

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

Vol. 82 No. 4 • FALL 2026

SEMPER FI



The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



Change of Command



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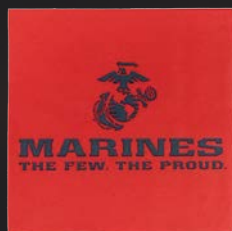
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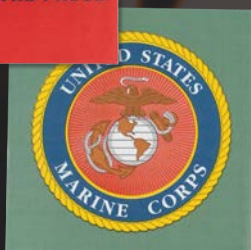
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SEMPER PARATI

The Magazine of the Marine Corps League



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ON THE COVER:

Attention on Deck! At the National Convention in Indianapolis, August 2026, 66th National Commandant (now JrPNC) passed the Marine Corps League flag to the 67th National Commandant Russ Miller. Pictured here, Russ Miller passes them back to the National Sergeant At Arms Lisa Solarczyk to conclude the change of command ceremony.



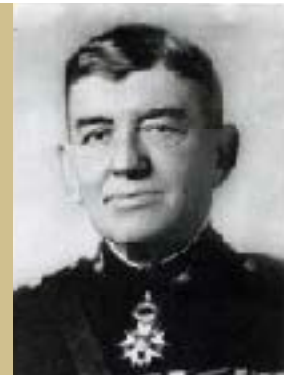
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The 2026 revised National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures are posted in the Member Library (www.mcleaguelibrary.org/member-library/).

Founded in 1923 by Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune, the Marine Corps League is the only federally chartered Marine Corps-related veterans organization in the United States.



NATIONAL COMMANDANT'S LETTER

RUSS MILLER

Momentum Is Key



MARINES: I can only begin to express the pride I felt throughout our 2026 National Convention as we moved through a jam-packed agenda and accomplished so much each day on the Marine Corps League Convention floor, as well as in the Military Order of the Devil Dogs, Auxiliary, and MODD Fleas. We hurried from meeting to meeting while our veteran service officers simultaneously helped hundreds of attendees with their claims, thanks to on-site assistance from VA personnel. When I turned the corner one afternoon and saw a line of veterans filling the passageway, with a few sitting on the deck waiting to talk to a veteran service officer about filing a claim, I had a flashback to Parris Island: sitting on the deck with other recruits while waiting to see the dentist and have our wisdom teeth pulled. This time, there was excited optimism instead of dread. Like many of you, I was moved to hear success stories of Marines who arrived Monday with disability ratings from 0% to 50% and learned by Thursday that their ratings had increased to 80%, 90%, or higher. The claims clinics, fireside chats, and on-site compensation and benefits evaluations from VA added tremendous value for those attending the Convention. We will look forward to them in years to come.

As we heard and read reports from around the nation, the excitement grew as we learned how the MCL is having lasting impacts in our communities. Whether through Toys for Tots, Young Marines, Scouting, homeless veteran stand-downs, funeral honors, color guards, marksmanship competitions, parades, volunteering at VA facilities, making meals for families of hospitalized veterans at a nearby Fisher House, providing scholarships, or hosting a poolee event for Marine Corps recruiters — the list goes on. When we work together to roll the rock up mountain, we encourage one another to keep taking the next step. Eventually, momentum kicks in, and the rock seems lighter and easier to move.

Lastly, I am deeply honored to have been elected as the 67th national commandant of our beloved MCL. I thank every member, associate, auxiliary member, Devil Dog, Flea, and guest who came together to make our 2026 National Convention a success. I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to push upward and onward together! **Semper Fi!**



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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/COO

BOB BORKA

Continue Your Leadership Journey



MARINES: As we welcome the new national commandant to his role, we are developing a list of books that are beyond the typical recommended reading list for leaders. These books are impactful for personal and professional development. Very often, we find that rules, procedures, guidelines, and practices are handed down from person to person. In fact, these things are often written, but there is no guidance on where to find the source documents.

The National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures are two go-to documents. Most often, our procedural questions can be answered by looking there first. The Member Library also contains many documents that can assist with a variety of topics such as how to run a meeting, procedures to be a paymaster, or even how to wear a uniform correctly. Please check out the "Training" section of that page for other presentations, videos, and documents helpful in the growth and development of the detachment.

The commandant's reading list goes beyond these and looks at developing the individual leader within you. You will find a common theme among the books in that the commandant and I strongly advocate for almost any book written by John Maxwell. The *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, *Developing the Leader Within You*, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, *Leadership Gold*, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, and *Failing Forward* are but a few examples of John Maxwell's work. Additional recommended titles are *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 12th edition (yes, actually read it), *Servant Leadership* (by Greenleaf), and *Who Moved My Cheese?* (by Johnson). Pick up a book, get one on audio, read it on a Kindle, or use whatever means works best for you. Our journey for knowledge should never end. **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

ROB BROOKS, USMC (RET).

First Steps



MARINES: As we begin planning our Marine Corps Birthday Ball events and preparing for the festive holidays, we all look forward to at the end of the year, I'd like to take a moment to highlight a major first for the League that occurred during this summer's National Convention. Through the direct efforts of Philip Du, National Director of Veteran Services, and all our amazing Veteran Service Officers, we hosted our first VA Mobile Clinic

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page

at a National Convention. We helped more than 150 veterans and service members complete their VA claims—from start to finish—within hours of checking in. As we celebrate this tremendous accomplishment, we are applying the lessons learned in Indianapolis, refining our plans and procedures, and preparing to continue this push forward as only Marines can.

Next February, as we settle into our new Midwinter Conference location, the Founders Inn and Spa, Tapestry Collection by Hilton, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, we plan to engage our nationally accredited service officers again. The “how” is still in the planning phase, but our goal remains the same: to help fellow Marines and service members at both the local and national levels. This next Midwinter Conference is shaping up to be a great one, and I look forward to seeing many familiar, and hopefully new, faces.

This year’s Marine Corps League Enlisted Awards selection process has provided another amazing opportunity to read about inspiring accomplishments throughout the Fleet Marine Force and recognize deserving Marines throughout the ranks. Unfortunately, the submission process began later than planned, but we are working to ensure that it starts as early as possible for the 2026 MCL Enlisted Awards.

Did you know we have an app? We sure do! If you haven’t downloaded it yet, you should! Not only is it free to everyone, it can also help you find your closest MCL detachment or veteran service officer, discover events taking place throughout the country, and much more. If you are part of a detachment, department, or division and have an event in the planning stages, send it my way. Let’s show everyone how awesome your event is going to be! **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

JOHN TAYLOR

Community Service Is the Ultimate Public Relations

MARINES: The Marine Corps League, a veteran service organization, accomplishes a great deal for veterans, but our mission extends far beyond assisting those who once wore the uniform. Our continued presence within our communities demonstrates that the spirit of service does not end when a Marine leaves active duty.

The Toys for Tots program is one of the greatest examples of that commitment. Through the efforts of Marine Corps Reserve units, MCL members, volunteers, and community partners, families experience firsthand the compassion and generosity associated with the Marine Corps family. Toys for Tots does more than provide toys—it builds relationships, strengthens communities, and reminds families that Marines remain committed to serving others.

Our color guards and ceremonial guards provide another important connection. Whether participating in community celebrations, patriotic ceremonies, veterans’ events, or memorial services, these Marines and MCL members represent honor, tradition, and respect. At



memorial services especially, their presence reflects our gratitude for those who served and provides dignity and comfort to families honoring their loved ones.

This is public relations in its most meaningful form.

Public relations is not simply about advertisements, photographs, social media posts, or telling people who we are. It is about allowing communities to see who we are through what we do.

When MCL members support veterans, help children, participate in ceremonies, honor the fallen, and serve their communities, we demonstrate that our commitment to service remains alive.

We often say, “God bless America.” Our actions should help give those words meaning.

The MCL has an opportunity to show our nation that Marines are still present, still serving, and still committed to the mission. Through community involvement, we strengthen relationships, preserve Marine Corps traditions, and inspire others to serve.

The uniform may change, but the mission continues. **Semper Fi!**



ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Change of
Command
Ceremony

NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF VETERAN SERVICES

PHILIP DU

Building Capacity, Advancing Advocacy

MARINES: Over the past year, our National Veterans Service Program has continued to grow in both capability and reach. What began as an effort to strengthen our service to Marines, veterans, and their families is becoming a more structured national program with a group of dedicated professional volunteer veteran service officers, high-quality training courses, and a willingness to address emerging issues that may affect generations of veterans.

One of our most important areas of focus has been blast exposure.

For many Marines, Fleet Marine Force personnel, and combat veterans, repeated exposure to weapons systems, breaching, artillery, explosives, and other high-pressure environments was simply part of the job. Yet scientific research on the long-term effects of repeated occupational blast exposure continues to develop. While the Department of Defense has taken steps to improve blast-exposure tracking, how that exposure is documented after a veteran leaves service remains a question for the VA.

The Marine Corps League is working to bring greater attention to this issue. We are using evidence-based methods to identify gaps in the evidence available to the VA. Specifically, we are advocating for better exposure documentation, stronger coordination between DOD and the VA, continued research, and



a system that ensures veterans are not forgotten simply because their blast exposure seemed too minor to raise a red flag until decades later.

Continuing to build our VSO corps is equally important. VSOs are often among the first people to hear a veteran describe symptoms, service conditions, or patterns of exposure that may not yet be fully understood by the medical or benefits systems. While VSOs are not researchers or clinicians, they play an important role in helping veterans document their service history, identify relevant evidence, preserve records, and understand how emerging research may affect future claims and health care decisions. Their work also helps the MCL recognize recurring issues that may warrant broader policy attention and advocacy.

There is still considerable work ahead. But the progress of the past year demonstrates what is possible when we combine the MCL's tradition of service with professional training, responsible advocacy, and a commitment to the next generation of veterans. Looking ahead to the Mid-Winter Conference, we are working with scientists to bring greater awareness to blast exposure and its

potential long-term effects. This work will strengthen our ability to advocate more effectively as the science continues to develop.
Semper Fi!

NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MCL AUXILIARY

MARY BRIEF

NATIONALMCLA.ORG

A Fortunate Journey to the MCL Auxiliary



MARINES: Thirty years ago, I attended my first Marine Corps birthday ball with my father, and that evening changed the course of my life. It was then that I discovered the inspiring, welcoming, and vibrant family of the Marine Corps League—and the women who stand beside their Marines in service and support.

My father and his two first cousins were Marines and as a child, I could see the bond they shared through their laughter, stories, and good-natured banter. However, I did not fully understand the depth of that bond until the night of my first birthday ball. Watching my father interact with his Marine family and being welcomed with open arms by people I had never met, was an experience I will never forget. Marines greeted me with hugs, handshakes, and smiles simply because I was Keith's daughter. Their warmth, acceptance, and genuine kindness made me feel that I belonged to something truly special.

Through the Marine Corps League Auxiliary, I found a way to share in my father's passion and pride for the Corps. Supporting him as an auxiliary member ignited a fire within me that has continued to grow ever since. In 1997, our Flint Unit was chartered, which I can say was the beginning of a journey of service that has spanned nearly



three decades for me.

Since then, I have had the privilege of serving on all levels of this great organization. Along the way, I have dedicated myself to supporting Marines, veterans, and their families, those still with us and those now standing watch at Heaven's gates.

When my father passed away in 2005, my commitment to service did not end; if anything, it deepened. Continuing my work within the Auxiliary became one of

the ways I could honor his legacy while carrying forward the values he taught me: loyalty, service, dedication, and faithfulness.

As national president, I have established a resource center to support our members by providing ideas and guidance for projects, events, and fundraisers that local units can implement. These efforts help educate our youth about patriotism, support our veterans, and ensure that their service and sacrifices are recognized and honored.

The Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis*—Always Faithful is more than a phrase to me, it's a way of life. It is the bond that first drew me into this remarkable organization nearly 30 years ago, and it remains the guiding principle that continues to inspire my service today. ***Semper Fi!***

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ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Pvt. George Phillips Detachment #1214, Ballwin, Missouri
Commandant John Cooper sprinkles sand from Iwo Jima on the grave of Pvt. George Phillips on July 18, 2026 during a ceremony to honor his birthday. In attendance at this ceremony were many extended relatives of Pvt. George Phillips, pictured are: Julie Jones, Barbara Van Leer, Jody Fleer, Karen Fleer, Marty O'Brien and Don Fleer.

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE FOUNDATION

JERRY HOLT

PRESIDENT, MCL FOUNDATION

Marines Helping Marines: The Marine Corps League Foundation at Work

MARINES: AFor generations, Marines have lived by a simple principle: we take care of our own. The Marine Corps League Foundation puts that principle into action by providing humanitarian assistance to Marines, Marine veterans, and their families when an unexpected crisis threatens their financial stability.

Recently, a young Marine veteran became a new mother just as the child's father died by suicide. She worked as a per diem nurse and had no paid maternity leave. Suddenly, she was facing both tremendous personal loss and the possibility of falling behind on her rent. The Foundation was able to provide temporary assistance while she prepared to return to work.

In another case, a Marine veteran was temporarily unable to work following an accident. His wife and teenage son were both working and contributing everything they could toward food and household expenses, but the family still could not cover its rent. The Foundation helped bridge the gap until the Marine was able to return to work.

Another family had its home destroyed by a hurricane. As they struggled to rebuild their lives, they needed repairs to a vehicle so they could continue getting to work. The Foundation helped cover those repairs.

Our goal is not to provide ongoing support, but to help a Marine family through an immediate crisis and give them an opportunity to regain their financial footing.

Humanitarian aid is only part of our mission. The Foundation also funds the Marine Corps League scholarship program and supports MCL youth programs.

Our ability to help depends on others' generosity.



Consider the power of just \$10 per month. The MCL has approximately 50,000 members. If only 5% — one member out of every 20 — made a recurring \$10 monthly contribution, the Foundation would receive \$300,000 every year. Imagine how many more families we could help.

There are other ways to make a lasting difference. Members who are required to take distributions from an IRA may be able to make a qualified charitable distribution directly to the Foundation. For eligible donors, this can count toward a required minimum distribution while supporting our mission. Your financial or tax adviser can explain whether this option is appropriate for you.

You can also remember the Foundation in your will or estate plan, creating a legacy that will continue helping Marines long into the future.

We encourage individual members, detachments, departments, and Auxiliary units to join us in this mission.

Please use the QR code accompanying this article or visit www.mclfoundation.org to make a contribution.

Together, we can make certain that when a Marine family faces its hardest day, the MCL family is there. **Semper Fi!**

CHIEF DEVIL DOG

JOE DEANGELO, 62ND CHIEF DEVIL DOG

Chief Devil Dog



MARINES: Woof, woof! Marines and dogs of the order!

As we prepare to celebrate the 251st birthday of our beloved United States Marine Corps, I hope everyone has the opportunity to gather with fellow Marines, raise a glass, share a few sea stories, and celebrate the brotherhood and traditions that have united Marines for generations.

On Nov. 10, 1775, the Marine Corps was born at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. For 251 years, Marines have answered our nation's call with courage, honor, and an unwavering commitment to one another. Although our uniforms may eventually be hung in the closet, the title Marine is something we carry for life.

As Devil Dogs, that brotherhood and sisterhood continue through our service to the Marine Corps League, our fellow Marines, veterans, their families, and our communities. So, as we celebrate another Marine Corps birthday, remember those who came before us, those still standing the watch, and those Marines who are no longer here to raise a glass alongside us.

Happy 251st birthday, Marines! Semper Fidelis!

This past August, we gathered in Indianapolis for the MCL National Convention and the 86th supreme growl of the Military Order of the Devil Dogs. What an incredible week of fellowship, tradition, service, and, of course, a little devil dog mischief!

I am truly humbled and honored to have been elected as the 62nd honorable Chief Devil Dog of our great order. I do not take the trust you have placed in me lightly, and I look forward to serving alongside all of you as we continue moving the order forward.

One of my greatest honors in Indianapolis was advancing 111 Devil Dogs to the degree of pedigree Devil Dog, the highest degree in our order. To our new pedigrees, congratulations! You earned it, and now you have the responsibility to preserve our traditions, mentor the dogs coming behind you, and help strengthen our order.

Congratulations as well to all newly elected



Attending the banquet on Friday night.

and appointed officers. Leadership is not about the title. It is about service, teamwork, mentorship, and taking care of our Dogs. Never forget that while our mission is serious, we are still the fun and honor society of the MCL!

Thank you to every Dog who made the 86th supreme growl a success. Take that energy back to your packs and pounds. Recruit, mentor, serve, have some fun, and continue making a difference.

Most importantly, take care of one another. Keep our traditions alive and keep moving the order forward.

Happy birthday, Marines! **Semper Fi!**



Reciting the Devil Dog Creed at the end of the 86th Supreme Growl.



The 62nd CDD installation by PCDD Tom Hazlett.



Above, morning colors. Woof, woof!

Left, the 67th National Commandant and 62nd Chief Devil Dog.

NATIONAL SR. VICE COMMANDANT

DAVID PORTER

Consistency Compounds and Persistence Pays

MARINES: I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Department Commandant Kay Ross and her team, as well as National Vice Commandant Dave Englert of the Central Division, for hosting an outstanding National Convention in Indianapolis. Their hard work, late nights, and meticulous planning made this event a success.

During my report on the floor, I asked for a show of hands to see who our first-timers were, and I was inspired by how many hands went up. Seeing so many new faces is a testament to the vitality of our organization. These first-time attendees bring fresh energy, new ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose to our ranks. To those who made the trip for the first time, thank you for getting involved at the National level. All are welcome, regardless of the color of your cover. Whether you are wearing a red cover at the detachment level or gold at the National level, we are all cut from the same cloth. The mission is the same, and every voice matters.

I want to thank everyone for your support, your trust, and for electing me as your national senior vice commandant. Congratulations, National Commandant Russ Miller, on reaching the top seat. I look forward to serving you and the Marine Corps League; you have an outstanding team working alongside you. As we advance in leadership, we take on greater responsibilities and commitments, and we are excited to embrace them together.



Bettering yourself is not only good for your well-being but also for the people around you. We can all continue to grow, but we must be patient with the process. If we fall, we get back up and learn. Failure is never the end as long as you refuse to give up. That relentless drive to improve is what defines us, and we must remember that successful leaders do not become great overnight.

As Bruce Lee said, "Long-term consistency trumps short-term intensity." We remain committed to the small, daily actions that compound over time to deliver results for our veteran community. Our veteran service officer program continues to grow. Please reach out if you need assistance. We are also entering the Toys for Tots season, another vital opportunity to give back. Let us keep moving forward together, knowing that the positive impact we have on others is part of our motivation.

Celebrating our nation's 250th anniversary alongside the Corps' rich traditions emphasizes the enduring influence of those who serve, support veterans, and give back to their communities throughout the year. It's a meaningful time to toast to history and camaraderie and renew our energy for the future. Happy birthday, Marines! **Semper Fi!**

NATIONAL JR. VICE COMMANDANT

BRUCE RAKFELDT

Honored to Serve

MARINES: It is with great humility and gratitude that I accept the responsibility of serving as your national junior vice commandant. I sincerely thank the delegates and members who have placed their trust and confidence in me. I look forward to working alongside our national commandant, board of trustees, department leadership, and members across the nation as we continue to strengthen our organization.

The Marine Corps League stands on a proud foundation built by generations of dedicated members who have devoted themselves to preserving the traditions of the United States Marine Corps while serving veterans, communities, and one another. As we move into another year of service, it is important that we honor that legacy while preparing for the future.

Throughout my travels within the MCL, I have witnessed the extraordinary commitment of our members at every level. Whether supporting veterans in need, mentoring young people through youth programs, participating in community events, or standing watch at memorial ceremonies, our members demonstrate every day what it means to live the values represented by our eagle, globe, and anchor.

One of my primary goals during this term is to encourage leadership development throughout our organization. Our future depends upon



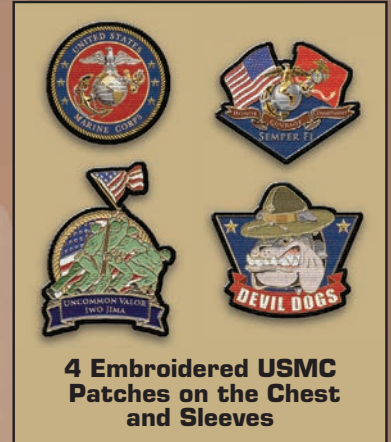
members who are willing to step forward, learn, and serve. Every detachment should be identifying and mentoring future leaders who will carry our mission forward. Leadership succession is not simply a national concern; it begins at the local level.

I am also committed to promoting education and understanding of our governing documents. Strong organizations are built upon consistency, transparency, and accountability. When our policies and procedures are understood and applied fairly, they protect both our members and the integrity of the MCL.

Most importantly, I believe our strength lies in our unity. We may come from different backgrounds, generations, and experiences, but we share a common commitment to the values of honor, courage, and commitment. By focusing on our mission and supporting one another, we can ensure that the MCL remains a vibrant and respected organization for years to come.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your national junior vice commandant. **Semper Fi!**

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NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE

ROBERT ZILTZ

No One Leads Alone

MARINES: As I begin this new chapter of service to the Marine Corps League, I find myself reflecting less on the office itself and more on the journey that brought me here. It reminds me of a simple truth: no one leads alone.

Over the past two years, I have written about membership, leadership development, mentorship, belonging, and preparing the MCL for tomorrow. Looking back, I realize those articles were never simply about leadership principles. They reflected lessons other Marines taught me through their example. If those articles have resonated with you, it is because they reflect lessons passed from one Marine to another for generations.

Looking back over my years in the MCL, every opportunity I have received came because someone took the time to encourage, mentor, challenge, or trust me. Some of those Marines are still with us. Others have crossed the final parade deck. Yet their influence remains with me. Their lessons continue to shape my decisions, remind me of my responsibilities, and challenge me to become a better leader and steward of our MCL.

That experience has strengthened my belief that leadership is stewardship. Leadership is service. It is creating opportunities for others to succeed, sharing what we have learned, and preparing those who will one day take our place. Leadership is



not about being in charge; it is about taking care of those in our charge. Our responsibility is not simply to accomplish today's mission, but to leave the MCL stronger than we found it.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence the membership has placed in me by electing me national judge advocate. I accept that responsibility with humility and a clear commitment: to serve to the

best of my ability, to put our members and the good of the MCL first in everything I do, and to approach the responsibilities of this office with fairness, diligence, and respect for the trust you have placed in me.

In the months ahead, I hope to continue this conversation in a new direction — not only about leadership, but about stewardship, service, good governance, responsibility, and our shared obligation to strengthen the MCL for the next generation. Together, we can explore how each of us can help build an MCL that remains relevant, resilient, and faithful to its mission. No one leads alone. **Semper Fi!**

JUNIOR PAST NATIONAL COMMANDANT

TJ MORGAN

Until We Meet Again: A Farewell Reflection

MARINES: As I begin my service as your national junior past commandant, I do so with a heart full of gratitude. Serving as your 66th national commandant has been the greatest privilege of my life. Thank you for your trust, your friendship, and your unwavering support throughout the past two years. When I accepted this responsibility, I promised to lead through servant leadership, and together we accomplished remarkable things. One of our proudest achievements was hiring our first national director of veteran services, placing the Marine Corps League well ahead of our five-year strategic goal to better serve Marines, veterans, and their families.

We also adopted a comprehensive business plan that will guide the MCL well into the future. My sincere appreciation goes to Bob Borka, Robert Ziltz, and our board of trustees for their dedication and vision in making this possible.

Our partnership with the Marine Corps Association also reached new heights. Through years of collaboration and our work at Modern Day Marine, we celebrated the successful purchase of the Marine Shop in Quantico, Virginia — an accomplishment more than 11 years in the making.

Returning the MCL to Capitol Hill was another milestone. Meeting with Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins,



Department of Veterans Affairs leadership, and members of Congress allowed us to ensure that the voices of Marines and veterans continue to be heard where it matters most.

While I am proud of these accomplishments, what I will cherish most are the people. During nearly 200,000 miles of travel, I had the privilege of visiting detachments across our nation, shaking hands with Marines of every generation, hearing your stories, and witnessing your extraordinary commitment to our mission. Those miles were not measured in distance but in friendships, shared experiences, and the reminder that the true strength of the MCL is its members.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your 66th national commandant. Please continue to support your newly elected national leadership and remain committed to serving others with the same devotion that has always defined our MCL.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES OF THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

COL BILL DAVIS, USMC (RET)

2026 National Convention

MARINES: Reflecting on a wonderful time at the Marine Corps League National Convention, I had the opportunity for meaningful engagement with many of you. I was especially proud of our Young Marines units in Indiana for their support of daily morning colors and other Convention activities.

Congratulations to Russ Miller, David Porter, and Bruce Rakfeldt as they continue their National service to the MCL, and to Robert Ziltz on his appointment as national judge advocate. I also offer my sincere appreciation to all MCL members and associates for their continued service to the MCL, our nation, and the Young Marines. I look forward to strengthening our partnership and advancing our shared mission across the country.

At the Convention, you all had a chance to meet our new National Young Marine of the Year, Young Marines Sgt. Maj. Quinn Lawton from South Carolina. His unit, Upstate Young Marines, led by MCL member Sgt. Maj. James Roberts, USMC (ret.), was also named our 2026 National Unit of the Year. Our National Volunteer of the Year is Sgt. Maj.



Shaun Betton, USMCR (ret.), who is now our Division 1 commander, overseeing all units in the northeastern states.

In my remarks at the Convention, I spoke about the concept of investment. I cannot overstate the importance of the MCL's investment in this program at every level. As the founder of the Young Marines program, the MCL has never left our side, even after we "left home" in 1980. Individual members, detachments, departments, divisions, and MCL

National headquarters make up our largest single organizational support network, from hosting events to providing direct donations. We are working hard to get federal support back on track while continuing to explore additional opportunities for private funding. Thank you for being our partners and advocates in helping us build strong leaders for America's next 250 years. **Semper Fi!**

YOUNG MARINES LIAISON

JOHNNY BAKER

Young Marines and the Alumni Association

MARINES: The Marine Corps League and the Young Marines are partners in helping America's youth lead healthy, drug-free lives, develop leadership and citizenship through community service, and become productive members of American society. Part of the Young Marines' success comes through the Young Marines Alumni Association.

Tens of thousands of America's youths have passed through the ranks of the Young Marines since its inception in 1959. The Young Marines Alumni Association seeks to reconnect former Young Marines with the national youth organization by providing a platform for them to engage with other alumni and inspire future generations of Young Marines. The association focuses on three pillars: Connect and Join, Engage, and Inspire.

"Connect and Join" focuses on renewing and fostering camaraderie among Young Marines and alumni. The association seeks former Young Marines and adult volunteers who believe in the program and the direction it has given their lives. Making connections is an important skill for junior leaders. The Junior Leadership School Alumni Connect Award recognizes a student who has excelled at making those connections.

"Engage" provides opportunities for meaningful interaction between Young Marines and alumni. Alumni help Young Marines through scholarships such as the National Leadership Academy scholarship, which helps send Young Marines from around the nation to leadership schools. The vision of the alumni association is to help point others in the right direction. The goal is for a Young



Marine to attend a leadership school and then share the knowledge gained with their unit. The Michael B. Kessler Space Scholarship Award provides Young Marines an opportunity to attend the Summer Programs of Adventures, Challenges, Encampments, and Schools.

"Inspire" brings Young Marines and alumni together through shared experiences. Sharing experiences through inspiring interactions is an

important skill in becoming an advanced leader. The Advanced Leadership School Alumni Inspire Award recognizes a student who has excelled at inspiring others.

The Young Marines Alumni Association Samuel K. Beamon Public Service Award is presented annually to recognize alumni who have distinguished themselves through a lifetime of public service or significant and outstanding accomplishments in a public service career.

The alumni association invites former Young Marines to reconnect, engage with fellow alumni, and help inspire future generations. Go to the Young Marines website and click the alumni link. One alum said, "My mom enrolled my sisters and me in the Young Marines program when we were young. That solitary decision, unbeknownst to us, changed the trajectory of our lives." What a testament—and a sentiment many Young Marines alumni share. If you are a Young Marines alum, join today. **Semper Fi!**



ROBERT E. BECKER (1997-1999)

Honoring the Service of a Past National Commandant

Past National Commandant Bob Becker died July 5, 2026, at age 87. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1960–1966 and then joined the Marine Corps Reserve in Albany, where he served until retiring as a first sergeant in 1982. Bob was a tireless advocate for fellow Marines and veterans. In 1973, he was a founding member of the Marine Corps League’s Electric City Detachment 222, serving as commandant for five terms. He helped form 17 new MCL detachments across New York and served as Toys for Tots chairman. His lifetime of service included 18 years as national legislative chairman, president of

the Schenectady County Veterans Council, and chairman of the Rotterdam Veterans Committee.

From 1990–1992, he served as commandant of the Department of New York. In 1997, he was honored with the Four Chaplains Humanitarian Award, and from 1997–1999, he served as the 50th national commandant of the MCL.

Bob was recognized for his veterans advocacy in 2011 when he was named National Marine of the Year. In 2019, he was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame. He received many other distinctions during his lifetime of charity and service. ***Semper Fi!***

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DIVISION REPORTS

What the Marine Corps League Offers

MARINES: “We never promised you a rose garden” was on a Marine Corps recruiting poster about five decades ago. Promises of college tuition, health care, and a paycheck were not what brought young men and women to join the Corps. It was the challenge and uniqueness of the Corps that were enticing. Being a Marine is a lifestyle, not an occupation.



Dave Englert

NVC, Central Division



What the Marine Corps League offers is camaraderie, the spirit of brotherhood and mutual trust forged through shared hardship and purpose. Camaraderie transcends casual friendship. It is a deliberate cultivation of the same unbreakable bonds formed in boot camp, combat deployments, and shipboard life. Regular meetings, social gatherings, and ceremonial events recreate the familiar rhythms of Marine culture. Whether it is the solemn observance of the Marine Corps birthday with its traditional cake-cutting ceremony honoring the oldest and youngest Marines present, or informal devil dog barbecues, these activities reinforce a profound sense of belonging.

MCL veteran service officers assist fellow Marines with VA claims, benefits navigation, and employment opportunities. During times of crisis — illness, natural disasters, or the death of a brother or sister Marine — MCL members swiftly respond with financial aid, hospital visits, and funeral honors. Youth programs like the Young Marines and scholarship initiatives extend this spirit to the next generation, ensuring the values of honor, courage, and commitment endure. Many members describe the MCL as their “second family,” a place where the isolation often experienced by veterans melts away in the presence of those who truly understand the unique sacrifices of Marine service.

The power of this camaraderie lies in its therapeutic and redemptive qualities. In an era when veteran suicide rates remain tragically high, the MCL offers purpose, accountability, and connection. Shared stories around the table — of battles won, lessons learned, and fallen comrades remembered — provide validation and solace and reaffirm that no Marine stands alone.

The MCL exemplifies how camaraderie transforms individual veterans into a living fraternity that honors the past, supports the present, and invests in the future. Through its unwavering commitment to brotherhood, the MCL continues to prove that the Marine Corps’ greatest strength — its people — remains eternally bound together, ensuring that every Marine finds not just an organization, but a home and that what the MCL offers is time spent with fellow Marines! **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mclcentdiv.org

Stick to the Basics



Scott Kirby

NVC, Mideast Division



MARINES: The National Convention is behind us, and what an awesome Convention it was! Seeing old friends and meeting new ones is always my favorite part. During the week, I had conversations with members on many different topics. I even witnessed a conversation about peanut butter! We can talk about just about anything and still find common ground.

During the Commandant’s Council, we had a great conversation about recruiting and retention and what we can do to attract younger members and retain the members we have. Some suggestions included not having a business meeting every month and doing more fun activities. I don’t disagree with those ideas, but I think we need to remember why we joined the Marine Corps League in the first place.

I didn’t join the MCL to go bowling every other month or because I could get a discount at Fred’s Diner. I joined because of one word: Marines. I joined because I knew there were brothers and sisters who had walked the same roads I had. Some of us struggled with the transition from active duty to civilian life. We suddenly found ourselves surrounded by people who didn’t understand the experiences, sacrifices, or challenges that came with being a Marine. The MCL gave us a place where we could once again find that sense of camaraderie, purpose, and structure.

I’ve heard people say, “Nobody wants to sit through a boring meeting.” My response is simple: Then don’t make it boring. Our problem isn’t necessarily that meetings are boring. Too often, we have gotten away from the basics and the structure our meetings were designed to provide. We get fancy, or worse, we get lax. We assume everyone understands what is happening, while the new Marine sitting in the back may have no idea what is being said or why we do it. That first impression matters.

So, Marines, let’s stick to the basics. Conduct our meetings with the pride, precision, and purpose that Marines are known for. Welcome the new member. Explain the ritual. Be squared away. Make them feel like they belong. We don’t need to reinvent the MCL. We need to remember who we are. We are Marines. We are brothers and sisters. And when a Marine walks through that door looking for a place to belong, let’s make sure they find exactly what they came looking for. **Semper Fi!**

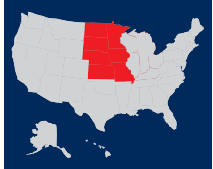
Division Website: mclmideast.com

Cultivating Our Future: Growing the Midwest Division One Member at a Time



Jim Maevers

**NVC, Midwest
Division**



MARINES: As we look at the future of the Marine Corps League and, more specifically, the Midwest Division, I would like to offer a simple comparison: our detachments are like gardens, and our members are the seeds we plant.

Every new member represents potential. When we recruit a Marine or Associate into the League, we are planting a seed that could eventually become a volunteer, a mentor, a detachment officer, a department leader, or even a national leader. But anyone who has ever tended a garden knows that planting a seed is only the beginning.

A seed needs good soil, water, sunlight and nutrients to grow. The same is true of our membership.

Leadership and training are the fertilizer that helps our members grow. Good leaders create an environment where new

members feel welcome, valued and needed. Training gives them the knowledge and confidence to participate. Mentorship helps them understand how they can contribute and, eventually, prepares them to become leaders themselves.

Recent articles have made a similar point: recruitment brings members into the League, while training and mentorship help develop and retain them. Our members are our most important asset and developing them into capable leaders strengthens the League's future.

We should also remember that a successful garden is not measured simply by how many seeds were planted. It is measured by what grows. Likewise, membership success should not be measured solely by the length of our roster. We should ask: Are our members engaged? Are they learning? Are they serving? Are they being given opportunities to lead? Are we developing the next generation of League leaders?

The Midwest Division has tremendous potential. Our departments and detachments are doing important work for veterans, their families and their communities. Our challenge is to ensure that the members doing that work can grow, and that we continually plant new seeds.

So, commandants and officers, I ask you to tend your gardens. Recruit new members. Welcome them. Train them. Mentor them. Give them meaningful responsibilities. Recognize their contributions. Then, when the time comes, give them the opportunity to lead.

Let us plant the seeds today, cultivate them through leadership and training, and grow a Midwest Division prepared for tomorrow. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mwdmcl.com

Indy — Checkered Flag



Pat Maguire

**NVC, New
England Division**



MARINES: I want to take a minute to thank the Department of Indiana for hosting the 2026 National Convention. Putting on a convention of this size takes a lot of work, and I think Indiana did a great job. Thank you to everyone who worked behind the scenes and helped make the convention a success.

Congratulations to all of the newly elected National officers. I wish all of you the best of luck as you take on your new positions and responsibilities. I especially want to congratulate our new national commandant, Russ Miller. Sir commandant, congratulations and best of luck.

One of the biggest highlights of the convention for me was the Veteran Affairs Claims Clinic. I thought this was a great addition and something that really belonged at our convention. Having veterans there who could ask questions and get assistance with their VA claims is exactly the type of thing we should be doing. It was a sound decision by NED/COO Bob Borka and Veterans Service Director Philip Du to have the clinic there. I hope this is something we continue to build on at future National Conventions.

I also want to give credit to CDD PDD Joe DeAngelo Jr. and the Military Order of the Devil Dogs for an outstanding job. Presenting a \$107,000 check to Riley Children's Hospital and another \$7,000 to the Indy Humane Society is something every Dog should be proud of.

The banquet guest speaker, VBA Under Secretary Margarita Devlin, was tremendous. It was great to hear her support for veteran service organizations and the important role we play in helping veterans. It was good to hear that kind of support for the work we all do.

With the Convention behind us, I'm looking forward to seeing how the Marine Corps League continues to move forward. There are certainly challenges ahead, but there are also a lot of good things happening throughout the MCL.

Overall, I thought it was a good convention, and I appreciated the opportunity to see so many members and friends and meet new ones from around the country. Congratulations again to our newly elected National officers, and thank you to everyone who helped make the National Convention happen. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: newenglanddivmcl.org

DIVISION REPORTS

Introduction and Thoughts Moving Forward



Dean Lawton

NVC, Northeast
Division



MARINES: As I begin my tenure as division vice commandant, I'm reminded of a truth every Marine knows well: leadership is not about position — it's about responsibility. It's about showing up, staying engaged, and ensuring that every Marine, every detachment, and every community we serve feels the strength of our commitment.

The Marine Corps League has always been more than an organization. It is a living bridge between generations of Marines, a place where traditions endure, camaraderie thrives, and service continues long after our active duty ends. As I step into this role, my first priority is to honor that legacy. We owe our predecessors not only gratitude, but the determination to build on what they created.

Our detachments are the heartbeat of this division. They are where Marines gather, where missions begin, and where community impact is felt most directly. My focus will be on strengthening these detachments through clear communication, accessible leadership, and practical support. Whether it's membership growth, administrative guidance, or community outreach, I intend to ensure that every detachment has what it needs to thrive.

We also have a responsibility beyond our own ranks. From veteran support to youth programs, from ceremonial duties to charitable initiatives, the MCL stands as a visible reminder of honor, discipline, and service. I will work closely with detachment leaders to expand our presence, build new partnerships, and reinforce the values we represent.

Finally, we must invest in the next generation of MCL leaders. Marines don't wait for leadership to appear — we cultivate it. I am committed to identifying emerging leaders, mentoring them, and creating opportunities for them to step forward.

This division is strong because its Marines are strong. I'm honored to serve alongside you, and I'm ready to get to work. Together, we will advance our mission, support our detachments, and uphold the values that define us. **Semper Fi!**

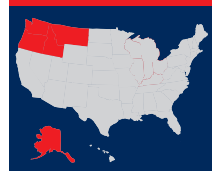
Division Website: nedmcl.org

Looking Ahead



Skip Nakashima

NVC, Northwest
Division



MARINES: First, I'd like to thank TJ Morgan for his outstanding leadership over the years since he was elected national judge advocate. We have made some amazing advances as an organization. Second, I congratulate Russ Miller on his appointment as our new national commandant and Robert Ziltz on being elected our new national judge advocate. I am confident they will continue our forward trajectory. David Porter and Bruce Rakfeldt were elected to the positions of national senior vice commandant and national junior vice commandant, and I'm sure they will continue to do the excellent job they have been doing.

Now that Veterans Day and the birthday balls are over, are the after-action reports in and complete? Are your reviews critical

reviews and not just congratulatory comments? Do they recognize both the successes and what needs improvement for next year? Things always change, and we need to change with them or we will be left behind. Have we accommodated the younger Marines in the area? Have we presented an image that draws them to join us and get involved? These are great opportunities to not only serve our area Marines but also get the image of our units out to the public.

I recommend everyone visit the National website for more information about the Marine Corps League. There is a plethora of information on all topics pertaining to the orderly and uniform operation of the MCL. In addition to the bylaws and administrative procedures, the topics include uniform regulations, color guard procedures and uniforms, training videos for using our database, insurance coverage, the marksmanship program, various forms, videos on how to use them, and more.

All of this is to help detachments maintain compliance with state and federal laws and ensure the smooth operation of the organization. By referring to the training portions of the website, your job will be easier and more accurate.

While on the National website, be aware that the Library section has all the forms you will normally need to comply with the various requests to operate your detachment. The Legislation section lists issues and proposals being considered in Congress for anyone interested in providing input to their member of Congress. The Recommended Reading section lists books for all interested readers.

All this information makes the MCL easier and more interesting. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: mcl-nwdiv.org

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Anthony Evangelista, Tun Tavern Delaware County Detachment #288 Scouting Chairman, presents the Good Citizenship Award to Emilia Menna upon her achieving the rank of Eagle Scout at her Court of Honor.



Audio/Visual Committee - A big Thank You goes out to Nat Sr Vice Cmdt (Ex Officio) Russ Miller, Member Jacob Bertin, and Chairperson Philip McCoy for their hard work on the A/V committee. Their dedication keeps our conventions and events running smoothly. Much of their work happens behind the scenes and goes unnoticed, but we see the care and time they put into managing the sound, video, and equipment. We are truly grateful for your support and time.

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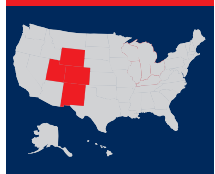
DIVISION REPORTS

Return to Our Roots



Tom Krueger

NVC, Rocky Mountain Division



MARINES: After having returned from the National Convention in Indianapolis, I reflect on a fulfilling week of conducting Marine Corps League business. It was special watching our new national commandant, Russ Miller, a member of the Rocky Mountain Division, take the helm of the MCL. During his acceptance speech, he encouraged us to put the "S" back in our MCL detachments' mission statements. The "S" stands for "service." As a veterans organization, we are called to support our fellow Marines, our fellow veterans, and our communities. Let's not ask what the MCL can do for us, but what we can do for the MCL. We need to step up and go out of our way to support each other and help every local veteran with immediate needs.

How do we accomplish "service"? By promoting the service mission of the MCL. Let's promote our historical traditions as we strengthen the Marine Corps fraternity. We serve Fleet Marine Force Navy personnel; we serve all veterans who wore the cloth of this great nation. We also serve our communities and demonstrate the ideals of Americanism and patriotic volunteerism. Detachments, let's get involved in Toys for Tots, volunteer at local VA centers, and assist at national veterans cemeteries. Do what we can to get back to what the MCL's mission is all about.

We also need to get back to taking care of business within our own MCL detachments. Too many are forgetting to complete the requirements set forth. The only way we are going to succeed is by looking at ourselves and ensuring we are doing our part to complete our required mission. This will assist us in gaining new members and retaining current members.

I ask each MCL member to look at the National website and review the decisions made concerning the proposed bylaw changes. There are going to be some excellent changes, as in years past. I also ask each MCL member to look at their future schedules and see if they can attend an MCL National Convention to experience the networking and professional relationships that develop each year. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: rockymountainmcldiv.org

The Importance of the Chain of Command in the League



Ronnie Broussard

NVC, Southeast Division



MARINES: The Marine Corps League was founded by Marines and exists to preserve the traditions, values, and brotherhood of the United States Marine Corps. Among those traditions is respect for the chain of command. While the MCL is a civilian veterans organization, an effective chain of command remains essential to maintaining good order, accountability, communication, and unity throughout our organization.

The chain of command is not simply a list of titles or positions. It establishes a clear path for communication and provides members with an orderly method for addressing questions, concerns, and organizational issues. In most circumstances, matters should begin at the lowest appropriate level. When an issue cannot be resolved there, it should move through the proper leadership channels until a satisfactory resolution is reached.

Following this process serves several important purposes. First, it ensures that leaders at each level are aware of matters for which they are responsible. A leader cannot effectively fulfill the duties of an office when issues within that leader's area of responsibility are routinely taken directly to a higher authority. Bypassing leadership can create confusion, duplicate efforts, and leave those responsible for solving a problem unaware that it exists.

Second, respecting the chain of command strengthens accountability. Every elected or appointed officer has responsibilities associated with that position. When members give those officers the opportunity to perform their duties, we strengthen the entire organization. When we routinely work around them, we weaken the positions they hold.

The chain of command does not prevent members from seeking assistance from higher authority. Rather, it provides an organized and professional method for doing so. When an issue must be elevated, the appropriate leaders should be informed and included in the communication. This promotes transparency and prevents misunderstandings.

Most importantly, the chain of command is built on respect. We may not always agree with one another, but disagreement should never prevent us from conducting MCL business professionally.

The strength of the MCL depends on members working together toward a common mission. By communicating through the proper channels, respecting the responsibilities of our officers, and resolving matters at the appropriate level whenever possible, we preserve the discipline and professionalism expected of our organization.

Good communication strengthens leadership. Good leadership strengthens the MCL. **Semper Fi!**

Division Website: sediv.org

A Good Leader



Mark Oldmixon

**NVC,
Southern
Division**



MARINES: From my early days in the fire service through the Marine Corps and corporate jobs, I have watched leaders, good and bad, from all walks of life. I learned how to be a good leader, though I've sometimes backslid. Here are some characteristics you can use to be a good leader or avoid being a bad one.

Leaders Must Care

Leadership is about people. Period. Being a good leader is about inspiring people, serving people, and caring for your people. Show your care through daily interactions. Don't pretend you care; your team will see right through that.

Leaders Must Communicate

Not communicating is one of the greatest mistakes a leader can make. When you don't communicate well, your team doesn't feel valued. I cannot think of anything more important in leadership than communication. Not communicating blocks the organization's goals. Good leadership involves listening and respecting others' opinions. When working with Marines, expect respectful disagreement, not personal attacks, and accept dissent. Teamwork means hearing all views, admitting mistakes, sharing risks, and giving rewards to your team. Teach your team to lead. Introduce them to your responsibilities and prepare them to replace you. Or do you keep your job a secret, leaving your team wondering, "What does he do?" When the lieutenant goes down, the sergeant steps up to lead.

A Good Leader Has Character

To be a good leader or team member, one must have character: integrity, honesty, respect for others, and selflessness. As an old saying goes, adversity doesn't create character; it reveals it. To be a good leader, one must know how to follow.

Leaders Must Be Competent

Good leaders know their stuff. Under-promise and overprepare. I've found that technical aspects of a job are the easy part, and the human relationship side will make or break the team. Yet the leader must be competent and proficient to get everything done.

Leaders Must Have Courage

It's easy to follow and let someone else own the problem or make a decision. It's much harder to stand up, speak up, and be accountable. Praise your team when they succeed; don't put the spotlight on yourself. Put the team first. Seeing them succeed is rewarding in itself. **Semper Fi!**

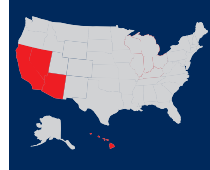
Division Website: mclsouth.org

The Strength in Balance



Joe Uribe

**NVC,
Southwest
Division**



MARINES: One of the greatest things the Marine Corps League gives us is the opportunity to belong to something again. For many of us, putting on the eagle, globe, and anchor was never simply a job; it became part of who we are. When we find the MCL, that familiar sense of camaraderie, purpose, and service can reignite a spark we thought we had left behind.

But with that renewed sense of purpose comes an important responsibility: balance.

As a young Marine, I wanted nothing more than to live within the culture of the Corps. Deployments, field exercises, long training evolutions—I embraced all of it and was having the time of my life. What I did not always appreciate was that while I was answering the call of the Corps, I had a wife and two little girls at home who

needed me just as much.

Now that I am older and, dare I say, a little wiser, I understand that lesson differently.

Our service to the MCL matters. Our detachments, our Marines, our Fleet Marine Force personnel, and the communities we serve depend upon members who are willing to step forward. But our service should strengthen our lives, not consume them.

That is why I encourage our detachments to remember the importance of family. Family days, pre-meeting lunches, picnics, community events, and other activities where spouses, children, and grandchildren are welcome can make the MCL something our families feel a part of rather than something that always takes us away from them.

And sometimes, our families simply are not interested in the MCL, and that is perfectly fine. In those cases, make sure you intentionally give them your time as well.

The Marines standing beside us are our family. That bond is real, and it lasts a lifetime. But never become so busy serving your MCL family that you overlook the family waiting for you at home.

Mission accomplishment has always mattered. So has taking care of our people.

Sometimes, the people who need us most are the ones waiting when the meeting is over.

Lastly, let me thank my division for reelecting me as national vice commandant, and congratulations to Antonio Espino on being elected as my assistant division vice commandant.

Semper Fi!

Division Website: mclswdivision.org



More Than Fun and Fellowship

The Military Order of the Devil Dogs

Ask a Devil Dog what the Military Order of the Devil Dogs is about, and you may get an answer involving growls, big bones, passports, fines, dog collars, or perhaps a story that probably should not be repeated outside the doghouse. The fun is real, and it is an important part of who we are. However, behind the barking, laughter, and traditions is something much deeper.

The MODD is the fun and honor society of the Marine Corps League, but those words mean more than simply having a good time. Our constitution states that one of our purposes is to promote "sociability, comradeship, and good fellowship" while supporting the principles,



programs, and objectives of the MCL.

That combination of fun, fellowship, and service is what makes the MODD unique.

We are Marines and MCL members who understand that camaraderie does not end when the uniform comes off. The bonds formed through service can continue for a lifetime. The MODD gives those bonds another place to grow. A growl provides an opportunity to laugh together, reconnect with old friends, welcome new dogs into the order, and occasionally separate a fellow dog from a few big bones. Yet, beneath all of it remains the same spirit Marines have carried for generations: take care of each other, serve your community, and leave things better than you found them.

That spirit is perhaps most visible through the charitable work of our pounds, packs, and the kennel.

The Children's Hospital Fund: Big Bones Making a Big Difference

One of the most enduring examples of the charitable heart of the MODD is the annual children's hospital donation.

Throughout the year, dogs collect bones at growls, make individual donations, conduct fundraisers, and find creative

The check presented at the end may carry one name, but the generosity behind it belongs to dogs throughout the kennel.

ways to build the fund. Even some of the traditions that make our growls entertaining have a charitable purpose behind them.

A big bone here and a handful of big bones there may not seem significant in the moment. Added together across pounds and packs throughout the country, however, those contributions become something much greater.

The Children's Hospital Fund demonstrates that charitable service does not always have to begin with a massive fundraiser or a large individual donation. Every dog can participate. Every pound can contribute. What begins as a fine, a donation, a fundraiser, or a few extra bones tossed into the pot becomes part of the

collective generosity of the entire order.

At the kennel level, those efforts culminate in a substantial donation that represents Devil Dogs across the country. At the 2026 National Convention, a check for \$110,000 was presented to Riley Children's Hospital. This was the largest annual children's hospital donation the order has made.

The check presented at the end may carry one name, but the generosity behind it belongs to dogs throughout the kennel. More importantly, the recipient is not simply an organization on a piece of paper. The Children's Hospital Fund ultimately represents children and families facing some of the most difficult days of their lives.

Operation Chow Hound: A Mission Continuing to Grow

Operation Chow Hound provides another example of how the MODD can turn fellowship into meaningful service.

Traditionally, Operation Chow Hound efforts have often supported animal shelters, humane societies, and similar organizations. Pounds have conducted pet food drives, collected donations, and partnered with local organizations to help animals in their communities.

At the 2026 National Convention, a check for \$7,000 was presented to IndyHumane. This was the largest donation to an animal shelter that Operation Chow Hound has made.

The program has shown what Devil Dogs can accomplish when we rally behind a cause. Now, at the kennel level, Operation Chow Hound is taking that spirit of service in a new direction.

Going forward, the kennel-level focus of Operation Chow Hound will be directed toward helping provide a service dog to a qualified veteran, with priority beginning within our own doghouse.

The priority will be a qualified member of the MODD. If no MODD member qualifies, consideration will then move to a qualified member of the MCL. If there is no applicable qualified recipient within the MODD or MCL, the opportunity will extend to a Marine veteran.

A properly trained service dog can become much more than a companion. Depending upon the individual's qualifying needs and the dog's training, a service dog can perform specific tasks that assist a veteran in their daily life, increasing independence and helping that individual navigate challenges that might otherwise limit everyday activities.

For a veteran who qualifies for one, that partnership can be life changing.

And there is something especially fitting about Devil Dogs helping put a working dog beside one of our own.

The mission also brings





the MODD principle of fellowship full circle. We often bark about taking care of our fellow dogs. Operation Chow Hound gives us another tangible way to put those words into action.

At the same time, this new kennel focus does not erase the value of the community work that has been done under the Operation Chow Hound name. Local efforts such as pet food drives and partnerships with shelters have demonstrated the generosity and creativity of our pounds and packs.

Why It Matters

It can be easy for someone seeing the MODD for the first time to notice the funny names, the barking, the passports, the fines, and the bulldog imagery and conclude that the organization is simply about having fun. However, they would only be seeing half the story.

The MODD was specifically created as the fun and honor society of the MCL. Fellowship, amusement, entertainment, and camaraderie are part of our stated purpose. Those traditions give the order its personality

and help preserve the camaraderie many Marines miss after active service.

But being a Devil Dog also means doing something with that camaraderie. It means turning a handful of big bones into support for a children's hospital. It means taking an Operation Chow Hound fundraiser and transforming it into food for animals waiting for homes.

And now, at the kennel level, it can mean helping place a trained service dog beside a fellow Devil Dog, MCL member, or Marine veteran who qualifies and needs that assistance.

Every Dog in the Order Matters

The MODD reminds us that service does not have to be solemn to be meaningful. We can laugh while doing good. We can enjoy fellowship while raising money. We can preserve traditions while finding new ways to serve. We can have a howling good time and still make a very real difference in someone's life. Every dog and every level of the order contributes to that mission.

A pound fundraiser matters. A pack

donation matters. The big bone dropped into a collection matters. The dog who willingly pays a little extra matters. The dog who organizes a community event matters. The dogs who explain our charitable programs to fellow Marines matter.

Individually, those efforts may seem small. Together, they become the MODD.

So, when someone asks, "What is the MODD really about?" perhaps the best answer is this:

It is about preserving the camaraderie Marines have always shared. It is about supporting the MCL. It is about fellowship and laughter. It is about honoring our traditions while continuing to serve. It is about helping children, supporting our communities, and taking care of fellow Marines.

And sometimes, it is about putting a few big bones in the right bowl so that somewhere down the road, a child receives help, a community becomes stronger, or a Marine gains a four-legged partner who can change their life.

We are the fun and honor society of the MCL. **Semper Fi!**



From left, Past National Commandants Johnny Baker, Dennis Tobin, and Wendell Webb; Honorary Past National Commandants Penny Weston, Louis Calleja, and Bryson Allen; and Past National Commandants Warren Griffin, Jim Tuohy, and Vic Voltaggio at the 2026 National Convention in Indianapolis.

2026 National Convention



National Director of Veteran Services Philip Du hosts a fireside chat with Veterans Benefits Administration Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Margareta Devlin at the 2026 National Convention.



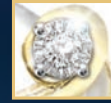
Marine Corps League accredited veteran service officers with VA Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Margareta Devlin at the 2026 National Convention. The MCL hosted a benefits claims clinic, and its veteran service officers volunteered their time during the Convention to assist veterans with their cases.



National Junior Vice Commandant Bruce Rakfeldt, National Executive Director Bob Borka, and Chief of Staff Mark Shuster at the 2026 National Convention banquet in Indianapolis.

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ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Military Order of Devil Dogs kennel staff at the 2026 MCL National Convention.



Members of Teufel Hunden Detachment #1360, West Covina, California, gather for their July 14 All Hands Monthly Meeting. On July 26, the Detachment celebrates its 16th charter anniversary. With more than one hundred combined Marines, FMF Corpsmen, and five Associate Members, camaraderie and integrity remain the cornerstones of the Detachment.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Marine Corps League, Colonel Mitchell Paige 1207 detachment 4th of July Parade events. Additionally, the team won second place for the parade float contest. The members were both walking and riding the float to celebrate the fourth and interact with the community in one of the largest parades on the west coast in San Diego California.



ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



Morning colors.



National Asst Sgt-at-Arms Mario Meaux, National Sgt-at-Arms Lisa Solarczyk, National Asst Sgt-at-Arms Jeff Strouse, and National Asst Sgt-at-Arms Rick Andisik.



aMarine Gail Wise and pilot after riding on a P51 Mustang at the WWII Airshow in Redding, PA on June 5, 2026.

ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



MCL National Commandant Russ Miller and MCL National Chief of Staff Mark Shuster at the 2026 Salute to the American Veteran ceremony in Cripple Creek, CO, on August 22, 2026. National Commandant Russ Miller was a guest speaker.



I had the pleasure to be invited to the Warriors Breakfast at the Albany, GA MCLB ON 8/5, with theme for the day was "FIDELITY". The Montfort Point Marines exemplify the principles of fidelity. We were honored to welcome the guest speaker the Honorable Ambassador Theodore R. Britton Jr. he delivered a very informational speech of his time in the Montfort Point Marines. I was given the pleasure to take this picture with him. As is we are losing them all the time with ages in the hundreds.



National Senior Vice Commandant David Porter Jr laid a wreath at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia in remembrance of the 25th Anniversary of 9/11.



Left to right, Judge Advocate Mark Kross, Associate Member Gloria Tomlin (MCL Det #1039 White Haven, Pa.) with Dave Bray U.S.A. in Philadelphia on November 10, 2025 for the 250th Birthday celebration.

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ROLL CALL

AROUND THE LEAGUE



The MCL Pikes Peak Detachment 29 Honor Guard fired a three-round volley during the 2026 Salute to the American Veteran ceremony in Cripple Creek, CO, on August 22, 2026. Pikes Peak Detachment Honor Guard: Terry Crum, Scott Douglass, John Huntz, Paul Ragan, Dan Wood, Larry Hathaway, Osa Tuck.

Join Roll Call!

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You may submit photos with short captions in email to semperfi@chipotlepublishing.com. Photos must not be more than 20MB in size.

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 instructions on the upload site).

Permission – For photos of youth under age 18, please visit the MCL Library for the “Photo Permission Form” under Scouting for the Photo Release Form.

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.

If you have any questions about uniform regulations, please contact Jim Powell of the Uniform Committee at the National website: www.mclnational.org.

NOTICE TO MARINE CORPS LEAGUE DETACHMENTS!

Please consider taking a group photo of your detachment's membership. Department and division conferences are another way to

capture some memories. We would love to include your photos in the *Semper Fi* magazine.

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKS FOR, ABOUT & BY MARINES – BY BOB BORKA

Finding Carl The Search for a Fallen Patriot

Appalachia native Carl Strong was a Marine who landed during the first wave on Iwo Jima. He died twenty four days later while fighting on the island. This work of non-fiction was written by Marine Corps League member Patrick Godsey. Strong was buried on Iwo Jima, buried again near his family's home, and then finally interred at a third site. Patrick painstakingly searched for the final resting place of this Marine. The story pays homage to the sacrifice and memory of Marines who have raised their right hand and paid the ultimate price for their country.

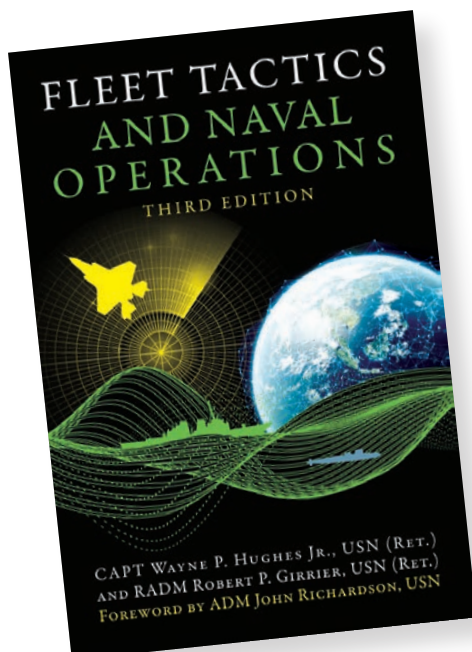
Finding Carl: The Search for a Fallen Patriot

Author: Patrick Godsey

Pages: 47 pages

Publisher: Patrick Godsey Publishing

ASIN: B07X49FMR3



Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations Third Edition

This book, in its third edition, is certainly a more educational experience than the average stories of war. Resembling a college textbook, the reader is provided with an educational opportunity. There is a great deal of text covering previous editions, prologues, introductions, index, and bibliography. The first 250 pages of history lessons were intellectually engineered to provide expansive knowledge. If a person wants to learn about naval history, this is a great book. It also provides some insights into the areas of space and cyber warfare. Interestingly, the culmination of reading leads to examples of other books to read, including Ghost Fleet.

Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations Third Edition

Authors: Capt. Wayne P. Hughes Jr., USN (ret.),
and Rear Adm. Robert P. Girrier, USN (ret.)

Pages: 408

Publisher: Naval Institute Press

ISBN-13: 978-1682479858

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CAC/CAP Vietnam 1965-1971 Marine and Navy Corpsmen

DATE: Nov. 6-10, 2026

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CONTACT: Mark Morales,
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601-918-5008

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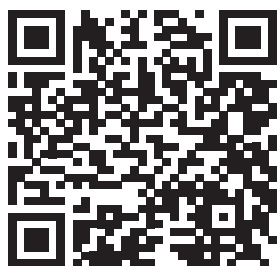
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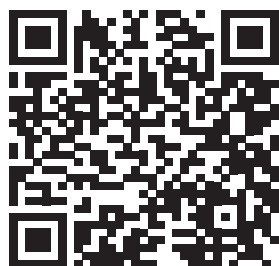
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Proceeds benefit the Youth Physical Fitness Program



The Tree of Lights Program of the U. S. Marines Youth Foundation has been supporting the Youth Physical Fitness Program for over twenty years. Its continued success has enabled the Foundation to provide thousands of students across America with the opportunity to not only improve their personal physical fitness, but to participate in a national competition. Over twenty schools, both civilian and JROTC, participated at the 2026 National High School Fitness Championships held in New York. The generous contributions of the Marine Corps League, Auxiliary and greater Marine Corps family allow the Foundation to provide the YPF Program free of charge to all schools and underwrite the costs of attending the National Championship. Sponsors' names are recorded on the *Scroll of Honor* displayed on the U.S. Marines Youth Foundation website:

www.usmarinesyouthfoundation.org

Registration form on back →

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*Forms should be received by December 1st to ensure inclusion on the Scroll of Honor displayed at the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Donations will continue to be accepted through December 31st. The final Scroll will be posted on the U.S. Marines Youth Foundation website:
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I hereby certify that I am currently serving or have served honorably in the United States Marine Corps, "ON ACTIVE DUTY," for not less than ninety (90) days and earned the Eagle, Globe and Anchor; or have served or am currently serving in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and have earned no less than ninety (90) Reserve Retirement Credit Points; or that I have served or am currently serving as a U.S. Navy FMF Sailor who has trained with Marine FMF Units in excess of ninety (90) days and earned the Marine Corps Device (clasp) or the Warfare Device worn on the Service Ribbon. If discharged, I am in receipt of a DD Form 214 or a Certificate of Discharge indicating "Honorable Service." ("Honorable Service" will be defined by the last DD Form 214 or Certificate of Discharge that the applicant received.) General Discharge under Honorable Conditions is acceptable. By signature on this application, I hereby agree to provide proof of honorable service/discharge upon request. I hereby authorize the National Executive Director, Marine Corps League to obtain an un-redacted copy of my latest DD Form 214 from the Marine Corps custodian of Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF), and/or verification of honorable service if deemed necessary to verify my eligibility for regular membership in the Marine Corps League. I understand the DD Form 214 may contain information such as military awards, training, and character of service.

(Sponsor where applicable)

Applicant's Signature (see reverse side)

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February 25th-27th, 2027

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Rate: \$124.00 per night plus tax

Pre-Registration: \$10.00 Registration at the Conference: \$12.00

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Online registration is available at mcleaguelibrary.org/conference

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