Command presence is not measured by how quickly a leader reaches for punitive authority. It is measured by the ability to enforce standards without personalizing conflict and to leave the MCL stronger than it was found. *Semper Fidelis* demands nothing less. **Semper Fi!**

JUNIOR PAST NATIONAL COMMANDANT

WARREN “GRIFF” GRIFFIN

Membership Still Counts

MARINES: We can finally come out of hibernation and let everyone know the Marine Corps League is here to benefit people from all walks of life. I once was foolishly told that membership was not my job. No matter what position you hold in the League, from member to elected officer, we need your help to grow. We have so much to offer, but somehow that message is being missed by our brother and sister Marines and Navy personnel. Toys for Tots, Marine Youth Physical Fitness, Young Marines, and, finally, Service Officers who help navigate disability claims so richly deserved by our veterans are just some of the League benefits we provide.

The question many Marines ask is, “Why should I join your League?” We have many good reasons, and now it is up to us to make people aware of them. Our youth activities are outstanding and, as such, encompass the entire family. The concept of conducting events in a family atmosphere is what appeals to our younger veterans. Something for everyone encourages participation. When Young Marines establish themselves in an area, we should be right there, assisting in whatever manner we can.

Encourage your fellow Marines to take advantage of the benefits they have earned. If they are eligible for a VA claim, we now have the resources to file that claim for the veteran and help



navigate it through the process. No one should be paying anyone to process a claim. Many veterans do not file claims to which they are entitled. These claims were earned while serving in the military and are part of the understanding we accepted when we were first sworn in. Throughout our history, veterans have had to strongly advocate for fair treatment after service. That was not immediately the

fair and proper response from our government, but, through time and hard-fought effort, these benefits became part of the nation's commitment to its veterans.

As Marines, we tend to volunteer more than the average person. Detachments, set aside time for hospital visits at your local VA. We like to help others. Host a dinner that allows hospitalized veterans an opportunity to get out. It gives your members and prospective members a purpose. We are leaders and doers. We cannot just sit around.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our National Convention in August. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

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

Young Marines Annual Awards Banquet

MARINES: It is always a pleasure to meet you at the Mid-Winter Conference and talk about the Young Marines program and its impact on our nation's youth. As we enter our nation's 250th birthday, I am looking forward to many special events for our program this year. We hosted our Young Marines Annual Awards Banquet in Dulles, Virginia, on March 13, and I want to share our division awardees from that event.

This year's division winners are:

Adult Volunteers: More than 1,900 volunteers support our program across the country. About half of our volunteers are veterans, and about a third are married couples.

D1: Shaun Betton, Nation's Capitol Young Marines, Washington, DC

D2: Melinda Wood, Black Creek Young Marines, Orange Park, FL

D3: Sydney Cardwell, Cincinnati Young Marines, Cincinnati, OH

D4: Crystal Farris, Lone Star Young Marines, Dallas, TX

D5: Robert Hogue, Foothills Young Marines, Thornton, CO

D6: Tracey Clark, MCAS Tustin Young Marines, Santa Ana, CA

Units: We guide our youth on the path to becoming great American citizens. These units were selected as the best in their respective divisions:

D1: Manassas Young Marines, Manassas, VA

D2: Upstate Young Marines, Greenville, SC

D3: Kentuckiana Young Marines, Floyds Knobs, IN

D4: Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office Young Marines, Harvey, LA

D5: Foothills Young Marines, Thornton, CO

D6: Copper State Young Marines, Prescott Valley, AZ

Young Marines: We build our future one youth at a time. Senior Young Marines compete for Division Young Marine of the Year. Here are your division Young Marines of the Year:

D1: YM/Sgt. Maj. Mason Steele, Natchaug River Young Marines, Danielson, CT

D2: YM/Sgt. Maj. Francis 'Quinn' Lawton, Upstate Young Marines, Greenville, SC

D3: YM/Sgt. Maj. Sydney Oke, Lapeer County Young Marines, Lapeer, MI

D4: YM/Sgt. Maj. Valerie Huete, JPSO Young Marines, Harvey, LA

D5: YM/Sgt. Maj. Charlotte Bisila, Lewis & Clark Young Marines, Ridgefield, WA

D6: YM/Sgt. Maj. Philip Zajac, San Diego Young Marines, San Diego, CA

Please reach out to your respective MCL division or department Regional AV, Unit, and Young Marine to congratulate them on this year's recognition of excellence. If you need help finding them, please contact us at yMDBS@youngmarines.org.

See our national awardees on our social media pages: Young Marines on Facebook, [@usyoungmarines](https://www.instagram.com/usyoungmarines) on Instagram, and [@USYoungMarines](https://twitter.com/USYoungMarines) on X.

I look forward to seeing you all at Modern Day Marine and Indianapolis! **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES LIAISON

JOHNNY BAKER

Young Marines of the Marine Corps League

MARINES: In past articles on the Young Marines and the Marine Corps League, I have focused on the value of our partnership with the Young Marines. That should remain one of our priorities for the future of our nation's youth. During the past few months, I attended several Marine Corps Birthday Balls and a professional dinner in Albany, Georgia, with the Marine Corps Association.

At each event, I paid close attention to the color guards presented by units of the Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve. What has made a lasting impression on me lately, though, is the color guards performed by members of the Young Marines. I have watched Young Marines, ages 8 to 18, perform in an exceptional manner. Some are truly impressive.

My thoughts always go back to how they reached the point of performing such an honorable duty, representing America, the Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps League at events across our nation. Those young people who wear the Young Marine uniform and perform these color guards are proud of what they have accomplished. They are able to perform at such a high level because of their adult leaders. Every Young Marine unit operates under the direction of a unit commander and other adult volunteers, and I am convinced those units succeed because adults have stepped forward to help in the mission.



Color guards are only one example of what Young Marines are taught. They learn leadership, discipline, and teamwork. They are instilled with duty and patriotism. Young Marines and their adult leaders provide hundreds of thousands of hours of community service each year. Adult leaders also emphasize physical fitness and a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

All of this depends on adult leadership in local communities and in Marine Corps League detachments. I hope this article motivates just one new adult leader from within MCL detachments. Are you that volunteer? I ask every detachment to make this a talking point at meetings. Your detachment may not be able to provide adult leaders for its own unit, but you may have connections in your community with the expertise and desire to help America's youth. Young Marines National Headquarters stands ready to help create new units, expand existing units, and answer questions about every facet of the program. Volunteering with the Young Marines is a chance to turn your hope for America's future into action. For more information, call headquarters at 800-717-0060. **Semper Fi!**

UNIFORM COMMITTEE

RICK THOMASON

It's Your Uniform Too

MARINES: Throughout history, uniforms have represented many things. They separated the warrior from the noncombatant, the enemy from friendly forces, and the officer from the enlisted. The U.S. Marine Corps uniform, without doubt, is the most impressive uniform of the six branches of the U.S. military. Many who joined the U.S. Marine Corps readily admit it was because of the Dress Blues. The Marine Corps League uniform is one to be equally proud of.

There is no other veterans organization uniform that stands out like ours. When you lead a parade in your uniform, there is no question in anyone's mind that you are a Marine. When you carry the colors at the opening ceremony of a ball game, there is no question you are a Marine. When you are tasked with folding and presenting a flag to a veteran's family, there is no question you are a Marine. Ours is a uniform to be worn with pride and honored by wearing it correctly.

The Uniform Committee was never intended to be "the uniform police." Perhaps you are unaware of our true responsibility. It is outlined in National Administrative Procedures, Section 3105:

"c. National Uniform Committee. The Uniform Committee

shall have the duty of testing and studying present emblem and uniform items and articles, recommending changes or additions thereto; identifying an acceptable source of supply and to formulate and present to the National Convention recommendations for changes or additions to existing uniform regulations. (See NAP enclosure three (3) for uniform regulations.) The Committee shall also review photographs submitted to the national magazine for uniform compliance prior to the publication of each issue."

You may think that last section makes us the "Uniform Nazis," but that is not the intent. That last sentence is meant to guarantee we maintain the proper image of MCL by upholding the standards we lived by while on we were on active duty. We are not the VFW or the American Legion. We are MCL. We still represent every Marine who earned the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor since 1775, every Marine currently on active duty, every Marine who has reached their EAS, and every Marine who will serve in the future. Maintain the image and set the standard. Wear your uniform often and with pride, as you were taught. Remember, you are a Marine. That makes it your uniform. **Semper Fi!**

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Members of Avalos Detachment, McLemore Detachment, Galveston Detachment, Marty Gonzalez Detachment, and Tijernia Detachment for presentation of resolution commemorating the 250th Birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps. The Harris County Commissioner that sponsored the resolution is Commissioner Tom Ramsey (middle); Also, Commissioners Lesley Briones and Adrian Garcia are shown. The MCL spokespersons were Southern Vice Commandant Mark Oldmixon and former Department of Texas Commandant Charles Ynman.

MCL Word Search

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

ADJUTANT
 ASSOCIATEMEMBER
 BYLAWS
 COMMANDANT
 CONGRESSIONALCHARTER

DETACHMENT
 DUES
 JUDGEADVOCATE
 JUNIORVICECOMMANDANT
 LIFEMEMBER
 MINUTES

NATIONALCOMMANDANT
 PAYMASTER
 REGULARMEMBER
 SENIORVICECOMMANDANT
 SERGEANTATARMS

DIVISION REPORTS

Officer Accountability



Dave Englert

**NVC, Central
Division**



MARINES: “I took the position because no one else would do the job.”

Read that sentence again. Not quite the way you’ve heard it stated, but actions speak louder than words. You may have heard, “I only took the position because no one else would.” Cringe-worthy words.

No matter why a member fills a position, the fact is that the position has been filled, and that member is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the job. Filling a position is not just wearing the cover and feeling good because of the benevolent act of taking a job no one else wanted. When you step into a position, you owe it to your fellow Marines and to yourself to do the job better than anyone has done it before. Take time to rate your own performance. I’d suggest rating yourself against the optimal characteristics the active

force uses on fitness reports, both present and past.

PERFORMANCE Results far surpass expectations. Recognizes and exploits new resources, creates opportunities. Emulated; sought after as an expert with influence. Impact is significant; innovative approaches to problems produce significant gains in quality and efficiency.

PROFICIENCY True expert in field. Knowledge and skills impact far beyond those of peers. Translates broad-based education and experience into forward-thinking, innovative actions. Makes an immeasurable impact on mission accomplishment. Peerless teacher selflessly imparts expertise to subordinates, peers, and seniors.

INITIATIVE Highly motivated and proactive. Displays exceptional awareness of surroundings and environment. Uncanny ability to anticipate mission requirements and quickly formulate original, far-reaching solutions. Always takes decisive, effective action.

FORCE Consistently completes assignments with enthusiasm, demonstrating an optimistic, can-do attitude regardless of the scope, difficulty, or perceived importance of the mission. Diligent attention to detail and effective prosecution of the task.

SETTING THE EXAMPLE Model Marine, frequently emulated. Exemplary conduct, behavior, and actions are tone-setting. An inspiration to subordinates, peers, and seniors. Remarkable dedication to improving self and others.

Although most of us are no longer on active duty, we are constantly evaluated by our peers on our performance. We should also engage in continuous self-evaluation in our elected or appointed offices. When taking a position, strive to fulfill its responsibilities in a manner others will emulate and in which you can take pride. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclcentdiv.org

IT’S NOT ABOUT YOU!



Scott Kirby

**NVC, Mideast
Division**



MARINES: Hopefully, everyone has thawed out and is looking forward to warmer weather. As I sat watching the Super Bowl and the Winter Olympics, I could not help but notice how athletes would raise their hands in the air and motion for the crowd to cheer louder. As if to say, “Look at me. Look at what I did.” Are we guilty of doing the same thing in our detachments and departments? Are we, as leaders, saying, “Look at me”?

I recently reread a book titled “The Purpose Driven Life” by Pastor Rick Warren. The very first sentence of the first chapter jumped off the page at me: “It’s not about you.” WOW! The chapter talks about taking the focus off us as individuals and placing it on other people. When we are leading, are we using only our own ideas, or are we asking everyone for input? Is it my

way or the highway?

Relationships normally fail because one person focuses on themselves and what they want, not the other person in the relationship. I have seen too many times when members feel disenfranchised because one or two people want to do everyone’s job instead of spreading the wealth so everyone feels part of the team. It is not about you; it is about us. One or two people cannot make the detachment successful. It takes every available member. To quote World War II Medal of Honor recipient Herschel “Woody” Williams, “The cause is greater than I.” It takes all of us to make this great organization work.

There is nothing wrong with being proud of your accomplishments, but when that pride starts to drive a wedge between members, it is time to reexamine the reason we are doing what we do. Most of us do an exceptional job of making sure our members are recognized and feel appreciated.

We will keep serving our members and stay dedicated to offering the assistance we promised when elected. I look forward to seeing you at our Division Conference, hosted by the Department of Delaware, at the Atlantic Sands Hotel and Conference Center in Rehoboth Beach, DE, April 17-18, 2026.

Semper Fi!

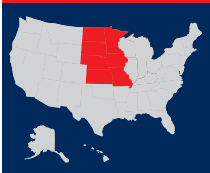
Division Website: mclmideast.com

Brothers in the Storm: Why Staying Connected Still Matters



Jim Maevers

**NVC, Midwest
Division**



MARINES: In the Winter 2026 issue of *Semper Fi*, I saw an advertisement for *Fuji Fire: Sifting Ashes of a Forgotten U.S. Marine Corps Tragedy*. It caught my attention. I had been researching survivors from that day in 1979. During that search, I found a 2020 YouTube video in which Chas Henry said he was beginning work on a book about the fire and trying to contact Marines who had been there.

He had sent a letter to an old address of mine that was never forwarded. We eventually connected. I purchased the book and read it not as a casual reader, but as someone who stood on that ground.

On October 19, 1979, I was at Marine Corps Base Camp Fuji when disaster struck. What began as severe weather became one of the worst peacetime tragedies in the history of the U.S. Marine

Corps. Thirteen Marines lost their lives. More than 70 were injured.

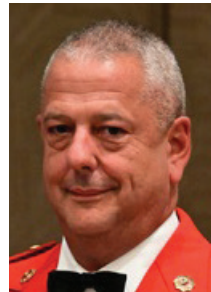
Reading *Fuji Fire* was not easy. The research is thorough, the interviews personal, and the details sobering. But what struck me most was not just the account of the fire itself - it was the reminder of who we were to each other. When the gasoline ignited and the squad bays filled with smoke and flame, Marines reacted without hesitation. They carried wounded Marines. They went back inside. They did what Marines are trained - and bonded - to do.

The book also reminded me that the fire did not end when the flames went out. Many carried scars, visible and invisible, for years. Some of us lost touch. Life moved on. But the bond forged that day never truly disappeared.

Staying connected matters. A phone call, a reunion, a League meeting - those simple acts reaffirm that we still stand for each other. We still remember the 13 who never came home. We still honor the promise we made in uniform. Each October 19, I recite their names so their legacy continues. During my first Marine Corps Marathon in 2016, I carried their names on my back so everyone behind me could see I was running for those who could not. ***Semper Fi!***

Division Website: mwdmcl.com

Compliance Matters



Pat Maguire

**NVC, New
England Division**



MARINES: The Marine Corps League was built on the same core values we learned in the U.S. Marine Corps—honor, courage, and commitment. Those values don't disappear when active duty ends. They continue to guide how we lead our detachments and how we serve fellow veterans.

Compliance may sound like paperwork and red tape, but it's about doing things the right way. When detachments follow bylaws, manage finances responsibly, submit required reports, and maintain accurate records, we protect more than an organization—we protect trust. That trust is everything. Communities support us because they believe in our integrity. Donors contribute because they trust us to handle funds properly. Most importantly, veterans turn to us because they know we

will be there. If we fail to uphold standards, that trust can erode quickly. And when trust fades, it's not just a detachment that suffers—it's the veterans who rely on us.

Many veterans face real challenges: financial hardship, difficulty navigating benefits, personal struggles few others understand, or simply the need for camaraderie. Our detachments often become a lifeline. But if a detachment falls out of compliance and is not in good standing, or cannot access League support, our ability to help shrinks. Programs stall. Resources become limited. Momentum is lost.

Compliance is not about control or micromanagement. It creates stability. It ensures smooth leadership transitions. It keeps detachments eligible for support and resources. Most importantly, it guarantees that when a veteran walks through our doors, we are ready to serve. As Marines, we understand standards. We lived by them. We didn't ignore them because they were inconvenient. Running a detachment requires the same discipline, teamwork, and accountability.

The League has stood the test of time because those who came before us understood the weight of responsibility. They recognized that good intentions, while important, are not enough on their own. Strong structure, clear accountability, and a commitment to doing things properly are what sustain an organization.

Compliance isn't about paperwork for its own sake. It's about safeguarding our mission and making certain that veterans always have somewhere to turn when they need support. ***Semper Fi!***

Division Website: newenglanddivmcl.org

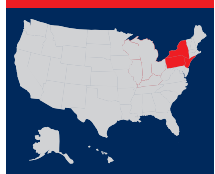
DIVISION REPORTS

From Belonging to Growth: Expanding Our Reach



Robert Ziltz

NVC, Northeast Division



MARINES: In our last discussion, we focused on the power of belonging—the glue that holds the League together and gives meaning to membership. Belonging is where it begins, but it cannot be where it ends. If we stop at belonging alone, we risk building a close-knit group that never grows. The next step must be growth, and growth begins with expanding our reach.

Growth starts with visibility. Too often, detachments do excellent work quietly—but quietly does not attract new Marines. Every project, event, or recognition is also an opportunity to show our presence in the community. When local citizens see Marines serving, leading, and honoring traditions, they see an organization worth joining. Let us not keep our impact hidden. Let us put the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor front and center, where it belongs.

Second, growth requires outreach. The pool of eligible members is far larger than our current rolls. Marine veterans of recent wars often do not know what the League is or what we offer. We must make the effort to meet them where they are—at community events, online, and through partnerships with other veterans and civic organizations. Outreach is not a one-time campaign; it is a steady commitment to connect.

Third, growth depends on inclusivity. Belonging reminds us that every Marine should feel wanted; growth challenges us to broaden that circle even further. We must make room not just for those who look, act, or think like us, but for every Marine who has earned the title. Each brings unique skills and perspectives that make our detachments stronger.

Fourth, growth comes from opportunity. New members stay when they have something meaningful to do. Whether it's leading a project, mentoring youth, or organizing a community event, giving Marines purpose keeps them engaged and connected. A detachment that creates opportunities for service will never struggle to keep its members.

Growth is not just about numbers—it is about impact. Larger detachments have more hands to carry the load, more leaders to step forward, and more voices to advocate for Marines and their families. The League was never meant to be small. It was meant to be strong, vibrant, and forward-looking.

Belonging is the foundation. Growth is the outcome. Together, they will ensure the League not only survives but thrives for generations. *Semper Fi!*

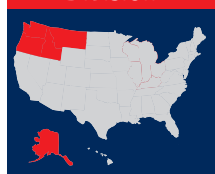
Division Website: nedmcl.org

See the Big Picture



Skip Nakashima

NVC, Northwest Division



MARINES: Common reasons for belonging to the Marine Corps League are camaraderie and service to others. A very good place for fulfilling both goals is by attending our annual National Conventions. There we meet Marines and corpsmen who have served with Marines from all over, spanning many decades. Time and again, I have talked to Marines who have renewed acquaintances with friends from active duty but then lost contact after returning to civilian life. Additionally, we meet many new people who share common interests and goals.

By attending the business meetings, an attendee becomes familiar with the overall mission, goals, and activities of the larger organization beyond the detachment and department. After the business meetings is an ideal time to socialize, meet new friends,

and exchange ideas for recruiting and retention, fundraising, and interesting service projects. It seems we all have common issues to deal with, and we all have different ideas for addressing those problems. Some will work for us and some won't, but this is a good time to get ideas to try after returning home.

While at the convention, a member can learn about programs such as HAMSAL (Help a Marine Save a Life) and the National Veterans Service Program. The League was the fourth organization chartered by Congress. Veteran Service Officers work to help veterans obtain VA benefits due them. Although they are Marine Corps VSOs, they help all veterans with their benefits. The goal for this program is to have at least one VSO in each state. The National Youth Physical Fitness Program encompasses students from elementary school through junior and senior high school. This program is designed to be easily implemented in any school setting. Students are tested in five basic exercises and are awarded scores indicative of their general fitness level. Finding out more about the Young Marines program may provide the incentive to sponsor or become more involved in a local YM unit. The Young Marines promotes the mental, moral, and physical development of its members. Internal programs such as the newsletter competition or the Americanism award may provide ways to encourage members to become more involved in detachment activities and thereby promote retention and recruitment.

With all this in mind, I hope to see you at the National Convention in Indianapolis August 10-15, 2026. ***Semper Fi!***

Division Website: mcl-nwdiv.org

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



15th SMMC and Detachment Life Member John Estrada presents his Sgt. Maj. cane to I&I Lt. Colonel W. Dammin from 4th ANGLICO as a memento to add to their Heritage Room at the HTC.



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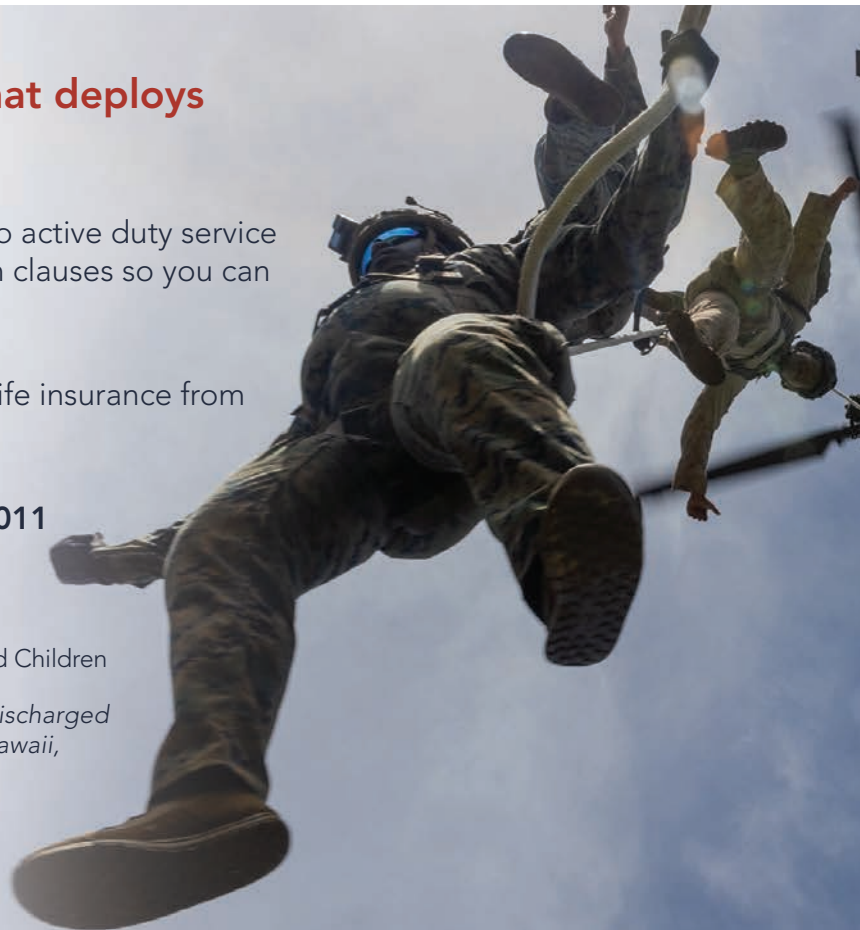
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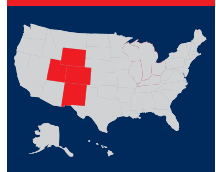
DIVISION REPORTS

Leadership, Compassion Leadership, Compassion



Tom Krueger

**NVC, Rocky
Mountain
Division**



MARINES: As we start this new year, let's focus on the mission of the Marine Corps League. This can be accomplished by detachment leadership stepping up and looking for those Marines and members who may not have been to a meeting for some time. It's very simple to make a phone call or a visit to verify they are okay. This also applies to our brothers and sisters. Like all veterans organizations, and life in general, we all get busy and forget to do what we know as "buddy checks." As I stated in my last article, I talked about the 11 leadership principles and traits we all learned and lived in the U.S. Marine Corps. We all should strive to continue living these principles and traits. Just like we did in the Marines, we cared for our troops. That applies within MCL detachments and departments.

It is time for our detachments and departments to start preparing for the upcoming years. What can we do to make our detachments and departments grow? First, there is more than just meetings. Let's start looking at the events that put the detachment's name out in public. These events also build camaraderie within our membership. Get the families involved in your events. This exposes families to what their Marine is doing with the detachment at these events. MCL is very appreciative of families' support. Detachment and department leadership can create a certificate thanking them for their support.

Lastly, technology is the detachment's friend. Find those members who have the smarts and ability to create a website and use social media to expand your horizons and your ability to communicate with possible new members. More and more people are looking to social media to discover what we are doing. I challenge all detachment and department leadership to step up and bring some new ideas to the table, and let's see our membership grow. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: rockymountainmcldiv.org

Recognition: A Force Multiplier for Volunteer Organizations



Ronnie Broussard

**NVC,
Southeast
Division**



MARINES: Volunteer organizations succeed because of dedicated individuals who give their time, energy, and leadership in service to others. Within the Marine Corps League, recognition is more than courtesy—it is a force multiplier that strengthens morale, reinforces values, and sustains long-term engagement.

Meaningful recognition acknowledges effort while motivating continued service. When members are recognized before their peers and families, it instills pride and confidence, reinforcing the importance of their contributions. Simple gestures, such as professionally printed certificates signed by the commandant and presented during a formal ceremony, can have a lasting impact. These moments remind volunteers that their work is valued and set a visible example for others to follow.

Awards should never be treated as routine. Each recognition should include a thoughtful narrative that clearly explains why the individual earned admiration. A well-crafted citation transforms an award into a story of service, leadership, and commitment. When presented annually, such awards encourage consistency, inspire participation, and foster a culture in which excellence is both expected and celebrated.

Recognition should also honor those who came before us. Naming awards after distinguished deceased members preserves legacy while educating newer members about those who helped build the organization. An award such as "John A. Smith Marine of the Year" honors both the recipient and the Marine whose name it bears. Inviting a surviving spouse or family member to assist with the presentation strengthens the bond between families and the League, reminding them that their loved one's service is neither forgotten nor diminished by time.

Community-based awards further expand the detachment's reach and influence. Recognitions such as "Patriot of the Year" or "Distinguished Service Award" acknowledge outstanding civic leaders while establishing valuable relationships within the community. Inviting recipients to officer installations or awards ceremonies enhances visibility and reinforces the League's commitment to service beyond its membership.

It has been said that a person experiences three deaths: when the body ceases to function, when it is laid to rest, and the final death, when their name is spoken for the last time. By attaching names to awards, we ensure that legacy endures. In doing so, we honor the past, inspire the present, and secure the future of MCL. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: sediv.org

Southern Division Annual Report 2026



Mark Oldmixon

**NVC,
Southern
Division**



MARINES: Southern Division is probably experiencing the same problems as most divisions: recruiting and retaining members, especially younger Marines in the 40-50 age range. Competition from other veterans organizations, family responsibilities, and careers all play a part. As for Southern Division, we have some work to do and cannot rest on our laurels.

We assisted more than 200 veterans and their families with temporary housing, food, clothing, and utility bills. We provided well over 200 funeral details across the three states. Wreaths Across America was active not only at national cemeteries but at private cemeteries as well. Toys for Tots was again a huge success in the division. Members drove veterans to many medical appointments at local VA hospitals, clinics, and private medical facilities. Approximately 20 detachments

are associated with Marine Reserve units in all three states, assisting Marines and their families.

The 250th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps was celebrated across Southern Division. Everything from formal balls and cake-cutting ceremonies at the state capitals to a birthday celebration at a hospital and down to the detachments took place. There was even a USMC birthday proclamation from Harris County, Texas, Commissioners Court.

My goal is to move Southern Division into the 21st century on the administrative side of the League. That means training detachments to transition to electronic forms for ROIs, transmittals, death notices, and more; maintaining and updating bylaws and APs; and preparing and mentoring members to step up in leadership roles not just at the detachment level, but upward to department, division, and national positions. It also means using local resources such as newspapers, radio, television, social media, podcasts, and YouTube to showcase the League. Finally, it means developing Southern Division's conference into more task-oriented training and professional development for its members. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclsouth.org

SOUTHWEST DIVISION SITREP



Joe Uribe

**NVC,
Southwest
Division**



MARINES: As national vice commandant of the Southwest Division, I am proud to report that our division, representing Arizona, California, Nevada, and Hawaii, continues to move forward and align with their department commandants' vision. Across all departments, morale is good, operations remain disciplined, and our commitment to serving Marines, veterans, and communities remains steady.

Since the August 2025 National Convention, a couple of departments have experienced a few disagreements. While minor disputes arose at the local level, every issue was resolved through constructive leadership and mediation. This reflects the maturity and integrity of our leadership teams throughout the Southwest.

One of the most historic accomplishments of the past year was our observance of the 250th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Through coordinated efforts, mayoral and gubernatorial proclamations were secured in Arizona, California, and Hawaii. Cake-cutting ceremonies were held at state capitols across the division, and Hawaii achieved a first-ever milestone with four Marine Corps flags raised at the state capitol. Nevada hosted multiple birthday balls, including a sold-out Las Vegas event attended by more than 1,200 guests.

Our collective impact in 2025 speaks volumes. Division-wide, our Marines performed more than 700 funeral honors, logged more than 30,000 community service hours, and distributed nearly 157,000 Toys for Tots items to children in need. These numbers represent not just statistics, but lives touched and families supported.

Each department continues to excel. Arizona led major fundraising and benevolence efforts. California performed the highest number of funeral honors and expanded scholarship programs. Nevada strengthened veteran services and community partnerships. Hawaii, operating as a developing department, provided exceptional outreach and is nearing full charter status.

Our work with youth organizations also remains strong. The National Scouting America Committee continues to process Eagle Scout awards efficiently, strengthening ties between MCL and future leaders. A big shoutout goes to Steve Bosshard, the division's Scouting America representative, who does an amazing job recognizing the future of America.

In closing, the SWD remains mission-focused and committed to the values of our Corps. None of these accomplishments happen by accident. They are the result of dedicated Marines and strong leadership. To quote one of my department commandants, "Don't talk about it, BE about it."

I am honored to serve alongside each of you and look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclswdivision.org

Taking the Enlisted Awards to the Fleet

The Marine Corps League Enlisted Awards have been our way of reaching out to the Fleet Marine Force and helping to recognize the Marine or Sailor who, over the past year, has contributed most to the combat readiness of the unit and command. For years, this has allowed us to serve and directly support our active-duty counterparts, and this year has been no exception. The process starts in May, with the Board of Trustees reviewing scores of nomination packets endorsed through the first general officer, followed by a lengthy and difficult debate over who stands above the rest. Our goals remain steadfast: strengthen the fraternity of Marines and serve Marines and Fleet Marine Force Sailors.

Traditionally, after collecting, vetting, and selecting from numerous nominations, the League invited the respective award recipients to be publicly recognized for their contributions at Modern Day Marine, either through the Enlisted Awards Parade at Marine Corps Base Quantico or, more recently, at the MDM Grand Gala. This year, we decided to make these award presentations more personal. Instead of making these Marines and Sailors travel away from home, we decided to go to them. Coordinating with each command, representatives from the League participated in individual award ceremonies held at home stations around the world.

Throughout each presentation, it was impressive to see firsthand the depth of impact these Marines and Sailors have had not only on the readiness of their units, but on the several generations to come. Just as our award namesakes left a lasting impact on the U.S. Marine Corps through deeds and sacrifices, so too have this year's award recipients. The support and efforts of their commands to recognize these men and women also speak volumes about the importance of continuing our



GUNNERY SGT. ROBERT NAVARRO

efforts to spotlight sacrifices and deeds that would normally go unknown on the global stage.

The **Gunnery Sgt. Carlos N. Hathcock II Award** is given to the enlisted Marine who has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of marksmanship training. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, was **Gunnery Sgt. Robert Navarro**, whose exceptional leadership, dedication, and skill in improving marksmanship training stood out while he served as the officer in charge of the Indoor Small Arms Range at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. He was directly responsible for the reopening and operation of the range, a critical facility supporting Marine Corps Installations Pacific and its mission.

He expertly managed four government contracts, developed comprehensive programs, and wrote the range standard operating procedures and range cards, ensuring compliance with all safety and operational requirements. His efforts

provided essential marksmanship training for Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Japanese units, directly enhancing their readiness and operational capabilities. Gunnery Sgt. Navarro's training initiatives were instrumental in supporting deployment readiness for critical commands, including Carrier Air Wing 5 and Marine Aircraft Group 12. His tireless efforts ensured these units were prepared to execute their strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific region.

The **Sgt. Maj. Wilbur Bestwick Award** is presented to the enlisted Marine serving in a ground combat element of the operating forces who has made an outstanding contribution to increased combat readiness within the organization. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, is **First Sgt. Chad Winchell**, whose outstanding leadership, tactical expertise, and unwavering commitment to combat readiness while attached to 2d Battalion, 8th Marines directly enhanced the warfighting capabilities of

more than 350 Marines. During Unit Deployment Program 24.1 in Okinawa, Japan, he designed and executed comprehensive jungle warfare training, improved anti-armor capabilities, and reinforced decentralized command and control within small-unit leadership.

Leading a grueling 100-kilometer forced march, he strengthened unit endurance and cohesion and ensured rapid deployment readiness as part of the Alert Contingency Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Following the deployment, First Sgt. Winchell was instrumental in preparing his Marines for Joint Viking 25, developing progressive training cycles that enhanced cold-weather warfighting proficiency and battlefield adaptability. His efforts further improved joint interoperability, sharpening the combat effectiveness of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. First Sgt. Winchell's steadfast dedication to training excellence and operational execution fostered a culture of aggressive maneuver warfare, leaving a lasting impact on his unit's lethality and mission readiness.

The **Sgt. Harry D. Myers Award** is given to the enlisted Marine serving in a combat service support element of the operating forces who has made a significant contribution to increased combat readiness within the organization. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, is **Gunnery Sgt. Ryan Schwartz**, who served as the senior staff noncommissioned officer in charge and company gunnery sergeant for Communications Company, 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, 3d Marine Division. During the regiment's first deployment to the Philippines in support of Littoral Rotational Force-Luzon, Gunnery Sgt. Schwartz served as both communications and networking chief for Alpha Command, enabling seamless command and control and integration with joint and allied forces.

Following deployment, he led more than 150 Marines through extensive predeployment training, underwater egress certifications, and large-scale communications exercises, including the unit's first aerial insertion and convoy using organic assets. He managed more than 150 weapons and 40 vehicles, earning a perfect score during the Field Supply Maintenance Analysis Office inspection. His devel-



FIRST SGT. CHAD WINCHELL



GUNNERY SGT. RYAN SCHWARTZ



FIRST SGT. MATTHEW CARUSO

opment of advanced networking training plans allowed the unit to operate three enclaves across four tactical kits, surpassing Fleet Marine Force standards. Gunnery Sgt. Schwartz's technical acumen, tireless leadership, and commitment to mission success directly contributed to the 3d Marine Littoral Regiment's operational readiness and the implementation of the stand-in force concept.

The **Sgt. Maj. Frederick B. Douglass Award** is given to the enlisted Marine who, while serving in an aviation combat element of the operating forces, made a significant contribution to increased combat readiness within the organization. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, is **First Sgt. Matthew Caruso**, who served as the senior enlisted leader, Company A, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 18, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Okinawa, Japan. While serving in this position, First Sgt. Caruso's guidance directly enabled the preparation and deployment of more than 200 Marines across the Indo-Pacific region, supporting 25 high-visibility training exercises, including eight joint multilateral operations.

These exercises enhanced interoperability with partner nations and joint forces while improving the unit's ability to provide command, control, communications, and computer support in contested environments. First Sgt. Caruso's leadership was instrumental in improving Company A's operational processes and personnel management systems, ensuring Marines were fully equipped and ready to execute their missions. He refined training programs, improved standard operating procedures, and streamlined administrative functions, resulting in enhanced efficiency and precision. His commitment to professional development included implementing a comprehensive education program to enhance individual and unit readiness, focusing on leadership development and operational effectiveness. He also prioritized unit cohesion and morale through initiatives recognizing Marine achievements and promoting esprit de corps. His relentless focus on readiness ensured the unit's ability to operate effectively in complex, dynamic battlespaces, contributing directly to the mission success of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The **Chief Hospital Corpsman George William**



**HOSPITAL CORPSMAN 1ST CLASS
STACIE MARTURANO**



STAFF SGT. KENT ESTRADA

"Doc" Piercy Award is presented to a Navy corpsman or dental technician in a ground, logistics, or aviation element of the operating force who has made a significant contribution to increased combat medical readiness within the organization. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, is **Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Stacie Marturano**. Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Marturano served as leading petty officer for the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. She leveraged her institutional and technical expertise to increase the combat medical readiness of II Marine Expeditionary Force. She advised four chief petty officers and 13 officers and led 95 Sailors in maintaining medical readiness in support of 2,100 Marines and Sailors, sustaining total force readiness at 99 percent across three ships during distributed operations.

Additionally, she led 28 instructors in the com-

pletion of 112 hours of tactical combat casualty care instruction to 901 Marines and Sailors, resulting in a 65 percent increase in training compliance for the Navy-Marine Corps team. By elevating the medical knowledge and confidence of junior corpsmen and supported personnel, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Marturano's actions created lasting effects that extended well beyond immediate missions. Her dedication to developing others ensured sustained readiness and reflected the highest traditions of the Hospital Corps and the naval service.

The **Marine Corps Reservist of the Year Award** is presented to the enlisted Marine Corps reservist who made an outstanding contribution to combat readiness within the organization. The **2025 recipient**, recognized for service from Jan. 1, 2024, to Dec. 31, 2024, is **Staff Sgt. Kent Estrada** for his contributions to U.S. Cyber Command, Marine Corps Information Command, U.S. Marine Corps Cyberspace Command, and Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve. Staff Sgt. Estrada demonstrated remarkable initiative and attention to detail as a global force management and deployment action officer. During this period, he successfully coordinated the deployment of more than 150 Marines and multiple temporary duty assignments outside the continental United States.

Staff Sgt. Estrada provided invaluable support to Marines deploying overseas for the first time, ensuring all geographic combatant command and service requirements were met in a timely manner, allowing deploying Marines to continue contributing to their assigned missions. As the Marine Corps Information Command joint capabilities manager, he ensured all joint requirements were tracked and executed efficiently. During his tour with Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, Staff Sgt. Estrada exhibited outstanding leadership as a battle staff noncommissioned officer, coordinating ground and air asset movements that resulted in the removal of 103 Da'esh insurgents from the battlespace.

Although the Marines and Sailor highlighted here were chosen for their respective awards, we want to publicly recognize all Marines and Sailors who submitted nomination packets and commend them on their outstanding accomplishments.

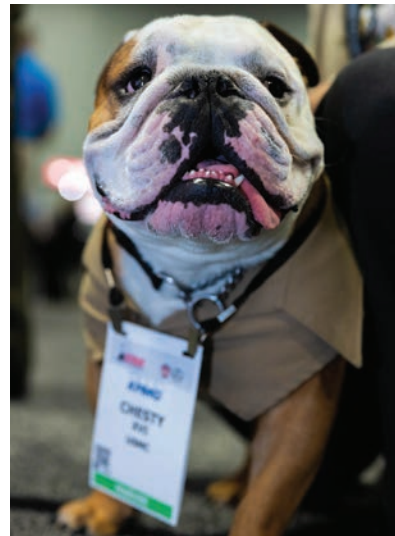
Modern Day Marine 2025



Representatives from the military, government, and industry attend Modern Day Marine 2025 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., April 30, 2025. Modern Day Marine is a military exposition organized exclusively for the Marine Corps to showcase the newest technology and warfighting innovations, from amphibious assault vehicles to drones and more. (USMC PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. ELLEN GUO)



USMC Marines observe new weapon.



USMC mascot Cpl. Chesty XVI attends Modern Day Marine.



USMC Cpl. Triston K. Gryniewski, right, and Lance Cpl. Kyle J. Vansteenbergen, both low-altitude air defense gunners with 2d Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, carry an AT4-CS confined-space light anti-armor weapon and a Carl Gustaf recoilless rifle.



USMC Cpl. Eric Nathaniel Williams-Clark, an administrative specialist assigned to Manpower Management Division, USMC Manpower and Reserve Affairs, fires a simulated M2 machine gun through virtual reality



USMC 2nd Lt. Tyler Birchenough, an administrative assistant assigned to Marine Corps Recruiting Command, looks through a rifle scope



USMC Marines with "The Commandant's Own" USMC Drum & Bugle Corps prepare to perform



USMC Sgt. Maj. Carlos A. Ruiz, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, speaks during a podcast at Modern Day Marine.

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To honor this legacy, the "USMC 250th Anniversary Commemorative" exclusive tribute features a breathtaking visual narrative of Marine Corps history by renowned artist James Griffin, specially created for this piece. Standing before Griffin's artwork is a finely detailed U.S. Marine figurine in full Dress Blues uniform, meticulously handcrafted and painted by hand.

This commemorative stands as a tribute to every Marine who has donned the

Eagle, Globe, and Anchor—from the battlefields of Belleau Wood to the desert mountains of Afghanistan. It serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of the Marine Corps and the sacrifices made by Marines to keep our nation free.

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Two And A Half Centuries

By Michael J. Haas

Born from a colony of British rule
They sought freedom and separatism.
For a hundred and fifty years of misrule
A breakaway began forming to anti-statism.

British debts created untenable taxes
Thoughts of revolution were being born.
A Declaration of Independence in praxis
Created the country we call home.

Two and a half centuries have passed
She's grown and matured on the world stage.
We've endured war and depression amassed
Carrying forward every day becomes our gauge.

Our time has come to celebrate her birth
A journey not without bumps and bruises.
The addition of fifty states adds to her girth
A populace of 349 million
giving way to her muses.

The United States of America is without doubt
The greatest country in the world today!
While democracy is our guide and clout
The Constitution holds her strength in sway.

She's had forty-seven Presidents to lead
During her storied existence in the world.
Each faced new trials and issues to impede
Each accepted the challenges
open and unfurled.

Now we celebrate her 250 years of achievement
Aged less than many countries
around the globe.
Our nation is a stalwart of
change and agreement
With centuries more on the horizon to probe.

The United States of America has it all
Blustering cities, quaint towns,
and fantastic landscapes.
We boast the most diverse population of all
One of strength and unity
subject to minor scrapes.

Our Constitution and Bill of Rights define us
The Declaration of Independence
holds our spirit.

No other country in the world can contain us
As our spirit and purpose rises to crescendo.

As all Americans look to our forefathers
Their drive and idealism are held in our soul.
Remember from where we came together
Celebrating our country's 250th birthday knoll.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Kathleen Potthoff and Kathy Sheppard, Dept. of Florida, Chapel of the Four Chaplain representatives conducted the Chapel of the Four Chaplains ceremony at the inaugural event at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL on February 3, 2026.



Chaplain George L. Fox is an IWU alum, class of 1931. Chaplain Fox had previously been honored during Veterans Day events at the university, but this event highlighted him and his fellow chaplains on the fateful anniversary of their selfless sacrifice of February 3rd. As a fellow alum, Kathleen ('73) worked with the university to commemorate Chaplain Fox and his comrades. The ceremony also included the first-time awarding of a Legion of Honor-Humanitarian award to another IWU alum, James Ingold ('85) whose lifelong efforts have raised funds for St. Judes Research Hospital, the university and local involvement with Special Olympics, in keeping with the legacy of the Four Chaplains.



Marines of the Cpl. JR Spears Det. 066, Pensacola, FL. Included in the formation are Former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps General William "Spider" Nyland; Navy Cross recipient, Rupert "Skeets" Fairfield, and many Vietnam veterans including several Marines from the Battle of Khe Sanh, Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Marines wearing their MCL covers are former and current detachment commandants.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



2025 Toys for Tots campaign, Lebanon MCL Det. 525 at Lowe's Home Improvement. Molly Luhrs, Ina Williams, and Marine Gail Wise



Three generations of Parris Island Marines in Vandegrift Det. 068 from 1970s, 1980s, and the 2000s. All 2nd RTBN alumni. From left, SVC J. Morris, Member D. Targett and current active-duty Sergeant, and Commandant K. O'Brien.

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.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



National Sergeant at Arms Lisa Solarczyk, center, with Assistant Sergeants at Arms Rick Andisik, left and Mario Meaux, right.



Mideast Division Adjutant Rick Shank, NASCAR driver Josh White, and National Vice Commandant Mideast Division Scott Kirby. Photo taken at Department of WV Winter Conference in Morgantown WV.

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Youth Physical Fitness:

The Youth Physical Fitness (YPF) Program remains one of the most effective tools we have to strengthen our communities and shape the next generation of leaders.

With the White House launching a new Presidential Fitness initiative, now is the ideal time to introduce YPF to schools and youth organizations nationwide and demonstrate how Marines continue to lead from the front.

The letter below is designed for easy sharing. Use it to introduce YPF in your community, open doors with educators and youth leaders, and showcase our commitment to the values of honor, courage, and commitment that define our Corps.

INTRODUCING THE YPF PROGRAM

Established in 1967 and funded by the U.S. Marines Youth Foundation, the Youth Physical Fitness Program is a comprehensive, structured fitness initiative for students in elementary through high school. It promotes health, wellness, and confidence through five scalable, accessible exercises:

- Plank Hold
- Push-Ups
- Standing Long Jump
- Pull-Ups
- 300-Yard Shuttle Run

WHY YPF ALIGNS WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL FITNESS INITIATIVE

- **Zero Cost:** All materials, scoring guides, and certificates are provided free of charge.
- **Flexible Implementation:** Easily integrates into existing PE programs or youth activities.
- **Inclusive for All Fitness Levels:**

Designed to engage every student, regardless of current ability.

- **Proven Track Record:** For over five decades, YPF has improved youth physical readiness nationwide.
- **Recognition for Achievement:** Students earn official Certificates of Accomplishment or Participation at no cost.

THE HEGSETH PUSH-UP/PULL-UP CHALLENGE

To add a motivational, competitive element, schools and youth programs can incorporate the Hegseth Push-Up/Pull-Up Challenge alongside YPF. This friendly challenge highlights two cornerstone exercises while inspiring goal setting, perseverance, and measurable improvement.

- Benefits:**
- Reinforces upper-body strength and endurance
 - Builds resilience through

personal achievement

- Connects students to a nationally recognized fitness challenge

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Review the easy-to-follow YPF guidelines.
2. Introduce the five exercises to your group or school.
3. (Optional) Add the Hegseth Challenge as a recurring event.
4. Conduct testing three times annually: fall, winter, and spring.
5. Submit your results to receive official YPF certificates.

There's no equipment to buy, no cost to join, and no barriers to participation—just an effective, ready-to-use program that supports the goals of the Presidential Fitness initiative.

JOIN OUR EXPANDING YPF NETWORK

The Marine Corps League is building a growing network of local coordinators across the country—ready to assist schools, youth organizations, and detachments in implementing YPF programs.

For more information, free program materials, or to connect with your nearest coordinator, visit: <https://www.mcleaguelibrary.org/youth-programs/youth-physical-fitness-ypf>



or scan the QR code below.

Together, we can promote the health, confidence, and resilience of America's

youth—one community at a time.

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKS FOR, ABOUT & BY MARINES – BY BOB BORKA

Ghost Fleet

A Novel of the Next World War

Cover to cover, a riveting tale of what could be in a future world war. It puts an exclamation point on Artificial Intelligence and Microchips not made in America. This book is well-written with easy text. The story moves from one storyline to another frequently to show the movement of the storyline forward across parallel lines. This reader enjoyed the book and found it difficult to put down. I just hope we kept up on the preventive maintenance on our mothballed battleships, A-10s, Cobras, and M-1A tanks!

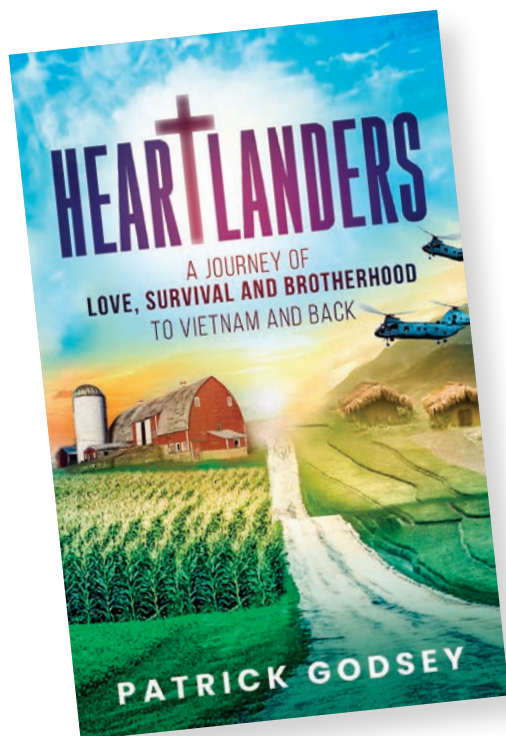
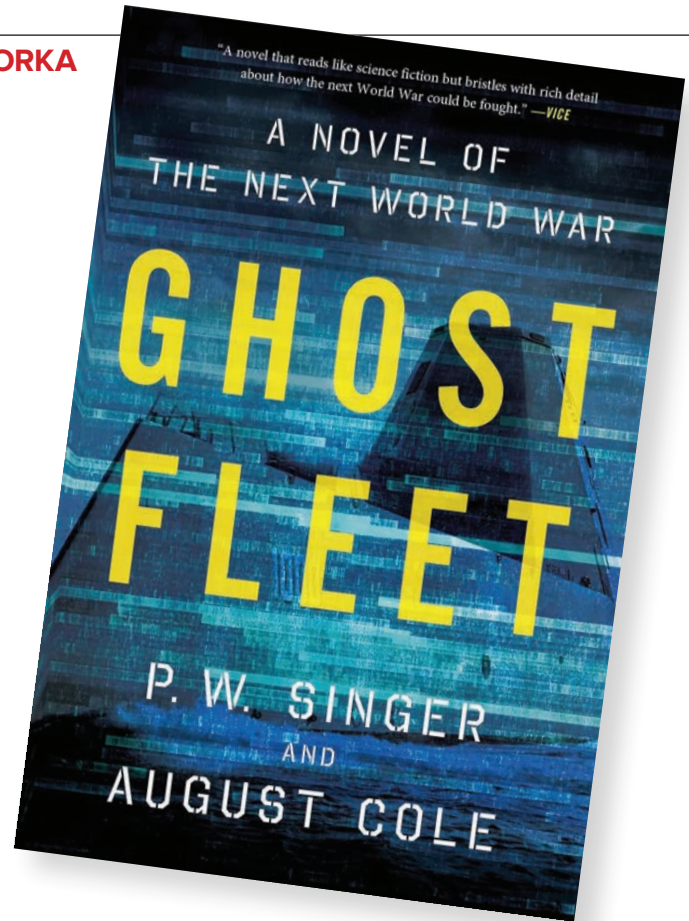
Ghost Fleet: A Novel of the Next World War

Author: P.W. Singer and August Cole

Pages: 416

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company

ISBN-13: 978-0544142848



Heartlanders

A Journey of Love, Survival, and Brotherhood to Vietnam and Back

Patrick Godsey, a member in North Carolina, tells a story that spans a wide range of emotions, struggles, and the bonds that hold Marines together. He provides enough early character development to make the transition into service feel natural and the storyline cohesive. The book is easy to read, with clean writing and solid grammar. It is a relatable account of going to war and returning home.

Heartlanders: A Journey of Love, Survival, and Brotherhood to Vietnam and Back

Author: Patrick Godsey

Pages: 353

Publisher: Patrick Godsey Publishing

ISBN-13: 978-1733457330

Why We Honor All Our Veterans and Families on This Veterans Day

By Raylan Jones

Fifth grader, Potter Gray Elementary,
Bowling Green, Kentucky

I am so happy to be here with all of you. I think we should honor veterans and their families every day because they missed time with their families, sacrificed many things, and served our country. But it is also important that we take time to honor our veterans and families in a special ceremony on Veterans Day, as a reminder of their service and sacrifice.

Here are some of my reasons for honoring our veterans on this special day, and after hearing my reading, I hope you will all agree!

The first reason we should honor veterans is because the United States military has served since 1775, which is 250 years. Happy birthday, veterans! Veterans have fought for years trying to keep America safe. This supports my topic because, just 15 years ago, Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces, a reminder that war and terrorism were still very real in our time. So war is still a possibility, and we need to be ready.

Veterans have served and gone through some of the worst conditions one can imagine. This supports my topic because they had to risk their bodies to protect us. In World War I, they could get trench foot. In many wars, POWs had to witness torture while in camps. POWs are prisoners who were forced into captivity because the enemy took them after battles. This is another important reason we should honor all veterans because POWs are sometimes forgotten.

Another reason we should celebrate veterans is to remember there are almost 2,000 MIAs, which means they went missing during battle and were never seen again. This supports my topic because they went missing, and families will not see them again. It is very important to honor and remember them because MIAs are too often forgotten!

Another detail is that my grandpa was a



Raylan Jones, Grandpa Butler, Annie Jones

Marine during the Vietnam War and served two tours in Vietnam. He did not see his family for 18 months. My uncle was in the Air Force for 30 years, and he retired in 2024. But he served all over the world in many wars, and he would only see us on holidays. He was also away from his family for many months—another sacrifice!

A third reason we should celebrate veterans is because they served our country. I go to World War II reenactments. This supports my topic because World War II reenactments show real war and what war would look like. Another detail is that my great-grandpa was a spotter pilot in Germany in World War II. This

supports my topic because World War II was an important war, keeping us free and safe.

I sing along to the national anthem at sports events because the national anthem is like the theme song of America. That is another reason we should continue to celebrate veterans!

Finally, when I was doing research and talking with my grandpa, I learned he, my uncle, and my great-grandpa all took an oath and volunteered to join the military during different wars. That is why I really want to honor my family veterans and all veterans every day!

Thank you for your time, and God bless America! **Semper Fi!**

REUNIONS

USMC Weather Service (METOC)

DATE: 14-18 JUN 2026

CONTACT: Dave Englert, englerd@psci.net, (812) 630-2099; or Kathy Donham, kathy.donham@hotmail.com, (252) 342-8459

Marine Corps Engineer Association (MCEA) Reunion and Rewards Banquet

LOCATION: DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA 95815

DATE: 17-19 SEP 2026

CONTACT: Lt. Col. George Carlson, USMC (ret.), treasurer@marcorengasn.org, (931) 307-9094

INFO: MCEA website: www.marcorengasn.org

531 Gray Ghost Squadron

LOCATION: Dallas, TX

DATE: 12-18 OCT 2026

CONTACT: Rusty Smith, rustysmith1521@gmail.com; or Mike "Horse" Frese, schorse@verizon.net

INFO: All former members of the active-duty 531 Gray Ghost Squadron, their families, friends, and other guests are invited. Registration and more at 531grayghostsquadron.org/upcoming-reunion

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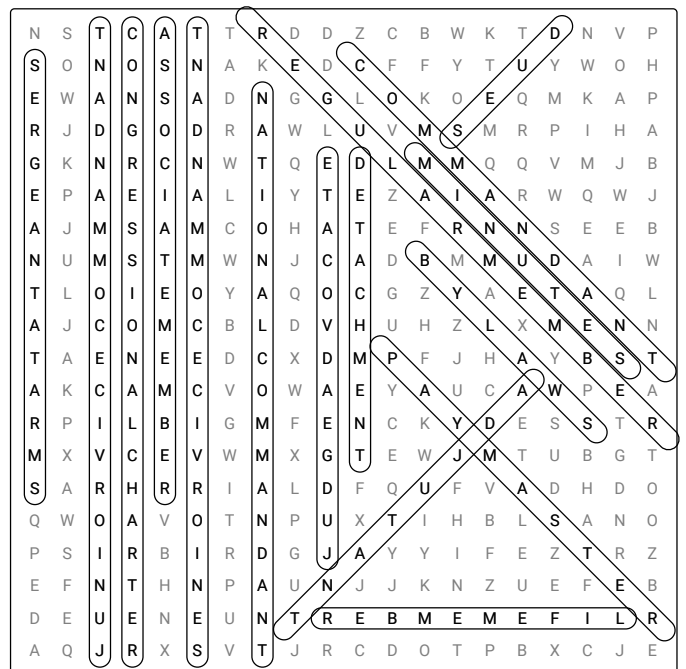
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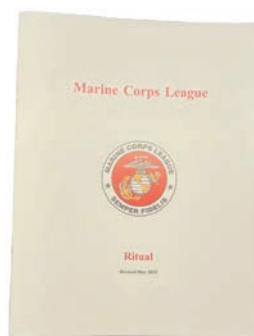
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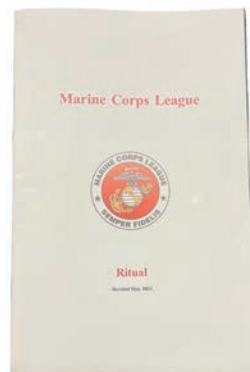
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Date of Birth ___ / ___ / ___ Join Date --- / --- / ---

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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MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
 Incorporated by Act of Congress, August 4, 1937
 Temporary Membership Card and Receipt
 This will certify that



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.

Amount

Sponsor's

(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
 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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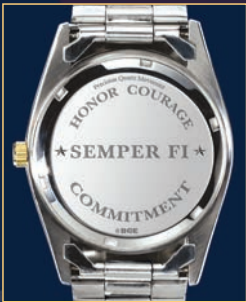
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