



National Commandant's 2021 National Midwinter Report

Welcome to our first and hopefully last virtual mid-winter conference. As was the case with our 2020 convention, the Board had no choice but to cancel the live conference due to Virginia restrictions on gatherings of no more than 10 people. So, here we are making the best of a bad situation. All reports, announcements and other notices have been prerecorded and placed on the Marine Corps League website in the conference tab. They will also be available for viewing on the Marine Corps League Facebook page.

We are coming out of one very trying and pressure filled year. The effect of COVID-19 on all of us has been extremely hard, some of us had the virus and pulled through, while some of us lost friends and loved ones to the virus. As an organization, a Family, a Tribe, whatever you choose to call us, we came through it together. I believe, stronger than before. We leaned on one another. We consoled and comforted one another, whether it was a sick member, a death in our family or an internal issue, we stood tall and worked together and came through with our heads held high. Semper Fidelis.

Now, here we are in 2021, not completely back to normal but hopefully well on our way to "BACK TO NORMAL." Since the start of COVID-19 there has been one constant within the league, that has been our headquarters staff. They have done an outstanding job and performed above and beyond what was expected of them during unreasonable conditions. They have been working remotely since the start, alternating days in the office to pick up mail, process orders and do paperwork. They have not worked Monday - Friday, 9-5, weekends off in just about a year. What they have done is worked 7 days a week 16 or more hours a day, always available for phone calls and emails. They all know their work that supports you, the members, could not stop. So, we owe them a very big debt of gratitude and a thank you would not hurt.

The main calming factor in our headquarters is our Chief Operating Officer (COO) Bob Borka. I have never met a calmer person in my life. He is level-headed with good bearing which helps others to calm down and relax. Then, together they solve the problem. Thank you, Bob.

Noteworthy Topics

1. PLM Distribution and Direct Deposit. We are up to 63% compliant which is about 722 Detachments on board with account information. As I have said numerous times, there will be no paper checks for PLM distribution this year or in the future years. COO Borka will begin to audit information during March and April. He expects to make distributions during the April/May timeframe. If you do not receive your distribution, it is because you did not submit a PLM audit or did not submit banking information to the COO.
2. The Database. It is up and running. There are still a few glitches to worked out from the company side, such as the roster, but PNC Wendell Webb and his team are working closely with the company to get things ironed out. There is historical data from the old system and data transitioning to the new system, so the team is working to get things updated and/or corrected. All Detachment and Department Commandants and Paymasters do have access to certain parts of the database. If you are one of the people allowed access and still have not been able to gain access, please go to the Member Library and watch the Database 101 (for Detachments) or Database 102 (for Departments) video by COO Borka. If you need help; he is available to walk you through it.
3. Marine for Life (M4L) Liaisons. Currently all Departments do have a M4L Liaison, congratulations and thank you for your support. If, as a Department Commandant, you did not appoint a liaison, then the M4L Liaison for your state is you, the Department Commandant.
4. Printing Membership Cards.
 - a) We have recently stopped using the outside printing company to print our membership cards. We have purchased a machine to do all card printing in house. We continue to process transmittals and membership cards as they come in. We are at a point now where transmittals come in and membership cards get printed and sent out. This should decrease the time it takes to get cards out to the detachment.
 - b) Due to the bad address situation (that I will discuss further) and too many cards being returned, we now mail all membership cards to the Detachment Paymasters to distribute. To answer the first complaint, that National has put all the pressure on Detachments to send them out to their members. Well, the easiest way is to give them out at a

meeting. If a member wants their card, they need to attend a meeting and pick it up; or pick it up between meetings. If a member who, for whatever reason, cannot attend a meeting needs assistance getting their card, I am sure you can find someone who lives close to them and drop it off. When they pick it up or you drop it off make sure to get all their correct contact info, including phone number and email.

- c) There is no expiration date on the new cards, reason being, everyone knows by now when their expiration date is, all regular dues paying members have the same date, so everyone should know when they need to pay their dues.
- d) Member Contact Info – Let us remember one important factor, Detachment membership and contact information is the responsibility of each Detachment. You are the boots on the ground, they are your members.
- e) To answer another question regarding the membership cards: What if a member is visiting from another Detachment, how do you know if they are in good standing? Well, the easiest way is to reach out to their Detachment Commandant or Paymaster and verify status. The Department Commandant and Paymaster are also able to see that member's information and answer questions.

Marines, these are simple common-sense things. We have many job descriptions in the Marine Corps League and issues arise that fit directly into those jobs to address. I have said it before and I will say it again, if you cannot handle the job or the office you swore to execute to the best of your ability then step down.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for their support during the past year. Your comments (good or bad) and your suggestions and ideas have not gone unnoticed. Constructive criticism is always a good thing. I hope this year proves to be much better than last year and we can continue to move forward and begin to have face to face meetings and have some fun again.

Semper Fi,

Dennis Tobin
National Commandant