

THE JARHEAD JOURNAL

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www.lakecountymarines.com



MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801

The Jarhead Journal

Published Quarterly

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Adjutant:	John Jezioro
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Sgt. at Arms:	Andres Morales
Asst. Sgt. of Arms	Carter Mitchell
Color Guard Commander:	Ed Mampe
Quartermaster:	Frank Contee
Va Hospital Visits:	Linda Smolich
Junior Past Commandant	Charles Walgreen
Web Sgt.:	Mel Ellingsen
VAC Rep:	Tom Koncan

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If you are not getting my emails with the meeting minutes, email me, John Jezioro at jezfamily11@ameritech.net or text me at 847-807-0736 and we'll get it worked out.

QUARTERMASTER'S CORNER

From the Quartermaster's Corner

I have challenge coins, ribbons, shirts, and a few covers available. If you have any desire for the above items, please feel free to contact me either by calling or texting me at (904)535-7336, or by emailing me at Fcontee@hotmail.com.

Please provide me sizes for shirts, if I do not have what you need, I will order what is needed at my earliest. SF, Frank Contee - Quartermaster

An Eventful Quarter

My research reveals that Tom Smolich published the Scuttlebutt prior to Erich Richey releasing his first issue in November 2012 of the Jarhead Journal. After 48 issues, Erich passed his pen to me. I shared my first issue in November 2016. Since then, I have enjoyed sharing with the detachment members our activities each month. After publishing 108 issues of the Jarhead Journal, I'm going to pass my pen to Charles Walgreen. For me, it has been both a challenging and rewarding experience. I hope you have enjoyed my contribution to the Lake County Detachment 801 these past nine years.

Charles Walgreen, and his wife Catherine, will publish their first issue of the Jarhead Journal as of June 2026 when the Jarhead Journal will become a quarterly publication. As needed, email blasts will continue to keep the detachment informed of future activities.

Semper Fi,
Mel Ellingsen

2026 Fundraising Dates (Shake the Can)



Sat, 6/27 10am-3pm Jewel-Osco 900 E. Rollins Rd., Round Lake Beach

****All Members:**

Please participate in some of these dates!

These fundraisers support our various programs throughout the year such as our dinners and the Memorial Picnic!

Hopefully most of you can assist for 1-2 hours or more on a Saturday;
not really much to ask, right?

Please contact me with any questions, suggestions, etc.

Thank you!

Ed Cooper

760-533-3850

ecooper1968@yahoo.com

Membership Renewal

Annual Notice

Expires 31 August



**Renew today with your
local Detachment Paymaster**

From the PAYMASTER - Nolan Webster

If you are a regular member of the detachment, your \$35 annual dues and now being collected. Please keep in mind that only \$7 of your \$35 stays in the detachment. You can always pay in cash at one of our meetings or mail us a check to PO Box 7732, Gurnee, IL 60031. [Or, click on this link to pay via debit or credit card.](#) You can also upgrade your membership to a Life member after paying your 2026 dues. The link to pay dues has all the information about Life membership. We will start sending out email 'reminders' directly to regular members whose dues are in arrears in a few weeks.

Thoughts on Memorial Day 2026

By Allen J. Lynch

US Army (ret), 1st Cavalry Division, Vietnam, 1967-1968

Medal of Honor Recipient

www.AJLynchFoundation.org

Memorial Day is about fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, the children for whom mommy or daddy is but a fading memory or are only known through letters written home.

It is for all of us who saw their brothers and sisters die in service to our country. It's for citizens who understand the cost of freedom. Though they haven't lost anyone directly, they know the pain felt by those who have lost someone.

It is not a holiday to be used as a means to an end by those who view this day in the most cynical way.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces and First Responders have, as our founding fathers did so long ago, **pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor in the cause of freedom**, so that our constitutional Republic can go on.

We risk our lives because none of us who serve know for sure that we are coming home. We risk our fortunes because the wounds suffered in service impact on our ability to earn a living. And for all of this, we pledge our sacred honor.

Only in the armed services can we - through poor behavior - receive a dishonorable discharge, an undesirable discharge, a less than honorable discharge.

Politicians can be totally disgraced and in a few short weeks it is as if nothing has happened. Criminals can be jailed time and time again only to be released and even get welfare and other freebies paid for by the taxpayer. People can leave their jobs in disgrace only to be hired into a better position.

But Service Members who screw up are forever labeled with a Dishonorable Discharge, or less than honorable or undesirable discharge.

Memorial Day is not just about mourning the loss of a loved one. It is also about honoring their service and that for which they fought and died.

It's about our Constitutional Republic. We didn't fight for political parties or political ideologies - be it progressive or conservative. We fought for the Constitution. We took an oath to protect it at the risk of our very lives. Why? Because the Constitution makes us citizens and not slaves.

It is the Constitution that matters. If you want to honor these men and women that have given their last full measure, then ensure that our Constitution is sacrosanct.

And, most importantly, please live a life worthy of their sacrifice.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE



LAKE COUNTY MARINES DET. 801

HELP VETERANS, THEIR WIDOWS, AND THEIR KIDS

ZERO SALARIES – 100% TO VETS

BOAT LOAD OF BOOZE RAFFLE



GRAND PRIZE: Seahawk 4 Inflatable Boat + Over 60 Bottles of Booze
(incl. Jack Daniel's, Captain Morgan, Smirnoff, Patron, Bacardi)

2nd PRIZE: 25 Bottles

3rd - 10th PRIZES: 5 Bottles or Case of Wine

1 TICKET - \$10.00



3 TICKETS - \$25.00



DRAWING: JULY 21, 2026

STEVENS' STEAKHOUSE

GURNEE, IL

NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.



JOIN US AND SUPPORT OUR VETERANS!

A CALL TO ACTION FOR OUR DETACHMENT

WE NEED MORE MEMBERS

Strength in Unity and Numbers

As members of the Best Damn Detachment, we have shared experiences that forge bonds unlike any other. Our camaraderie as Marines and Corpsman, built on mutual respect and understanding, provides a unique support system. Now is the time to extend this haven to others who have served but have yet to find the Marine Corps League

Why We Need to Expand

Each new member enriches our detachment with their individual stories, skills, and perspectives. By growing our numbers, we not only strengthen our solidarity but also enhance our ability to support one another. Imagine the wealth of experiences and knowledge that could be shared, the new friendships that could blossom, and the collective wisdom that could guide us all.

Benefits of a Larger Detachment

- **Greater Support Network:** More members mean more resources and support for each of us. Whether someone needs advice, companionship, or assistance, a larger group can provide a stronger safety net.
- **Diverse Perspectives:** New members bring fresh viewpoints and ideas, which can help us tackle challenges in innovative ways.
- **Enhanced Activities:** With more hands-on deck, we can organize more events, outings, and activities that cater to a wider variety of interests.

How to Find New Members

Recruiting new members requires a proactive approach and a genuine desire to connect with others. Here are a few strategies to consider:

Start with Your Networks-Church, Social media, Your local Watering Hole

Think about that guy wearing the USMC cover you see while shopping or that USMC flag flying on a house down the street. Or, that car in the Walmart parking lot with the USMC decal on the window. Pick up a handful of applications at the next meeting and leave them on car windows and front doors. Print the following poster and get it into your favorite bar.

KNOW YOUR BENEFITS: WHAT EVERY VETERAN SHOULD KNOW IN 2026

For many veterans, the benefits earned through years of faithful service go unclaimed — not out of indifference, but simply because the system can be difficult to navigate. As your chapter's paymaster and a fellow member of the Marine Corps League, I want to make sure every Devil Dog in our ranks knows what's available and how to access it.

[Compensation Rates Are Up](#)

Around 6.5 million U.S. veterans receive monthly, tax-free disability compensation from the VA, providing financial support to those whose injuries or illnesses were caused or worsened by military service. If you haven't reviewed your rating in a while, it may be time. A 3.2% cost-of-living adjustment took effect in late 2025, with updated payment rates now reflected throughout 2026. A veteran rated at 100% with no dependents now receives more than \$3,750 per month. Veterans who have not had their disability rating reviewed in several years should consider requesting a re-evaluation if their condition has worsened — a higher rating directly translates to higher monthly compensation.

[The PACT Act — Don't Leave It on the Table](#)

The VA estimates that more than 3.5 million veterans may now be eligible for benefits under PACT Act provisions related to toxic exposure, including burn pit exposure, Agent Orange, and radiation. More than 20 conditions have been added as presumptive, including 11 cancer types and 12 respiratory illnesses tied to toxic exposure. This is significant: veterans no longer need to prove a direct service connection for these conditions. Many claims that were previously denied are now presumptive. If you served in Southwest Asia, Vietnam, or any area with known toxic exposure and haven't filed a PACT Act claim, do it now.

[Claims Are Being Processed Faster Than Ever](#)

Good news on the administrative side: the average number of days needed to complete a claim has fallen from 141.5 days to 80.7 days — a 43% decrease — and the VA's claims-processing accuracy has increased to 94.02%, the highest 12-month accuracy rate in the last two years.

[Expanded Access to Care](#)

The VA has opened 36 new healthcare facilities since January 2025, expanding access around the country, and completed an all-time high of over 82 million direct care appointments in FY 2025 — up more than 4% from the prior year.

[Take Action](#)

The Marine Corps taught us to leave no one behind. Let's apply that same standard here. If you or a fellow veteran hasn't filed for benefits, has an outdated disability rating, or just doesn't know where to start, reach out. Our chapter is here to help connect you with the right resources.

For assistance, contact the VA at 1-800-698-2411 or visit va.gov. Veterans in crisis can reach the Veterans Crisis Line anytime at 988, then press 1.



HELP US CELEBRATE OUR
BIRTHDAY ALL YEAR
LONG. IT WILL BE 250
YEARS ON 10 NOVEMBER
2025.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR MARINES AND FMF CLERGY & CORPSMEN!

We are the Lake County Marines Corps League
Detachment 801. We meet on the third Tuesday
starting at 1830 at Steven's Restaurant - Gurnee.

Check us out at

SEMPER FIDELIS



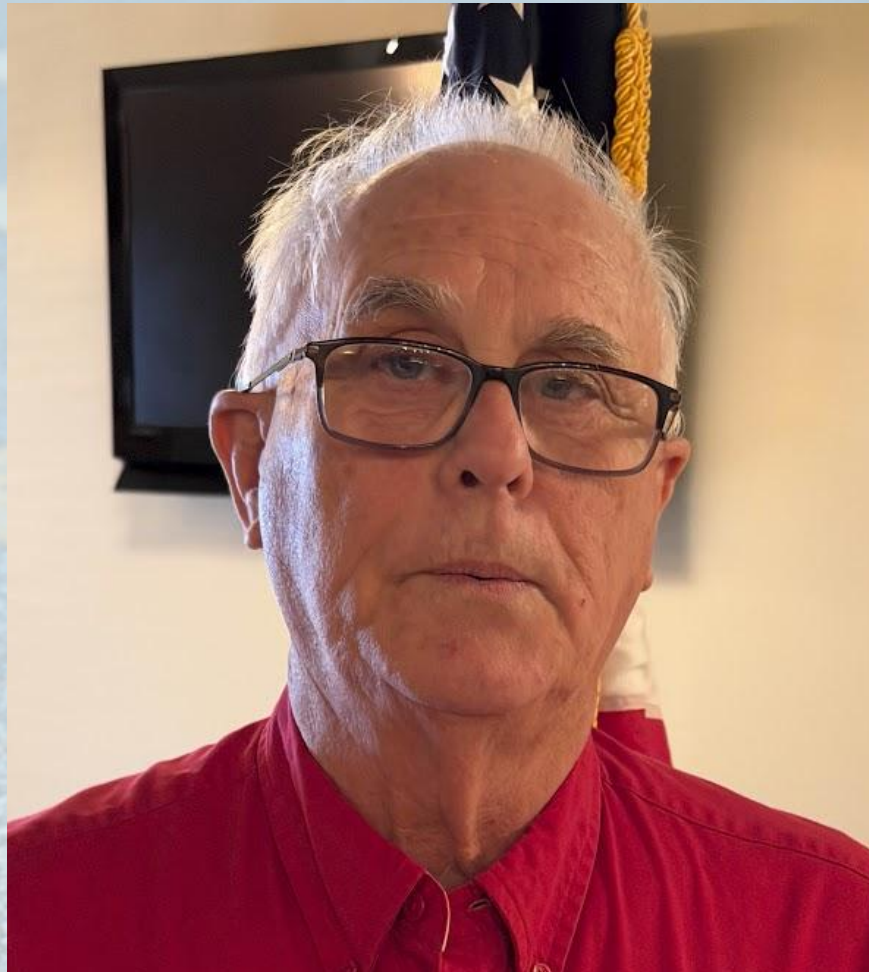
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801

2026 MEMORIAL PICNIC

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/7pYcauc4u2QY8mXj6>



WELCOME **ABOARD**



Welcome Aboard, David Riordan! David's first 18 years were in Northeastern Pennsylvania: two years in the USMC, and Penn State University for college. Next he was in Florida for 11 years, 33 years in Maryland, then moved to Chicago five years ago.

CONGRATULATIONS, GEORGE!



Lake County Detachment Members:

I'd like to congratulate detachment 801 member Marine George Gandara for being recognized as the Illinois VFW Veteran of the Year at their recent state convention. George transferred into Detachment 801 a few months ago.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801



COLOR & HONOR GUARD



Color and Honor Guard

Our guard fired a rifle volley at Lindenhurst on Memorial Day to honor those service members who didn't come home.

Ed Mampe - Color Guard Commander

PH #847-641-9689

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801



EAGLE SCOUTS

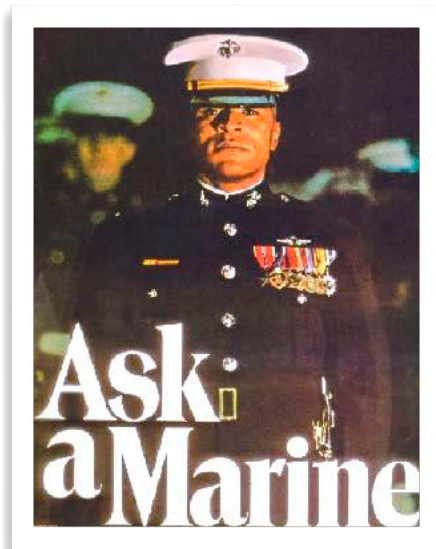


KA-BAR PRESENTATIONS TO EAGLE SCOUTS

During this past quarter, the Eagle Scout Presentation Team presented 34 Ka-Bars and Distinguished Citizen Award certificates to new Eagle Scouts. Many thanks to the our team and especially Frank Contee who has recently joined us. We reported to the Department of Illinois that Detachment 801 presented 78 certificates and Ka-Bars for the year ending 30 June 2026. If you want to join our presentation team, please contact Mel Ellingsen (847) 274-8144.

FYI for somewhere else, we had 55 members and guests join us for our Memorial Picnic on 30 May at Foss Park.

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Do You Remember Major James Capers?

Sure you do. This picture was used for many, many years following Vietnam as a recruiting tool. Charles Walgreen met him at a 3rd Force Recon Reunion at Camp Lejeune. Watch the news reports because Maj. Capers has been awarded the Medal of Honor on June 18 by President Trump.

Here is a link to watch a [documentary about his life](#). Use "Capers" as a password.

Also, here is a link to an article about Maj. Capers: The [Legend of Jim Capers](#): The Hero who Never was!



WWI CODE TALKERS

John Jezioro

In 1917, a Choctaw Indian named Joseph Oklahombi walked 21 miles from his home in Wright City, Oklahoma, to Idabel, the McCurtain County seat, to enlist in the U.S. Army. Oklahombi enlisted at a time when most Native Americans were not considered U.S. citizens—that didn't happen until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. The U.S. government wanted him to forget his history, his culture, and his native language, but that didn't prevent him from fighting for his homeland in World War I. Shortly after he enlisted, Oklahombi and 19 other Choctaw men became part of an effort that used their language to help win the war for the Allies. They became code talkers—Native American soldiers who used tribal languages to confound enemy intelligence. On May 22, they were honored by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, which dedicated a sculpture to the memory of the World War I code talkers outside the Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant, Oklahoma. "This monument honors our brave Choctaw warriors whose extraordinary service helped bring an end to a devastating war," Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton said at the ceremony. The bronze sculpture depicts three World War I era soldiers. Two of them use a field telephone and notepad to send and receive message traffic in the Choctaw language, while a third stands guard. On the bronze notepad is a message in the Choctaw language requesting more "corn"—code for soldiers. Choctaw artist Jane Semple Umsted, who has produced many works for the Choctaw Nation, wanted the work to show the courage and dedication exemplified by the Choctaw code talkers. "I wanted ... not just a sculpture of soldiers. I wanted [it] to be a depiction of the soldiers in action," Umsted told The Epoch Times. Action on the part of the code talkers is credited with saving potentially hundreds of thousands of lives, at a time when the Germans' ability to listen in on communications and break codes was a major challenge for the Allied forces.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, approximately 12,000 Native Americans volunteered to serve. Of those, a select group were placed on front lines and at command posts to transmit military messages in their native languages. Many of those soldiers had been students in government schools designed to assimilate them into white society, according to the website for the National Museum of the United States Army. They spoke English in those schools and, in some cases, were punished for speaking their native languages. Brig. Gen. Richard Pratt had founded the first Indian boarding school, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1879. Pratt said his aim was not to kill Indians, but to exterminate their culture. "All the Indian there is in the race should be dead," Pratt was quoted as saying. "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." The languages that Pratt and others wanted the students to forget became instrumental in preserving the government that was trying to erase them, according to the Army museum website. Cherokees were the first Native Americans to be used as code talkers, but the Choctaw are the most well documented, with numerous news reports, photographs, and official correspondence describing their work. They paved the way for the use of other Native American languages in World War I and future conflicts. The original 20 Choctaw code talkers were Victor Brown, James Edwards, Otis Leader, Solomon Louis, Walter Veach, Tobias Frazier, Robert Taylor, Jeff Wilson, Calvin Wilson, Mitchell Bobb, Pete Maytubby, Ben Carterby, Ben Colbert, Noel Johnson, Albert Billy, Benjamin Hampton, Joseph Oklahombi, Joseph Davenport, George Davenport, and Jonas Durant.

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A Man 'Full of Character'

Oklahombi's descendants say that he was proud to defend his homeland, regardless of the U.S. government's efforts to stamp out his native language and customs. They never got to meet the man who made his living as a farmer, carpenter, and —possibly—a bootlegger. Still, they said he is remembered by those who knew him as a man of integrity and courage. "He was a man that was full of character, and he believed in doing the right thing," Oklahombi's great-great-nephew Lee Watkins told The Epoch Times. "He would do whatever it was for his country, even though his country didn't recognize who [the Choctaws] were." According to information from the Choctaw Nation, Oklahombi had an exemplary war record. He was part of a contingent of 24 men who captured 171 Germans from Oct. 11 to Oct. 18 in the Champagne region of France in 1918. In that battle, Oklahombi reportedly crossed about 200 yards of open ground to capture a German machine gun position. He then turned the gun on the enemy troops which enabled the Americans to hold the Germans until they surrendered four days later. For his bravery, Oklahombi was awarded the Citation Star, the Victory Ribbon, and the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star.

'A Giving, Loving Heart'

Margaret McWilliams of Oklahoma City drove to Durant for the statue's unveiling to honor her grandfather Calvin Wilson. She remembers Wilson as a neat, reserved, and kind man who didn't talk much about his military service. She said that the code talkers were instructed not to talk about their work. McWilliams said she believes that her grandfather answered the call to serve, despite the discrimination that Indians were subjected to, because he felt that there was much more at stake. "They were there for our country, not for our government," McWilliams told The Epoch Times. Batton said the code talkers exemplified qualities that Choctaws, and all Americans, should strive to obtain: resilience, strength, forgiveness, and love. "We were told not to speak our language, but yet we were asked to use our language, and we're still willing to sacrifice and to give," Batton said. "That's a giving, loving heart, and that, I believe ... we need in this world more than ever before."

'Stop Making Up Stories'

Lisa Johnson Billy, a Choctaw tribal member, was an Oklahoma state representative from 2006 to 2016. She said there are still people who would like to ignore Indian history and culture. Billy said that when she introduced legislation to honor the Choctaw code talkers, she met resistance from other lawmakers who didn't believe the story. "In conversations with my colleagues at the state capitol, I literally had some of them tell me to stop making up stories about those Indians," Billy told The Epoch Times. But according to the historical record, those stories are true. Barely one year after entering the war, the 30th Infantry Division found its messages, transmitted in plain English, were intercepted by the Germans. Enemy troops were gaining a great advantage on the battlefield. Soldiers of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians began sending messages in their native tongue for the 105th Field Artillery Battalion. The inability of the Germans to break the Indian "code" helped turn the advantage back to the Americans and their allies. Choctaw soldiers from the 142nd and 143rd Infantries helped commanders move units, coordinate operations, and exchange important information. This included organizing a surprise artillery attack at the end of October 1918 that secured an important win for the 36th Infantry Division.

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Reconciling Old and New

The code talkers had to meet the challenge of reconciling ancient language with modern society. Most Indian languages had no words for military terms. So, “fast shooting gun,” was used for “machine gun.” Battalion was changed to “twice big group,” and “big gun” meant field artillery. Choctaw code talker James Edwards is credited with devising many of these terms. The U.S. Army code talkers used several tribal languages in World War I, including Cheyenne, Cherokee, Comanche, Ho-Chunk, Osage, and Yankton Sioux. The strategy was so effective that the German regime attempted to sabotage the program as it prepared for what became World War II, sending spies to the United States to study tribal dialects and crafting propaganda that argued that Native Americans should not sign up for the draft. Those efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, and code talkers went on to play an important role in World War II, the Korean War, and in Vietnam.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE LAKE COUNTY DETACHMENT 801



SmedSaidLedecka'26

and

then

“SMED”

said

LEDECKA

To all my Marine Corps League Brothers and Sisters in Lake County, Semper Fi!

Some time back, while assisting Mel Ellingson at an Eagle Scout Court of Honor, I used this story to illustrate the importance of performing your best effort in whatever you attempt. I hope you enjoy this as did many of those attending.

Several years ago, I watched, (in awe) as a twenty-eight year old young lady (who was quite out of her comfort zone) say to herself, “the race is over, and the winner has been declared. I will just go out and do my best, and hope I finish.”

She was the last of twenty-six to participate, the winners had already been announced (on the air) by NBC, and though she was unknown to the rest of the world, was just going to perform her run, do her best, and history was made.

As we now know, Ester Ledecka, a Czech Republic snowboarder, on a pair of borrowed skis, a part time skier rated #43 in World Cup Super “G”, in an Olympic event she had never competed in before, stunned the world in the most incredible upset in Olympic downhill history by edging out the world’s favorites by one hundredth of a second to take the Gold Medal in the Women’s Super “G” during the 2018 Winter Olympics. Even more incredible, she also became the first person to win two Gold Medals at the same Winter Olympics using two different types of equipment.

When interviewed after the run, Miss Ledecka stated, “I was watching the scoreboard, they are going to change the time. Nothing was happening, I really don’t know what is happening. Okay, this is weird! Why do they scream?”

I don’t believe many of us here today will have the opportunity to race down an ice encrusted mountain with the whole world watching, but we each have the ability to ‘do our best’ in whatever we attempt to do. And, who knows?.....

See all of you next month?
Semper Fidelis my friends!

Richard Butler (SMED)

Waukegan Independence Day Parade

Detachment 801 has again this year entered the Waukegan Independence Day Parade. It will take place Sunday, June 28, 2026. The route will travel north on Sheridan Road from Franklin Street to Jack Benny Drive.

Our entry will consist of the following:

- **BANNER** - 2 People carrying our Banner
- **COLOR GUARD** - Dress blue color guard from the recruiters
- **FLOAT** - Det. 801 replica of a 1940 landing craft. It will hold 12 riders.
- **SIDE WALKER** - 2 people to walk along side with ML brochure to pass out to anyone wearing USMC hat, shirt, etc.

PARTY!

After the parade ends we will meet for hot dogs, brats, cold drinks, etc. at Al and Kathi's house.

We need volunteers to ride in our float and enjoy the Independence Day!

CALL ME!

Al Seyler
847-220-1525

Lake County Marine Corps League Foundation

Officers and Directors

President- Charles Walgreen

Treasurer- Nolan Webster

Secretary- Jerry Pedrin

Directors

**Jim Sroka, Ed Mampe, Ed Cooper,
Hank Landrau, Al Seyler and Randy Lund.**

The foundation continues to need all of the detachment member's participation in selling Boat Load of Booze tickets to help with our mission statement of helping Veterans from all branches of the Services and their families.

Semper Fi

Charles Walgreen
President
Lake County Marine Corps League Foundation

Related Military Links to Click

Honor Flight Lake County

Midwest Veterans Closet

US Department of Veterans Affairs

Lake County Veterans Assistance Commission

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs

Marine Corps League Headquarters

Illinois Marine

VFW Action Corps Weekly

American Legion

Sgt Grit

PTSD Resources

Past copies of the Jarhead Journal can be viewed here:

www.lakecountymarines.com/newsletters

Marine Corps League (MCL) Resources

Websites:

www.mclnational.org – MCL national website – **SHIPS STORE**

www.mcleaguelibrary.org – MCL national public documents / resources

www.mcleaguelibrary.org/member-library - Password (DD2), library holds meeting minutes, forms, national bylaws / administrative procedures manuals to include MCL uniform guidance and MCL awards guidance, etc.

_____ <https://theillinoismarine.com> _____ Department website

_____ <https://lakecountymarines.com> _____ Detachment website

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/mclnational - MCL National

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064587650733 Chicago Area MC Co-Council

www.facebook.com/groups/67134899955 2nd District Facebook

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068070852934 Department Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/48678176402 Detachment Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/groups/mclhonorguardandcolorguard - MCL Honor Guard / Color Guard

www.facebook.com/groups/447677227018622 - MCL National Membership Committee

www.facebook.com/groups/mcluniforms - MCL Uniforms Buy-Sell-Trade

www.facebook.com/groups/mclconnections - MCL Connections (MCL members only)

www.facebook.com/groups/usmccollectibles - USMC Sell Your Sh**!

Other:

www.youtube.com/themarinecorpsleague - Click “subscribe” for new content

www.instagram.com/hqmcl – MCL national Instagram

www.militaryorderofthedevidogs.org – MODD Kennel website

www.nationalmcla.org – MCL national Auxiliary

www.linkedin.com/company/marine-corps-league - MCL national LinkedIn

We encourage you all as members to visit these websites and social media pages. Take a look around and know all the resources available to you on these platforms. Please share this information with all members not only in leadership positions, but your Detachment members.

*Questions about any of these resources can be addressed directly to the **MCL** National Public Relations Committee for assistance.*

publicrelations@mcleague.org