



Marine Corps League Department of South Carolina

To: National Commandant Johnny Baker

From: Helen Breen, Commandant, Department of South Carolina

Re: 2023 National Convention Report

The Department of South Carolina is continuing a positive trend overall with strong leadership and mentoring of leaders in our Department.

We currently have 23 Detachments and are 1089 members strong. We are continuing to survey the state to see where we could start some new Detachments and are hopeful to start some in this coming year.

We are very close to 100% compliance on 990's and filings with the Secretary of State. We appointed a new Compliance Officer who is going to work with our Department Paymaster and our Detachments to ensure all our Detachments are in compliance with all required filings and submission of ROIs when that time of the year comes. Our Paymaster has done a great job this past year with getting everyone up to date and making corrections as needed and I am confident that our new Compliance Officer will keep that trend in place.

We still have one Detachment at risk due to lack of active members and those willing to step up to be officers, we are working diligently with the current Detachment Commandant and are happy to say that in the next couple of months we will get them out of "danger" status and into "critical" – the Detachment isn't out of the woods yet, but is making positive strides to strengthen.

We are currently struggling with a few Detachments that do not want to follow the rules due to personality conflicts with previous Department officers. We have made it our focus to visit those Detachments with an emphasis of rebuilding relationships. We are on a positive move in that area, I believe, and hope to continue that positive momentum this coming year. Some of these Detachments have new, young, leaders who are interested not only in building their Detachments but serving at the Department level in the future.

This year also brought some restructuring in our bylaws, as we amended our Board of Trustees to the elected officers and brought on 3 elected Trustee positions. This was met with a bit of resistance, but in the end I think this is going to help improve the governance of our Department. We are hopeful that these Trustee positions will give Marines a taste of Department Leadership and will encourage them to continue up the leadership ladder. We continue to be on the lookout for those hidden leaders who will move our Department forward in the future.



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We have also instituted District Vice Commandants to have “boots on the ground” in each of our regions. The goal of these members are to support Detachments, as needed, act as a pre-emptive mediator when potential issues arise, and serve as a liaison with the Department, helping communicate needs to the Department Staff and keeping us up to date on what is going on and if the Department Staff needs to step in to assist on any specific matter.

Over this past year as Commandant, I have visited 19 of our 23 Detachments and have plans to visit the remaining 4 Detachments over the course of the coming months. I am making it a focus to not only come to the monthly membership meetings, but trying to attend their community events to serve as a volunteer and learn more about the members and what work the Detachments do in their communities.

Our Department Web Sergeant has been working to improve our website with the goal of utilizing it as a better communication tool. It has been set up with an email system that can be updated as new officers are elected, allowing us to continually maintain an up-to-date communication system between the Department Staff and Detachment Officers. We are also in the “beta” testing phase of an online dues payment system, very similar to National’s system, to help make dues transmittal processing an easier and more efficient process. Our goal is to have it available to all Detachments in September of this year.

Over the past year, our Detachments performed 6,023 Community Service hours, and have participated in 87 Funeral / Color Guard events. South Carolina recently approved funding for Honor Guards, so we anticipate having a couple more Detachments becoming involved. A couple of our Detachments volunteer with multi-organization Color Guards, which is a benefit when a Detachment is smaller.

Twelve of our twenty-three Detachments have Coordinators running Toys for Tots programs in our state and we have 2 Detachments that support Reserve Units for the annual drive. In 2022, we had two new programs started and three new coordinators. In 2022 across all the Toys for Tots Programs in South Carolina we collected 423,190 toys that were distributed to 73,756 children. Detachment programs counted for 101,885 of those toys to 21,709 children, 24.1% of the total toys and 29.4% of the children this year. Bravo Zulu to Detachment #1123, Olde English Leathernecks, who distributed 22,838 toys to 6,010 children, the largest MCL Toys for Tots Program in the state.

Our Eagle Scout program is still struggling with communications from some of the local Councils, but 33 Eagle Scouts were recognized by our Detachments in 2022 - 2023. We hope to continue to improve that trend this coming year.

We have four Young Marine Units in the state and presented a check for \$4,000 to them after our Department Convention. One of our Young Marines was nominated for Young Marine of the Year, which is quite an accomplishment. James Roberts, our Young Marines Liaison is amazing at getting information to us at each Quarterly and keeping us updated on what the Young Marines are doing in our state. At the Southeast Division Conference, hosted by Low Country #803, the Parris Island Young Marines provided our color guard on Saturday morning. We allowed them to set up a table to help them raise some much-needed funds for their program.



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We are still working on getting some shooting teams established but have found more interest from some Detachments and have appointed a Chairperson to work on that project. There have been some challenges in finding shooting ranges that aren't membership-based and that adhere to the National SOP requirements.

Finally, the Department was honored to host the Southeast Division Conference in March of this year. Low Country #803 did a fantastic job and I think it is safe to say that a good time was had by all! At the Department Convention this year, we changed things up a little and started integrating training sessions on Friday morning. The sessions focused on specific offices, but also Robert's Rules of Order and Uniforms. The sessions were very well received by those in attendance, and we heard a lot of positive feedback. We are focused on changing how the Conventions are organized and the schedule of events to hopefully encourage more participation in the future.

I am proud to serve as the Commandant for this great Department and I look forward to more successes in 2023 – 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helen Breen
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cc: Bob Borka, COO