



The Straight Scoop

Department Newsletter of the
Marine Corps League
P.O. Box 1224
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MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE-

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Commandant's Letter ~ December, 2022

Greeting Marines, Associate members, Navy FMF Corpsmen and Chaplains:

I want to wish everyone a joyful, festive, and wonderful holiday season. The COVID has changed how we do things, but we can all be thankful we have each other and a whole lot of friends. Spending time with your loved ones over the holidays is priceless. Let's see if we can send some cards to some of your members who may not get out much and just let them know you are thinking of them. If a local unit is doing Toys for Tots give them all the support you can. Give a call to the widows of your members and invite them to your dinners and activities. Visit the veterans at various nursing home in your communities. They would enjoy your visit and many love to share stories; it livens them up. Take some health and comfort items to them. Let them know they are special and thank them for their service.

We need to focus on recruiting new members and retaining our unpaid members. Detachments should have a mentorship program for new members and engage with your community to bring more visibility to our League. Detachments have been tasked to have a Membership Retention Team (MRT) who should be pro-active and engaging. They can call unpaid members, write letters, or visit their homes. Have other members who live nearby pay a visit and talk to them about retaining their membership. Take a look at vehicles that have a military logo or sticker on their license plate or bumper. If you see a military flag flying in the yard stop and thank them for their service and talk about the things the League does. Military caps, shirts and jackets might indicate someone's a veteran. Place some of the MCL trifold brochures in your local Legion, VFW, DAV, Vietnam Veterans locations, VA Clinics, medical facilities, and local hospitals. Try leaving a few in the MC Recruiting Offices. Get business cards made up with your name and contact information and use the reverse side to post your Detachment name or meeting location along with your meeting date and time. We need to do more than just sign-up new members; we need to invite them to join our Marine Corps League Family.

I hope your New Year brings you lots of love, good health, and happiness. Take care of yourself and those you love.

My best, God bless and Semper Fidelis,

Mike

Chaplain's Corner

Lord, For those whose hearts are battered by sorrow or broken relationships, for those whose lives know only conflict and confusion, for those whose bodies are tried and tested beyond their ability to endure this year—precious Savior, draw them close to You. Let them know You are still the same Jesus who was born of a virgin, not in a hospital but an animal barn, laid in a manger of hay. You are still the One sent by a heavenly Father who offered not condemnation for our sins, but love and forgiveness—and daily, divine fellowship. We not only need Your peace and joy; Lord, we crave it. You've promised rest for the weary, victory for the battle-scarred, peace for the anxious, and acceptance for the broken-hearted—not just at Christmas, but every day of every year. Amen.

Being Human

We are all human. It's easy to forget when we expect more of others than we do of ourselves. As believers, aren't we all called to a higher standard? Think about the seminarian studying for the priesthood. He intends to serve God and the people of God, dedicating his life to ministry. Given the history of scandals in the Church, he'd be held to the highest standards and expected to be above reproach. Despite the best of intentions, he's bound to fall short because he is human, as we are.

How quickly we may criticize a priest or minister for giving a lengthy homily or for not showing up at parish meeting. Or we may find fault when he gets crabby or makes decisions without our input. At such times, let us keep in mind that our priests and religious leaders are just as human as we are and struggle as we do to answer God's call.

Bless us all as we seek to serve you Lord. Lord Jesus Christ, inspire us to walk according to your holy ways, not wavering, but focusing on the Cross and your abiding love for us all.

Living in Faith, Gail Golens

A Memorable Day in Vietnam

I just wanted to share some thoughts of a Thanksgiving day in Vietnam. I joined 2nd Bn, 5th Marines on Hill 69 at An Ton Bridge near Chu Lai in 1966. Several companies were up north near the DMZ on Operation Prairie and in late November 1966 our battalion conducted Operation Mississippi in the An Hao basin relieving 3rd Bn 9th Marines. We had assumed the tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) of protecting Liberty Bridge, Nong Song (coal mine), and the An Hao industrial complex area and Duc Duc district refugee compound. We

also had responsibility of the Que Son Valley and were a blocking force to keep the North Vietnamese Army from closing in and rocketing Da Nang.

On Thanksgiving Day, in the middle of a driving rainstorm during the monsoon season, I was a member of a rifle squad in 1st Platoon, Hotel Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines that conducted a long patrol that eventually ended up with us spending the night on the edge of a Vietnamese village. Our mission was reconnaissance of an area several kilos out where one of our helicopters was recently shot down. For our patrol, we all carried a full combat load in our packs that included extra belts of machine gun ammo, claymore mines and grenades. We didn't have room for anything more than one C-rat meal. The patrol was one of those which turned out to be a total cluster as we were new in the area and were only supposed to recon out several clicks, report on designated check points and then back to the An Hao combat base. Due to the rain, swollen rivers, and thick mud in the rice patties, our patrol took longer than expected and we were forced to spend the night in Indian country.

We set up on the edge of a Vietnamese village, several kilometers from our combat base, and dug our fighting holes which filled with water faster than we could dip them out. We had eaten our chow earlier in the afternoon and we only had our canteens of water, and I had several coconut candy bars which I had traded over several days and was saving. Someone had a few packs of Kool aid. We mixed several canteens of the Kool aid, and we divided up the candy into as many pieces as the men in the squad. No one worried about getting a fair share of anything for we had developed trust many long months ago. Here it was Thanksgiving day, and we were all in a foreign land serving our country. We never made a big deal out of our lot that it was Thanksgiving Day, although we missed the big dinner at An Hao combat base as we were sure they had turkey & all the trimmings. We sat in thick mud and water all night, keeping watch for the enemy, driven by fear for we knew enemy soldiers might attack our position at any time. The heavy rain was cold; each of us struggled during the night, searching for rest, sleep, and warmth, which none of us found.

We were grateful that we lived among men who cared about each other and shared everything we had; we made the best of our Thanksgiving meal of Kool aid and left-over coconut bars. We all shared what few cigarettes we had as we sat in the chilly rain thinking of past dinners and were blessed that we had each other to depend on. There's something about being among friends, facing danger together and only living for today, for tomorrow is too far away. Lots of things mattered, but that night it only meant we all shared a memorable Thanksgiving together and that's where we all wanted to be, facing danger together. We could never have been more thankful for what we had. We were friends, we were warriors, and most importantly we were Marines. Nothing could have meant more.

Professional Development Training Award Writing

There are numerous awards that a person can be recommended for. You want to tailor your recommendation for that particular award. All award recommendations must be submitted from the Detachment or Pound level and be approved by the membership. The following awards require a cover letter with the Detachment or Pound name on the recommendation, plus the date of the meeting that they were voted on. Unless the award is for a Department award, do not list everything the person is supposed to do in their position because that's their job duties and not relevant. Do not get into detail about them being involved in the MODD if it's an MCL award. If it's an MODD award, then expand on this. If they are in a paid position this is not relevant either.

The cover letter should state in the opening line what the name of the award is and the year. Example: Letter of Nomination for 2023 Department, Mideast Division or National Marine of the Year or Associate Member of the Year Award. Plus, there should be a statement with the members full name and that the recommendation was approved at a regular membership meeting by a majority or more of the members present with the date listed.

The Commandant and Adjutant must sign and date the recommendation. If the Commandant is nominated, then the Sr Vice Commandant must sign. If the Adjutant is being nominated, then the Sr Vice Commandant must sign instead. A nominee cannot sign his or her own nomination.

Next have the name of the Award at the top of the next page as per the example listed. 2023 MARINE OF THE YEAR OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECOMMENDATION. Start your write up with the full name of the member and note if he is life member or a regular member in good standing and note total number of years in the League. State Detachment or Pound name and number, city and state and repeat the name of the award and recommendation for the following accomplishments: Example:

John Wayne is a life member in good standing of Cowboy County Detachment 1945 Tucson, AZ Department of Arizona and is recommended for the 2023 Marine of the Year or Associate Member of the Year for the following accomplishments:

Start off by listing full name and what position the member is currently serving and include an impact statement on why the member is being nominated. Expand on what the member did to be nominated. Do not just write about what the duties of the position involve or require. What did the member do to stand out?

Next list all positions and committees the member held in his Detachment.

Next list all positions and committees the member held in his Department

Next list what previous awards the member received, MOY, C4C Award, various Department awards and high-level awards from National, Division or Department with date. Example 2009 Detachment MOY, 2010 Department MOY, 2020 Mideast Division MOY

Next list the total number of Detachment meetings, Department Quarterly meetings, Department, Division, or National Conventions the member attended and any other significant events they participated in such as the Midwinter or Modern-Day Marine Expo. List anything where the member represented their Detachment and or Department.

Next use bullets to outline what the member did to be recommended for the award. Tell a good story about their accomplishments because a weak write up does not help. It's important that the accomplishments stand out in separate paragraphs so that they are readable and engaging. Do not waste a lot of words on irrelevant activities. Look back over your Detachment minutes to see what activities your Detachment participated in and the role of the nominee. Think outside the box; what did the nominee do to better his Detachment or get them recognition? Was there any civic or community involvement from the member? Look over your theme holidays or military tributes for reference. Examples: toys for tots, youth sports, fundraisers, special projects, flag classes, decorating graves, honor guard, birthday ball, BBQ planning, parades, festivals, recruiting booths, career/history projects, public speaking, church projects, assisting Veterans in need, nursing home visits, VAVS and or other projects.

Organize activities and events into separate sentences. Veteran or military activities together, civic or community projects or activities together, committee projects or Detachment activities together, special, or significant impact projects into separate sentences.

Summary page should list why you think this member should receive the award and repeat at the end the member's full name and the name of the award and that he was approved by the membership and date approved. Read it over, looking for proper wording, spelling, and punctuation mistakes before mailing.

Ensure you follow the instructions for addressing and mailing your nominations, paying special attention to postmark deadlines and how the envelopes are to be addressed.

For writing Department awards – select those members for specific Department awards in January depending on what category you nominate them for. Have your selected committee start to write down bullet comments about their nominees and ensure you have one writer for every award recommended. Meet in two-three weeks and go over each award where committee members can comment about each member being recommended. In February start to finalize the write ups for submission in early March. Go back over the Detachment meeting minutes and look for activities or events where the nominees may have participated. Look at the award criteria and tailor the write up to match your nominee's accomplishments. Brainstorming ensures a good write up for every candidate. Signature signed by the Commandant and Adjutant or Sr Vice Commandant if either is recommended as the nominee. Be sure to include the date that the member was recommended by vote.

Department Officer Nominations for FY2024

Department Sr. Vice Commandant Rick Shank is Chairman of the Department Nominating Committee. The following Department Officers will be elected during the Department Convention in Mineral Wells on May 20, 2023. Commandant, Sr Vice Commandant, Jr Vice Commandant and Judge Advocate. Nominations for these positions can be submitted to Sr Vice Commandant Shank commencing January 2023. Floor nominations will also be taken at the Department Convention.

Hershel “Woody” Williams Scholarship Foundation Applications

Foundation Chairman George Gill has mailed out applications to every Detachment Commandant within the Department. The applications may be reproduced as needed. The Foundation normally awards four scholarships 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, 2023**. 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. 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 Jason Hunt will distribute nomination forms for the following Department awards at the January 2023 Quarterly Meeting in Huntington. 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, 2023** 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 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY AWARD is presented in recognition of this Detachment's outstanding public relations contributions and community involvement from May 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AWARD is presented to Detachment_____ in recognition for publishing an outstanding newsletter that conforms to the National Newsletter guidelines from May 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

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 2022 to March 2023

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

Stan Legge President, Department of West Virginia Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year Society will be distributing an announcement for the 2023 Department of West Virginia Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year nominations at the January 2023 Quarterly Meeting in Huntington. Detachments should consider submitting a member for nomination for each of these prestige awards upon receipt of the announcement letter. All nominations must be **postmarked by March 1, 2023** to be considered.

IMPORTANT NOTE For January 7, 2023 Quarterly Department Meeting and Spring 2023

(Detachment Officers: If you don't read anything else, read this!)

All Detachments should do their best to have at least one representative at the Department of WV Quarterly Meeting January 7, 2023 at the American Legion Post 16, in Huntington. Packets for Department Awards Nominations will be distributed, along with packets for Department Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year Nominations. In addition, each Detachment will be given their allotment of Pistol Raffle Tickets that need to be sold and the stubs & funds turned in to the Pistol Raffle Chairman no later than April 30, 2023.

There is also an **Annual Detachment Activities Report** due to National (attached to this newsletter) that must be completed and turned in to Adjutant-Paymaster Patti Leib by the end of January. We were not aware of this report last year and did not get it turned in to the Mideast Division/National in time to be counted. West Virginia rarely misses a deadline and we don't want to miss this one in 2023. This is a fillable form and you can email it to Adjutant-Paymaster Leib which makes the reporting process easy. If you have questions or problems with the report, please contact her for assistance. Email to pattileib024@gmail.com

Other Deadlines Detachments need to be aware of are for **1)** Nomination of Department MOY and AMOY are due POSTMARK no later than March 1, 2023; **2)** Hershel Woody Williams Scholarship Applications are due POSTMARK no later than March 15, 2023; **3)** Department of WV Awards are due POSTMARK no later than March 30, 2023; **4)** Hotel, 2023 Convention Registration, and Grand Banquet Payment to Commandant Archibald Henderson Det 1087 due no later than April 1, 2023; **5)** Annual Detachment Activities Report due to Adjutant Leib no later than January 31, 2023; **6)** Election and Installation of Officers for FY24 (Report of Officer Installation due to Adjutant Leib) No later than April 30, 2023; **7)** Annual Corporation Report (ACR) due after ROI and before June 30, 2023; **8)** copies of monthly Detachment Meeting Minutes and Annual Financial Audit sent to Adjutant Leib by April 30, 2023; **9)** Pistol Raffle Ticket Stubs and funds turned in to the Pistol Raffle Chairman no later than April 30, 2023; **10)** Department and/or Detachment Property Inventories due to Adjutant Leib no later than April 30, 2023; **11)** Color Guard/Honor Guard Report due to Adjutant Leib no later than March 31, 2023; **12)** Payment for your Detachment's commemorative coins, ribbons, and medals for the 50th Anniversary (not the free items – only the items requiring payment) is due no later than April 1, 2023. Detachments should make their checks payable to the Department of WV MCL and mail them to Adjutant-Paymaster Leib. (Three Detachments have already submitted their payment – thank you!) The coins have already been delivered; we're just waiting on the ribbons, medals, and devices.

Please note: All of these items are listed on the Snapshot Report and reported to the Department Board of Trustees. Don't let your Detachment be delinquent or non-responsive – help us Keep West Virginia number one in compliance nationwide!

Toys for Tots Program

The US Marine Corps has tasked all Marine Corps League units to support local area Toys for Tots Program by assisting with toy collections and transport to the nearest distribution point. Here are several Toys for Tots local coordinators in WV that are approved to conduct an annual campaign. We have been asked to give as much support as possible.

2023 VA Compensation Rates

	Single	Married
10 %	165.92	
20%	327.99	
30%	508.05	567.84
40%	731.86	812.29
50%	1,041.82	1,141.83
60%	1,319.65	1,440.31
70%	1,663.06	1,804.37
80%	1,933.15	2,094.03
90%	2,172.39	2,353.92
100%	3,621.95	3,823.89

Widowhood & SSA Financial Impact

When a spouse dies, not only is there the profound emotional loss but also there's frequently a financial one as well. While a widow receives Social Security survivors' benefits, she can't receive the same amount of Social Security income that she and her deceased spouse enjoyed before. And, while Social Security income drops, the effective tax rate tends to increase due to the change in filing status. To top it all off, there are a host of bureaucratic hoops to jump through when a spouse passes away. Here are a few of the most important items:

You must return the Social Security benefit that your deceased spouse received for the month of death, and any received thereafter. You are not allowed to keep Social Security checks received for the month a person dies, even when the death was on the last day of the month. If your spouse passed away in September, the September benefit is the check received in October. That money must be returned to the Social Security Administration, even if you were dealing with piles of medical bills in your spouse's last month of life.

You will not receive a survivor benefit in addition to your own retirement benefit. You receive the higher of the two and, for the overwhelming majority of women, that means giving up your own retirement benefit to receive the higher survivors benefit.

If you receive your own retirement benefit, rather than a spouse benefit, your benefit will not automatically convert to a survivors benefit — you must apply. You cannot apply online however; you must make an appointment with the Social Security Administration. Survivors must contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to request an appointment.

Your tax filing status and exemptions change. Tax rates and exemptions tend to be more favorable for married couples filing jointly. When a spouse passes away, you file as joint for the previous year, but you will file as a “single” taxpayer in the following tax year. Single taxpayers often must pay a higher effective rate than married couples, and you don’t qualify for the more generous standard exemption for joint filers

Several approaches to modify Social Security benefits in order to aid widows are available to Congress. One widely discussed option would boost the widow’s benefit to a percentage of the couple’s combined Social Security benefit (such as 75% of the combined benefit) when the deceased spouse was alive, allowing the widow to choose the higher of the new boosted benefit or what she would otherwise receive as a widow’s benefit.

Pending Events

2023 Department of WV Spring Quarterly Meeting will be January 7, 2023 hosted by the Hershel Woody Williams Detachment 340 in Huntington, WV at American Legion Post 16, 1421 6th Avenue Huntington, WV 25701. Staff Officers Meeting is 0930 AM with general business meeting at 1000 AM. Lunch will be provided. WV Pack Growl will immediately follow close of the Department Meeting. Please submit your Detachment’s Quarterly Report via email to pattileib024@gmail.com and bring 15 copies to the meeting to be shared with other Detachments. The report format will be an attachment to this newsletter and also sent out separately. It is a fillable PDF so it should be easy to complete. If your Detachment cannot be represented at this meeting, Please contact Sr Vice Commandant Rick Shank to be excused. He will be conducting the meeting for Commandant Mike McLain, who will be at his vacation home in Florida.

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 and register with the host Detachment for the Conference and banquet.

2023 Department of WV Department Convention will be May 19-21, 2023 at Comfort Inn & Suites, 167 Elizabeth Pike, Mineral Wells, WV 26150. Phone: 304-699-0886. Room rate: \$85.00 Free breakfast, WIFI, parking. Rooms have refrigerators and microwaves. **Do not call the hotel for room reservations** as they are being booked via Detachment 1087 to use tax exemption. **Contact Don Dearth, 304-481-9595 for rooms, banquet, and advance registration.** Make check payable to MCL Detachment 1087. If you want to use your points or credit card, then contact the hotel. They will give you the block rate but will charge you tax. The hotel has 22 jacuzzi rooms so when you call Don Dearth to book your room, let him know if you need an ADA room or want a King bed or want one of those jacuzzi rooms. The banquet rate is \$30.00. If you are not sure if you are actually attending, go ahead and book your room, as you can always call and cancel. You do not have to make payment for your room, banquet and \$5.00 pre-registration now but need to before the April 1 cutoff date.

2023 Modern Day Marine Expo will be June 27-27, 2023 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC.

2023 MCL National Convention will be August 14-18, 2023 in Oklahoma City, OK. At Omni Oklahoma City Hotel Resorts, 100 W Oklahoma City Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73109, (405) 438-6500 Room rate \$165.48 includes tax. Breakfast is included. Parking is not included and is \$10 per day per car. Pet friendly with service animals no charge but others is \$165.00 per week. Rate good for 3 days prior and afterwards. Reservation open August 22 at 0800.

2024 MCL National Convention will be August 11-16, 2024 in Denver, CO at Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center, 7800 East Tuffs Ave, Denver, CO, 80237. 303-779-1234 Room rate is \$167.84 includes tax; parking costs an additional \$10 per day per car. Breakfast is not included but the host Detachment will pay.