



The Straight Scoop

Department Newsletter of the
Marine Corps League
P.O. Box 1224
Athens, OH 45701-1224



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Department Officers:

Commandant: Jim Doss, 740-441-5638
Sr. Vice Commandant: Mike McLain, 304-464-5049
Jr. Vice Commandant: Greg Irwin, 304-704-5758
Judge Advocate: Randy Thomas 304-688-8
Jr. Past Commandant: Scott Kirby, 304-588-0318
Legislative: Hershel Williams, 304-743-1026
Public Relations: Jean Lamb, 304-595-1482
Historian: Mike Lynon, 304-419-0982
Asst Aide-de-Camp: Larry Goff, 304-752-2106

Adjutant: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Paymaster: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Chaplain: Frank Armentrout, 304-837-4011
Sgt.-at-Arms: Shaun Scott, 304-532-4186
Asst. Sgt-at-Arms: Allen Miller, 304-379-0731
Chief of Staff: Roger Ware, 304-636-4365
Web Sgt: Steven Swenton, 304-277-8872
Aide-de-Camp: Richard Sneigle 304-388-7901
Asst Chaplain: Roy Yanscoy, 740-538-1917

Department E-mail contact: jsdoss@zoomnet.net
Department Web site: <http://www.mcleaguedeptofwv.org/>
Department Adjutant/Paymaster: pattileib024@gmail.com
PO Box 1224
Athens, OH 45701-1224

Newsletter Editor: Roger Ware, 181 Weese Street, Elkins, WV 26241 E-mail: rrware@yahoo.com



Commandant's Letter ~ January 2022

Welcome to all MCL Members, Marines, FMF Corpsmen, Chaplains and Associate Members:

The Christmas and New Year holidays are over, and everyone should be full of good food and saturated with Football Bowl Games.

I attended a ceremony in memory of the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. It is put on each year by Detachment 340 Huntington to remember and honor all our brother and sister veterans that were injured or those who lost their lives that day.

The Covid Virus has rebounded with a vengeance so hopefully by the time everyone reads this the Department will know and have the information out to all of the Detachments whether we will be able to have the January Quarterly meeting due to the Covid Virus. The Department Board of Trustees will have a Conference call to decide whether it can be in person, by Conference call to all Detachment Officers or will have to be cancelled. This information will be out in time for all Detachments to notify their members.

There was a lot of useful information in the December Straight Scoop which I hope everyone had a chance to read. Important topics covered were: Professional Development Training on how to submit changes to the Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures, Award Writing, Department Officer nominations, Scholarship Foundation Applications, and instructions on submitting Department Awards, Department Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year Award Nominations, Mideast Marine of the Year Award Nominations, and Division Marine of the Year Award Nominations. Especially take note of the submission POSTMARK deadlines for each! If we don't meet in person in Princeton on January 15th, the forms will be mailed out to all the Detachments, to the addresses listed on your ROIs, or make sure Adjutant Leib has your preferred address.

Winter is here so don't forget to check on our shut-in brothers and sisters or their widows to insure they are doing OK, or if the need help with food and heat.

Please keep all members of our Armed Forces in your thoughts and prayers as they serve around the world in harm's way.

Semper Fi

**Jim Doss, Commandant
Department of West Virginia
Marine Corps League**

Chaplain's Corner

Father, thank you for your great love and blessing over our lives. Thank you that your favor has no end, but it lasts for our entire lifetime. Forgive us for sometimes forgetting that you are intimately acquainted with all our ways, that you know what concerns us, and you cover us as with a shield. We ask that we walk in your blessing and goodness today. That your face would shine on us. That you would open the right doors for our lives and for our loved ones, that you would close the wrong doors and protect us from those we need to walk away from. Establish the work of our hands and bring to fulfillment all that you have given us to do in these days. We pray that you would make our way purposeful and our footsteps firm out of your goodness and love. Give us a heart of wisdom to hear your voice and make us strong by your huge favor and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Debbie McDaniel, www.crosswalk.com

Recruiting new members

When you are trying to recruit new members, you need to be prepared to distribute MCL material on the spot as you may meet a potential new member anytime, anywhere. You should always carry a membership application with you and have some in your vehicle in case you run across more than one new member. Being properly prepared is part of the process. Everyone is a salesman, and you should be ready to give a potential new member your elevator speech as we say. Being able to inform a new member of what the MCL is and what your detachment does in the community is extremely important. That's why it's paramount that you keep your detachment activities in the eyes of the public through promotional and media articles in the local newspaper or television station. Informing them of your events in advance can pay dividend as it's free advertising that these prospective members might see. You can always submit photos and an article of your events and activities to the media. Always promote your detachment. The department has promotional brochures you can staple a membership application to, with it and include your mailing address and phone number. It does no good if they cannot contact you. Making yourself some business type cards through vistprint.com and attaching one to the brochure is very helpful. Distribute some of the brochures in your post office, local library, other military organizations, local bulletin boards in shopping centers or malls and in your visitor and convention centers. If you have a National Guard unit in your area, talk with the members about the MCL, since many times there are Marines in these units. If there is a truck stop or popular restaurant nearby, drop off some brochures there. Talk

with the local police or fire departments as Marines always seek positions where they are in demand. Wear something that defines who you are. Marine gear is popular so wear it. If you see a vehicle in a parking lot with USMC decals, insert one of your brochures under the windshield wiper or wait and make contact with that person. Establish a relationship with your local Marine recruiters as this will pay numerous dividends with recruitment. The idea is to get in places where there is a lot of foot traffic.

A good initiative that detachments might consider is to have a collaborative effort to sign one new member per month. Every member in the detachment can help focus on signing that one new member. Setting a goal of one new member for the detachment to recruit per month is a lot easier than everyone trying to sign up a new member themselves. Work as a unit on this and communicate with each other to find that new member. Make it your mission and start working on this. Be sure to invite potential new members to your events and social activities and include their families. A good idea is to recruit some of the wives in your detachment as Associate members. This is often a good draw for new members and knowing that their wives can also join serves as a great social outlet for the wives.

These are just some general ideas on recruitment, and I am sure you can think of others, but this can get you kick started.

Semper Fi,

Greg Irwin
Jr. Vice Commandant
Department of WV

Recruiting and Retention

It's a typical stereotype image associated in locations where veterans gather: a place to retreat and share kinship with men who became close because they stood side by side in conflicts like the Vietnam War or met in veteran outreach programs.

But it's not the image the next generation of vets wants people to think of. As we attempt to change the image that most older veterans portray, younger veterans indicate it's time to go back to a grassroots campaign of family-oriented programs and community service.

The Marine Corps League, like the military itself, must shift and offer more personalized, tailored positions that give prospective members or those thinking of leaving the Marine Corps League a sense of purpose and belonging.

At some point in time, the MCL and other legacy service organizations, switched from being a community-centered focal point to being an exclusive social club. And that is switching back.

Post-9/11 vets find themselves more closely aligned to the League's founders, the World War I-era service members who were on a mission to give back to communities, build partnerships with local and state organizations and foster programs geared toward camaraderie and family events.

While the League has always maintained a responsibility to its purposes, those efforts at some point become less prominent. The image of a bunch of old guys sitting around complaining about the VA and swapping war stories was born.

They are fighting against their own perception of what the MCL is because the MCL is not a bar, and they are fighting against the public perception because that's all they've done for the last several decades. The most positive growth across the country has been in communities where the members are active and gaining exposure. Participating in numerous military themed events and civic activities is a huge aid in recruiting more members.

While old members are dying off, the young Marines aren't interested, as the Marine Corps League has lost its appeal. Acknowledge that there has been the long-standing stigma of WWII veteran's verses Vietnam and

today's veteran because each vet has something different to offer either to their Detachment or to his or her community.

Standing up a new detachment is especially promising because they offer a fresh start and can be whatever they want to be. A lot of people think that they must have a building. You can do it anywhere, really. Your home, community, - you just need a place to host your meetings. It could be someone's house. It could be a Denny's; it could be a virtual community through online video conferencing. It could be via face book or other media

There is a larger, long-term strategy to bring in new members and the MCL is long overdue to incorporate more targeted conversations and marketing efforts to recruit and retain members. The MCL needs to capitalize on the talents of the people that we're recruiting.

The recruitment conversation can come down to picking a demographic, and it comes down to a question of, for lack of a better word, talent management and engagement.

The Defense Department has moved toward tailored messaging to a generation skeptical of service. The League has a struggle with talent management, where we have people that want to come in and do good work, they want to continue serving, but we haven't trained ourselves as an organization to identify and put those people in the right positions.

Retention is also a huge problem for similar reasons. If you don't capitalize on the skill set or the interest of the veteran, they're not going to renew. They don't want to come back. They can't get what they are looking for out of this organization, which we should be offering.

You need to ensure that you're providing something that is satisfying for all the members of your detachment across all demographics and generations. You really should re-inflate that sense of purpose and direction that people know what they're doing is making a difference. We need to engage them and get them into a committee where they are productive.

One main reason they do not join is because they have a family and there's a need to share time with them. The department had been going through a tough phase, but reinvigorating family time cookouts, fairs, and a little something for everyone became the catalyst it needed. The family is important and doing things where they can interact helps them see the benefit and social aspect of belonging. It's also about the outreach work with our mission of taking care of veterans and their families, widows and orphans while strengthening our community. When we do events and activities where our members physically participate, it helps bond them to our League.

Professional Development Training

Prior to any detachment meeting, an agenda should be made, as this is something that will help you manage your detachment. First look back over your past detachment minutes and pull forward those items that were not completed. Look back to last year for the month you are holding your meeting now and see if any items or events are reoccurring this year and add them into your agenda. Solicit input from all your officers prior to your scheduled meeting and include these into your agenda. Look at any reports that are pending and list them. At your first meeting after your installation add all your recurring reports into your monthly meeting minutes as this will help you track your reports and have a ready reference for your future meetings. Here are examples of your typical reports to help you track when they are due or when they were completed. These reports should always be reflected in all your monthly meeting minutes for reference.

Membership totals: PLM: 77, members Paid: 32 unpaid: 0, associate members: 24 Total members: 107
Installation date: 4/26/2021 EIN: 55-03110411 Charter date: 8/14/96 Incorporation date: 12/14/00
Incorporation Number: 36374 Locator page: current PLM Audit: 7/17/2021 990-N-efile: 7/1/2021
Annual Corporate Report filed: 4/26/2021 Financial Audit - Monthly Detachment property inventory –
April 26, 2021, Business certification date: 7/21/2011 Rifle inventory: N/A

Department Officer Nominations

Department Sr Vice Commandant Mike McLain is Chairman of the Department Nominating Committee. The following Department Officers will be elected during the Department Convention in Gallipolis, OH on May 21, 2022. Commandant, Sr Vice Commandant, Jr Vice Commandant and Judge Advocate. Nominations for these positions can be submitted to Sr Vice Commandant McLain commencing January 2022. Floor nominations will be taken at the Department Convention.

Hershel "Woody" Williams Scholarship Foundation Applications

Foundation Chairman John Nanny (or Assistant Chairman George Gill, should John's health prevent him from performing this task) will mail out applications to every detachment Commandant in the Department. The applications may be reproduced as needed. The Foundation normally awards four scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.00. This is a one-time scholarship so prior recipients are not eligible. The deadline for applications must be postmarked no later than March 15th, 2022. Please assure that all portions of the application are completed, all requested materials are included and proof of eligibility from the local Marine Corps League is verified by the Detachment Commandant's signature. The application includes additional information required to complete and submit the application properly. Paying attention to detail is necessary in submission of a successful application. In the twenty-one years since the Scholarship Foundation was instituted, 150 scholarships totaling \$132,000 have been awarded.

Department Awards

Department Awards Chairman Rick Shank will send out nomination forms for the following department awards in January 2022. Detachments should be considering those individuals who they desire to nominate for one or more of these awards. All nominations must be postmarked by March 30, 2022, to be considered.

DEPARTMENT HEART & SOUL AWARD is presented in recognition of this Marine Corps League member's outstanding spirit and enhancement of the mission and principles of the U. S. Marine Corps and Marine Corps League from May 2021 to March 2022

COMMANDANT OF THE YEAR AWARD is presented in recognition of this Marine Corps League member's outstanding leadership and guidance in meeting all department and national guidelines, policies, and procedures from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY AWARD is presented in recognition of this Detachment's outstanding public relations contributions and community involvement from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT AMERICANISM AWARD is presented in recognition of promoting patriotism, citizenship, participating in parade activities, and observing all traditions of U.S. Marine Corps and Marine Corps League from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT/PAYMASTER AWARD is presented in recognition of this Marine Corps League member's outstanding administrative and fiscal practices and procedures in the Marine Corps League from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER AWARD is presented in recognition of this Marine Corps League member's outstanding service performance and volunteer work to veterans and their dependents from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AWARD is presented to Detachment_____ in recognition for publishing an outstanding newsletter that conforms to the National Newsletter guidelines from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT COMMENDATION AWARD is presented in recognition for displaying outstanding principles and purposes of the U. S. Marine Corps and Marine Corps League from May 2021 to March 2022

DEPARTMENT RECRUITER OF THE YEAR AWARD is presented in recognition to this Marine Corps League member for recruiting the highest number of new Marine Corps League members for the period May 2021 to March 2022

Department of West Virginia Marine of the Year, Associate Member of the Year Awards

Greg Irwin President, Department of West Virginia Marine of the Year Society and will be sending out an announcement for the 2022 Department of West Virginia Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year in January 2022. Detachments should consider submitting a member for nomination for this prestigious award upon receipt of the announcement letter. All nominations must be postmarked by March 1, 2022, to be considered.

Associate Member of the Year

An Associate Member of the Year Award Ribbon has been approved at the National, Division, Department and Detachment levels. This change/addition would be for a RIBBON ONLY. **APPROVED WITH “A” IN RIBBON VICE EGA.** Department Chief of Staff Roger Ware has the letter “A” for the Associate Member of the Year and the Eagle/Globe/Anchor for the Member of the Year awards.

Bronze A Device



Department Ribbon with A Device



Detachment
ribbon
with A



device

Mideast Division Marine of the Year

Section 300 (h) of the National Administrative Procedures outlines the criteria for selection of the National Marine of the Year. Using these provisions, the following Mideast Division MOY recipients are the committee to select a 2022 Mideast Division Marine of the Year. The Chairman is Frank Mathers - Department of Delaware. The other committee members are Richard Tanner - Department of Delaware, Roger Ware, Mike McLain, Rick Shank and Scott Kirby - Department of West Virginia and Jeffrey Jones and Rick Thomason - Department of North Carolina. The guidelines in Section 300 (h) (2) of the above reference must be followed for each nomination. Please insert “Division” in lieu of “National “, as appropriate. Any regular member from the Mideast Division can be nominated and the Mideast Division MOY will be presented at the 2022 Mideast Division Conference. Each letter of nomination must be mailed to the above Chairman, registered return receipt, post marked not later than May 15, 2022. Mail to Frank Mathers, Mideast Division Chairperson Marine of the Year Committee, 17 Fairway Drive, Ocean View, Delaware 18870. Telephone: 301-520-8051. It must have a cover letter signed by the Commandant and Adjutant or other officers if one of them is nominated. An inner envelope must be addressed to the Mideast Division Chairperson Marine of the Year Committee. A second envelope must be addressed to the Chairperson. It must be sent Certified, Return Receipt Requested for your records, before the postmark deadline.

The Marine of the Year Committee will announce the 2022 recipient during the Mideast Division Conference. The above provisions are for 2022 Marine of the Year selection only.

Division Marine of the Year Criteria

This award shall be presented to a REGULAR MEMBER of the Marine Corps League who has rendered service(s) and/or performed a deed(s) above and beyond the duties and obligations required of a member of the Marine Corps League, or a meritorious deed(s) so identified as being within the scope of these rules shall be of such substance that the weight will or shall have brought acclaim and prestige to the Marine Corps League; or has enhanced and/or furthered the concepts of the duties of being a citizen of the United States of America; or a deed(s) of courage or valor without regard for his/her own safety

Letters of nomination must originate only at the DETACHMENT LEVEL. No individual nor any subsidiary unit of the Marine Corps League shall submit a letter of nomination.

All letters of nomination shall include a letter signed by the Detachment Commandant and Adjutant, stating that the nominee for Division Marine of the Year was approved at a regular meeting of the detachment by a majority vote. (In the event a nominee is the Commandant, the Senior Vice Commandant and the Adjutant shall sign the letter of nomination. In the event a nominee is the Detachment Adjutant, the letter of nomination shall be signed by the Detachment Commandant and Senior Vice Commandant).

Each nomination submitted shall be placed in a sealed envelope and addressed to "Chairperson, Division Marine of the Year Society". THIS ENVELOPE SHALL THEN BE PLACED IN ANOTHER ENVELOPE and mailed, certified/return receipt requested, to:

the Chairman at the address listed on the announcement.

The member must be a member in good standing and have served at least either an elected or appointed position within his detachment and department. List how many years he has been a member. List his positions and what was the significance of each if any. Is he a Detachment or Department Marine of the Year?

The recommendation should summarize what the member has done in his detachment, and or department. It should be brief and only impact areas where the candidate performed that brought credit upon his detachment and not merely list that he performed the duties expected of his position and or attended meetings. What were the results of any activities he participated in that were above the normal expected duties of his position?

List those activities where he was the Chairman or committee lead. Examples: Toys for Tots for 15 years and how many toys collected and how many children benefited. Chairman of numerous fund-raising events that benefited detachment or selected charities. What was the total amount generated? Did he teach flag etiquette or flag folding to children, how many classes and how many kids for how many years?

What civic projects or volunteer did he do to enhance the league. If he did not participate as a league member in an event or activity, do not list it. What did he do as a volunteer outside of his detachment for the league? Was he recognized within his community for a project?

The nomination should be a snapshot of the member's achievements and not just listing his MCL awards. Did he attend his department quarterly meetings or convention, Mideast Division Conference, National Mid-Winter Staff Conference, National Convention?

The Division MOY Committee has developed a point system to aid them in their selection process. Consideration can be giving a point for each event, and a point giving for participation outside his detachment for either serving on department, division, or national level and on any committee.

Department of WV Spring Quarterly Meeting will be January 15, 2022 hosted by Mountaineer Marine Detachment 957 at Vietnam Veterans of America Building, 113 Straley Ave Princeton, WV, 24740, Telephone: 304-487-0082 in Princeton, WV Staff Officers Meeting is 0930 AM with general business meeting at 1000 AM. WV Pack Growl will immediately follow Dept. Meeting.

2022 MCL Midwinter Staff Conference will be February 23– 27 2022 Sheraton Norfolk **Waterside, 777 Waterside Drive Norfolk, VA**

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/orfsi-sheraton-norfolk-waterside-hotel/> Group Code: MCL Phone: (757-622-6664) Room rate includes up to 4 breakfast vouchers per occupancy. \$129.00 per night + prevailing tax (currently 14%) Please make your room reservation directly to the hotel. 2/24/2022 – 2/26/2022 (check in 2/23, check out 2/26) Thursday arrivals & stores are open in the afternoon, Friday opening session & agenda items, Saturday sessions continue

2022 Marine South will be March 30-31, 2022, at Camp LeJeune, NC - **Canceled**

2022 Department of Maryland Convention will be 6-8 May 2022 at the Fenwick Inn 13801 Coastal Hwy Ocean City MD 1-800-641- 0011 (Code MCL) \$125.00/room. <https://www.fenwickinn.com>

2022 Department of Delaware Convention will be 7 May 2022 at the Heritage Shores Golf Club One Heritage Shores Cir, Bridgeville, DE 19933. Coffee Mess 0930, Business meeting 1000, lunch will be served after the close of the business meeting.

2022 Modern Day Marine Expo will be 10 – 12 May 2022 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC.

2022 Department of North Carolina Convention will be May 13-14, 2022, it will be hosted by RDU Det #1482 in Durham, NC.

2022 Department of West Virginia Convention will be May 20-21, 2022, at The Quality Inn Gallipolis, 577 State Route 7 North, Gallipolis, OH 45769. Phone: (740) 446-0090. MGM Detachment 1180 will be the host detachment. Rooms rate: \$85.00 plus tax Banquet includes choice of: Prime Rib \$30, Chicken \$30 or Vegetarian \$25. Dinners include salad, 2 vegetables, rolls, beverage, and dessert. Amenities: Group Rate includes free Wi-Fi, free parking, free cable, free in-room coffee, free breakfast for two guests per room (each additional guest in a room pays \$6) Breakfast is 6 a.m. – 10 a.m. Pre-registration due by April 30, 2022. For information call Jim Doss: 740-441-5638, Jerry Bain: 304-593-9519, Patti Leib: 740-591-8611

2022 Department of Virginia Convention will be TBD

2022 MCL Mideast Division Conference hosted by the Department of North Carolina in 17-18 June 2022. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Raleigh-Durham Airport at Research Triangle Park, 4810 Page Creek Lane, Durham, North Carolina 27703, phone 855-605-0318 or 919-941-6000 The host Detachment is Cpl Alan D Lamm from Burlington. Costs TBD

2022 MCL National Convention Will be August 15-19, 2022, at Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, 100 North Atlantic Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL, 32118 Phone: 800-774-1500 code MCL22 Room rate: \$127.00 plus 12.5% Room reservation open 0800 August 16, 2021. Rates good 4 days prior and 4 days after convention. Self-Parking: \$21.30 per car per night (includes 6.5% sales tax) Valet Parking: \$31.95 per car per night (includes 6.5% sales tax) This hotel is full. ALTERNATE HOTEL INFORMATION: The Plaza Resort & Spa Daytona Beach's Grand Resort. 600 North Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach, FL 32118, Phone: (866) 500-5630 and as for MARINE CORPS LEAGUE, All-in Rate is \$142.88 per night includes 2 breakfasts per room per night. Self (\$15) and Valet (\$25) Parking is separate per day cost.

2023 MCL Midwinter Staff Conference will be 2/23/2023 – 2/25/2023 (check in 2/22, check out 2/26) Sheraton Norfolk Waterside, 777 Waterside Drive Norfolk, VA <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/orfsi-sheraton-norfolkwaterside-hotel/> Group Code: MCL Phone: (757-622-6664) Room rate includes up to 4 breakfast vouchers per occupancy. \$129.00 per night + prevailing tax (currently 14%) Please make your room reservation directly to the hotel.

2023 MCL National Convention will be August 14-18, 2023, in Oklahoma City, OK. At Omni Oklahoma City Hotel, 100 W Oklahoma City Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73109, (405) 438-6500 Room rate \$165.48 includes tax. Parking not included but is \$10 per day. Pet friendly with service animals no charge but others is \$165.00 per week. Rate good for 3 days prior and afterwards.

AROUND THE STATE

Merry Christmas from Huntington Det 340:



Greg Winters and Stan Legge



Buddy Winters



John Roberts



Rick Shank

(continued on next page)



12-20-2021 Huntington Detachment 340 Marine Corps League worked in conjunction with the American Legion Post 16 in Huntington, WV to provide Christmas food baskets for Veterans in need living in the Tri-state area.



On 21 December 2021 Cpl Walter L. Mann Detachment Jr Vice Commandant Gary Watkins and Adjutant/Paymaster George Gill visited Detachment Life Member and Past Department Commandant Sam Baldwin in the West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility. They presented him with Christmas gifts from the Detachment.

Sam was a Past Department of West Virginia Marine Corps League Commandant and had been West Virginia State Commander of the VFW 2 different times.

If anyone wants to visit Sam or send him cards or letters, he is staying in the West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility. To visit you must call 304-626-1600 to make an appointment and you must wear a mask. You can also call Sam at the same number and enter extension 1239 when asked.

His mailing address is:

WVVNF

Attn: Sam Baldwin Room 224

One Freedoms Way

Clarksburg, WV 26301

Semper Fidelis and Gung Ho!

George O. Gill - Adjutant/Paymaster

Cpl Walter L. Mann Detachment 1065

Department of West Virginia - Marine Corps League

304-377-1345

gogill@suddenlink.net

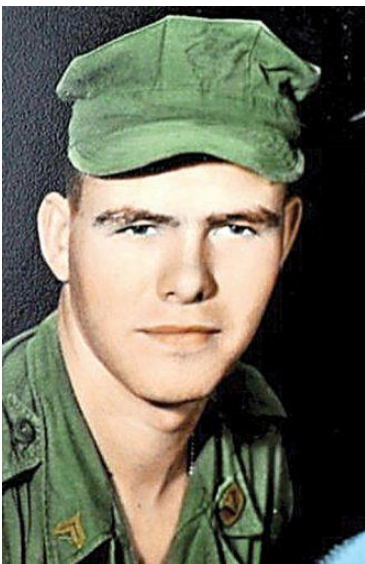


December 18, 2021 – Huntington Detachment 340 presented \$2,150 dollars' worth of Walmart and Kroger gift cards to the Hershel “Woody” Williams Fisher House to support Veteran families. Picture L-R are Denny Wood, Rick Shank, Maria Cain, Commandant Randy “Doc” Thomas, Jane Legge, Stan Legge, Roger Legg, and John Roberts.

The Funds were generated by the Detachments Cookbook fundraiser spearheaded by Chairperson Marine Maria Cain. Members of the Cookbook Committee include Maria Cain, Rick Shank, Jane Legge, Stephanie Thomas, Cheryl Wroblewski, Karen Vasvary, Patti Leib, Brandy Hodgens, and John Roberts.

Huntington Detachment 340 would like to thank all of our contributors and everyone that submitted recipes and purchased a cookbook. Happy holidays and Semper Fidelis!

MEMORIES FROM THE PAST ~ Our own Roger Ware



ELKINS — Today as the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Woodstock Music & Arts Fair, a local Vietnam veteran recalls his personal memories of attending the historic concert. Roger Ware of Elkins was among the estimated 400,000 people to attend the original Woodstock event. The festival took place the weekend of Aug. 15-18, 1969, on Max Yasgur's 600-acre dairy farm in Bethel, New York. The event was captured in an Oscar-winning documentary film, featuring classic acts that ranged from Janis Joplin to Jimi Hendrix.

Ware had enlisted in the Navy, after receiving *“some greetings from Uncle Sam”* that would have drafted him into the Army in 1965. He went through Navy boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois in November 1965, and was stationed briefly in Jacksonville, Florida, before being assigned to support the U.S. Marines as a field medical officer, known as a hospital corpsman.

It was spring of 1969 when Ward first heard mention of the now-iconic music festival. He was stationed in Williamsburg, Virginia, alongside his friends Don Ginn, Dale Gorrell and Pete Black, who was from Monticello, New York, close to Bethel. Sometime in April or May, Pete was talking to his cousin who was doing marketing for events in New York, and she was planning an event somewhere upstate. He asked her what kind of event, learning it would be a music and arts festival.

“We thought it would just be local bands,” Ware said. *“We almost didn’t go.”*

They quickly changed their minds after hearing the musical lineup from Pete via his cousin. They were pleasantly surprised to find that major rock groups like Santana, the Grateful Dead and Creedence Clearwater Revival would be performing over the course of the weekend.

“We were all in the Navy at the time, so we had to get permission from our commanding officer to go,” Ware said. *“We put in for four days off, and we got approved. Pete’s cousin said that we could get tickets for the whole weekend. So, we each gave him \$20.*

He sent him in to his cousin, and she sent the tickets back to us with a poster that had all the band names. Pete still has that poster.”

Arriving a day early on Thursday morning, they found that the traffic leading to the concert site was already extensive.

“We had no idea how many people were going to be there, but traffic was already backed up,” he said. *“It was atrocious. The road going into the farm was filled with traffic for 15-20 miles; there were cars all over the place, and they actually blocked the road so much that emergency vehicles couldn’t get in.*

“They were letting people in two days before the event started, so by the time we got there, there were people all over the place — thousands and thousands of them. They had to get helicopters to bring in all the performers, food, and water, and they had to fly people out for emergencies.”

Ware said the overall atmosphere of the festival was carefree; people were kind to each other.

“We finally got to park in the woods about a mile from the site,” he said. *“There was a van next to us selling all these tie-dye things because the Grateful Dead was there — bandanas, shirts and basically anything they could tie-dye. They just had a long string of stuff, and people would stop there all the time.*

“We saw teenagers walking around carrying bottles of booze; nobody even stopped them. There was a pond there that people were skinny dipping in. When it rained, people would slide off the hillside right into it. Everyone was friendly. There were a lot of teenagers and people in their early 20s like us.”

Despite imperfect weather conditions, those attending Woodstock were not put off by being soaked by the rain.

“It rained a lot. A lot of times the music was supposed to start around two in the afternoon, but some bands would have to start around nine at night and wouldn’t stop until nine the next morning,” he said. *“They just played all night because of rain delays.*

“People sat on a huge hill, and the stage was in a gully. Most of the people there were able to sit on the hill looking down, but the one bad thing was that all the rainwater ran down the hill, and the guys at the front of the stage were standing in 4-5 inches of water, but people didn’t complain about the rain. They just accepted it and kept going. They had these huge speakers. You could be a mile or two away and still hear all of the acts, so I spent a lot of time listening from the van.”

While walking in the backstage area, two of his friends met someone they wouldn’t soon forget — the legendary singer Janis Joplin.

“Two of our guys were walking near the area where the performers were walking, and they were carrying a bottle of Southern Comfort. Janis Joplin walked up to them and said, ‘Hey! Can I get a drink of that?’ And of course, they were going to give her one,” Ware said. *“She talked to them for a while about cars. She loved Porsches, and she told them about the customized one that she had. She loved that car. She stayed to talk to them for about 15 minutes.”*

Ware has fond memories of listening to her set: *“She played really well, and she asked how everybody was doing — if they had a place to sleep. Kind of like a mother-type figure.”*

Some of Ware's favorite acts from the event included Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, Sly & the Family Stone and Santana, but not all of the big acts were what he expected.

"The Who played, but they had to wait a long time and acted like they didn't really want to be there," he said. "Abbie Hoffman started an onstage protest during their set and had to be escorted off."

Perhaps one of Ware's most indelible memories occurred as his Woodstock experience came to a close.

"We were waiting to get out on Sunday morning in the traffic, so we got to hear the end of the music out of the speakers. Jimi Hendrix played last that morning for about two hours," he said.

"Somewhere after the first hour, he did that classic rendition of 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and I remember just hearing that thing played across the fields and thinking, 'Wow, that's awesome.' We didn't know he was going to do that. Hearing that was really something."

Organizers hoped to present a 50th anniversary concert in Watkins Glenn, New York this month, but the event was canceled. However, Ware doesn't think the feeling of the festival he experienced could ever be emulated.

"It's good that [the original] did take place, and the good things about it were that there were no fights, people were peaceful, they were friendly, but that was the hippie generation. People would just talk to each other like they knew them even if though they didn't," he said.

"Vietnam was still going on, and there were protests against that, but having that music festival just created a time to kick back and enjoy being there, the music, and being able to meet people from all over— basically just having a good time when you didn't have to worry about anything," Ware said. "Even though a lot of the people were muddy and wet, they said they wouldn't have missed it for the world.

"The thing is, it's hard to get that many people to get together without turmoil nowadays. You can't put that many people together in an event without something going wrong. I know people tried to mimic Woodstock on a racetrack in 1994, and it was chaos."

Ware and others who were there 50 years ago still have their memories.

"When you listen to music from that era, it takes you back to that place," he said. "You're young again. It's feel-good music. It's music that people still listen to today. I look back on it, and we think about how we almost didn't go. We're lucky we went, though. If you were a music lover, that was the place to be."

2022 VA Compensation Rates

| | Single | Married |
|------|----------|----------|
| 10 % | 152.64 | |
| 20% | 301.74 | |
| 30% | 467.39 | 522.466 |
| 40% | 673.28 | 747.41 |
| 50% | 958.44 | 1,050.57 |
| 60% | 1,214.03 | 1,325.22 |
| 70% | 1,529.95 | 1,659.15 |
| 80% | 1,778.43 | 1,926.69 |
| 90% | 1,098.52 | 2,164.70 |
| 100% | 3,332.06 | 3,517.84 |