An Interview with Captain Billy Vaughan

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HAVA’s LTSA Program
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ON THE COVER:
League National Commandant Webb, National Judge Advocate Griffin, COO Borka, Marine Military Expos Show Director MajGen Regner and Senior Enlisted Advisor SgtMaj Houle visited the Wounded Warrior Battalion West on Camp Pendleton, CA. Battalion Commander LtCol Flatley, Capt Reiter, SgtMaj Fields and Command Advisor Paul Swanson provided a battalion overview and tour.

The League provided a $12,000 scholarship via a Delta Dental grant to the non-profit Serving Those Who Serve who brought Breath–Body–Mind to Camp Pendleton. Doctors Patricia Gerbarg and Richard Brown of Breath–Body–Mind provided training to the Battalion. Deborah Alagna coordinated with the League to receive the scholarship.

At the facility, Marines receive medical care, mental health counseling and training as their next path is determined. The Wounded Warrior Regiment provides excellent care to our Tribe of Marines. The Marine Corps League is honored to assist with and is grateful for the care our Marines are receiving (see more on page 37). Photo by Semper Fi Staff.

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Non-profit corporate and VSO Model for the League

**MARINES:** My Tour of Duty is coming to a close, and not everything on my bucket list that the League needs to accomplish will be accomplished on my tour. Setting the stage to carry on is very critical for the body and upcoming leadership. We have accomplished a lot, thanks to the leadership by many of you working with our COO and BOT. Our non-profit model for our non-profit corporation is shown; it sets the stage for the organizational chart of the MCL Military Veterans Service Organization (VSO).

The Non-Profit Corporate and VSO Model for the League

**Minimum Requirements**

1. Federal IRS
   a. Registered 501 (c)(4)
   b. Family 0955
   c. Deductibility of 1
2. Registered in State of operation
3. Everyone has a checking account and files 990s

Under the Divisions, MODD and Auxiliary are the boots on the ground working entities that carry the message and execute our Mission. We have accomplished the fiduciary responsibilities at HQ working to change operational SOPs allowing us to obtain the “GUIDESTAR RATED PLATINUM” level.

We have been working with the departments and detachments during the year, and we have found poorly administrated business practices. Some of these have resulted in legal issues and findings that need more attention. As we develop our Finance Committee recommendation on how we will handle, monitor, measure and spend our HQ assets for the future, we plan on scaling that process down to every department/detachment fiduciary operation whether they have small or large assets. Remember, all funds collected belong to the non-profit organization; they are not your individual funds even if they come from business contracts, donors or raised on the behalf of our organization to carry on the Mission. This also applies to the MODD and Auxiliary since they are part of our Parent Organization.

By the time you read this, we again will provide the IRS our Parent List of all the departments, detachments, all the MODD and Auxiliary entities which are in good standing and which will be part of our Parent Organization authorized to do business under National Marine Corps League for FY2020.

**Semper Fi!**
**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Suicide Prevention Recommendations**

In response to the letter “An Open Letter to the MCL Membership on Suicide Prevention” I have the following recommendations. First, a little bit about myself and my experiences/knowledge.

About 6 years ago I became involved with the Placer County Veterans Court as a Mentor. After about 1 year, I had a mentee call me at 0-dark early being suicidal. After about 2 hours talking him down and getting him to see a professional later that day, I realized I need more than the simple 8-hour training I was provided as part of the Veterans Court Mentor program. I did some research and found it. I called the place on a Monday morning, had an interview on Tuesday and was in training that Saturday. This was going to be about 160 hours of training at no cost to me; the only caveat is I have to volunteer 4 hours a week to answer the county crisis hotline. The request is 200 hours; this works out to be about 1 year at 4 hours a week. Like everything else I do, I jumped in feet first. Because of personal matters I stopped working the hotlines at about 350 hours. The experience and knowledge I gained while working the lines are priceless.

The problem I see with your plan and 90% of the ideas out there is people say call this number printed on the back. The Veterans Suicide Hotline phone number placed in every newspaper across the USA, with minimum size of 1/16 of a page. The last and most important is this: when you see a fellow Marine, ask him how [he’s] doing and listen to what he says. As a group we should not be whispering ideas in the dark but yelling ideas from the rooftops. This is an enormous problem that will take people who care to step forward.

No, I have not stopped working with veterans; I am still a Mentor with the Placer County Veteran Court. I am expanding. I am now working on the items I need to check off to become a Sacramento Sheriff Community Chaplain. If all works out the way I have it planned I will be in training this summer. One of the things I was doing while sitting on the hotline was reading books on crisis counseling. Every single book I found and read was about chaplains doing crisis counseling. I found and read others’ books about communication, forgiveness and the power of spoken word. Because I am too old and already have a good job, there was no way I was going to become a professional counselor. A Community Chaplain is the next best thing and, in my opinion, a better way to help people.

John Healy
Chaplain, Folsom MCL, Department 940
Chaplain, Roseville American Legion, Detachment 169

---

**Command the League in Toys for Tots Efforts**

As a life member of the Marine Corps League of Aiken, SC, I have to say that I’m sure not many people know the voluntary work they [the League members] put into making Christmas a happy holiday for children.

Having said that, I didn’t tell anyone I would write something on the League’s behalf, but they should be commended for their efforts. One of my friends of some 20 years and former neighbor, the past Commandant of the Marine Corps League of Aiken, Lane Parker, has been working hard doing the Toys for Tots for many, many years.

We just had a conversation where over 1300 kids were registered to receive gifts from Santa. The League also collected some 400 new bicycles to give as gifts for those who are less fortunate. That doesn’t include the toys that were collected through donations from good-hearted people and various stores who see the significance of giving to those who can’t afford to see their children experience a bountiful Christmas.

I won’t be shy in saying that I see my brothers in arms as heroes who still have our country and our children’s best interests at heart so when you see a Marine sporting a hat or clothing that says they are Marines, thank him or her for going above and beyond.

Gregory J. Topliff
MCL Life Member
USMC 1966-1969, 100% disabled
Vietnam veteran
Warrenville, SC

Marine Topliff,
Thank you for writing and your kudos to the Marines helping with the Toys for Tots mission. We are proud to work with the Marine Corps Reserve and Toys for Tots Foundation all across these great United States. I think most detachments are out there every year not only bringing smiles to children, but a huge relief to parents.

It surprises me when a Marine veteran calls and is not sure what to do for his children. One of the easiest and most reliable guidance is to have them get in touch with a Toys for Tots location.

Semper Fi,
Bob Borka
#EmbraceTheTribe
Tell Marines their Tribe is still there

In the last issue of Semper Fi, we spoke of suicide among our veterans. Bravo Zulu to those detachments and departments who immediately stood up and acted. As some pointed out, we don’t need to reinvent the wheel here, but we do need to tap into local resources. More progress will be made in the coming year, and it is important we reinforce our Tribe.

It is significant that transitioning Marines know their Tribe is still there for them in the civilian world. Our transition support network is growing as more detachments identify their Liaison. We each have our own transition story, and mine is not unlike yours. I had the coolest job in the world as a Marine, but I didn’t know how to express my qualifications in civilian terms. My transition was light years away from my expectations, and I didn’t know where to go or how to get there. Our Vietnam veterans did not receive a proper welcome home from the war, but they made certain that future generations receive a proper welcome. Our approach to Marine For Life should be similar.

We are continuing to work on enhancements to the League Library mcleaguelibrary.org. Please visit the site. We now have a Veterans Service Officer page as well as Helping Marines & Family page. The website should not overwhelm with information but should contain good resources for our Membership. We have also added a Travel Planner to the site mcleague.hotelplanner.com. This is primarily for individual travel but can also be used when planning large events such as a department conference.

For detachments in areas without a Young Marines unit, consider starting one. It would be great planning to check out the program and determine if you are able to start a Young Marines unit near you. The unit will absolutely make a positive difference in the lives of young Americans by teaching discipline, leadership and teamwork with a healthy dose of fun. When people in the community hear about youth mentorship, they will have their children join. You will find that often the parents served in the Marine Corps—an avenue for recruiting into the Marine Corps League. - Semper Fi!

EVENTS IN MARINE HISTORY

BY ANNETTE AMERMAN

April 1, 1936: The Division of Aviation was created at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) under the command of Col Ross E. Rowell. This elevated aviation within HQMC from the formerly “Marine Aviation Section.”

May 4, 1959: Two Marine Corps A4D-2 “Skyhawks” jets of 2d Marine Aircraft Wing flew 2,270 miles non-stop from Argentia, Newfoundland, to NAS Rota, Spain. The flight was the first of single-engine jets to cross the Atlantic using the “buddy system” of in-flight refueling.

May 6-8, 1937: Marines under the command of LtCol W.T.H. Galliford carried out rescue and riot control duties at Lakehurst, NJ, after the crash of the German airship Hindenburg.

May 18, 1984: Col Jerome G. Cooper, USMCR, was advanced to the rank of BGen Cooper and became the first black Marine general officer in the Marine Corps Reserve, only the second black Marine general officer in the Corps.

June 12, 1948: The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 authorized 100 regular Women Marine officers, 10 warrant officers and 1,000 enlisted in a gradual build-up over a 2-year period with regular candidates coming from the Reserve Women Marines.

Editor’s Note: This is not an all-inclusive list. This is a selection of events that occurred in this timeframe that our readership may find interesting.
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Our Marines serve our country with an always faithful commitment to the higher principles of duty, honor and courage. They are the few and the proud of our United States Marine Corps. Now, you can show your unwavering pride and support for the Marines, with our exclusive Women’s USMC Pride Jewelry Collection.

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This graceful oval shaped pendant is surrounded with a pavé of over 30 clear genuine Swarovski crystals. Within the oval is the USMC emblem of eagle, globe and anchor with 18K gold-plated accents. On either side of this proud symbol are two hearts—to show your love—both shimmering with Swarovski crystals, and the hearts, oval and the bail gleam with 18K gold plating. The reverse side is engraved with Semper Fi, and is finished with an 18” chain.

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☐ Women’s Embrace Ring 01-19310-001
☐ Both the Pendant and Ring 01-31876-001

Ring Size:___ (If known)

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ATTENTION ON DECK

Let the Marines Help Plan Your Trips Again

Members now have access to over 600,000 lodging options worldwide, and at rates up to 65% off or more. The Marine Corps League Travel Planner sources rates from dozens of supplier channels to bring you the best rate and terms for your hotel for your specific dates. You can also book flights and other travel services right from the site. Make the Marine Corps League Travel Planner your one-stop shop for travel and SAVE Now.

GROUPS/MEETINGS—You can get unmatched group lodging rates for weddings, reunions, team sports or any of your special events. mcleague.hotelplanner.com

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that’s available to anyone, even if you’re not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. The caring, qualified responders at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping veterans of all ages and circumstances.

- Send a text message to 838255 to connect with a VA responder.
- Start a confidential online chat session at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.
- Take a self-check quiz at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Quiz to learn whether stress and depression might be affecting you.
- Find a VA facility near you.
- Visit MilitaryCrisisLine.net if you are an active duty Service member, Guardsman or Reservist.
- Connect through chat, text or TTY if you are deaf or hard of hearing.

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Helping Veterans Learn to Shoot Again
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Story & Photography
By Rick Cicero

Impetus for Learn to Shoot Again Program

In August 2010, I lost my right arm and leg from injuries sustained in Afghanistan. Six months later, after learning to walk again, a trip to the range with my Dad rekindled my love of shooting. Over the next several years via trial and error and with guidance from other shooting professionals in the military and police, I developed new shooting techniques to work within my physical “limitations.” I was my own worst student. I knew what a proper stance and all the fundamentals should look like, I found myself shooting well, yet I would look down and see that my stance and grip were not what would traditionally be correct. That’s when I finally came to the realization that I had to learn to shoot again using different techniques to suit my abilities.

Advancements in technology, including the SIG SAUER Brace, have been instrumental in honing my skills. Each new success is built on previous successes. After attending an Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA) Family Day event, I became involved in supporting such activities. This organization created associations with other accomplished shooters such as Trevor Baucom and Chris Fleming, also injured veterans. The true success of that day was when I began taking fellow wounded veterans to the range, which was the impetus for what is now the Learn to Shoot Again program—LTSA.

Immediately following SHOT Show 2016, we assembled a team of combat veterans—most of whom sustained and recovered from major injuries including paralysis, loss of limbs and spinal injuries that would have sidelined most. With the support of the NRA and HAVA, the entire team became certified NRA Instructors. Additionally, SIG SAUER Academy has been instrumental in advancing the skills of the LTSA instructors by offering advanced pistol instructor and advanced carbine instructor courses. One of the main focuses of LTSA training is not only to perform, but to perform to the highest standards of the able-bodied shooter without any special considerations and in all environments. All of which lead to the most important benefits: teamwork, esprit de corps, return to a known work ethic, visual...
success and HAPPINESS!

LTSA has established monthly classes in Florida. Additionally, we work diligently to travel the country and bring the classes to those who will benefit from them the most. Our class format develops shooter skills to compete in pistol, carbine, 2 and 3 gun, and most recently long range.

The positive feedback within the veteran community and firearms industry has been nothing short of amazing. The industry stepped up immediately with optics provided by Leupold and SIG SAUER and rifles provided by Savage. When Kestrel offered to help, they provided directed training, products, shooting opportunities and fundraising; all of which was far beyond our expectations.

Beyond Expectations

This past April, we conducted the first full Long Range Class at the Peacemaker National Training Facility, where Katie Godfrey was a remarkable asset. Kestrel sent her with knowledge, rifles, ammo and Kestrel devices. Katie conducted her full classroom presentation followed by days on the range using the Kestrels to maximize every shot.

A unique challenge was offered to every student—those who hit a three-shot group on a Kestrel zero target at 400 yards would be given one. Even with stiff winds, every student completed the challenge and left with a Kestrel. All of these students now use the devices regularly to compete and or hunt; two of the students have become LTSA instructors.

Kestrel further surprised us by making HAVA/LTSA the benefactor of the Kestrel Challenge Precision Rifle Series (PRS) match at Peacemaker in August. Not only did Kestrel donate product, time and money, they coordinated with other industry support. Ruger donated two rifles, Leupold and Vortex donated scopes, Hornady donated ammo, and the list goes on. The funds raised from that event and match supported multiple classes for our veterans.

The greatest value of that match was to have two of our students compete and learn to be Range officers that weekend. Both Justin and Tyler have overcome significant limb and internal injuries that would have stopped most veterans. However, both of these men raised the standard by completing the match, assisting with the fundraiser and working as Range Officers for the match.

Nothing can put words to the expressions on fellow shooters’ faces when they see these men in shorts and realize the injuries that no one noticed.

The secondary benefit from that match was the number of shooters who approached us throughout the day and thanked us, not for our service, but for motivating them. We have learned the unique aspect of providing a perspective to the able-bodied shooter that they often forget: it is about the team and not the individual.

Conducting training for our veterans exposes students and staff to so much more. We have encountered and overcome different physical personal challenges I would have never expected. Each student is unique in his or her own way and identical in so many others. We all come from the military whether it is the student with one leg and only two fingers on one hand, the legally blind man who can see through a very narrow field of vision or the man who comes to class in a wheelchair.

Sasquatch, a Defined Success

The success that counts the most for me is confidence and happiness in life. The particular student who comes to mind sustained a gunshot wound in combat and has significant challenges. Unlike most, he completed his tour and was discharged without a full retirement and wanted to go on as a civilian. Unfortunately, his challenges caused him severe pain and loss of consistent ability to hold a regular job. He fell into a depression like so many and expressed to me how he felt a failure.

After attending some of our classes he became a dedicated student in every way. When he told me how much our classes improved his outlook, daily habits and overall quality of life, I was left speechless. We all have demons, and this is the best medicine for so many. Who would have thought that? In true military form we all have nicknames; his is “Sasquatch” (his profile in a shadow is priceless!). He is the great giant of our team. He was among the students in the April Long
ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

Range Class and a coach at the Long Range Class just last month. He has competed in several matches and attended the NRA Instructor course. Just last week, he put those skills to work at the HAVA Family Day in San Antonio and the three day class for our veterans in that same area.

As the “Director” of LTSA, it is not a title of management, but a title of responsibility. For students and teammates like the Squatch, the resources, tasks and organization are all worth it. The trust we have in our instructors is exceptional because they are exceptional people. Often the visual prosthetic device or chair gains attention, while others are overlooked. Sasquatch raises that bar and has volunteered to be a leader. Many of us lead in the military, but so many fail to lead in the civilian world. Sasquatch has stepped up and is the remarkable example of this program for so many to follow.

LTSA Tool Box

We create tools to maintain every aspect of our lives—the LTSA tool box is no different. As firearms have advanced over the last several years, we have taken advantage of those that are most practical. We strive to train our students with readily available items that can give them the skills to be as confident and safe as other shooters.

The first tool to provide a significant benefit was the “SIG SAUER Brace,” proving to give stability to the one-armed or impaired shooter to build long-gun skills for stance, grip, sling, balance and flexibility for various platforms and calibers from a .22 to a .300BO.

The advent of ambidextrous pistols like the new SIG SAUER P320, Smith & Wesson M&P, Glock and more are making one-handed shooting much more accessible—even for those with only a left hand or with great impairment to their right hand. Every advantage our students have helps to overcome their challenges.

Within our long range program, the benefits of left-handed bolt rifles create an option that is efficient and nothing short of a blessing. We have Savage and Remington to thank for such rifles. Even a vertical fore grip on a rifle is a huge benefit to those with prosthetic arms or limited abilities; their control improves drastically.

The Quick Clip provides multiple benefits for those with upper extremity impairments to safely change magazines, clear malfunctions or just walk while maintaining their balance. It also maintains the rifle in a safe orientation for wheelchair users while in motion. And even those with all of their appendages but who have balance issues can maintain control while walking with free arm swing.

Several other manufacturers have supported us by providing unique adaptations to firearms for better access, ergonomics and control.

As our industry develops these unique tools, our community realizes what is already available to expand their abilities. The greatest honor LTSA has is to continue to serve our country and communities through one of the best commonalities our veterans have.

Our Program is Growing

Over the last three years LTSA has trained over 300 students in classes from Florida to California and New Hampshire. We are offering classes for pistol, carbine, shotgun and even long distance rifle to 900 yards and beyond. In 2019 we will be teaching in Arizona, Florida, Maryland, West Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and more. We will also be at events like HAVA Family Days and shooting matches around the country to Coach, RO, Compete and Inspire our veteran community to get out and join us! If you are interested in attending such a class or know a veteran who could benefit from our classes please call Rick Cicero at 434-294-5883 or email at LTSA@honoredveterans.org.
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2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION

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- Historic Tour to the Trail of Lewis and Clark
- Early Bird Reception Chuckwagon Supper
- Commissioner’s Reception & Western Entertainment
- Banquet of Ribeye Steak, Walleye Fish, and Chicken

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 1ST

For event updates and contact information, check out the convention webpage at:
MCLNationalConvention2019.com
Convention Questions - 406-534-9156

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**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**  
**96th NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
Billings, Montana  
**Convention Dates:** Aug 4 — Aug 9, 2019

TO: National Credentials Committee  
VIA: Chief Operating Officer  
3619 Jefferson Davis Hwy Suite 115  
Stafford, VA 22554

SUBJ: Registration of National Delegates(s)  
REF: (a) Article 3, National MCL Bylaws.  
(b) Chapter 2, Administrative Procedures, Sect 2020 (b) — Registration

Registration to the National Convention shall be $6.00. Advance registration fees shall be $5.00 provided that such fee, accompanied by properly executed Official Credential form, is received at National Headquarters not later than fifteen (15) days prior to opening date of the National Convention.

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<th>ASSOC MBR</th>
<th>DUAL MBR</th>
<th>GUEST</th>
<th>NAME(S)</th>
<th>Include any Nat'l and Dept Officers in your detachment who are attending</th>
<th>6 Digit Membership Number (NOT PLM #)</th>
<th>ATTENDING</th>
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2. Delegate strength is based on the number of regular members on the 30 June Strength report. See ref (b), section 2025(b).  
3. Enclosed is a check/M.O. ( ) in the amount of $________ made payable to National Headquarters, MCL, to cover the registration fees of the all delegate(s), alternates & other attendees to the MCL National Convention as per by ref (b).

PRINT NAME: ______________________________          _____________       ____________________________________        _______________  
SIGN NAME: ______________________________          _____________       ____________________________________        _______________  

DETACHMENT NAME ____________________________________ Det # ________ DEPT. of ___________
Let’s have another birthday party!

“The Military Order of the Devil Dogs is the fun and honor society of the Marine Corps League.”

- From the MODD Handbook

**MARINES:** Last June we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Belleau Wood, during which the defeated German soldiers honored the Marine Corps’ ferocious fighting by naming us “Teufel Hunden,” or Devil Dogs. So I ask, do we really need to wait another 100 years to celebrate again? Woof No!!

We, as current day Devil Dogs, continue to exhibit that fighting spirit which has been displayed by all Marines over the years. While not on a battlefield, we have found new challenges within our communities that we agreed we can all get behind. One of these challenges is helping to make a difference in the lives of children. We are protectors, and we have chosen to help the children of the cities in which we gather. With this in mind, we have an opportunity to have some fun, let the public know who we are and raise some money for the children.

What I am proposing is that, in the month of June, we hold another birthday party! This time, make it an opportunity for your Pound to get together with a local group (preferably something dog-related) such as the humane society, a local dog groomer or pet store. Be creative. You can have a pet costume contest, sponsor a BBQ and take donations or whatever else your local laws will allow.

As previously stated, this gets our organization out there in the community, but it is also a way to raise money for the kids. The timing of this event is perfect for one last opportunity to raise money for the Kennel’s big donation for the children’s charity at the Supreme Growl, as the Big Bones need to be turned in before July 1.

This is an event that has the potential to be an ongoing activity that could be done each June, as well as to be a great recruiting opportunity for the MODD and the League. I hope you will give it serious consideration. You have plenty of time to make this happen. Feel free to send me your progress reports.

Keep up the good work and continue to have fun. If you have any questions or concerns, my contact information is on the Kennel website.

Semper Woof!

Chief DD Spicer and members of Pound #330 collected toys and donations for the Toys for Tots program in Cape Girardeau, MO.
Chicago – A local board-certified physician has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid.

This new hearing aid is packed with all the features of traditional hearing aids found at clinics for a mere fraction of the cost. Now most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound — in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind — without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.

FDA-Registered MDHearingAid® Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, hearing aid is the outgrowth of the technology revolution that is changing our world. While demand for new technology caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a medical-grade hearing aid remains out of reach.

The doctor knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn’t afford the expense for these new hearing aids. Generally they are not covered by Medicare and most private health insurance plans.

The doctor evaluated the high priced hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version, called the MDHearingAid, for less than $200.

The doctor, a Chicago physician, shook up the hearing aid industry with his invention of an affordable hearing aid. Now most people with hearing loss can enjoy crystal clear, natural sound at a fraction of the cost.

Use Offer Code JH49 to Get FREE Shipping and FREE Batteries for a Full Year!
“There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer.”
— Gen. James H. Doolittle

LADIES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE AUXILIARY:  As I wrote this article, west central Illinois experienced record cold weather with wind chills of 45 degrees below zero! After just a few days, we had a high temperature of 40+ degrees. I know many of you have had equally strange winter weather. By the time you read this, spring will be here!

    Hopefully, most of you were busy helping with Toys for Tots and paying visits to veterans this past winter. In December, I assisted with our local Toys for Tots program and helped host a Christmas party for Marines and FMF Corpsmen at the Illinois Veterans’ Home in Quincy, IL. It was a fun and rewarding afternoon. Our unit members also joined the local detachment in hosting Bingo at the Quincy Veterans’ Home for all residents. The veterans as well as our members always enjoy this afternoon activity.

    I would like to welcome our newest unit, the PFC Boyd A. Lewis Unit in Utah! It was such a thrill to sign their Charter, my first as your National President. Congratulations, ladies. I wish you every success. This is a good time to remind all of our members to work hard to maintain your membership in your units and to continue to recruit others who are volunteer-minded and would be assets to your units. If you don’t ask, they won’t join!

    How do Auxiliary members serve our Marine veterans? A request was made of us for help in obtaining transportation of a motorized wheelchair from the James H. Quillen VA Hospital in Johnson City, TN, to Manteno Veterans’ Home in Illinois. Kankakee (IL) Unit President and Marine Margaret “Peg” Myers put out a request on Facebook, and, in less than four days, a gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Randy Rogers, delivered the chair free of charge. What a wonderful example of an Auxiliary member reaching out to help a veteran! As thanks for Mr. Rogers’ generous act of kindness to a Marine veteran, our National Memorial Fund donated $300 to the Manteno Veterans’ Home to purchase a coat, boots and other clothing items for this veteran.

    Thank you for all you do every day for our veterans and your communities!

    Semper Fi!
A shining symbol of hard-won achievements, the Marine NCO sword is also a proud point of connection to the Marines of the past. Now The Bradford Exchange celebrates the Semper Fi spirit with the “Sword of Honor” USMC Tribute.

- Hand-cast sword is hand-finished in silver and gold-plated to recall the NCO sword’s intricate designs
- Grand 2-foot high museum-quality wall display with a rich wood-grain finish and golden Marine emblem
- The Marines’ Hymn, an inspiring quote, and artist Glenn Green’s Marine portrait complete the effect

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“The Sword of Honor” is issued in a limited edition of only 5,000 worldwide. Claim yours at four installments of $32.49 for a total of $129.99*, backed by our unconditional, 365-day money-back guarantee. Send no money now. Mail the Reservation Application today!

*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to bradfordexchange.com/use-tax
PRESIDENT, MCL FOUNDATION INC.
GREGORY HUNT

We’re here to offer a hand up, not a hand out

MARINES: As we begin to thaw out from the long, hard winter, it’s time to look around the house and our community for damages caused by the cold weather. As we know, ice and snow can cause havoc on homes. They also cause heating bills to increase. A lot of our Marines and their families may be struggling to pay those higher winter bills. Reach out to Marines and their families in your communities and vet their situations to head off problems before they receive cut-off or eviction notices. Within the past 6 months, we’ve received three requests for mortgage assistance but not until they received eviction notices or had court appearances for eviction. If we know our communities, we’ll know these Marines’ situations and help them before it’s too late.

Donations are down; we haven’t received any donations earmarked for scholarships in over 6 months. With awarding of the 2018-2019 scholarships, we’ve had to dip into reserves. If the donation level continues to decline, for the first time in over 4 years, the Foundation will have to reach into investments to cover the costs of humanitarian/disaster relief, scholarships and youth program funding. If you have begun making recurring donations, thank you, and if you haven’t made a donation in a while, please consider the MCL Foundation.

The Memorial Certificate and Challenge Coins programs continue to be our strongest funding streams and for that I thank you. Remember, the easiest way to pay honor to a fallen brother or sister is with one of the Memorial Certificates.

The Foundation has a new mailing address: Marine Corps League Foundation, PO Box 180, Franklin, NC 28744.

Let’s keep marching forward to the 2019 National Convention and maintain strong relationships with one another and our communities. Don’t forget, “We never leave a brother or sister behind.”

Semper Fi!

CEO, YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
BILL DAVIS

Let’s make 2019 as phenomenal as 2018

MARINES: Greetings! The Young Marines program has ended another phenomenal year. From events such as the National Young Marines Leadership Symposium to the countless hours of veteran appreciation events, our youth rounded off 2018 embodying our program’s values. All indications are that 2019 will be equally as fulfilling thanks to the support of our volunteers and organizations such as the Marine Corps League.

Annually, Young Marines across the country support the Marine Corps and the MCL in the Toy for Tots campaign. From collecting toys and donations to sorting the thousands of toys for distribution, the Young Marines work hand-in-hand with these organizations. In 2018, between the 264 units, the Young Marines were able to raise thousands of dollars while completing over 20,000 hours of volunteer time thanks to the nationwide support of the League.

Sadly, we have lost a few avid supporters of the Young Marines. Samuel Beamon, Sr. (an original member of the Brass City Young Marines), Daniel Long (a prominent volunteer for the East Central Alabama Young Marines) and R. Lee Ermey (the official spokesman of the Young Marines) are men who made huge impacts on our organizations and will not be forgotten.

We ended 2018 in Hawaii for the Pearl Harbor Remembrance events where we were honored to have the presence of the MCL Aloha Detachment 363 at the wreath laying ceremony at the Punchbowl National Cemetery. This was the first year that we held a joint ceremony with wreaths laid by the Young Marines, MCL Aloha Detachment 363, American Legion, and the Vietnam Veterans of America Oahu Chapter 858. The combined support of these organizations only shows how important our veterans are in influencing the younger generation to preserve history.

Our spring events included: Young Marines Public Affairs Course (February 14-17); Iwo Jima Association Symposium and Banquet (February 16); Board of Directors meeting and Mid-Winter Conference (March 2); and Annual Reunion of Honor trip to Guam and Iwo Jima (March 17-25).

We look forward to another great year working with the League and seeing you all face-to-face at the Marine Corps League National Convention in Billings, MT.

Semper Fi!
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WITH DUAL INTERIOR LOOP PANELS – AND OPTIONAL HOLSTERS

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R86500-MCL-0419
We need to be one unit, working one mission

MARINES: We are U.S. Marines, “NOT AS LEAN, NOT AS MEAN, BUT STILL UNITED STATES MARINES.” At some point in our lives we decided we wanted more, we wanted back in, we wanted to continue the legacy and traditions of the United States Marine Corps. So, we joined the Marine Corps League. Why? Because as a Marine Corps veteran’s organization it’s our mission to do just that, carry on the traditions and legacy of the Marine Corps and to assist all Marines and their families, active, reserve and veteran. Which brings me to a question, “Why are there detachments that are fighting against our mission by not wanting to bring transitioning Marines into our organization?”

We need to be one unit, working one mission. It may be done in different ways, but the mission must be the same. Ours is an open-ended mission—as long as there is a Marine Corps our mission will remain the same. We have to bring in new members, and those members will continue what we do. These transitioning Marines, no matter what age or rank, know and understand what today’s Marines want and need. It is a top priority that we adapt to new Marine veterans and not expect them to adapt to us.

We talk about the mentoring program but barely use it. Too many Marines join a detachment, sit ignored and then he/she is not seen anymore. Every new member should be assigned a current member of the detachment who stays with the new member until he/she feels comfortable, introducing them to other members and making sure they are aware of upcoming events. Keep one new member, he’ll bring in more. I realize every area is different and that some have very few if any Marine veterans; if you are in one of those areas, we have the Fire Team method, which works great in large areas (see our website). We cannot survive as an organization without new Marine veterans.

From National, departments to detachments we have to work together to make our League bigger and better. For the past few years the National Officers and staff have been working very hard to do just that, and we will continue to do so into the future. There are some detachments that insist on playing their own game outside the rules and regulations. If there are any complaints, please feel free to voice them but provide a solution to the problem.

In closing, I want to say that in my last article, I was not denouncing the VA or suggesting you go elsewhere. I was just offering other solutions and asking for awareness in regards to suicide. Semper Fi!

“All they needed to do was make me feel ... welcome”

MARINES: New membership and retention continue to be our primary focus. To continue our growth, we must seek out and embrace new members. Once we have those new members, we must strive to keep them in the League. The following is just one scenario that I have heard too often.

“I’m the Marine who asked to join the Marine Corps League. I’m the Marine who paid his dues to join. I’m the Marine who stood up in front of all of you and promised to be faithful and loyal. I’m the Marine who came to your meetings and no one paid any attention to. I tried several times to be friendly to some other Marines, but they all had their own buddies they talked to and sat next to.

I sat down several times, but no one paid any attention to me. I hoped very much that somebody would have asked me to take part in a fundraising project or something, but no one saw my efforts when I volunteered.

I missed a few meetings after joining because I was sick and couldn’t be there. No one asked me at the next meeting where I had been. I guess it didn’t matter very much to the others whether I was there or not. The next meeting, I decided to stay home and watch TV. The following meeting that I attended, no one asked me where I was when the last meeting was held.

You might say I’m a good Marine, a good family man who holds a responsible job, loves his community and his country. You know what else I am? I’m the Marine who never came back.

It amuses me when I think back on how the leadership of the detachment and the members were discussing why the detachment was losing members. It amuses me now to think that they spent so much time looking for new members when I was there all the time. All they needed to do was make me feel needed, wanted and welcome!”

—Author unknown

Marines, how does your detachment embrace your new members? How do you get them involved and motivated to stay with the League? The above letter was from an “unknown author,” but it can happen to any of us if we become complacent. It’s a challenging task, but it is the responsibility of the leadership of our detachments to ensure that all members feel welcome and useful. The challenge is yours, will you accept?

Semper Fi!
This is the time for learning

MARINES: Our League is now in the season of department and Division Conferences throughout the country. This is the opportunity for our new members to learn what it means to be a League member; camaraderie is first and foremost.

This is also the time for learning. The easiest way to run a detachment is to follow the National Bylaws and Procedures. Don’t deviate. In the long run, following our rules makes it easy for everyone. Those detachments that report, “We don’t do that in our detachment,” eventually wind up having problems. Deviations, once begun, tend to increase, and this usually is not a positive growth.

When detachments are installed the leaders are asked to lead to the best of their ability for the detachment and their community, but the membership is also asked to step up and support the detachment’s efforts. The most productive and fun detachments are the ones that have many hands participating. These are the detachments that do not have need of chapter nine proceedings. The Gung-Ho spirit of working together is in our DNA.

A few departments have had questions related to detachments not being up-to-date with such things as Reports of Installations and/or with their annual filings to the IRS. These are two of the more important requirements that must be maintained to remain as a viable MCL detachment. I would ask that the detachments police themselves first with these matters. If you are not in compliance, work to get there immediately. Eventually, whatever has been amiss will come out into the light of day. If you are not sure how to go about fixing a problem, please contact us. Problems can be fixed. In some cases the reason for noncompliance is just that there is no one left to take responsibility, and in this case the detachment will be required to turn in their charter. Fortunately, when one window closes another one opens. We are continuing to grow nationwide.

Enjoy your conferences and conventions. I hope to see all of you in Billings in August.

Semper Fi!
No MCL member is better than any other

MARINES: Wow! Where has all the time gone? When you read this the National Mid-Winter Conference in Fredericksburg, VA, will have passed; a great time was had by all, and the Central Division Conference in Rock Island, IL, was a huge success. Next we are all looking forward to our Department Conventions and then the National Convention in Billings, MT.

For those who have known me for a while you know that my wife Wendy is also a Marine and has been our Detachment Commandant and also our Department of Michigan Commandant; I have to say she did a great job while holding those positions. One of the things I want to talk about in this article is something I read back in January as it upset me that there are some with this attitude. A Corpsman asked the question on one of the many Marine Corps League social media Facebook pages, “Can a Navy Corpsman hold the Commandant’s job?” Of course, the majority of us answered correctly and said, “Yes, as long as you are a regular member then you can hold that position.” Here comes the part that upset me: A Marine said “NO,” and when asked why, he said, “Because they’re medical and not tactical.” WHAT?!!! Of course, plenty of League members straightened this Marine out and even posted the Bylaw that states that Corpsmen and Chaplains who served in FMF units are regular members and can hold elected positions.

If you have members in your detachments who think one type of member is better than another type of member, just remember this: We all went to boot camp whether it was San Diego, Parris Island, Montford Point or wherever you called boot camp. No regular member is better than the other and shouldn’t be denied a position in your detachments that they can rightfully hold per the National Bylaws.

Lastly, be ready for huge changes soon with the new database. At the Mid-Winter Conference we had some classes, and hopefully the departments and detachments will have access soon as long as the beta testing goes according to plans.

Just remember! Put your hand out to fellow Marines, Corpsmen and Navy Chaplains, explain to them what you do in your detachments and ask them to join you to help not only veterans but your communities so they know who the Marine Corps League is.

Semper Fi!

Thanks to every detachment for its constant hard work

MARINES: Springtime is a busy time for our Division! All of our department conventions take place between May and June, as well as our Division Conference hosted in Princeton, WV, on June 21-23. All of the conference information has been published, and I expect this to be one of the most attended conferences we’ve had.

Our Division is growing; specifically in West Virginia! The Sgt Mecot Camara Detachment 1461 was officially chartered on December 15, 2018. This is West Virginia’s 14th detachment! My congratulations to newly elected Detachment Commandant, Danny Yancey, as he and his staff mold and grow this new detachment to accomplish the League’s mission.

I have reviewed the recently published December 2018 Division roster. I’m very excited to see how our Division has stepped up and continues to work on achieving a Target Zero unpaid status. My thanks to every detachment for its constant hard work and diligence to make this happen. Remember, every annual-paying member’s dues must be submitted to National no later than September 1 of each year. To ensure your membership shows “current” on the annual September roster, always pay your dues prior to the annual National Convention, keeping in mind that you can certainly pay earlier in the year as well.

Our national Marine For Life (M4L) program, headed by David Ossian, has really taken off over the past several months. All of our departments have appointed M4L Liaisons, and Mike Lynon (Dept. of WV) has been recently appointed as the Division Liaison for this program. The majority of our detachments are onboard with representatives, as well. I am excited to know that the Mideast Division is ready to assist all of our transitioning Marines to civilian life. This in turn helps the detachments and Division grow by recruiting these newly separated Marines.

"Thank You" to the Department of South Carolina of the Southeast Division. North Carolina suffered East Coast damage due to the hurricanes that occurred in 2018. South Carolina provided monetary support to both the department and the Pack. This generosity is appreciated by North Carolina and by the whole Mideast Division.

Take care of yourselves and each other, and let’s always keep our overseas Marines and Corpsmen in our thoughts and prayers.

Semper Fi!
**Time to advance the Marine Corps’ goals**

**MARINES:** Now that the Mid-Winter Conference is complete, it’s time for all members to advance the Marine Corps’ goals. As you are aware, the SOP was released during the Mid-Winter Conference for funeral detail. T.J. Morgan, National Vice Commandant of the Northwest Division, did an outstanding job in gathering information and writing the SOP. Detachments that have a detail now will have the official uniform and training requirements available to properly follow procedures during funeral detail. The main items are the uniform requirements and the section on how to conduct the service.

The Midwest Division Mid-Winter report, with three of seven departments responding, stated a total of 601 Funeral Honors for 2018. The Department of Missouri reported that it conducted a total of 9,087 funerals, a total of 474 for 2018, since the initiation of the department’s Funeral Honor program. St. Louis Detachment 183 performed 217 Funeral Honors during 2018 and reported a total of 8,660 for all veterans since initiation of the program. OUTSTANDING!

Jan Denney, Past Department of Kansas Commandant, Tri-Rivers Detachment 730 initiated a new program, Kansas Veterans Project, Inc. (KVP, Inc.; kansasveteransproject.org), a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) that provides the necessary items for military veterans to transition from homelessness to living in housing provided by the HUD-VASH voucher program. Veterans must be honorably discharged, be enrolled in the Veterans Affairs system and meet the government’s definition of “homeless.” Since June 2018 the program has provided assistance to nine veterans including providing them new beds and bedding, household furniture, kitchenware, personal care items and $100 gift cards for food.

It will soon be time for department conferences and election of officers. Hopefully a good number of members will come forward with the desire to assist their detachment and departments with new ideas on how to recruit and retain members, assist their Marine For Life representatives in maintaining a healthy relationship with the League and assist young Marines who for whatever reason chose to leave the Corps after one tour. Remember once a Marine, always a Marine.  

*Semper Fi!*

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**We need inspiration to fire-up that Esprit De Corps**

**MARINES:** We have started 2019 on solid ground with positive gains as 2018 ended and 2019 began. Toys for Tots had another successful season, with Marines working within the community helping to bring smiles to children during the holidays. Marines, if you have not taken part in this program, I challenge you to do so next year. It is extremely humbling and rewarding to give back in this way. Our collaborative work on this program with the Marine Corps Reserve is another tool to keep people aware that the Marine Corps League is out there to help!

The Mid-Winter Conference has passed, but the motivation carries over as we get ready for the National Convention in Billings, MT, this summer. August will be here before we know it, and we have a lot of work before us. As General Neller enters his last year as Commandant of the Marine Corps, we continue to work hard under his incredible leadership.

Once again I would like to highlight the “Marine For Life Network” which helps Marines connect to resources as they transition to civilian life. This program is connected nationally, and its sole purpose is to help our own. We need to continue to strengthen our camaraderie among Marines and be there for our brothers coming home! We stood on the same yellow foot prints, we took the same oath, and we must continue to mentor to those transitioning to civilian life.

The League is maintaining its membership, but we are looking forward with a serious eye to what our future holds. Our senior officers hold a wealth of knowledge, and we need to ensure this information is passed down to carry on the strength of the MCL. We need to challenge ourselves to step up and allow the older generation to pass on their knowledge so that the younger generation can wisely lead and ensure the Marine Corps League will persevere and remain strong in the future.

In New England, the Quad State Convention was held in New Hampshire with a great turn out. We are looking forward to the Department of Massachusetts Convention, May 30 to June 2 located at the Doubletree in Hyannis, MA, and the Department of Connecticut Convention the following weekend. Please check out the Massachusetts Department’s website: [mcldepofmassachusetts.com](http://mcldepofmassachusetts.com) as well as the New England Division’s site: [mcinivedision.com](http://mcinivedision.com).  

*Semper Fi!*
DIVISION REPORTS

We have an obligation to do the right thing

MARINES: Our rosters came out in January as promised, and the Northeast Division has about 91% of its members renewed. Our Department Commandants will be reaching out to detachments to get that number up. Membership is our life-blood and shows our support for the many programs that our League participates in.

Two very important programs will have been highlighted at this year’s National Mid-Winter Conference in March. The Military Funeral Honors and Marine For Life Programs. Both help to bridge the gap between the Marine Corps and our League. As I’ve written before, the Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps are very interested in our progress. We cannot and will not let them down.

Our Division Conference was held April 4-5 in Binghamton, NY, and at this writing, looked to be a good one. We will have National Staff on hand as well as a few Marines running for National Office in August to hear their vision of where we need to go as a League and what they plan on doing.

The department conventions and membership meetings are all posted on our website, nedmcl.org. The Membership meetings are intended for all members and give each of us a say in what we do and a chance to hear firsthand what is going on in our department.

Social media continues to be a challenge for units. Once posted, it’s out there for all to see. We must be in proper uniform for any pictures and stay away from politics or controversial issues that could discredit our League. As leaders at the detachment, department, Division and National levels we have a fiduciary obligation to do the right thing.

Spring is always a rebirth and a chance to grow our League with parades and events that honor our military. Look your best, take part in our communities—people are watching.

Semper Fi!

Marine For Life Network is vital to Marines EAS

MARINES: Hello Spring! It’s almost time to say, “Welcome to Billings, Montana!” The Mid-Winter Conference is finished, and the Northwest Division’s department conventions are under way or completed. I will be the guest speaker again at the Department of Idaho convention. Not sure if I was that good last year or you couldn’t find anyone else! We will have a great time regardless!

We are also ushering in a few new Department Commandants here in the Northwest. I wish you all the best, and we will work together to make our Division grow.

Part of some new duties I have taken on at the national level is the Marine For Life (M4L) program (usmc-mccs.org). This is a vital piece to Marines EAS and getting them the resources they need at the local level. This means housing, employment and education. We are working closely with the Marine Corps and are there to assist in any way possible. The Division has one Liaison, and each department and detachment also has a Liaison. Get to know all your resources in your area and don’t forget to take a look at what Dave Ossian has put together to assist you all in the M4L program on the National website (mclnational.org) and in the library.

We will again host the Northwest Division Conference in Spokane, WA, September 13-14. Last year our attendance was down, so again this is an open invitation to come and check it out. It’s just after the National Convention so most of the information is hot off the press!

Lastly for all of the Funeral Honor Guard members, SOP-10 is in the library, and has some great information on it. It was a very long process and a hard one to find a standard for the entire League. I ask that everyone look at it and apply it to your detail. We are there for the veterans and their families. The way you present yourself will be a special memory for them. Be humble and professional and be proud of the job you do.

Semper Fi!
Convention and conference planning underway

**MARINES:** In every detachment I have ever belonged to, no matter how many members, there were six or seven members who did all the work. This isn’t a Marine Corps League exclusive. I belong to many other veteran service organizations, and it’s the same in all of them. This is a problem with not only committees but also with members willing to run for elected offices and volunteering for appointed offices. One thing we can do is welcome new members and put them to work. The sooner they become involved the more likely they are to stay active.

In the Rocky Mountain Division, the departments are planning their conventions which start in April. I’m looking forward to attending them all to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. I would encourage all members of the Division to visit other departments’ conventions to learn what’s going on with our brothers and sisters in neighboring states and exchange ideas. The Division conference will be hosted by the Department of Colorado in conjunction with their department convention in Greeley, CO, the first weekend in May. Please visit the Department of Colorado’s website, mclco.org, for details. It’s important for all departments to attend since you’ll be electing a new National Vice Commandant and an Assistant National Vice Commandant to a 2-year term. I explained when I was elected that I would only serve one term in office, and the end of my term is in August at the National Convention in Billings, MT. I’d like to see a good representation from this Division since it’s so close to our homes.

I’ll take this time to thank all of you for your support during my tenure. I won’t name all of you individually because I’m sure to miss someone, but I’d like to thank all the Department Commandants and my aide de camps for all their work to get me information and help me pass it on. I would also like to thank my assistant for all he’s done; I’m sure he will be a very successful National Vice Commandant. I encourage anyone who’s interested in National Office to attend the Division conference and throw his hat in the ring. I’ve learned more in the last 2 years about how the League works than in all the years prior. Please continue to support your Division National Vice and continue to grow. *Semper Fi!*

It is Springtime … we’re headed into our busiest time

**MARINES:** There is always much activity in our detachments and departments during the spring months. Elections are held, and with warmer temperatures, we can get out to work on fundraisers and recruiting new members. The membership year for annual dues ends August 31, so it’s not too early to start collecting and transmitting the 2019-2020 annual dues. Please continue to contact any members who are in arrears on their 2018 dues. We don’t want to lose any of them. My sincere thanks go out to the detachments that are at 100% paid.

Speaking of elections, I’m very thankful for our Department Commandants and their staffs who have served the Southeast Division this past year. Each has done a fine job assisting the Division. I will be attending most of the department conventions of the Southeast Division this year. I look forward to meeting, and in some cases installing, the newly elected officers. I hope that all the department conventions will have strong member and Detachment Officer participation.

As mentioned in my last column, Florida was hit by a devastating hurricane on October 10, 2018. Hurricane Michael was reportedly the third most powerful hurricane in recorded hurricane history to hit the U.S. Some areas of the Florida panhandle still look today as they did the day after the hurricane came through. The Department of Florida is assessing the needs of our Marines in that area.

Finally, our younger Marines use social media much more than those of us over 60. One article on the internet states there are 57 social media platforms that everyone should know, so most of us may want to investigate a few of those. Using social media for recruiting members, announcing meetings/civic activities, discussing USMC history or keeping in touch with fellow members are good uses of social media, and it may be one of the best ways of connecting with younger potential members. Social media should never be used by any member to publicly discuss the private business of the League, such as finances or personal disagreements.

*Semper Fi!*
DIVISION REPORTS

Membership continues to improve in the Division!

We cannot afford complacency and lack of leadership

Johnny R. Gothard
NVC, Southern Division

Bill Ebright
NVC, Southwest Division

MARINES: Department of Arkansas held their Winter Conference in Conway, AR, January 19, 2019, hosted by Dale W. Langford Detachment 1323. Their new Bylaws were presented for review by the membership for consideration and corrections and to be voted on in June at the department’s 2019 Convention.

I would like to welcome and congratulate a new detachment in the Department of Texas; the Lake Ray Hubbard Detachment 1465 was charted on Saturday, January 26, in Rowlett, TX. I was not able to attend because of a conflicting engagement; however, the Assistant National Vice Commandant David Niemann and National aide-de-camp Lonnie Young attended.

By the printing of this article, the Southern Division Conference will have been held March 21-23 in Lawton/Fort Sill, OK, hosted by the Boomer Detachment 1288. I hope you all enjoyed your time there. The National Mid-Winter Conference will also have taken place February 28–March 2, 2019, in Fredericksburg, VA. A report on these events will be included in my next article.

Membership continues to improve in the Division; judging by the December 2018 Rosters there have been noticeable improvements in Oklahoma—good job Marines! Arkansas and Texas have shown some improvement also! A job well done everyone! Please keep up the good work.

I would like to say at this time it has been a high Honor and challenging to serve as your Southern National Vice Commandant these past two years and that I am seeking re-election for a second and final term in this Office serving the Marines Auxiliary and Associate. There are many more things I would like to see done in a second term and a few that I have seen started and would like to help become reality. I would hope I have earned your respect and trust and would appreciate your support.

Semper Fi!

Bill Ebright
NVC, Southwest Division

MARINES: By the time you read this article Marine Expo West and the Mid-Winter Conference will be history. We now look forward to our Southwest Division meeting and the 2019 National Convention in August in Billings, MT.

I am pleased to announce the scheduling of the Southwest Division Meeting in Henderson, NV, April 26 and 27, 2019. Our hotel, the Eastside Cannery, is providing members with a favorable rate of $89.99 per night. To get this rate tell them you are an MCL member. Devil Dogs, be aware that there will be a Growl on April 26 evening at 7:00pm hosted by the Arizona Pack. Be sure to view the announcement flyer on the Southwest Division’s website: mclswdivision.org

All Detachment Commandants and Judge Advocates should be aware that the revised Bylaws and Administrative Procedures passed. These are available on the National website. Click on the Library section and scroll down to see them. National Judge Advocate Warren C. Griffin asks that all detachments make sure that their Detachment Bylaws are in compliance with National’s. Please review and make any required changes. When your review and changes are made and voted on by members, please send a copy of your Bylaws to your Department Judge Advocate for review.

“Once A Marine Always A Marine,” is MajGen John A. Lejeune’s inspired motto we proudly repeat. This leads into the important topic of the Marine For Life (M4L) program that connects transitioning Marines and their families to education resources, employment opportunities and other veterans’ services. The last edition of Semper Fi magazine shows the importance being placed on this program. On page 36, Junior Past Commandant Richard Gore informs us that Marine Corps Commandant General Neller and our Commandant Wendell Webb have weekly discussions on ways to make Marine For Life benefit all Marines, active duty and separated. Thus, it’s important that each detachment have an M4L coordinator, one devoted to carrying out the important mission of Marine For Life.

Finally, Assistant Southwest Division Commandant Pat Connell and I remind all members of the dedication to duty required of all Detachment and Department Officers. Just as when we served as active duty Marines we could not afford complacency and lack of leadership, so too, serving as MCL Officers we must be mindful of the leadership responsibility to our brother and sister Marines and our League. Therefore, we urge members not to run for any office without a resolute desire to benefit their detachment, their department and the League or without a determination to act as leaders.

Semper Fi!
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Captain William (Billy) Vaughan, a native of Pocahontas, Arkansas, retired from the Marine Corps in May 2010 after 21 years of service, including 11 years as an enlisted man. He deployed six times, three of which were combat tours including Operation Desert Shield/Storm and the Battle of Fallujah, Iraq in 2004. His awards include the Navy Commendation Medal with “V” and the Navy Achievement Medal with “V.”

After retirement, Billy attended seminary and focused on pastoral care and counseling. For the last 8 years he has served people struggling from the effects of trauma, addiction, homelessness and mental illness. During that time, he served as a chaplain on Skid Row in Los Angeles. That experience was very formative and com-
pelled him and his wife, April, to buy a farm in Arkansas and start a non-profit called The Sanctuary Farm & Rest House (sanctuaryfarm.org). They plan to grow and sell organic farm products, have therapy animals and help rehabilitate men and women who have experienced trauma by teaching them organic farming and other self-supportive skills. They hope to welcome their first guests in 2019.

David Ossian: Your first step after the Corps was seminary. What guided you towards serving others?

Billy Vaughan: I suppose I have always been drawn to helping others. As a teenager I helped a stranger who was having car trouble, and I wasn’t sure I would be able to get his car going. I went home to get more tools and asked my mom if he could stay the night if I wasn’t able to fix his car. We did get it going, and he was able to make it home. Looking back, that probably wasn’t a very wise decision to invite a complete stranger into our home, but I was compelled to help him. For me, it originates from taking the teachings of Jesus very seriously. Jesus claimed the world would be able to identify his followers based on how they loved each other, and he encouraged his followers to love strangers and even enemies. I take his words very seriously and try to love whoever I come into contact with. That includes people who may look, talk and believe differently than me. That includes people from different countries with different ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. That includes people who have been through the ringer and have come out the other side with the very life squeezed out of them (haven’t we all been there?). And it even includes people I might not naturally get along with. Jesus’ teachings press me to love when it’s difficult. In fact, he said that is kind of what makes love valuable—to love those who cannot necessarily love me back. That is how I try to serve on a daily basis.

DO: Why did you choose this direction in your life?

BV: In almost every stage of my life, I have seen people make poor decisions because they lacked options, opportunity and education. Growing up I saw people caught in the cycle of poverty, not seeing any way out. As a Marine, I saw people in other countries choose poorly because they lacked the opportunities that Americans have. On Skid Row I saw people choose to remain in their addiction and state of homelessness because of past trauma, mental illness and an inability to break powerful cultural cycles. In prison where I volunteer once a week, I see a high rate of recidivism because of lack of education. With veterans, my experience is that many who need help choose not to get help because they feel isolated and alone after getting out of the military. They are missing the camaraderie they once had in the military and cannot find anywhere else. It seems there is a common thread among these groups of people—strong community is helpful in cultivating connection with options, opportunity and education. That is what I want the farm to be—a place where people can experience community and feel supported in moving forward in their lives, whatever that may look like.

DO: Can you share a Marine Corps story that led you to become the kind of leader you are?

BV: I had a blessed experience in bootcamp. My Senior Drill
Instructor talked to us often about leadership. He talked to our Platoon about serving and not taking advantage of your position of authority. And not only did he speak plainly about this, he led that way and trained the Junior Drill Instructors to lead this way—sometimes for us to witness. I’m grateful from early on to have leaders like that who set the example, even when the situation was hard. Not just talk. This helped guide me through more challenging times when the waters were murkier and doing the right thing wasn’t quite as clear. That early experience, and others, eventually led me to pursue becoming a Marine Officer. I felt if I could lead Marines well and they responded to me positively, I could contribute more by being an Officer.

DO: Can you speak to experiences that lead you to continue on a path of service?

BV: It definitely originates from how I was raised, from many experiences as a Marine and specifically when I was a Lt. I served with three other Platoon Commanders for two deployments, including the Iraq Invasion in 2003. We became very close and continue to be to this day. Those Marines are all still serving in different capacities outside the Corps, and they continue to encourage me to serve in ways specific to who I am and the need around me. My relationship with them continues to cultivate a longing in me for what the American Christian Church should and could do better—an environment that encourages people to explore how they can lead, grow and create together based on who they are, their gifts and the needs around them. These Marines and I continue to check in with one another and encourage each other, and we’d do anything to help each other. I really value their friendships and support, and I have found that type of support to be integral in serving others long-term. Without support, the burnout rate is high. It isn’t very helpful to become a casualty while helping the wounded.

DO: Tell me about the Veteran Farmer Training Program?

BV: It’s a program aimed at veterans who would like to transition to organic farming and focuses on vegetable production, working with animals, compost and many other areas of farming. I went there mainly to learn about treatment-free beekeeping and vegetable farming, which I got a lot of in the two months I was there. And I was able to bring back some bees with me that are alive and well in my backyard. I also brought back a chicken named Miss Elly, but perhaps that’s a story we can talk about later. If you want to learn more (and see my ugly mug on the webpage), you can go here: rodaleinstitute.org/education/training-programs/veteran-farmer-training

DO: How can the Sanctuary Farm & Rest House help veterans?

BV: I learned many valuable lessons during my time in combat, and one of the most valuable was the necessity to be flexible in rapidly changing environments. I relearned this lesson—to some degree the hard way—when I returned to Iraq in 2004 and found that fighting an insurgency is very different than fighting the conventional force of the previous year. I had to relearn what success meant because it looked very differently than it did during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. That lesson continues to serve me when working with people who have experienced the effects of trauma, addiction, mental illness and homelessness. Helping people who have suffered does not mean their lives have to look like mine or some other picture. Helping involves creating space for them to learn, grow and improve in ways they want to. Progress can be painstakingly slow, sometimes unnoticeable and elusive. But success can happen—you just have to look for it differently and possibly change your mind about what it looks like.

By coming to our farm, veterans could work in whatever capacity they can handle and benefit from being outside. With time to think and process both what they are learning and also past experiences, they can form new bonds with fellow workers and animals. I have lots of experience with creating spaces for people to share without condemnation. I have observed that people can heal from sharing their stories in safe environments, and I enjoy hearing peoples’ stories.

DO: Do veterans have to have training prior to coming there? How do they apply or get more information?

BV: No prior training is required, just a willingness and openness to learn. They can email me for an application at: billy@sanctaryfarm.org

Personally, I love a challenge. Farming is one of the most daunting challenges I have faced—there is so much to learn that it can be overwhelming. Also, I love to cheer people on. When I was a brand-new Second Lieutenant at The Basic School, my Staff Platoon Commander called me a cheerleader because I made up songs about people to encourage them and sounded reveille in the field in creative, funny ways. I’m not sure he meant it as a compliment, but I took it as one—I like rooting for people!

DO: How does farming aid PTS?

BV: There is some strong evidence that being in peaceful environments outdoors can improve the effects of trauma. I am interested in how farming can improve creativity, which I think can reduce depression, anxiety and other negative effects of trauma. In Florence Williams’ book, The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative, she says the threshold for boosting creativity is seven outdoor sessions a month, with each session lasting at least 30 minutes. I think a person can benefit from being outside every day, and tending to animals while bonding with them and other people can also be helpful. Simply put, I want the farm to be a safe place to land for people who need a respite.

DO: Looking at the different ways you have chosen to help others, would you say that you are in favor of integrated treatments for Mental Health?

BV: Integration is important because we are complex beings. We function on different levels—spiritual, physical, emotional and relational. It’s important to pay attention to our different layers. Exposing people to integrative treatments can lead to deeper healing. Not necessarily faster—if we move through the healing process too quickly, it could mean we simply are covering something up so we don’t have to deal with it. If this is the case, we may be triggered later on when we’re not expecting it. These unexpected symptoms can lead to coping in unhealthy ways, which can then lead to addiction, depression and other problems. It is no secret that suicide is an immense problem among veterans. From my experience, there are many factors to a person becoming suicidal—mental illness, coping in negative ways and self-critical thought patterns are the ones I’ve seen the most. I believe integrated treatments are among the best ways to break these dangerous and tragic cycles.

DO: You have helped so many different kinds of people.

FROM THE DESK OF BILLY WATSON
Do you find yourself having a deeper connection when you are helping veterans?

BV: I do feel a deep connection with veterans—those I have served with and the ones I randomly meet now. I still get calls from Marines who served under my command—sometimes to catch up, sometimes for advice, sometimes just to vent. As an Officer, I felt my prior service as an enlisted Marine gave me credibility when working with younger Marines. But that credibility would only last so long if I didn’t genuinely care for them and listen to them. I believed I could learn from my Marines because their perspectives were usually different than mine. They could problem-solve in different (and often better) ways because of their experiences and perceptions—it was my job to create space for them to engage their intellects to deal with problems and make decisions. Whether working with veterans or with people struggling with addiction or even in the prisons working with the inmates, this is what I try to do. I’m not trying to be the Bible answer man when I teach, because I’ve found I learn about God in new and profound ways when I listen to people. Their experiences often are so very different from mine, and sometimes their experience of God is quite astounding. That’s why I like to hear people’s stories—you can learn so much when you listen to someone’s story.

DO: What’s next for you, Sir? Perhaps leading a church?

BV: I have preached quite a bit during and after seminary, but being a full-time Pastor of a church is just not a good fit for me. In fact, my doctoral project is an examination of how recovery communities (specifically ones that are 12-Step-based) are addressing some of the real problems in our culture in ways the American Church should be but has been falling short. This has just been my experience and over again within the cultural Christianity that is prevalent in America. And that statement—that the American Church has been falling short—will be rejected by some, but others know exactly what I’m talking about. So, continuing to develop and run the farm is my priority, along with working on a way to eventually turn it over. My wife and I have talked about creating an environment that’s not solely dependent on our personalities. We’ve seen where a church loses its Pastor who might have been the heart and soul, the life blood of the church and then the church struggles because it was tied too closely to that individual and the way they led. I want to approach it more like the Marine Corps model where a unit will take on the persona of the Commander to some degree, but if something happens, or it is time for that Commander to move on, the next Commander takes over typically without the unit skipping a beat. This is something I really took away from the Marine Corps. As a leader, you never want to be that single point of failure. When you are, there is a high probability that many people will get hurt, and mission accomplishment will suffer. Yes, I still try to balance troop welfare with mission accomplishment. I was taught that any good Marine should. $F

Author’s Notes

Tragically the suicide numbers are at a 10-year high. We must increase our efforts to develop new treatments and share information on current modalities that are available to our veterans. Certainly, there is no “magic pill” that will work for every case. Stories like Captain Vaughan’s must be shared. This Marine stepped out on faith and is making a difference. It’s imperative that more of us follow his example. For more information on programs to assist Marines and their families please visit our National website: mcleaguelibrary.org/helping-marines-family
Becoming an officer doesn’t mean becoming a dictator

MARINES: What I am going to discuss in this article is a subject that everyone in the League should read and take to heart for the future of the organization. This is the time of year when election of officers takes place and your decisions in this respect affect the future of your detachments and departments for the next year, and sometimes even longer.

It has been brought to my attention, in several instances, that some of the elected officers are of the opinion that once the oath is taken that gives them free rein to start the dictatorial process which they wish to impose upon their Marines who elected them. As I have stated numerous times, there is no “I” in the word “team.” You were chosen to work together with the entire membership, not just your cadre, to fulfill the wishes of the membership. Our members are mostly composed of fellow Marines who endured the same hardships as we all did to be among the best and recognized as such. Don’t try to destroy their pride to make you feel good. Every member has a right to voice an opinion and a vote will decide the decisions made.

Further, all meetings are to be conducted according to the Bylaws as established and voted upon at the National Convention by the membership in attendance at that Convention after debate and amendments are held and a majority vote accepts or declines. These then become the format upon which your meetings are conducted; not interjecting your own rules and policies. Members expect to come to our meetings and have uniformity and a feeling of well-being prevail. Dissension and bad feelings at meetings will destroy any organization unless you have fair and equal leadership. The idea is to strengthen your detachment or department, not destroy it.

My suggestion to all is to read the National Bylaws and understand them; only then will you understand what makes our League a success. It is the TEAM, not the individual who is on a power trip. What destroys unity is when one, and then more individuals, break away from the majority to have a controlling group and not be TEAM players. Be careful of your choices and vote wisely. If unhappy with your selections read your Bylaws; there are ways to make corrections. Hopefully, you don’t have to use such a method to get good leadership. Everyone, including Associate Members, has the right to seek out new members to make our membership stronger so we can become the organization we deserve to be.

I also want to thank Commandant Neller for his successful tour and wish him, “Fair winds and following seas” on a job well done. Enjoy your retirement; I enjoyed our 2 years working together. Semper Fi!

UPCOMING TOURS

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MCL Visits Wounded Warrior Battalion West Facility, February 2019

The statue in front of Wounded Warrior Battalion West Facility honoring the iconic Fallujah photo (by Lucian Read) was sculpted by Gold Star dad, Navy Vietnam veteran John Phelps.

MajGen Regner and National Commandant Webb speaking with Dr. Patricia Gerbarg from Breath-Body-Mind.

State-of-the-art rehabilitation facility and grounds.

Wounded Warrior Battalion West Facility, Camp Pendleton, CA.
The Making of a Marine

Hershel W. Williams

An Essay by Isabelle Bechtel

As the Marine amphibious assault vehicles climbed the ashy, sulfuric sands, they were mowed down by the Japanese forces who were contained within an intricate underground tunnel system, safe from the American air support. As described by Ralph Wilcox, retired Marine and World War II veteran, “The landings were the most memorable. Being sent out from the back of the ship into huge waves that would soak everyone and everything inside, all the while, being fired at by the enemy.” At the end of the first day of the Iwo Jima invasion, over 5,000 Marines were killed.

Just a few short months before, a dark-haired, blue-eyed junior Marine, known to his superiors as “Corporal,” but to his peers as Hershel “Woody” Williams, maintained his combat training on recently captured Guam. The first time this young Corporal had seen action was on Guam, which he would later describe as the most challenging aspect of his military experience, “scaring him beyond explanation.” He would go on to board a ship, and it was on this ship he discovered that he and his company were being sent to Iwo Jima. From the troops’ perspective, the fighting that was going to take place was expected. They knew what was coming and did not seek to differentiate between the two.

Hershel W. Williams was born on a dairy farm in Quiet Dell, WV, on October 2, 1923. Williams described himself as being a “shy, bashful boy, with very little self-confidence,” so shy, in fact, that in elementary school, he had difficulties getting to know other students. When Williams was 11 years old, his “father died of a heart attack. He absolutely worked himself to death. He was running a dairy farm, dawn to dusk, with 35 dairy cows, which provided our living.” Williams described “seldom ever getting to town. We’d get to go to town in the winter, when the crops were in, for a movie or a hot dog.” In his teenage years, Williams recalled having two major influences, law enforcement and his older brother. Law enforcement stood out in the community, and he could always rely on them to be his protectors. He was especially inspired by his older brother by two years, who was “determined and could always finish what he set his mind to.”

“I did not plan to be in the military, a country boy on a farm, with no previous military influence. But when our country was threatened by someone I had never heard of, I was determined to defend my freedom and country.” When Williams decided to enlist, he was majorly influenced by the Marine Corps Dress Blues. He laughed a little as he said, “There was a kid in my town who joined the Marines, and when he came home, he always looked so neat and squared away, and I thought to myself, I want to look like that.” When Williams originally attempted to enlist as an adult, he was denied because he only stood as 5’6” tall, which at the time, was considered too short for active duty.

Later, when the military lowered their height standards, Williams successfully enlisted in the Marine Corps. He was sent to San Diego, CA, to receive recruit training, in which all Marines were trained in being riflemen, despite their designated military occupational specialty (MOS). Soon after finishing basic recruit training, Williams was assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division at Guadalcanal. He was later assigned to Headquarters Company and saw his first action in Guam.

After Guam, his unit was assigned to be backup ground support on Iwo Jima. Their mission was Operation Detachment: to capture the entire island, including three Japanese controlled airfields, and to provide a staging area for attacks that were to be made on the Japanese mainland. With his flamethrower, a 75-pound piece of equipment equivalent to half of his own body weight strapped to his back, he began to move across the Japanese “BB volcanic sands.” In his words, he had been prepared in training for the jungle warfare that had been on Guam, but the fighting that took place on Iwo Jima was all in the open. Williams credited his training for properly preparing him for the marks of war, but he has also said that it helped keep him going, even when he was scared half out of his mind. Williams’ Medal of Honor actions were above and beyond the call of action. On February 23, 1943, Williams, protected only by four riflemen, crossed between enemy and base lines multiple times, taking out multiple Japanese pillboxes, or in-hill bunkers, and protecting the lives of many Marines, with no regard for his own. While Williams fought on, the famous second flag raising was taking place on Mount Suribachi, symbolizing America’s control over the island, and immortalizing the heroism of the Marines who fought there.

When Williams described his Medal of Honor, his voice was filled with a pained pride. He said that, at the time, he actually didn’t know what it was or even why he was selected to receive it. He didn’t know what it was based on until after his citation had been read on the steps of the White House on October 5, 1945 as he was receiving the award from President Harry S. Truman. Williams recalled not recognizing the difference between his actions and those who served on the left and right of him. In every interview that Williams has given, when asked what his Medal of Honor means to him, he answers that, “Eventually, I came to realize that the only reason why I received
“They showed us it on the map, 2.5 miles wide and 8 miles long. We didn’t know until the end of the first day that we were going to be involved on Iwo Jima, didn’t know that they’d need 60,000 Marines to capture that we piece of land. It took 36 days, which surprised us all.”

–Hershel W. Williams

the Medal of Honor was the sacrifices made by others, and I wear it in their honor, not mine.” The moment he received the Medal, however, he knew that his life was changed forever. He was no longer able to be the shy, quiet country boy but was instead thrust into the limelight to be a fluent and impactful public speaker.

Coming back had its downfalls. Williams suffered from PTSD, a term and diagnosis that did not exist at the time, for nearly 17 years after the war, especially regarding the number of lives he had taken. He found peace through his wife’s Methodist Church, committing himself to God and to his family. Williams retired from the Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserves after 20 years of faithful service. He would go on to work as a Veterans Affairs counselor for 33 years, where his service to the military and its service men and women continued. He would also serve as chaplain of the Medal of Honor society for 35 years. He continues to work for the benefits of all veterans, serving on his home state of West Virginia’s Governor’s Military Advisory Board and has written dozens of letters prompting help for veterans throughout West Virginia and the rest of the United States.

In 2010, at the age of 87, Williams started his Hershel Woody Williams Congressional Medal of Honor Education Foundation; a foundation dedicated to honoring the ultimate sacrifices made by service members and their families. He’d had a friend as a boy named Leonard Brown, and they would walk to and from school together, elementary through high school. Brown joined up in the services, and Williams lost track of him, but after Williams had returned from the Pacific, he had learned that Brown had been killed in action. It was the memories of those deliveries and of Leonard that drove Williams to start his foundation.

“We needed to do something to recognize the sacrifice of the families and their loved ones. We did it primarily to honor our own West Virginians and then it began going viral throughout the country. They want to honor their families, too.” The foundation sets up Gold Star Memorials throughout the country with the names of lost loved ones and is now responsible for setting up over 33 Gold Star Family memorials throughout the United States with over 40 under construction in 36 states.

Today, Williams is honored throughout the United States, including an honor granted by one of the highest ranking officers in the military, the Secretary of the Navy, who named T-ESB 4 (Expeditionary Sea Ship Base 4) the USNS Hershel “Woody” Williams mobile-base sea vessel. He is also honored in his own Fairmont, WV, with the only National Guard Facility to be named after a Marine, Hershel “Woody” Williams Armed Forces Reserve Center. He was also honored at the most recent Super Bowl, where he was the official coin tosser.

Williams, today, is one of only four living World War II Medal of Honor recipients and the only living recipient to have served in the Pacific Theatre of the war. Williams has a truly incredible story. It was his courage, pride in his country and respect that shined in every American heart during World War II. It was qualities like these that made America strong and great in times of trouble and qualities like these that make Marines.

Sources


Wilcox, Ralph. Phone Interview. April 4, 2018.


Williams, Hershel. Phone Interview. April 5, 2018.
The Cpl Gerald Max Rich Detachment 1352, Cache Valley, Logan, UT, distributed Toys for Tots to Shoshone children at the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation annual Tribal Meeting in Brigham City. Detachment members Commandant Duane Smith, Ernie Blankenship, Jerry Cokely and Michael Soholt posted the colors and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Marine Veteran Pat Murray was recently featured on a banner in Lancaster, CA, with a photo taken at boot camp. She is a Life Member of Antelope Valley Detachment 930. On December 1, 2018, Pat turned 101 years old. The City of Lancaster created the “Hometown Hero Banner Program” in an effort to celebrate local military heroes who have served our nation to maintain our freedom. (Courtesy City of Lancaster)

Members of MCL 1284 Road Detachment at a pre-Christmas fundraiser for the wounded and needy on December 16, 2018. Left to right: Ed Clancy, Jim Lindsay, John Reimer, Tony Del Rocco and Joe Gonzalez.
**ROLL CALL**

**AROUND THE LEAGUE**

MODD Pound 288, Flint, MI, held its annual Children's Christmas Party on December 15, 2018. 27 children and their families attended. **Front row, left to right**: Jack Porn, Ron Anderson, Santa, PNC John Tuohy, Dave Clark. **Back row, left to right**: PNC Jim Tuohy, Jack Trosko, Ted Leclair, Warren Tracey, Bob Larson, George Granberry, Mike Mullally.

During an annual Coins for Kids event, UT Dixie Detachment 1270 members volunteer to help with the logistics of transporting toys and gifts December 18, 2018. JoAnn is in the truck receiving a gift bag from Steve Handy.

JC Paul Detachment 1448, South Central, KY, completed the 2018 Toys for Tots campaign. The detachment provided “A Little Christmas” to 2,976 low-income children, with 11,868 toys and 8,901 books. This is an 86% increase over the 2017 Campaign. **Jr. Vice Commandant Connie Lee Taylor playing Santa.**

Don Geesaman, Jr. Past Commandant, Lewis B. Puller Jr. Detachment 524, Carlisle, PA, presents a certificate of appreciation to Tracie Rollins, Sales Mgr. for the Raddisson Hotel Harrisburg, PA, for its longstanding support of the Toys for Tots Program.
The CT Women Marines Association (WMA) and the Young Marines from the Brass City Detachment in Waterbury, CT, partnered together on December 18, 2018, to present a check for over $2,000 along with 4 bins of new socks and t-shirts for homeless veterans. Vince Santilli, CEO/Executive Director for “Homes for the Brave” in Bridgeport received the gifts on behalf of the residents. Left to right: Young Marine PFC Ryan Spring, Jennifer Jackson, Vince Santilli, Bill Spring, Jamie DePaola and Young Marine SSgt Tanner Linhard.
Roll Call

Around the League

Oldest Marine Donald Swift and youngest Marine Antonio Agaya with Commandant Steve Chavez of Detachment 1204, Benson, AZ.

The JC Paul Detachment 1448, Whitley County, KY, was on hand to accept a check for $545 from Center Target Firearms and Indoor Range for its Toys for Tots campaign. Center Firearms sponsored a pistol competition, and all proceeds went to the campaign. Left to right: Dan Smoot (Center Target), Greg Sims (Commandant), Cathy Sims (Paymaster/Adjutant) and Ken Hayes (Sr. Vice Commandant).


Detachment 1363 Black River Falls, WI, observed the Marines’ 243rd birthday on November 12, 2018, at the request of a local Walmart in honor of an employee and Guest of Honor Delmar Dahl (in dress blues). Commandant Dennis Beattie narrates history before cutting cake. Korean War vet Dahl’s picture is on the store Wall of Heroes. Store manager Josh (in blue) provided cake and beverages. Detachment members served employees and customers.
Capt. Jack Holland Detachment 735 presented a $10,000 check to Mid-South Toys for Tots! Accepting the check is Carrol Howard, Ret. MSgt and Coordinator for Mid-South Toys for Tots.

On January 9, 2019, the MODD Desoto Pound 377 (“Conquistadawgs”) of Bradenton, FL, gathered at its Pound Growl to advance Ret. Col Robert Warren age 95 to the degree of Devil Dog. Col Warren was a fighter pilot during World War II earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, flying F6F Hellcats at the battles of Okinawa and Saipan.

2018 Toys for Tots representative John Gingrich Sr. Commandant of Detachment 525 Lebanon, PA, has been coordinating Toys for Tots for 28 years. Pictured are Detachment 525 members, Leatherneck riders and volunteers.
Eddie Cranford awarded the Marine Corps League Meritorious Commendation (Individual) by Detachment 1311, Woodstock, GA, for continually and directly contributing to the detachment’s on-going success.

Walter Modler, Commandant, Treasure Valley Detachment 878, presents the Idaho State Veterans Home (Boise) with an MCL flag accepted by Amber Goodchild, representative of the home. The lightweight, single-sided flag was created for this event and is a replica of the national MCL flag.

The Color Guard stands behind the World War II veterans as follows: Captain Llewelyn Jenkins, U.S. Army; Captain Vince Lacy USMC; Sgt Clyde Brandt USMC; Cpl Jerry Clarelli, U.S. Army; Cpl James Head, USMC; Cpl Mario Mobilia, U.S. Army; Corpsman Robert E. Morris; PFC Dennis Kavanagh, USMC; and PFC Glen Thompson, USMC.
DeSoto County Veterans Park in Southaven, MS, honors all U.S. veterans, beginning with the Revolutionary War to the present War on Terror, including the Middle East & Caribbean Conflicts and also contains the flags and bronze emblems for each branch of the military.

Seven members of Mitchell Redcloud Jr. Detachment Black River Falls, WI, raise funds and recruit at a Gun Show. Left to right: Dennis Beattie, Jerry Kilde, Aubrey Olson and an IHC M1 Garand, Springfield 1911A1 and M1A. Three other members of the Landing Team were held in reserve.

Jr. Vice Commandant Ken “Doc” Honaker of the President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597 in Simi Valley, CA, presents a check from the detachment to Blake and Janet Steele on February 1, 2019. The Steeles have lost everything in the Woolsey Fire that ravaged Southern California in 2018.
On January 5, 2019, UT Dixie Detachment 1270 presented the High School Coaches of the Year Awards to six veterans who are now High School coaches. Marine LtCol Jack Stanfill presents the "Bomber Jacket" to Utah Coach of the Year Les Hamilton of Summit Academy as Marines and fellow coaches look on.

Left to right: Thane Marshall from Milford High, Mike Grejake from South Summit High, Les Hamilton from Summit Academy, Jeremy Hill from Orem High, Erick Kjar from Comer Canyon High. Bart Brockbank of Loan Peak High was not present.

Toys for Tots 2018—Ssgt Jean (Toys for Tots Coordinator) and Black Sheep 412 Commandant Lisa Solarczyk at the MWSS 472 Detachment, a Toys for Tots warehouse.

Black Sheep 412 Sr. Vice Commandant Frank Ciappio, Jr., with his service/therapy dog Crystal, which is also the Black Sheep 412 mascot, at the Black Sheep 412 Toys for Tots event at a Walmart in Pittson, PA.
Over 30 Marines and FMF Corpsmen, members of Lake County, IL, Detachment 801, participated in 10 Toys for Tots fundraising events in 2018 to raise $16,000 which was presented on December 17, 2018, to Col Scott Gondek, Commanding Officer of MACG 48, Great Lakes, IL, and SSgt Potter, Toys for Tots Coordinator, on behalf of the Toys for Tots Program.

Commandant Dick Jennings of the President Ronald Reagan Detachment 597 offers a piece of birthday cake to the detachment’s oldest member, Ms. Jean Irving, 95 years old who enlisted April 1943. Looking on is SgtMaj Ramona Cook (USMC Ret.) who was the guest speaker for the evening.

Pound 188’s Pound Keeper Joseph Kier initiated Pup Robert M. Sundling (left) and advanced Pup Phil Amann (right) to Devil Dog at the Pound’s Growl held in February 2019.
Join Roll Call!

ALL MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MEMBERS MAY SUBMIT ROLL CALL ENTRIES

Our new Roll Call Upload System is now live!

- Go to semperfi.chipotlepublishing.com
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- Log in, click on the “Upload Your Files” box and then follow instructions.
- You may also submit photos with short captions in email to semperfi@chipotlepublishing.com.

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 instruction on the upload site).

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.

From left to right: Emerald Empire Detachment Commandant Dave Huber; Emerald Empire Young Marines Cpl Austin W. Bradley; Austin’s mother Jennifer Toney; Austin’s step-father Victor Hansen; Austin’s grandmother Sandy Toney; Austin’s grandfather Mike Toney; and Emerald Empire Detachment Senior Vice Commandant Peter Bock (in attendance but not shown: Emerald Empire Young Marines Commander Brandon Mathews). The Jess M. Wise, Jr., Young Marine of The Year—2018 Award Presentation took place during Detachment 917’s February 2019 monthly meeting. The Award citation was read by Detachment SVC Peter Bock, and the plaque was presented by Detachment Commandant Dave Huber to Emerald Empire Young Marines Cpl Austin W. Bradley. The Award was created by Emerald Empire Detachment 917 as a remembrance of our deceased member Jess M. Wise, Jr. Jess was a Charter Member of the detachment, a retired Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and a strong supporter of the Young Marines program. The Young Marine of each quarter receives a certificate, and the Young Marine chosen from those 4 receives the Young Marine of the Year Plaque.

The Bethlehem 284 and Lehigh Valley 296 Detachments 2018 Toys for Tots, Allentown, PA. Over 1200 families received toys.

Veteran Marines and volunteers helped on distribution day: Roz Schroeder, Jeff Weiner, Amy Zanelli, Carl Schroeder, Joe Malia, Bill Remo, Nick King, Colyer James, Fred Babcock and Rob Neill.
Ensuring continued progress made in last year’s budget process

Likewise, ensuring the continued implementation of the VA MISSION Act by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is essential to fixing the "broken" parts of the VA health care system. Major health care and benefit system reforms have been implemented in recent years but require an ongoing commitment and investments to meet demand and ensure timely access.

2. Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently introduced, as a potential option, TRICARE For Life enrollment fees and minimum out-of-pocket requirements as ways the federal budget could escape red ink. Military retirees, through their service and sacrifice, have paid in full for their TRICARE For Life benefits.

3. Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector. Any pay raise set by the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) must match the Employment Cost Index (ECI) increase of 3.1 percent—anything lower will make the pay gap wider.

4. Stop erosion of compensation and non-pay quality-of-life benefits. Other components of compensation are equally essential to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force. We must continue to oppose proposals to reduce compensation and undermine long-term retention.

5. Achieve equity of benefits for Guard and Reserve members with their active duty counterparts. Achieving pay and benefits parity with active duty forces is vital to recruiting, retaining and sustaining forces for the Guard and Reserve supporting our nation’s defense strategy.

6. Protect military and veteran family support programs and policies. Military and veteran family quality of life is critical to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force. We must engage members of Congress and their staffs on the importance of military family readiness and issues affecting military and veteran families.

There is much to do to ensure that the prior year’s progress is continued. You can find out more about the legislative priorities at the Marine Corps League website library at mclnational.org.

Until next time, leanin’ forward in the trenches.

Semper Fi
BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKS FOR, ABOUT & BY MARINES – BY BOB BORKA

A Family’s Solemn Journey

Simply put, this book is a “must read.” MOH recipient Alexander “Sandy” Bonnyman, Jr., Lt/USMC, was killed in action at Betio, Tarawa, 1943. Many Marines know this name and the place because we value the history of our Marine Corps. I have cherished the opportunity to experience this book from a different perspective. Clay Bonnyman Evans is the grandson of Alexander Bonnyman, and he takes us through the family’s journey and his personal quest to locate and bring home his grandfather’s remains. On September 27, 2015, with Marines from 8th and I, Cobra helicopters overhead, Col Robert Couser and MajGen Burke Whitman in attendance, Lt Bonnyman was laid to rest in Knoxville, Tennessee (Evans, 2018). I was grateful that he was brought home, but after reading this book, I am deeply moved to know the honor, courage and commitment shown by this family.

God bless our Gold Star families. Semper Fidelis, Marines.

Bones of My Grandfather
Reclaiming a Lost Hero of World War II

By Clay Bonnyman Evans

Hardcover: 300 pages
Publisher: Skyhorse Publishing
Language: English
ISBN: 978-1-5107-3061-8

Dedicated to Those Who Serve Our Country

Moments in time guide our future, often in ways we could never imagine. Gary Sinise shares with readers his life story and moments that lead to his tireless dedication to our service members. The actor, director and musician shares, “My mission is one of respect, of honor, of gratitude…. It’s a mission of serving other people…. Of helping us never forget” (Sinise, 2019, page 270). This biography and autobiography explores the life of Gary Sinise, including playing in a band at an early age and how his career as an actor has provided a stage for music to serve our military.

Grateful American—A Journey from Self to Service

By Gary Sinise and Marcus Brotherton

Hardcover: 280 pages
Publisher: Thomas Nelson Books
Language: English
ISBN: 978-1-4002-0812-8

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Item Code: Gloves
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Description: White Slip-on Gloves

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**Handling & Postage**

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- [ ] MASTERCARD
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**Name**

As it appears on credit card

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**Handling & Postage**

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From Iwo Jima to You

Mike Huttner
Commandant, NW Suburban MCL 80

93-year-old Elwood (Woody) Hughes is a Marine, a WWII survivor and a longstanding member of Northwest Suburban Detachment 80 in Arlington Heights, Illinois. He is also an eyewitness to the flag-raising at Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima, February 23, 1945.

Here is Woody’s handwritten account of that fateful day:

“On February 19, 1945, military forces of the U.S. invaded the Japanese island of Iwo Jima. Four days later, on February 23, an American flag was raised on Mt. Suribachi showing a conquest of that part of the island. On that date, I was on duty with HQ Company/5th Marines at the edge of Motoyama Airfield #1, Keller E. Rockey, commanding. I was assigned to take and deliver messages by foot or jeep to the regimental or battalion commands. Thus, my title was ‘runner.’ I had other duties within the command center and similar duties during the Battle of Saipan under Holland M. Smith, commanding. I have even delivered an urgent message for translation by one of the Navajo Code Talkers.

On the morning of February 23, word had spread that Chandler Johnson, CO of Combat Team 28, had ordered a patrol to ascend Suribachi and secure the summit. With this order he gave the patrol a U.S. flag with instructions to ‘Plant this flag when you reach the top.’

From my vantage that morning, I could see the small figures making their way up the mountain. Sometime later I heard loud cheering and the sound of ships offshore blowing their horns. Marines everywhere were banging their mess gear and their helmets as we looked up to see our flag standing tall at the top of Suribachi. I joined in the cheering!!

The flag may have been too small, and so, Commander Johnson ordered a larger flag to replace the smaller original. Once the larger was found, a photo of the Marines raising Old Glory was also taken. That photo would become an instant sensation in the news and soon after become an icon of the Marine Corps, itself!”

—Elwood (Woody) Hughes
Life Member, Northwest Suburban Detachment 80

IMMERSIVE AND INTERACTIVE
exhibits surround visitors with irreplaceable artifacts and the sights and sounds of Marines in action.

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TAPS
The magazine delivery to detachment members looking to help. The policy has been that detachment chaplains fill out, sign and submit a death notification form to their respective department chaplains who then forward it on to Headquarters’ membership department. This policy has been instrumental in forming a local motorcycle group called, “The Friends of the Forgotten” to raise awareness of POW/MIA issues. He enjoyed participating in Civil War reenactments serving in both Union and Confederate armies.

Rest easy Brother, we have the watch.

Semper Fi!

Joel Sofranko – Commandant, Detachment 304

A Great Marine Reassigned to His Maker

Neustadt Detachment 304 recently lost a great Marine to his new duty assignment with the Supreme Commandant in December 2018. Howard William Lee Jr. MSgt/USMC (Ret.) (we called him “Top Lee”) was dedicated to serving. He became a life member of the detachment (Scranton, PA) in 2006 and brought with him the drive of carpe diem.

Top Lee could have attended college at Ohio State with a football scholarship but chose to go to Parris Island instead. He served two tours in Vietnam and then went on recruiting duty. Top Lee is credited with recruiting over 600 Marines. While working at the Pentagon, he met his future wife, Carol. They enjoyed 59 years of marriage together. He retired with 22 years of Marine Corps service.

Top Lee was very active after retirement. He was instrumental in forming a local motorcycle group called, “The Friends of the Forgotten” to raise awareness of POW/MIA issues. He enjoyed participating in Civil War reenactments serving in both Union and Confederate armies.

Rest easy Brother, we have the watch.

Semper Fi!

Joel Sofranko – Commandant, Detachment 304

Death Notification Policy

Headquarters Marine Corps League receives frequent calls regarding the passing away of members. Calls vary from loved ones who wish to stop the magazine delivery to detachment members looking to help. The policy has been that detachment chaplains fill out, sign and submit a death notification form to their respective department chaplains who then forward it on to Headquarters’ membership department. This policy has not changed but will be better adhered-to in the future. It is the only way a person’s name will appear in the TAPS section of Semper Fi magazine.


**Non-Profit Group Seeks to Preserve Military Musical Culture**

**The Band of America’s Few, Inc.** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of veteran and active duty Marine Corps musicians. Our members join together in camaraderie to preserve and advance the musical culture of the United States Marine Corps and United States military bands through exemplary performance and patriotic and community enriching service work. Past notable events include the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo; Columbus, OH Honor Flight for the Military Order of the Purple Heart; United States Air Force Memorial; National Museum of the Marine Corps; Fortissimo on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada; and the largest VFW Post in the world, the General Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller VFW Post 1503.

What makes Band of America’s Few truly remarkable is that we do not have a “home” or regular rehearsal location. Our members volunteer their time to “give back” to our country by traveling to a performance location. After a day or so of practice, we perform at events such as patriotic concerts, parades, ceremonies, and military funerals and tattoos.

As a non-profit organization, Band of America’s Few relies on the generosity of its members and donors to help promote our mission. You can learn more about Band of America’s Few by following us on Facebook or going to our website at bandofamericasfew.com.

**Upcoming Shows**

**Heroes Among Us**
Free Patriotic Concert
May 26, 2019
2:00pm

**Webster University**
Community Music School
535 Garden Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
bandofamericasfew.com
BLAST FROM THE PAST

Vietnam Church Service

A copy of this photo of a church service from Vietnam is at the top of a wall at the National Museum of the Marine Corps that honors chaplain service during Vietnam. The chaplain in the photograph is now-retired Navy Captain Salvatore Rubino.

The Marine wearing glasses in the right foreground, 1stLt Lee Roy Herron, was killed in action on February 22, 1969, and received the Navy Cross posthumously. Lee Roy was a close friend of Captain David Nelson’s throughout their school years in Lubbock, Texas, and it was Lee Roy who convinced him to join the Marine Corps in 1965. His commanding officer in Vietnam was then 1stLt Wes Fox, and Fox received the Medal of Honor for his actions in the same battle in which Herron was killed. Fox wrote the Navy Cross citation for Herron.

Mr. Nelson is a current member of the Marine Corps League, who was discharged as a Marine Captain in late December 1973.

“AMERICA’S SOUL”

Gary Manning

I have found it (CA) to be, rather to seem, (NC) that God enriches (AZ) when the people rule (AR). Work conquers all (OK), and America’s industry (UT), agriculture and commerce (TN) have thrived. We have been blessed with liberty and prosperity (NJ) and friendship (TX). Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law (MO) and may every American have equality before the law (NE).

United in pride and hope (VI), tempered by wisdom, justice and moderation (GA), we move forward to the stars through difficulty (KA). Let it be perpetual (ID).

Under God, the people rule (SD) with union, justice and confidence (LA). With God all things are possible (OH) as we dare defend our rights (AL) and our freedom and unity (VT). All for our country (NV), it grows as it goes (NM).

By valor and arms (MS), our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain (IA).

While I breathe, I hope (SC), prepared in mind and resources (SC) to live free or die (NH).

Let God be first (American Samoa) as we move forward (WI) and into the bye and bye (WA), ever mindful that united we stand, divided we fall (KY).

Presented to Daughters of the American Revolution, Oneonta Chapter November 10, 2018.
Attention VMA(AW)-225 Squadron members! Plans are underway for the Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 225’s “50th Year After Vietnam (1969–2019)” anniversary reunion. Officers and enlisted (and their families) alike who served in VMA(AW) 225 while it was deployed to the Republic of South Vietnam from January 1969–April 1971. The reunion is scheduled for May 15-19, 2019, in Morehead City, NC. For more details please contact Maurice “Mo” Chevalier at 252-240-1965 or email mochev@twc.com.

First Marine Air Wing Association—Vietnam Service is having this year’s reunion in Washington, DC, on June 13-16, 2019. For information contact Al Frater at teanal@optonline.net or 201-906-1197.


The National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc., a veteran’s group that celebrates the legacy of America’s first African American Marines, will celebrate their 54th National Convention August 28-31, 2019, at the Charlotte Renaissance Suites in Charlotte, NC (704-357-1414). The convention is open to all veterans and supporters from all branches of the Armed Services. For more information, please visit the National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc. website at: montfordpointmarines.org or call the convention director, Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant USMC (Ret.) Ron Johnson at 504-202-8552.

Marine Corps Engineer Association (MCEA) Reunion and Awards Banquet, September 12-14, 2019, Hilton Inn & Conference Center, San Antonio, TX. POC: Maj Charlie Dismore USMC (Ret.) at 512-394-9333 or visit marcorengasn.org.

Basic School MCB 3-68 Reunion to be held September 19-22, 2019, Quantico, VA. Contact Norm Hapke at 619-249-2281 or nhapke@cox.net for more information.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) is building a roster of all living Iwo Jima Veterans in order to contact them and their families about upcoming important events, especially the Battle’s 75th Anniversary in 2020. Email name and contact info of the living Iwo Jima veterans to Director@iwojimaAssociation.org.
**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP - MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**

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**Application Fee**

- New Membership applicants must enclose $30 for one year’s membership.
- Renewal applications must enclose $20 for one year’s membership.
- MAL applicants must enclose $30 for one year’s membership.

**Sponsor's Signature**

- (Sponsor where applicable)

**Applicant’s Signature (see reverse side)**

**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
3619 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 115, Stafford, VA 22554.

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OATH OF MEMBERSHIP – REGULAR MEMBERS

I, ________________________________ in the presence of Almighty God, and the members of the Marine Corps League here assembled, being fully aware of the symbols, motto, principles and purposes of the Marine Corps League, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will uphold and defend the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America and of the Marine Corps League. I will never knowingly wrong, deceive or defraud the League as to the value of anything. I will never knowingly wrong or injure or permit any member or any member’s family to be wronged or injured if to prevent the same is within my power. I will never propose for membership one known to me to be unqualified or unworthy to become a member of the League. I further promise to govern my conduct in the League's affairs and in my personal life in a manner becoming a decent honorable person and will never knowingly bring discredit to the League, so help me God.

Signature

OATH OF MEMBERSHIP – ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

I, ________________________________ in the presence of Almighty God, and the members of the Marine Corps League here assembled, being fully aware that, as an Associate Member, I will not be permitted to hold an elective office or to vote on Marine Corps League policy, a membership application, or an election of officers, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will uphold and defend the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America and of the Marine Corps League. I will never knowingly wrong, deceive or defraud the League as to the value of anything. I will never knowingly wrong or injure or permit any member or any member’s family to be wronged or injured if to prevent the same is within my power. I will never propose for membership one known to me to be unqualified or unworthy to become a member of the League. I further promise to govern my conduct in the League's affairs and in my personal life in a manner becoming a decent honorable person and will never knowingly bring discredit to the League, so help me God.

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