



# The Straight Scoop

Department Newsletter of the  
Marine Corps League  
Department of West Virginia  
P.O. Box 11828  
Charleston, WV 25339



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## Department Officers:

Commandant: Scott Kirby, 304-588-0318	Adjutant: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Sr. Vice Commandant: Jim Doss, 740-441-5638	Paymaster: Patti Leib, 740-591-8611
Jr. Vice Commandant: Jerry Bain, 304-675-1905	Chaplain: Frank Armentrout, 304-837-4011
Judge Advocate: Rodney Mayberry, 304-922-2150	Sgt.-at-Arms: Chuck Ghuste, 304-692-0334
Jr. Past Commandant: Michael McLain, 304-464-5049	Asst Sgt-at-Arms: Greg Irwin, 304-704-5758
Legislative: Hershel Williams, 304-743-1026	Service/VAVS: Roger L. Estep, 304-380-7930
Chief of Staff: Roger Ware, 304-636-4365	Public Relations: Jean Lamb, 304-595-1482
Web Sgt: Steven Swenton, 304-277-8872	Historian: Mike Lynon, 304-419-0982

Department E-mail contact: [ronald\\_kirby@yahoo.com](mailto:ronald_kirby@yahoo.com)  
 Department Web site: <http://www.mcleaguedeptofwv.org/>  
 Department Adjutant/Paymaster: [pattileib024@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:rrware@yahoo.com)

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## COMMANDANT'S MESSAGE

Marines, FMF Corpsmen, FMF Chaplains and Associate Members. I hope this finds you well.

As I write this, we have Marines from our Department deployed in many places. Currently we have Marines at the National Mid-Winter Conference in Fredericksburg Virginia. We also have Marines in Hurricane preparing to stand up another Detachment very soon. Our Marines in Morgantown are finalizing the 2016 Department of WV Convention. We will be meeting them at the end of the month to do a walkthrough of the hotel.

I would like to remind every Detachment that your monthly minutes should be sent to the Department Adjutant after every meeting. The purpose for this is two-fold. First, it gives me an opportunity to see what all of the Detachments are doing in our communities and I can report that to our Division. Secondly, there is a ton of information that the Department can compile without asking you for a new report every time National asks for information. We have several Detachments that do a very good job of doing this.

Like I said last month, Detachment elections are coming up. Please ensure that your elections are done per the bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order. After your elections be sure to send your Report of Officer Installations to the Department Adjutant. Once that is complete you can make sure your annual Corporate Report is filed.

I always like to be positive in my writings but there is something that I need every Detachment to consider. We are Marines. We always take our objective. With that being said, I know that each Detachment is different and does certain things their own way and that is fine. This only becomes an issue when the “We just want to be left alone” attitude kicks in. I have spoken with a couple of Department Commandants that have had to close detachments in their areas because those detachments weren’t holding monthly meetings or sending their required annual reports in to their Departments. It is important for us to keep good minutes showing that our detachments are active so that we don’t fall into the same boat.

I was very proud to read the Mideast Division Commandants report to National for the Mid-Winter Conference. In it he praised our Department for all of the good work that we are doing, and he appreciates it as well.

I hope to see you all in a couple of months at the 2019 Department Convention. If you need anything please reach out to the Department Staff. We are here to help.

Please keep all members of our Armed Forces in your thoughts and Prayers as they serve in harm’s way.

Semper Fidelis,

Scott Kirby

Commandant

Dept. of WV

Marine Corps League

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### **Chaplain's Corner**

Memorial sermon delivered by Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn dedicating the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division Marine Cemetery on Iwo Jima on 21 March 1945

“Here lie men who loved America because their ancestors, generations ago, helped in her founding. And other men who loved her with equal passion because they themselves, or their own fathers, escaped from oppression to her blessed shores. Here lie officers and men, Negroes and Whites, rich men and poor, together. Here are Protestants, Catholics, and Jews together. Here no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here there are no quotas of how many from each group are admitted or allowed.

Among these men there is no discrimination. No prejudices. No hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy! Whosoever of us lifts his hand in hate against a brother, or who thinks himself superior to those who happen to be in the minority, makes of this ceremony and the bloody sacrifice it commemorates, an empty, hollow mockery. To this then, as our solemn sacred duty, do we, the living, now dedicate ourselves: To the right of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, of White men and Negroes alike, to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have here paid the price.

We here solemnly swear this shall not be in vain. Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come, we promise, the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere.” ~

### **A Note from the Adjutant-Paymaster**

I have two important issues to relay to you that affect your reporting and membership submissions.

1) By now, I'm sure all detachments have received notices from the Secretary of State of West Virginia, notifying you of the required Annual Corporation Report. This communication boldly says the reports are DUE & warns that you must comply with the law to avoid late fees and potential revocation. Yes, you must file your business Annual Report by the deadline of July 1, 2019, but you also must wait until After your detachment has held your elections for 2019-2020 and sworn in your new Officers, even if your Officers do not change. If you file early, then an Officer that is reported to the State changes, you will have to file again and pay an additional fee of \$26. This is a waste of your time and money. The due date is June 30 each year, but we recommend you have your new Slate of Officers sworn in and installed before Convention (May 17-19). In addition, I prepare a Snap Shot page for the Department Officers Meeting, and I update it with this information and other items, so it would be best to complete your Elections/Installation of Officers by the end of April/first of May, then complete your ACR immediately after that, so you can report to me in time for your updated information to be included on the Snap Shot Page.

2) I was just in the Library on the MCL National Website and noticed National has changed the Transmittal again. Dates have changed for the reduced fees for New members, so it is VERY Important that you go on line to use this most recent form. It starts off with a page of codes and explanations that should be helpful to you, but if you have questions, please be sure to call, email, or text me so I can help you figure out the best way to complete this process. Remember to Always use the online forms and NOT one saved to your desktop, as National is frequently updating their forms and they often reject a submission if an old form is used. I don't recall receiving any notice from National that the transmittal and dates have changed again; I just happened to find this while assisting another Officer with his questions.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. ~

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### **Hershel “Woody” Williams Scholarship Foundation Applications**

Foundation Chairman John Nanny has mailed out applications to every detachment Commandant in the Department. The applications may be reproduced as needed. The Foundation normally awards four scholarship in the amount of \$1000.00. This is a one-time scholarship so prior recipients are not eligible. The deadline for applications must be postmarked no later than March 15th, 2019. 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. The application includes additional information required to complete and submit the application properly. Paying attention to detail is necessary in submission of an application. In the seventeen years since the Scholarship Foundation was instituted, 117 scholarships totaling \$99,000 have been awarded.

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### **Department Awards**

Department Awards Chairman Rodney Mayberry has sent out nomination forms for the following department awards in January 2019. 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, 2019 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 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY AWARD is presented in recognition of this Detachment's outstanding public relations contributions and community involvement from May 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AWARD is presented to Detachment\_\_\_\_\_ in recognition for publishing an outstanding newsletter that conforms to the National Newsletter guidelines from May 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

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 2018 to March 2019

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### **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 2019 Mideast Division Marine of the Year. The Chairman is Roger Ware - Department of West Virginia The other committee members are: Bud Raines - Department of Maryland, Richard Tanner - Department of Delaware, Mike McLain - 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 2019 Mideast Division Conference, June 22, 2019 in Princeton, WV. Each letter of nomination must be mailed to the above chairman, registered return receipt, post marked not later than May 15, 2019. Mail to Roger Ware, 181 Weese St, Elkins, WV 26241. Telephone: 304-636-4365. The Marine of the Year Committee will announce the 2019 recipient during the Mideast Division Conference. The above provisions are for 2019 Marine of the Year selection only.

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## 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 letter of nomination shall be signed by the Senior Vice Commandant and the Adjutant. 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 "Chairman, 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

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## 2019 MCL Department Convention Schedule

**The Morgantown Marriott at Waterfront Place, Morgantown, WV May 17 -19, 2019**

### Friday, May 17, 2019

1300-1600 Professional Development & Leadership Training

1300-1600 MCL & MODD Registration

1200-1300 Lunch on your own

1300-1700 Department Audit Committee\*

1600-1700 Commandant's Council for Detachment Commandants/Staff Officers Meeting

1700-1830 Dinner on your own

1700-2230 Hospitality Room open

1830-1900 MODD Pack Board Meeting - At call of Dept Commandant, Pack Leader, MODD

1900-2100 MODD Growl of the Pack

### Saturday, May 18, 2019

0600-0930 Breakfast on your own

0800-1000 MCL registration

0800-0815 Flag-raising Ceremony - Dept Sgt-at-Arms

0820-0930 Memorial Services, all hands attending - Dept Chaplain

0930-0945 Department Budget Committee Meeting\*

0930-0945 Department Nominations Committee Meeting\*

1000-1200 MCL Business Meeting

1200-1315 Lunch on your own

1315-1600 MCL Business Meeting

1615-1640 New Officer Installation & Department Officers' Meeting

1800-1900 Formal Reception

1900-2200 Grand Banquet

\* At call of Chairman for Audit, Budget and Nominations Committee

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## **VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program to end ahead of implementation of new Veteran appeals law**

Today February 14, 2019, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will discontinue the [Rapid Appeals Modernization Program \(RAMP\)](#), which provided eligible Veterans with early resolutions to their appealed claims, ahead of full implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 that takes effect Feb. 19, 2019.

VA will not accept RAMP elections from Veterans with a legacy appeal after Feb. 15, 2019; however, RAMP claims pending on or after Feb. 15 will continue to be processed until the inventory is complete.

Beginning Feb. 19, Veterans who appeal a VA decision will have three decision review choices: Higher-Level Review, Supplemental Claim, and appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. VA will now offer Veterans greater choice in how VA reviews their claim is committed to ensuring the claims process is accurate, timely and fair.

“VA has been preparing for full implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act over the past 18 months to ensure the new, streamlined process is available to Veterans who have long sought reform of the broken legacy

system,” said Secretary Robert L. Wilkie. “We encourage Veterans whose appeal is currently in the legacy system be to put into RAMP before February 15 to take full advantage of the benefits of the new process.”

VA initiated RAMP in November 2017 to provide some of the benefits of the new law’s streamlined process before full implementation. Participation in RAMP is voluntary. However, processing times under the program have been faster than legacy appeal processing times. Under the legacy process, decisions currently average three to seven years. Veterans who have a legacy appeal after Feb. 15, 2019 will be able to opt in to the process when they receive a Statement of the Case or a Supplemental Statement of the Case after the new law is effective Feb. 19, 2019.

Veterans who participate in RAMP can choose to have their VA decision reviewed in either the Supplemental Claim or Higher-Level Review lanes. In the decision. Participants who select the Supplemental Claim option may submit new and relevant evidence, and VA will assist in developing new evidence under its duty to assist. VA’s goal is to complete Supplemental Claims and Higher-Level Reviews in an average of 125 days.

For more information on Appeals Modernization, visit <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp> and <https://www.bva.va.gov/>. Higher Level Review lanes, a more experienced adjudicator will conduct a new look at the previous decision based on the evidence considered in the previous.

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### **Proposed VA Rules Would Expand Veterans' Access to Private Health Care**

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) today announced [proposed rules](#) for determining which veterans would be able to seek medical care in the private sector starting this summer -- their eligibility guidelines based on drive times and appointment waiting periods that could significantly expand the number of veterans seen outside the VA.

The [VA Mission Act](#) required the department to consolidate its private-sector care programs into a comprehensive community-care system that will provide veterans access to private health care networks under certain circumstances.

The criteria established by the law included access for veterans who live in a state without a VA medical center, who can’t access needed treatments at the VA, who have special medical needs, or who live more than 40 miles from a VA medical center.

The law also stipulated that veterans who meet certain standards for access to care developed by the VA could opt to use the network instead of going to a VA medical center or clinic.

Those access standards, announced Wednesday by VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, are based on driving times and appointment wait times.

Under the proposed standards, veterans would be able to see a community network provider if they drive an average of 30 minutes for primary care or mental health services at a VA health facility, or an average of 60 minutes for specialty care at the VA.

Also, veterans who wait 20 days or more for a primary care or mental health appointment, or 28 days or more for specialty care, with certain exceptions, could seek care in the private-care network currently being established.

Veterans would not be required to get their care through the network; they could always choose to be seen at a VA medical facility, according to the agency.

Wilkie called the proposed access standards a "vital part of the effort" to meet "veterans' needs and reinforce the trust that forms the basis for every interaction with VA."

"Most Americans can already choose the health care providers that they trust, and President [Donald] Trump promised that veterans would be able to do the same. With VA's new access standards, the future of the VA health care system will lie in the hands of veterans, exactly where it should be," [he said in a statement released Monday](#).

The new standards -- and the considerable size of the contract the VA awarded to manage three of the VA's planned community care regional networks, [worth up to \\$55 billion](#) -- has raised concerns that the Trump administration is moving forward with privatizing the VA.

In December, Democrats on the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees expressed concerns that liberal access standards would allow many veterans to utilize community care, undermining VA medical centers and clinics by drawing funding away from them in favor of private networks.

The lawmakers argued that allowing nearly all veterans who qualify for care to choose the private sector would essentially privatize VA medical care.

On Tuesday, 28 Senate Democrats, led by Montana Sen. Jon Tester, ranking member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, [sent a letter to Wilkie](#) expressing their concern over how the VA developed the access standards and community-care program.

"The Department now intends to designate all clinical services as making a veteran nearly automatically eligible for community care. This will significantly increase the overall cost and amount of care VA will send to the community," they wrote. "Given that the administration opposes increasing overall federal spending, these increased costs for community care will likely come at the expense of VA's direct system of care. And that is something we cannot support."

In his statement, Wilkie acknowledged the possibility of a backlash but said the proposed changes give "veterans the power to choose the care they trust, and more veterans are choosing VA for their health care than ever before."

According to Wilkie, the number of VA medical appointments in 2018 was 58 million, up 3.4 million from 2014. He said wait times are shorter and veterans have expressed more trust in their care.

"VA is seeing more patients than ever before, more quickly than ever before, and veterans are more satisfied with their care than they have been previously," he said.

A spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars said the organization is analyzing what the proposed access standards would mean for veterans. VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace expressed disappointment that the organization, which represents 1.6 million veterans, wasn't included in the process to develop the rules.

"VA is repeating previous mistakes," Wallace said in a news release. "Twenty days is just as arbitrary as 30 days and by simply once again adopting prime service area standards does not serve in the best interest of veterans."

The proposed guidelines also would grant veterans access to an urgent-care facility with the newly established community-care networks. According to the VA, veterans may be required to make a co-payment, but they would be allowed to seek urgent-care services.

The VA is encouraging people to comment on the proposed standards and urgent-care benefit on the [Federal Register](#) when they are published. The access standards are expected to go into effect when the final version is approved, probably in June.

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## **VA Disability Rating Update    How to Increase Your Percentage**

Did you know that you can have your VA disability compensation benefit increased by the Department of Veterans Affairs? Many types of medical conditions get worse over time. If you are getting disability benefits from the VA, you have the right to request that your rating be increased if your medical condition gets worse or causes your health to deteriorate. Before you file for an increase in your disability rating, make sure you know what you can expect from the VA, and be prepared for both the best and worst outcomes you might face after requesting a disability rating increase. There are basically three different courses of action you can take when applying for an increase in disability benefits:

1.     **Requesting Compensation for a New Disability** You normally do this if you are already getting VA disability, or have filed before and were denied. For example, you hurt your back while in the military so the VA is paying you disability compensation for a bad back. Now, you realize you are having hearing issues that may be related to your military service. In this case, you just have to file a new disability claim with the VA. Some disabilities may have time limits, and you do have to document everything just like any other application for VA disability. You can choose one of three ways to file for a new disability:  Apply online, using the VA's VETS.GOV website, or  Work with a Veteran's Service Organization. These groups know the intricacies of dealing with the VA and can help you ensure your submission is complete and correct. They will provide free assistance, anyone who charges you for help filing a VA claim is ripping you off.  Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you.

Once you filed your claim, now you sit and wait. It can take months, but usually the VA will send you a letter when:  They get your claim  They start working on your claim  If they need more information  Around Every Month or So While They Are Working on It  When They Make A Decision on Your Claim.

If you submitted a claim online you can check the [www.VETS.GOV](http://www.VETS.GOV) website for the status. If you filed through a Veteran's Service Organization you can check your claim's status through them. The VA may have to contact the DoD for records or if they need more medical information, they may ask you to provide it. The VA may also schedule an examination for you to assess the disabilities you claimed. If the VA requires you to undergo a medical exam to support your claim be sure to show up for the appointment, or risk having your claim delayed by several months. The VA may schedule you for multiple medical appointments depending on how many or what type of disabilities you claim. Other than attend scheduled examinations, you don't need to do anything else unless VA sends you a letter saying it needs more information.

2.     **Filing for an Increase to an Existing Disability** There may come a time that your disability begins to worsen. You may have more pain, have new symptoms, or find that your existing disability causes other issues. For example, your service-connected back injury leads you to favor one leg over the other, causing knee pain. To file for an increase, you normally go through the same procedure you went through when you initially filed for compensation. You will need medical proof that your condition has gotten worse. This can be from either the VA doctor or a private doctor. You can file your increase request using eBenefits or by filling out a VA Form 21-526b Veteran's Supplemental Claim for Compensation (Fillable)

If you have medical information from a private doctor, you must submit a VA Form 214142 Authorization to Disclose Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) which authorizes that doctor to share

information with the VA. If you are seeing a civilian doctor as part of the Veterans' Choice program, you may not need the VA Form 21-4142, but it never hurts to have one on file.

When you request an increase in your VA disability rating, you are in effect opening up your claim for reevaluation. The VA can actually lower or terminate your existing rating, so you need to make sure you have all your ducks in a row before you file. ☐ If you've had your VA disability for more than five years, the VA has to prove that your illness or disease has gotten better and will stay better before reducing or terminating your rating.

☐ If you've had your disability for 10 years or more, the VA can very rarely terminate your benefits unless it proves that you've been fraudulent in your claim. It can, however, reduce your benefits. ☐ If you've had your disability for 20 years, the VA won't reduce your rating below the lowest one you've received in those 20 years.

The VA can also reduce or terminate your compensation if you miss a scheduled disability rating medical exam. Whatever the situation, be prepared to send in a ton of documents, fill out lots of forms (this may be easier to do using eBenefits instead of regular mail), and wait for several months before the VA makes a decision on your claim.

3. Disagreeing with the VA's Decision If you disagree with the VA's decision on your disability, you can file an appeal. You can file an appeal if you think the VA rated your disability too low or it denied your disability. You can file an appeal with any decision made by the VA, the initial rating or any subsequent rating. The Board has prepared a pamphlet for you to help explain the process. It is available for you on the web site: [https://www.bva.va.gov/How\\_Do\\_I\\_APPEAL.asp](https://www.bva.va.gov/How_Do_I_APPEAL.asp). You may also send in your name and address, and they will mail you a copy. You may request a copy by: ☐ Email to: [BVAOmbudsman@mail.VA.Gov](mailto:BVAOmbudsman@mail.VA.Gov) ☐ Mail to: Board of Veterans' Appeals, 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20420 Attention: Ombudsman

Anyone who is not satisfied with the results of a claim for Veterans benefits (determined by a VA RO, VHA medical center, or other local VA office) should read the pamphlet above. It is intended to explain the current steps involved in filing an appeal and to serve as a reference for the terms and abbreviations used in the appeal process. Updates to this process as a result of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 are forthcoming. Upon reviewing the pamphlet, if you still want to continue, you will need to submit a Notice of disagreement using VA FORM 21-0958, SEP 2018.

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### **VA Appeals A Long-Overdue Fix**

Veterans rejected for disability benefits will have a new slate of appeals options starting next month, when federal officials will put in place an overhaul the review process with hopes of dramatically cutting down on wait times for the complicated cases. Last week, Department of Veterans Affairs officials announced they will implement new appeals modernization rules starting Feb. 19. Work on the effort has been underway for more than 18 months, since lawmakers passed sweeping reform legislation on the topic in August 2017. Under the new rules, veterans will be given three options for their benefits appeals. All three are designed to streamline the complicated existing process for cases, which can languish for years as new evidence and arguments are introduced throughout the time line.

Now, VA leaders are hoping the most difficult reviews can still be completed in under a year in the vast majority of cases. Their target for cases which don't go before the Board of Veterans Appeals is an average of about four months for a final decision. A successful appeal can mean potentially thousands of dollars in monthly benefits payouts for veterans who have previously been turned down for what they believe are service-

connected injuries and illnesses. VA and Capitol Hill leaders hailed the changes as a long-overdue fix. “(This) is the most significant reform in veterans’ appeals processing in a generation and promises to improve the timeliness and accuracy of decisions for our nation’s veterans,” said House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA). He promised close oversight of the work ahead, but also hope about the potential rewards for veterans.

Committee ranking member Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN) last week visited a regional office in his home state that will be involved in the new appeals process and left feeling confident in its success. “The VA staff feel really good about this,” he said. “They’re worked out the hiccups they’ve had, and are ready to move ahead. Getting all the training and experience is going to take time, but I walked away optimistic.” Veterans groups largely supported the appeals overhaul, although a few groups have expressed concerns about the new system limiting veterans’ options for future reviews in favor of getting faster answers.

Under the first of the three new appeals processes, veterans can file a supplemental claim where they introduce new evidence backing their case. The appeal is handled by specialists at a regional office, who render a final decision on it. In the second option, veterans can request their case be reviewed by a senior claims adjudicator instead of the regional office. Those experts will review cases for clear errors or mistaken interpretations of statute. If they find mistakes, they can mandate corrections for the cases. Finally, veterans will also be able to appeal directly to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. Those cases are expected to take the longest to process, because of the legal prep work involved. Veterans can get a direct decision or request a hearing before the board.

Portions of the new process have been implemented as pilot programs at select sites in recent months. Previously, cases involved a combination of all three options, with cases reset and repeating steps with every new submission of case evidence. Veterans with cases currently pending in the system can opt-into the revamped processes starting next month, or remain in the current system if they believe it will better benefit them. More information on the changes is available through the Veterans Affairs benefits website.

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### **VA Health Care Access Standards Proposed Under Mission Act Implementation**

On 30 JAN the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced its proposed access standards for community care and urgent care provisions that will take effect in June 2019 and guide when Veterans can seek care to meet their needs under the MISSION Act – be it with VA or with community providers. Under the MISSION Act, signed by President Trump in June 2018, there are six different eligibility criteria for community care:  Services unavailable  Residence in a State without a full-service VA medical facility  40-mile legacy/grandfathered from the Choice program  Access standards  Best medical interest  Needing care from a VA medical service line that VA determines is not providing care that complies with VA’s standards for quality

**ACCESS STANDARDS** VA is proposing new access standards, effective when the final regulations publish (expected in June 2019), to ensure Veterans have greater choice in receiving care. Eligibility criteria and final standards as follows were based on VA’s analysis of all of the best practices both in government and in the private sector and tailored to the needs of our Veteran patients:  Access standards will be based on average drive time and appointment wait times.  For primary care, mental health, and noninstitutional extended care services, VA is proposing a 30-minute average drive time standard.  For specialty care, VA is proposing a 60-minute average drive time standard.  VA is proposing appointment wait-time standards of 20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services, and 28 days for specialty care from the date of request with certain exceptions.

Eligible Veterans who cannot access care within those standards would be able to choose between eligible community providers and care at a VA medical facility.

URGENT CARE Eligible Veterans will have access to urgent (walk-in) care that gives them the choice to receive certain services when and where they need it. To access this new benefit, Veterans will select a provider in VA's community care network and may be charged a copayment. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said, "Our medical services must meet our Veterans' needs and reinforce the trust that forms the basis for every interaction with VA. Our new access standards are a vital part of this effort. "Most Americans can already choose the health care providers that they trust, and President Trump promised that Veterans would be able to do the same. With VA's new access standards, the future of the VA health care system will lie in the hands of Veterans – exactly where it should be." Secretary Willkie's full statement is available at <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5186>

VA encourages the public to comment on the proposed access standards and urgent care benefit during the public comment period once these proposed regulations (RIN 2900AQ46 and RIN 2900-AQ47, respectively) publish in the Federal Register; we look forward to receiving this feedback

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## **Professional Development Training**

### **Incorporation of Detachment**

The Detachment is formed for non-profit purposes and no member has a right to any form of profit or personally benefit from the assets or property of the Detachment, with the exception that a member might be hired to provide commercial services for which they can or should be paid. According to National Bylaws, upon dissolution of a Detachment, any remaining assets shall be distributed to the Department and or National.

The Department of West Virginia, including Detachments, which engage in services or business, either profit or non-profit, or which use the name of the Marine Corps League shall be incorporated in accordance with Article Seven, Section 700 of the National Bylaws. The Department or any detachment shall not utilize the EIN number of the National Organization. To apply for an EIN, use IRS Form SS-4 and follow the directions on the form. Detachments should be incorporated within the State of West Virginia as an IRC 501 (c) 4 non-profit organization with their own Employer Identification Number (EIN) under the Marine Corps League's Group Exemption Number 0955. This allows the Detachment to operate, establish a checking account, collect monies for membership and activities, to collect charitable donations for detachment programs, to obtain a permanent business certificate and to act as a corporate entity for sales and other activities, with associated tax benefits for a non-profit entity. Incorporation protects the Officers and members of the Detachment, and by the same measure establishes the limitations for the organization in doing business as a non-profit organization. Therefore, only members shall represent the Marine Corps League.

To avoid any legal ramifications of membership in the MCL, National HQ requires each detachment to file for corporate status within two years of receiving their charter. A correctly formed and operated Corporation shields each individual member of the League from becoming liable for the satisfaction of any possible court issued judgment. Officers of the Detachment have an ethical and fiduciary responsibility to make decisions in good faith that will bring no harm to the Detachment, and they can be held accountable for their decisions.

The Board of Trustees of a corporation has certain duties and must examine all aspects of the corporate business. These duties include a good faith effort to manage the affairs of the corporation through attending meetings, adherence to procedures, examining financial statements to assure each officer is complying with the rules, Bylaws and directives of the board and examination of the books and records where called for. Overlying

all is the duty of good faith and reasonable judgment. To do otherwise is break faith with the membership at large and risk personal liability. Full transparency of financial records is imperative for the benefit of the membership.

## **Finance**

The Fiscal Year shall end at the close of business on June 30th of each year. The revenue of the Detachment shall be derived from membership dues and such other sources as may be properly established at regular meetings or by the Board of Trustees. Disbursement of Detachment funds shall be made as established for payment of National Membership per capita and Department per capita dues, annual Application to Change or Appoint Officers, Corporate Annual Report and those items previously approved by the membership.

Donations to non-profit organizations or members in distress can be made by approval of Board of Trustees or during regular member meetings. A letter should be received from any non-profit organization or school requesting a donation in support of a function. The letter should be read during a membership meeting and any donation must be approved or denied by the membership. A budget will be established as necessary. Each Detachment shall fix the amount of its annual membership dues. Annual dues shall include the Department and National per-capita dues and fees.

All other disbursements will be approved during normal business meetings. The maximum amount of funds that the Commandant is authorized to disburse without getting general membership approval should be specified. The maximum amount for the Board of Trustees should be specified. The Paymaster will reimburse members for approved items upon paid receipts if funds are available.

The Detachment will maintain a checking account and all funds received will be deposited. The Paymaster will draw all checks and ensure proper signatures are obtained. This account will be audited with the monthly bank statement and a report will be given during the general membership meeting by the Paymaster. An annual audit will be conducted by the Audit Committee prior to the Officer Installation.

A motion should be made by the Paymaster to change bank signature cards during a regular meeting upon Installation of officers and this must be included in the minutes.

The annual per capita dues shall be provided for by the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures plus an additional Department per capita due as determined by the Department Convention. The sum of these two accounts shall be forwarded with every membership application or renewal thereof by the Detachment Paymaster directly to the Department Paymaster who will remit the National per capita dues in each instance to the National Paymaster. The current annual per capita of \$5.00 is effective as of 1/1/2003. A member resigning from membership shall not be entitled to any refund of per capita paid.

The Detachment Commandant and Detachment Adjutant/Paymaster or Paymaster will be bonded by a commercial crime policy paid for and administered by National. The bond limit will be in the amount of \$10,000 with deductible of \$1,000.

Checks drawn against Detachment funds shall be valid only if they cover disbursements authorized and jointly bear the signatures of the Commandant and Paymaster. The Detachment financial records will include the Detachment corporation name, address, telephone number and Employer Identification Number (EIN).

No Officer or member of the Detachment shall obligate the Detachment financially in any manner whatsoever without the prior consent of the membership or Board of Trustees.

To assure the financial integrity and credibility of the Detachment, any funds received for a charitable purpose

or for a specific purpose will be deposited into the Detachment funds and will be reserved for that respective charity or specific purpose.

**Detachment Audits and Reports** - An annual audit of detachment finances will be conducted prior to the annual installation of officers. Monthly audits can be conducted and be combined to satisfy the annual audit required by this section if these audits are included in detachment meeting minutes and approved by members. A copy of the audit and all the minutes from the last installation will be sent to the department commandant.

## **Fund Raising**

Two of the most important tasks of every detachment are the recruiting and retention of members and raising funds to run the operation and support detachment programs and objectives. A detachment cannot make the mistake of annually relying on its own membership to fund operations and projects. Brainstorming on numerous methods and ideas to generate funds will benefit your detachment.

If you do a raffle to benefit a charity, then those funds must be dedicated toward that respective purpose. The net proceeds from a drawing need to be applied to that program or project for which the money was received. From the total revenue, the cost of merchandise, printing of tickets, and an amount for the reserve fund of the detachment may be deducted.

Don't forget, when your detachment is incorporated this is your authority to conduct fund raisers within your respective area and your general business license from the state of WV supports your activity. I would highly suggest that each detachment file a copy of their detachment Bylaws and corporate papers with its respective county clerk's office as this makes everything a matter of record in the event an issue on fund raising develops.

Make posters listing your prizes and drawing dates, set up a small table at a mall entrance or large department store -- Wal-Mart, Kmart, Tractor Supply Company, etc. You might even have a donation jar for anyone who wants to make a donation to a local charity, such as Humane Society, Relay for Life, Make a Wish, or any other non-profit organization (ensure any funds collected this way go to that organization). When you collect these funds and then make the donation, be sure to get photo of event in local paper as it gets your detachment some visibility and further supports future events.

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## **Vets Groups Effectiveness and Impact on the Younger Vet Community**

Now, nearly a generation after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the oldest and largest veterans' service organizations known colloquially as "the Big Six" are seeing their influence diluted, as newer, smaller organizations focused on post-9/11 veterans compete for money, political influence and relevance. While there are thousands of nonprofit veterans' organizations registered with the Internal Revenue Service, the majority of power has been consolidated among the Big Six: Disabled American Veterans; Veterans of Foreign Wars; American Legion; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Am vets; and Vietnam Veterans of America. The newer organizations reflect cultural shifts in a smaller community of younger and increasingly diverse veterans who are replacing the older, predominantly male veterans. The scores of upstarts include Student Veterans of America, which advocates on education and job issues; Team Red, White and Blue, which promotes service and "camaraderie" events; and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, which focuses on the specific health and employment challenges those who served in those two wars face. Leaner and more financially efficient these newer veterans' organizations focus on issues such as education and job training rather than meeting spaces or lobbying Congress. In addition, their goals are to integrate veterans back into civilian communities where they feel misunderstood and have lost ties, while helping civilians who have had little contact with veterans understand their experiences.

A shrinking veteran population over all has caused memberships to fall and some groups to restructure. The young vets are saying we need to do things differently with a different emphasis. Most veterans today are married with families, and that means new demands, new interests and new pressures.

The shifts, while perhaps inevitable, leave some worrying that the hard work of pressing for the complicated and expensive health care needs, and other issues, will lack a generation of new leaders. These smaller groups don't do policy advocacy while the Big Six have been carrying all the water.

A relatively new entry, the Wounded Warrior Project, has set a new model for advocacy organizations, raising money from outside the veterans' community and funding research and services rather than infrastructure.

They figured out how to raise money from outside the vet's community better than anyone else. The Big Six are struggling with overhead. As the veteran population shrinks, how they end up dealing with the overhead of maintaining buildings and their structures is yet to be determined. Through grants, the Wounded Warriors Project also marries legacy Big Six organizations with newcomers to build coalitions around issues like toxic exposure, which brings post-9/11 veterans into advocacy, and legacy groups into the future.

Congress still listens to the Big Six but when it comes to forming laws, some groups are clearly on the rise, like Student Veterans of America, which played a significant role in drafting a new G.I. Bill. These groups, lacking the large governance structures of the old veterans' service organizations, tend to be faster on their advocacy feet.

Younger veterans prefer community centers with healthier and more practical assets, like Wi-Fi, child care and yoga classes. In many cases, social media has replaced physical spaces as a place where veterans congregate. Many of the new groups steer away from lobbying on Capitol Hill, and have turned instead to community services, running races and other activities meant not to connect veterans to one another as much as to the rest of the communities they have rejoined.

The epidemic of alienation and loneliness in society writ large is magnified in the vet's community, and Team Red, White and Blue, which engages veterans in community service and physical activities. Many post-9/11 vets served five, 10, 15 years, and they are looking for connection and community and support. Team Red, White and Blue are key to getting people out into their communities and taking what they learned from their service, doing things together shoulder to shoulder to build deep bonds with other people. Their organization is not necessarily in the advocacy space, as they work toward mental health solutions via physical and social activity.

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**A bill that would** have the last Medal of Honor recipient from World War II lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda gained bipartisan backing Monday from the chairmen and ranking members of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees.

"I can't think of anybody who would vote against that," Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Georgia, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said of the bill introduced in January by Rep. Carol Miller, R-West Virginia, which would direct a state funeral for a member of the "Greatest Generation" who earned the nation's highest award for valor.

State funerals, and lying in state at the Capitol Rotunda, are reserved for current and former U.S. presidents and those deemed to have rendered "distinguished service." The late Sen. John McCain was [granted the honor](#) last August.

[Army](#) Gens. John J. Pershing and Douglas A. MacArthur had state funerals, but there has never been one for an identified enlisted service member. (There have been state funerals for the "Unknown Soldiers" of World War I and World War II.)

All four living recipients of the Medal of Honor from World War II were enlisted. They include former [Marine Warrant Officer Hershel "Woody" Williams of West Virginia](#) and three former soldiers: [Tech. Sgt. Charles H.](#)

## WWII Vet Wilson Watson - The One-Man Regiment



Within the ranks of the military, there exists a certain rivalry between those who serve on the front lines and those who serve in the rear with the gear. While all jobs contribute to putting Americans in the fight, the Marines have long prized their beloved infantry above all. In modern terms, it is referred to as the "grunt versus POG debate" with POG referring to "persons other than grunts." In Vietnam, one might have heard the term REMF. Whatever one might call those in the rear, it would serve students of history well to hold their tongue before calling men like Army mess hall cook Wilson Watson a POG or REMF. Little would they know that they would be speaking of a former Marine who fought the Japanese Army along for 15 minutes on Iwo Jima before the rest of his platoon caught up.

The cook serving up a healthy dose of S.O.S on a plate had previously served up violence on Iwo Jima that would lead to the deaths of 60 enemy soldiers. Yes, quite literally, the soldier cracking eggs in one war was a Medal of Honor recipient Marine in another. Wilson Watson was born in 1922 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, to Charles and Ada Watson.

While they looked upon their newborn baby with adoration, little did they know he would one day earn the nickname "The One-Man Regiment." In a family with twelve children, it is likely safe to assume that Watson had to do his share of fighting growing up. He spent much of his youth working on his father's farm and was only able to complete 7 years of grade school as a result.

When his nation was thrust into the fray of World War II, Watson didn't hesitate to do his part. August of 1942 saw him at a United States Marine Corps recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he began his journey towards a Medal of Honor Marine. He attended basic training at the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego before eventually deploying overseas with his fellow Marines, ready for the fight. Although Iwo Jima was where he would earn his unique place in military history, Watson gained experience as a combat veteran elsewhere throughout the Pacific. Serving with G Company, 2nd Battalion 9th Marines, he saw action in Bougainville, Guadalcanal, and Guam. When the Marines finally hit the beaches of Iwo Jima in February of 1945 for their most iconic battle, they had no idea that a one-man regiment existed among them.

Nearly a week after the initial landings, Watson and his fellow Marines had already witnessed what level of savagery it would take to overcome the island. The Japanese were well dug in, with a zealous commitment to fight to the death. Fortunately for America, the Marines were more than ready to match their aggression. As the 26th of February dawned, Watson's squad became pinned down by enemy fortifications that poured withering fire into the Marines. Upon his own initiative, Watson rushed the first enemy pillbox alone. After pinning down the Japanese with rifle fire, he approached the opening of the pillbox and tossed in a grenade. Then, for good

measure, he ran around to the back of the enclosure in anticipation of those retreating. When they arrived as expected, he cut them down with a lethal burst of fire.

Not yet done with his acts of gallantry, Watson charged into action again when his fellow Marines came under fire from some Japanese soldiers on a small hill. Watson scaled the rocky escarpment, killing every enemy that crossed his path. The Japanese, who were none too pleased with his presence, began to pepper the hill with mortars and grenades. Remarkably, Watson could be seen standing erect, gifting violence right back to the enemy the entire time. For nearly 15 minutes Watson stood alone on the fire-swept hill, although wounded multiple times by bullets and mortar fragments, holding the position until the rest of his platoon could catch up. On that hill alone, it was estimated that he had killed nearly 60 Japanese.

Thus, the legend of "the one-man regiment" was born. In the attack, he was shot seven times and was hit in the shoulder by mortar fragments. He was evacuated from Iwo Jima after he suffered a gunshot wound in the neck on March 2, 1945. On October 5, 1945, Private Wilson Watson was presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman at the White House. Following his discharge from the Marine Corps, he enlisted in the United States Army Air Force, and then the United States Army as a Private, where for a time he served in the mundane role of mess hall cook. He eventually reached the rank of Staff Sergeant and finally retired from the military in 1966.

He was married to wife Patricia, with whom he had two children: Ricky (b. 1953) and Darlene (b. 1962). Wilson "Doug" Watson-the man that an entire Japanese garrison on Iwo Jima couldn't seem to kill eventually passed away as a local hero and legend on December 19, 1994, in Russellville, Arkansas.

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Even heroes pause to give thanks.

Iwo Jima Survivor and Medal of Honor Recipient Woody Williams pauses to give thanks at Sheppard Elementary School at Sheppard Air Force Base.



February 4, 2019 Huntington Detachment 340 Marine Corps League participated in a memorial with American Legion Post 16 to honor the Four Chaplains. Pictured Le' to Right are: Marines Denny Wood and Roy Marcum, Post 16 Commander Shannon Harshbarger and Marines John Roberts and Rick Shank.

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service to their church and community, and for upholding America's precious values and traditions, six Knights of Columbus brothers of Our Lady of the Mountains Assembly 3159 received the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award in a ceremony during the 4th Degree meeting at St. Brendan Church in Elkins. Inductees included, from left: Brother Frank Koenig, Brother Mike Woods, Brother Tyke Kyle, and Brother John Vallelonga. Also selected to receive the award were

In recognition of their military service, outstanding

Brother Bob Hammer and Brother Mike Gasper who were not present during the meeting. Brother Roger Ware, right, presided during the award presentation and induction ceremony.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award, recognizing individuals who impart the principles of selfless service to humanity without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, gender or religious beliefs, was named for four U.S. Army chaplains — two Protestant, one Catholic and one Jewish — who gave up their life jackets to crew members and prayed together when their transport ship, the USAT Dorchester, was torpedoed by a German submarine on Feb. 3, 1943, during World War II.

Names of the six new inductees will be inscribed in a book on permanent display at the Chapel of Four Chapel Foundation located in the former Naval shipyard in Philadelphia, Pa.



#### NOTICE

Members wishing to purchase a red blazer as pictured here, should contact Don Dearth to place an order; call (304) 481-9595 or write to him via email to [gemini.65@live.com](mailto:gemini.65@live.com). These blazers are about half the cost of the ones sold by Ships Store, but are the same fabric, quality, and include the correct buttons. Don can give you instructions on measurements for a proper fit, and an estimated delivery date. Now would be a good time to place your order so you could wear it at the Grand Banquet at the 2019 Convention in May.

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## Pending Calendar

2019 Department of Delaware Department Convention and elections of officers will be on Saturday 11 May 2019 at the Heritage Shores Golf Club, Bridgeville, DE. Note to all. The Club is located on US 13 near the intersection of DE Rt. 404 and US 13. 1 hour north of Ocean City and 40 minutes south of Dover, DE.

2019 Department of Maryland Department Convention will be 10-12 May 2019 at the at the Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center, 9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland 21842-2745. 1-800-4 ROYALE, (1-410-524-7777) Rooms: \$105.00 plus tax. Banquet \$45.00. Ocean-view/Pool-view. Ocean Front: Includes free continental breakfast. Convention registration and banquet information can be downloaded at: [www.deptofmdmcl.org](http://www.deptofmdmcl.org). POC: Department Paymaster Ed Dahling Phone: 410-987-5714 Email: [umpire86@aol.com](mailto:umpire86@aol.com)

2019 Department of WV Department Convention will be May 17-19, 2019 at the Morgantown Marriott at Waterfront Place, 2 Waterfront Place, Morgantown, West Virginia 26501. Hosted by Earl Anderson Det 342. Room rate: \$97.00 plus tax. Banquet \$35.00 buffet style., includes free breakfast and free parking. Detachments are encouraged to purchase an ad in the convention ad book for \$100 full page. More in in the Department Convention flyer. Phone: 304-296-1700. or reservations by phone please use the code “2019 Marine Corps League State Convention”. Rate available **05/17/19 to 05/19/19**. The reservation link is live as of now. Book by **04/27/19** For online reservations please follow this link:  
[Book your group rate for 2019 Marine Corps League State Convention](#)

2019 Department of Virginia Department Convention will be May 17 – 19 2019 hosted by John A. Lejeune detachment at Holiday Inn Virginia Beach- Norfolk and Conference Center, 5655 Greenwich Road, Virginia Beach, VA. 23462. Room cost \$99.00 per night plus tax. Reservations: Call 757-499-4400, Reservation Code is MCC. CUT OFF Date is 18 April 2019. Telephone Don Coons POC at 757-510-0435 (c)

2019 Department of NC Department Convention will be June 7- 8, 2019 in Jacksonville @ the Hilton Garden Inn 1016 Jacksonville Pkwy. Jacksonville, NC 28546 Tel: 910) 346-2400. Rooms \$109.00 plus tax. Banquet \$40.00. For convention registration and banquet information go to: [www.ncmcl.org](http://www.ncmcl.org) and click on convention announcement. 2019 Mideast Division Conference will be June 21-23, 2019 hosted by Mountaineer Marine Detachment 957 and the Department of WV at the Days Inn, 347 Meadow Field Lane, Princeton, WV, 24739, Telephone: 304-425-8100. Room rate \$75.60 with tax. Includes free breakfast, parking, Wi-Fi. Reservation start January 7, 2019. Code: 2019 Mideast Division Conference. Reserve by June 7. Banquet \$30.00. Banquet speaker: Woody Williams, Medal of Honor recipient – Iwo Jima. POC: Susan Roles 804-393-0352

2019 MCL National Convention will be August 4-10, 2019 hosted by Eugene Sara Detachment 418 at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center, Billings. Montana. Telephone: 1-406-248-7151. Room rate: \$99.50 plus tax. **Reservation open on Monday August 20, 2018 at 10 AM EST.** Free breakfast, parking and Wi-Fi. Link: [www.mclnationalconvention2019](http://www.mclnationalconvention2019).