



MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Office of the National Judge Advocate

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From: Russ Miller, National Judge Advocate, Marine Corps League, INC.

To: All Marine Corps League Divisions
All Marine Corps League Departments
All Marine Corps League Detachments

Subj: 2023 National Judge Advocate Report

The past year since Daytona Beach has been a very eventful one.

Since the completion of the 2022 National Convention, fourteen (14) Departments have submitted their updated Bylaws & Administrative Procedures for review and approval. It is important that all remaining Departments please submit copies of their current Bylaws and Admin Procedures to be placed on file with the National Judge Advocate for archival and reference purposes.

One recurring issue found in recent reviews, is the need for all Departments and Detachments to examine their documents and make necessary clerical corrections to update all references to old articles, chapters, and sections from 2015 or earlier versions of the MCL National Bylaws and AP. In that these clerical changes/updates do not make material changes to the intent, form or function of their documents, said corrections should not require a vote of their membership and may be completed by Department JA with approval of their Department Board of Trustees. Just as we are striving at the national level to see all Department's Bylaws and Administrative Procedures brought up to date and a library of self-same current documents created; so too should all Department JAs be working toward the similar goals with all of their Detachment's bylaws and admin procedures.

For all of the good work that has been accomplished in the past one years' time, it is however, unfortunate that in the same one-year time frame, a total of thirty-one (31) Chapter Nine cases were filed. Of those cases filed, nine (9) were at the Department level and twenty-one (21) were/are at the National level. Seven (7) grievances in which either negotiated settlements were reached or in a small number of cases, petitioners re-filed as disciplinary charges. There were/are a total of twenty-three (23) Disciplinary Charges filed of which five (5) are currently at

different stages of the adjudication process for the incoming NJA and National Commandant to carry forward. Previously heard cases resulted in three (3) expulsions and one (1) suspension. Of those cases that resulted in expulsion or suspension, only two went forward all the way to a National Board of Trustees appeal. In both instances the BOT voted unanimously to uphold the findings of the hearing boards' panel. On the brighter side of this issue, twenty (20) of the cases that came before the office of the National JA, involved a recurring four (4) members. I say, "on the brighter side", because this demonstrates that there is not, at this time, a great systemic disciplinary issue across the organization, but rather an issue of a small number of individuals allowing their own personalities to dictate their decision-making skills.

I am saddened to have to report that in this same period of time, we also had a small number of administrative expulsions and resignations with prejudice in lieu of chapter nine hearing boards. Three (3) of which involved individuals that either lied about a past criminal history or were convicted since becoming a member. Additionally, some of the resignations as well as a couple of the hearing boards related to four (4) former members who were exposed for instances of stolen valor. Although, it is unfortunate that each of these cases occurred, it is a good sign that our members are making efforts to "police or own" and ensure that integrity is maintained within our ranks.

Lastly, I must apologize to our members for not completing a few of the tasks that I set out to do over this past year but will gladly be available to assist the incoming NJA and his Bylaw Committee in any way I can to carry to completion. We are still in great need of updating our Ritual and Guidebook for Detachment Officers, as well as gathering any more records from previous NJAs that we can then scan and archive onto the cloud for future NJAs to be able to access for reference. Another daunting task will be to do a complete re-write of Chapter Nine of the NAP, thus making it easier for the average member to follow, and hopefully eliminate many of the current redundancies that exist within the procedures.

It has been a true honor to serve the membership of our beloved Marine Corps League this past year as the National Judge Advocate and I hope and pray that the next NJA will be even more successful as we all strive to build our organization up to be the gold standard of veteran organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Miller

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Marine Corps League