



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 Financial Report Marine Corps League, Department of West Virginia Hershel "Woody" Williams Scholarship Foundation: 17 Feb 2016 beginning balance: \$17,619.77 - Deposits: \$0.00 - Interest: \$4.05 16 March 2016 ending balance: \$17,623.82. Please send all scholarship donations to John Nanny, P.O. Box 2121, Wheeling, WV 26003-0234. Marine Corps League, Department of West Virginia General Account and Paymaster Report: 17 Feb 2016 statement beginning balance: \$14,420.73 Deposits: \$145.00 Debits: \$677.50 16 March 2016 statement ending balance: \$13,888.23

COMMANDANT'S MESSAGE

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

By the time you read this issue of our Dept. Newsletter The Straight Scoop, your detachment may have or may not have held their detachment elections yet. It is a good time to prepare for the upcoming slate of detachment officers in your detachment.

Preparing officer turn over binders with information and materials that you have compiled during your tour of duty will help support the member that is moving up and stepping in to your past position. The experience and advise that you pass down and offer will prove to be a valuable asset for that new officer as well as the detachment.

Assist and support, and try to avoid conflict between past officers and new officers. Not everyone's style of leadership is the same, and things may not go exactly how you would like them to go. The way that each officer and member handles that will determine the future for their detachment. Remember, we move forward together or we do not move forward at all.

I have been very fortunate that the officers I have replaced in my time in the League have been very supportive and the members of my detachment and the Department have helped mentor me to be able to do the job.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case for some officers and detachments in our past as a Department. The damage and disharmony that can grow within a detachment because of this can be devastating. Our brotherhood is better than that and if we can recognize and understand how this type of problem can start, we can better prepare ourselves on how to avoid this type of problem in our future.

It has been my honor to serve as your Department Commandant this past year. There have been some ups and some downs along the way, but the overall experience has been enjoyable and humbling for me and I thank our membership, and my Dept. Officers for that.



Please keep our Armed Forces in your thoughts and prayers as they serve in harm's way.

Semper Fidelis,

Richard L. Shank II,

Commandant Dept. of WV MCL

Mid-Winter Conference After Action Report

The Marine Corps League Mid-Winter Conference was very informative and forthcoming.

I was very impressed with our National Commandant Richard Gore and his Staff. Equally impressive were our Division Vice Commandants and Department Commandants from around the country. The work to move forward and better our league was evident and appreciated by all who were there.

We had six members of the Department of WV in attendance. NVC Mike McLain, PDC Roger Ware, Dept. Adjutant/Paymaster George Gill, Dept. 2018 National Convention Co Chairman Todd Morris, PDC of Virginia and member of Det. 956 in Elkins Wayne Sarapata and Myself.

On Thursday we had the Dept. Commandants Council conducted by National Senior Vice Commandant Wendell Web. Recruiting and Retention was on the top of the list and forming new Detachments using the Fire Team approach was discussed. The information that was shared will be implemented into our Professional Development Program at National and will soon be available on the National website at mclnational.org. The new detachment locator has been set up on the National website. You can search for detachments by entering their zip code.

Todd Morris gave a professional presentation to the National Convention Committee to place our bid to host the 2018 National Convention in Charleston, WV. The Bid was well received by the Committee and the feedback we had from members at the conference was positive. Todd manned an information booth for the Department for three days passing out brochures and trinkets building interest for the League to come back to our state in 2018. His efforts and professionalism made all of us in the Department of WV proud to have him on our team.

On Friday there was a Memorial Service for our fallen brothers and sisters and then the general meeting got underway. The National Board of Trustees and staff gave their reports on their activities and their committees and took questions from the floor. Topics discussed were: progress on contacting inactive members, recruiting members and retaining members by making them feel welcome and keeping them active within the detachments. Problems with Annual Corporate Reports, 990's, ROI's, Death Notice forms and transmittals not being filled out properly or sent in to National in a timely manner. Following the Chain of command is an ongoing problem. Ensure that detachments update Detachment Officers National, Department and Detachment Bylaws each year. The current version is change 21 of the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. The MODD held their mini growl and raised over \$4000.00 Big Bones for the Children's hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Saturday we had speakers from the Women Marines Association and a non-profit veterans group called the Shepard's men, this group is bringing veterans suicide awareness to the forefront and stated that 22 veterans commit suicide per day in America. The 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps General Al Gray spoke to the members about the current state of the Marine Corps and about his time in the Corps. There was a vote to hold the 2017 Mid-Winter Conference in Fredericksburg Virginia, the motion was approved by the members. Several Shooting match awards were presented to members who participated in the MCL Shooting Program. A discussion on how the MCL Pistol and Rifle Matches were a great way to recruit new members was discussed by the National Executive Director Tom Hazlett. Past MCL National Director Mike Blum is currently suing the Marine Corps League for wrongful termination of him and his sons. This has cost the League \$47,000 so far. More info on this situation will be discussed in Tulsa. The National MCL Budget was openly discussed with the members and questions were taken from the floor. National Commandant Gore stated that the League will always be upfront and open to the members from now on even if it hurts to do so. The members were very pleased with this new approach to our Marine Corps League business.

The banquet on Saturday night was well attended. A Marine General was the guest speaker and he spoke about how important our Marine for Life Program is to the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is going to be more exceptive to the League and its programs so we can work better to take care of our Marines.

There is a lot of good information distributed at the National Mid-Winter Conference. I encourage all of our members to try and attend them in the future.

Semper Fidelis,

Rick Shank

Commandant Dept. of WV Marine Corps League

Memo from Dept Adj/Paymaster George Gill to Commandants and Adjutants

It is that time of year again where the detachments hold their elections. The Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures say your Detachment must do an audit prior to installing your new officers. A copy of the audit must be mailed to the Department Commandant within 10 days. Your elections must be completed by May 1. It also says that your Report of Officer Installation must be turned prior to the Department Convention for your Detachment to be recognized.

Complete your Report of Officer Installation form after the election. It is supposed to be mailed to me within 15 days of the election so get them done quickly and mailed in ASAP. Be sure to fill in the email address for each officer as this is how we keep in contact with them.

After your election you should also do your 2016 Annual Corporation Report with the West Virginia Secretary of State's office. After you get confirmation that it is accepted; mail or email me a copy of the confirmation.

Last but definitely not least, It is time or getting close to time for every Detachment to do your 2016 990-N. After you do this, mail or email me the confirmation that it was accepted.

Semper Fi

George O. Gill

Dept of WV MCL

Adjutant/Paymaster

304-377-1345

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SECTION 508 - ELECTIONS, INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS - Each Detachment shall hold an Annual Election of Officers between 1 October and May 1. Installation must be conducted within thirty (30) days, subsequent of the election, the "Report of Officer Installation" form will be forwarded to the Department Adjutant within fifteen (15) days of the Installation, even if the Officers did not change. Notwithstanding the above, the "Report of Officer Installation" form must be received at National Headquarters no later than 30 June of each year. (National Administrative Procedures Chapter 6, Section 620 applies to this section.)

SECTION 607 - DETACHMENT AUDITS AND REPORTS - An annual audit of detachment finances will be conducted prior to the annual installation of officers. The Audit Committee will consist of no less than three members in good standing within the detachment. The Audit Committee members attesting to the accuracy of the report will sign a written statement showing the total income and total disbursements for the year prior to the elections. This report, along with a copy of the monthly minutes of the meetings shall be forwarded to the Department Commandant no later than 10 days after the installation of officers.

Failure to conduct an annual audit and/or forwarding this report with the minutes to the Department Commandant within the time frame of this section would give the Department Commandant authority to conduct an investigation/audit of the Detachment's financial situation using Department Officers so appointed. Monthly audits can be conducted and be combined to satisfy the annual audit required by this section. (Approved by membership at the Department Convention Charleston, WV May 5, 2006)

SECTION 509 - DEFAULT - A Detachment, which is in default of monies from any source due National and such debt has not been satisfied as required by Section 105 (c) of the National Bylaws or fails to report its Detachment Report of Officers and Installation as of June 30 prior to the National Convention such fact shall be reported to the National Convention Credentials Committee, such Detachment and its Officers will not be recognized on the floor of the National Convention. A Detachment, which is in default of monies from any source due the Department of West Virginia and such debt has not been satisfied or fails to report its Detachment Report of Officer and Installation prior to the annual Department Convention will not be recognized on the floor of the Department Convention.

Bylaws

Every detachment should maintain a copy of the National and Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures with all current changes. Since detachments have to be incorporated within WV they are required to have their own Detachment Bylaws which are not inconsistent with the National and Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. In the event of a conflict between the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures and the Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures, the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures shall take precedence. The policies and procedures within the National and Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures must be followed as there is no deviation. They also have to be in compliance with the state corporations laws and file all required reports. The rules contained in the current edition of **Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised** shall govern the MCL assemblies in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent or in conflict with these Bylaws and Administrative Procedures and any special rules of order that the MCL may adopt. Detachment Commandants shall be responsible to ensure all their officers have a working knowledge and understanding of the National and Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures as well as their own Detachment Bylaws. Detachments must ensure they do not exceed their authority or jurisdiction. The disharmony and personality conflicts can often be resolved by constantly following and adhering to the Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. Common sense and proper communication should be considered as normal for all detachment meetings, events and activities. Detachments often have difficulty when member freelance or just wing things without any reference and steps must be taken to ensure they follow all Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. A member does not have the right to impose their will upon the membership. Any disharmony within a detachment should be discussed and resolved during membership meetings.

Hershel "Woody" Williams Scholarship Recipients

John B. Nanny, Chairman, Scholarship Foundation announced the recipients of the 2016 Department scholarship who will be presented a check for \$1000.00 each during the Department Convention Banquet in Wheeling on May 7, 2016. Since the inception of the program, a total of 97 scholarship have been awarded with \$79,000 total to date. The Scholarship Committee unanimously approved the following 12 applicants.

Anthony A. Atkins
West Virginia University
Father: Craig A. Atkins
Huntington Det. 340

Erika Bowling
Marshall University
Grandfather: Donald Robbins Sr.
Mountaineer Marine Det. 957

Madison Crickard
West Virginia Wesleyan
Father: Kenneth Crickard
Leland D "Crow" Crawford Det. 956

Adriana Herrera
Syracuse University
Father: Adrian Herrera
Mother: Deborah Herrera
Danny M. Green Det. 570

Jenna L. Lather
Defiance College
Grandfather: John B. Nanny
Jones, Wolin & Obrien Det. 771

Shian Lester
Concord University
Grandfather: Freddie L. Harvey
Mountaineer Det. 957

Jacob Mayberry
West Virginia University
Grandfather: Rodney E. Mayberry
Mountaineer Det. 957

Megan S. Paul
Paradise Valley Community College
Grandfather: John B. Nanny
Det. 771 Wheeling

Shelby Smith
West Virginia University
Father: Jimmy Aaron Smith
Mountaineer Det. 957

Logan Snyder
Valor Christian College
Stepfather: James C. Adams
Cpl. Walter L. Mann Det. 1065

Reece Andrew Westfall
West Liberty University
Grandfather: Edsel Westfall
Wood County Det. 1087

Jennifer R. Wine
University of Charleston
Grandfather: John W. Thompson
Cpl. Walter L. Mann Det. 1065

Detachment Reports & Files

(1) After the detachment conducts their election and installs their officers, the Adjutant should prepare the Report of Officer Installation (ROI) , and have the Installing Officer sign it. It is then forwarded to the Dept Adjutant. Ensure you have your Adjutant or Paymaster make a motion to change the names on all bank financial records and include these names in your Detachment Minutes as the bank will require a copy of those minutes before the accounts can be changed. This is required to receive new signature cards at the bank.

(2) A detachment should try to hold their elections in the Spring so they can file their WV Secretary of State - Annual Corporate Report prior to July 1. The cost is \$25.00 and it is mandatory. If filing after July the cost is \$50.00 as there is a late fee.

(3) Most Detachment end their fiscal year on June 30 or as specified when they obtained their EIN from IRS so they can file their IRS 990-N efile commencing on July 1. Upon receipt of the confirmation from IRS, send a copy of that email to the Dept Paymaster. The Dept Paymaster usually sends copies of all the confirmation copies he receives to the National Adjutant/Paymaster.

(4) Paid Life Member (PLM) audits are conducted using the June 30 yearly membership roster sent to every detachment from National Membership Dept. Take the original copy and write your statement on it certifying that the list of paid life members is true and correct and that there are no changes (if there are any changes, sent in the documentation), ensuring the commandant and paymaster sign and date it. Make a copy and send the original to the Dept Paymaster.

(5) Death of a member - File MCL Notice of Death and send to the Dept Chaplain. in addition, if the member also is a member of the MODD, then fill out a MODD Notice of Death and send to the WV Pack Dog Trainer.

(6) Detachment Web pages - The Detachment Web Sgt should ensure that any changes in officers or other events are posted on the web page. An update should be made at least every 3 months.

(7) Detachment Membership Meeting Minutes should be reduced to a written copy maintained in a binder that is accessible vice storing on a computer. Copies of these Minutes should be kept for any potential audit that might be conducted by the Dept and or state of WV. Standard desktop procedures should be maintained at all times. Files should be set up by each year in a folder for easy access. The following information should be included in your monthly Minutes:

EIN:	Charter date:	Incorporate date:	Annual Corporate Report date:
990N filing date		PLM Audit:	Officer Installation date:
Locator Page date update		Last audit date:	

(8) Detachments will conduct an annual audit of their detachment finances prior to the annual installation of officers. A copy of the audit along with a copy of the monthly minutes of the meetings shall be forwarded to the Dept Commandant NLT 10 days after the installation of officers.

(9) Standard desktop procedures should be maintained at all times. Files should be set up by each year in a folder for easy access. Included in this file should be your annual Rust Insurance policy, WV Permanent Business Certificate, copies of your IRS 990N, Annual Corporate Report, PLM audits, Annual audit of detachment finances, ROI, WV - Articles of Incorporation, Detachment Bylaws & Administrative Procedures and Minutes from respective year and a copy of your detachment Charter.

Wounded Warrior Project's top execs reportedly fired amid lavish spending scandal

Published March 10, 2016

Wounded Iraq war veteran Joe Beimfohr sits among injured war veterans during a news conference held by the Wounded Warrior Project to urge Congress to pass a final version of the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act. (Reuters)

The two top executives of the Wounded Warrior Project — among the largest veterans charities in the country — were fired Thursday after an investigation into accusations of lavish spending on parties, hotel and travel, [CBS News reported](#).

Wounded Warrior Project's CEO, Steven Nardizzi, and COO, Al Giordano, were fired by the charity's board amid criticisms about how it spends more than \$800 million raised in donations in the past four years, CBS News reported.

The charity's board of directors made their decision after a meeting in New York City, where they received preliminary results of a financial and policy audit, sources told CBS News.

The charity came under fire after an [earlier CBS News investigation](#) in January revealed large amounts of spending on administration, meetings, and travel.

Army Staff Sergeant Erick Millette, who returned from Iraq in 2006 with a bronze star and a purple heart, told CBS News at the time he admired the charity's work and took a job with the group in 2014 but quit after two years.

"Their mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors, but what the public doesn't see is how they spend their money," he said.

Millette said he witnessed lavish spending on staff, with big "catered" parties.

"Going to a nice fancy restaurant is not team building. Staying at a lavish hotel at the beach here in Jacksonville, and requiring staff that lives in the area to stay at the hotel is not team building," he told CBS News.

According to the charity's tax forms obtained by CBS News, spending on conferences and meetings went from \$1.7 million in 2010, to \$26 million in 2014, which is the same amount the group spends on combat stress recovery.

Two former employees, who were so fearful of retaliation they asked that CBS News not show their faces on camera, said spending has skyrocketed since Steven Nardizzi took over as CEO in 2009, pointing to the 2014 annual meeting at a luxury resort in Colorado Springs.

"He rappelled down the side of a building at one of the all hands events. He's come in on a Segway, he's come in on a horse," one employee told CBS News.

About 500 staff members attended the four-day conference in Colorado, which CBS News reported cost about \$3 million.

In January, Charity Navigator, a group that oversees nonprofit organizations, placed Wounded Warrior Project on its watch list, [Fox News reported](#), citing a separate CBS report.

[Wounded Warrior Project Inc.](#) | [FindTheCompany](#)

Wounded Warrior Project declined CBS News' interview requests for Nardizzi in January, but instead sent Director of Alumni and a recipient of their services, Captain Ryan Kules, who denied there was excessive spending on conferences.

"It's the best use of donor dollars to ensure we are providing programs and services to our warriors and families at the highest quality," he said.

Kules added the charity did not spend \$3 million on the Colorado conference, but he was not there and was unable to say what it did cost. He also told CBS News that the charity did not spend money on alcohol or engages in any other kind of excessive spending.

Last week, a major donor to the Wounded Warrior Project veterans' charity called for the nonprofit's CEO to resign in light of allegations of lavish spending on staff meetings, CBS News reported.

Fred and Dianne Kane, the parents of two Iraq War veterans, have donated \$325,000 to the Wounded Warrior Project since 2009 through their personal charity, Tee-off for a Cause. Slightly more than half of the Kanes' donations directly benefited veterans, according to CBS News.

But after recent tax forms reflected questionable spending by the veterans' charity on staff expenditures, including \$26 million on conferences and meetings at luxury hotels in 2014 alone, Fred Kane called for Nardizzi to be fired. The expenditure on conferences and travel was up from just \$1.7 million in 2010, according to reports.

"Hearing that there was this waste of money, donor dollars that should have been going to servicemen and women that were injured, and that it was spent on [Wounded Warrior Project staff] having a good time—it's a real disappointment," Dianne Kane told CBS News.

The Kanes also initiated an online petition calling for a public audit of the Wounded Warrior Project in addition to canceling the next golf tournament Tee-off for a Cause was to hold to benefit the Project. Kane, in the recent interview, also questioned Nardizzi's apparent public absence while his organization has been under scrutiny.

"Where is this guy? You lead from the front—good or bad—you don't hide," he said, "If no one is going to talk about this right now and it has to be me, then it has to be me."

Kane said he has cut charitable ties with the Wounded Warrior Project, embarking on a new charge to effect change at the organization.

VA Announces Community Care Call Center to Help Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues

Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA's efforts to modernize VA's customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance.

"As a result of the Veterans Choice Program, community providers have seen thousands of Veterans. We continue to work to make the program more Veteran-friendly," said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health. "There should be no bureaucratic burden that stands in the way of Veterans getting care."

The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper Veteran billing and assist community care

medical providers with delayed payments. VA staff are also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on Veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers. VA is urging Veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity.

VA acknowledges that delayed payments and inappropriately billed claims are unacceptable and have caused stress for Veterans and providers alike. The new call center is the first step in addressing these issues. VA presented [*The Plan to Consolidate Community Care*](#) in October of 2015 that outlines additional solutions to streamline processes and improve timely provider payment.

For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact . Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call-866-606-8198 to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

PTSD Punitive Discharges - DoD Policy Change

On September 3, 2014, then Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued a memo instructing Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) to grant "liberal consideration" to requests for discharge upgrades from veterans who may have been suffering from PTSD before it was a recognized diagnosis. Previously, those upgrade requests would have been denied, because veterans had no way of proving they had PTSD while still in service. The policy change was especially helpful for Vietnam veterans, whose post-service PTSD diagnoses had not been recognized by the BCM/NR up to that point. Unfortunately, the memo did not explicitly allow veterans who had been denied under the old rules to reapply under the new rules. To correct this error, DOD issued a memo on 24 FEB, clarifying that those veterans may reapply under the new policy. It also waives the statute of limitations in those cases. If you or someone you know wishes to apply for a discharge upgrade under this policy, go to the Pentagon website <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/adrb-ptsd.cfm>. To read the February 24 DOD memo, do to the DoD website:

http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Consideration_on_Discharge_Upgrade_Requests.pdf.

Burn Pit Toxic Exposure - Burn Pit Registry

VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry allows eligible Veterans and Service members to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire. In total, 61,338 Veterans and Service members completed and submitted the registry questionnaire between April 25, 2014 and February 28, 2016. Eligible Veterans and Service members include those who served in:

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn

Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001

Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm

Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990

Check your eligibility and sign up at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> . It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later. You can print and use your completed questionnaire to discuss concerns with your provider. VA providers can also access an online copy of your questionnaire. Some important points about the Burn Pit Registry are:

No cost to participate

Not a disability compensation questionnaire or required for other VA benefits

Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary

Based on Veterans'/Service members' recollection of service, not on their military records

Veterans'/Service members' family members are not eligible to participate

Data from the burn pit registry are available in the following reports:

Report (1.68 MB, PDF) highlighting health conditions and physical limitations experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Service members who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and December 31, 2014 (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/exposures/va-ahobp-registry-data-report-june2015.pdf>).

Report (1.48 MB, PDF) on the health effects of exposures, including burn pits and other environmental hazards, experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Service members who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and September 30, 2014 (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/exposures/va-ahobpregistry-data-report-april2015.pdf>).

If you have health concerns, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator who can be located at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>.

Agent Orange IOM Panel - Bladder Cancer & Hypothyroidism Link

A new review of Agent Orange research found evidence that bladder cancer and hypothyroidism are more strongly linked to exposure to the herbicide than previously thought, but the science does not support a previously held belief that spina bifida occurs in the offspring of exposed veterans at higher rates. A report released 11 MAR by the Institute of Medicine on the health effects of Agent Orange also recommended the Veterans Affairs Department grant service connected presumption to veterans with "Parkinson's-like symptoms," not just those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease related to Agent Orange exposure. "There is no rational basis for exclusion of individuals with Parkinson's like symptoms from the service-related category denoted as Parkinson's disease," members of the IOM panel wrote in the report.

The 1,115-page review is the final in a series conducted by the IOM on health problems related to Agent Orange and other herbicide use during the Vietnam War. "There is no rational basis for exclusion of individuals with Parkinson's-like symptoms from the service-related category denoted as Parkinson's disease." The panel, chaired by Kenneth Ramos, professor of medicine at the Arizona Health Sciences Center, University of Arizona, reviewed the scientific literature on Agent Orange released between October 2012 and September 2014 for its review. The decision on bladder cancer and hypothyroidism was tied to results of a large study of Korean War veterans who served in the Vietnam War suggested an association, while the choice to downgrade spina bifida was based on a lack of data, panel members said.

"[The inclusion of] spina bifida in the limited or suggestive category of association was based on preliminary findings from [an ongoing Air Force study]. However, to date, a complete analysis of the data from that study for neural tube defects has not been published ... [and] no subsequent studies have found increases in spina bifida with exposure to components of the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam," they wrote. The upgrade for bladder cancer and hypothyroidism from the category "inadequate or insufficient evidence" to "limited or suggestive evidence," of a link, as well as the recommendation to include Parkinson's-like symptoms to the service-connected list could pave the way for thousands of veterans to receive health care and disability compensation from VA. The downgrading of spina bifida marks only the second time the IOM Agent Orange committee has demoted a health outcome related to the herbicide.

Roughly 2.6 million U.S. veterans served in Vietnam, many of whom may have been exposed. The herbicide, named for the color of the metal containers used to store it, was sprayed over 20 percent of the country to strip the jungle of its vegetation where enemy troops could hide. Veterans who served in Vietnam on the ground or on boats that patrolled the country's inland waterways are eligible for health care and compensation for certain conditions presumed to be connected to their service. Other groups of veterans, including those who served after the war on aircraft that had been used to spray Agent Orange, have won recognition for illnesses they say are related to exposure to chemical residue.

Some veterans continue to seek recognition and presumption for exposure to the herbicide, including those who served on ships in the bays, harbors and territorial seas of Vietnam. Attorneys for Military-Veterans Advocacy and the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association on Thursday presented oral arguments to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to recognize that the court has jurisdiction to decide whether the VA should not have excluded these veterans from the presumption. Retired Navy Cmdr. John Wells, executive director of Military Veterans Advocacy, said the sailors who served on these ships should be included because the vessels' distillation systems used water contaminated with Agent Orange to produce drinking water as well as water used for their boilers. "There was no magic, invisible Agent Orange filter at the mouth of the rivers," Wells said. "We have documented proof of its presence in Nha Trang Harbor, 20 years after the war. That evidence has been presented to the VA. The distillation system which produced drinking water and water for the boilers did not remove the dioxin — it enriched it."

In their report, the IOM panel made several recommendations to VA to address illnesses in Vietnam veterans, to include recommending that VA continue to study their health, develop protocols to investigate transmission of adverse effects to offspring by exposed fathers and design a study on the health consequences of dioxin exposure on humans. They also recommended that the Defense Department and VA monitor potential service-related health effects in military personnel, to include creating and maintaining rosters of individuals deployed

on missions and linking DoD and VA databases to identify, record and monitor trends in diseases

VA Memorial Benefits - How to Apply & What to Expect

VA takes special care to pay lasting tribute to the memory of Veterans who served and sacrificed and that of their families. VA meticulously maintains 134 VA national cemeteries in 39 states and is adding new cemeteries to accommodate Veterans and loved ones in their time of need. In a few years, 95 percent of Veterans will have a burial option in an open VA, state or tribal veterans cemetery located within an hour's drive of their home. Some benefits are also available for Veterans who choose burial in a private cemetery. Veterans with a qualifying discharge are entitled to VA burial benefits. Spouses and dependent children are eligible too, even if they predecease the Veteran. The following burial benefits may be provided:

Burial in a VA national cemetery - Opening and closing of the grave or burial of cremated remains or placement in an above-ground vault, also called a columbarium; a government furnished grave liner; perpetual care of the gravesite; a headstone or marker with an inscription; a burial flag; a Presidential Memorial Certificate; and transportation of flower arrangements from the committal service shelter to the gravesite

Burial in a private cemetery - A government headstone, marker, or medallion; a burial flag; and a Presidential Memorial Certificate. Some survivors may also be entitled to VA burial allowances as partial reimbursement for the costs of funerals and burials for eligible Veterans.

Burial in a VA national cemetery. Although burial plots cannot be reserved in advance, you can plan ahead by safeguarding military discharge papers and discussing end-of-life planning with loved ones. Time permitting, it would be useful to review www.cem.va.gov/CEM/burial_benefits/need.asp in advance. Upon the death of the Veteran or his or her spouse or dependent, family members should locate the Veteran's DD-214 or other discharge papers and the DD-214 form or other discharge papers to 1-866-900-6417 and follow up with a phone call to 1-800-535-1117 to schedule a burial in a VA national cemetery. The process takes about 10 minutes. Then make arrangements with a funeral home, National Cemetery Scheduling Office or directly with a VA national cemetery. Note that gravesites in a VA National Cemetery cannot be reserved in advance. Burials in a national cemetery take place during the week and cannot be conducted on a federal holiday.

Burial in a private cemetery. To prepare for a private cemetery burial, VA suggests families review some questions and complete required forms in advance which are indicated on www.cem.va.gov/CEM/burial_benefits/private_cemetery.asp. Action necessary to receive/apply for the following are:

Headstone, marker, or medallion: Visit the national cemetery administration headstones, markers, and medallions page to download and fill out VA form 40-1330. Return your completed form with a copy of the Veteran's DD-214 to: Memorial Programs Service (41B), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903 Or fax claims and supporting documents to 1-800-455-7143. If you are submitting more than one claim, fax each claim package (claim and supporting documents) in individual fax transmissions.

Burial flag: At http://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/burial_flags.asp download and fill out VA Form 272008 from the National Cemetery Administration Burial Flags page. Take the completed form to the funeral director, a VA Regional Office or a U.S. Post Office flag issuing station.

Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC): Visit the National Cemetery Administration Presidential Memorial Certificates page <http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp> to download and fill out VA Form 40-0247. Return your completed form with a copy of the Veteran's DD-214 to: Presidential Memorial Certificates (41B3), National Cemetery Administration, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903 or fax them to 1800-455-7143.

Alternatively, order a PMC using the toll-free fax line following the instructions provided at <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/faxpmc.asp>.

VA Burial Allowance: To apply go to <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-530-ARE.pdf> to download and fill out VA Form 21-530. Mail your completed form with a copy of the Veteran's DD-214, death certificate, paid receipts, and other applicable documentation to the VBA regional office located in your state. Go to <http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=3> to locate the office nearest you. You can also apply online (eBenefits) at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>

At the special compensation overview page <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp> you can learn more about VA Burial Allowances and eligibility

3 Reasons Veterans Hate Networking

Networking is challenging for anyone. Even the most extroverted people wrestle with initiating new relationships and extracting value from their contacts. While the concept of networking may have been frowned upon in the military, in your civilian career it will be critical.

Unlike our social relationships, networking should be viewed in an intentional and strategic way. If you approach networking as a focused meeting of your target audience in an authentic way in order to nurture mutually beneficial professional relationships, then networking becomes a very valuable part of your transition, and civilian career. After all, you **never** know who you are about to meet – that new contact could be the key that unlocks your future!

Here are a few of the reasons people dislike networking and how to overcome them:

1. Fear of Rejection

It's natural to view networking as making yourself vulnerable to a complete outsider. Approaching a stranger brings up our insecurities and fears of rejection and criticism. What if they walk away or reject my email? Will they laugh at me or see me as weak?

When someone approaches us to initiate a conversation, most of us will listen to what they say. If the initiator is genuine, it is very rare that a stranger will outright reject them.

2. Being Unprepared

If you are heading out to a job fair or networking reception and arrive unprepared and uninformed, you have a right to be fearful. Instead, research the people you'd like to meet, and look at their online profiles to see what they do, how they work and what recent milestones or successes you could use as ice breakers to start a conversation.

Practice your elevator pitch. Have an idea of the topics you want to discuss and how you'd like the conversation to go.

3. Lack of Follow Up

After you exchange business cards and say goodbye to a new contact, take a moment to write a note on the back of their card about the conversation. Then, when you email them as follow up, you can reference your discussion and any next steps. Also, view their Linked In profile to see where you might have common interests and experiences. Send an invitation to connect online and continue the conversation. Be sure to personalize the invitation to connect by referring to where you met and what you discussed.

Networking is not easy for most people. It takes practice to project confidence and remain genuine and relatable while meeting strangers who could impact your future. Over time, you will learn to be more intentional and focused in the professional relationships you develop to aid and grow your career.

VA Identifies Additional Beneficiaries in Need of Fiduciary Assistance

New Technologies Aid VA in Identifying 14,000 Beneficiaries Delayed for Fiduciary Appointments Due to Claims Processing Errors

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that an information technology system that it deployed in 2014 and enhanced in 2015, the Beneficiary Fiduciary Field System, allowed it to identify claim processing errors affecting approximately 14,000 Veterans and survivors. These Veterans' and survivors' claims were initially filed over many years, with some going back as far as 2000. The errors concern cases in which VA had proposed that due to disability or age the beneficiary was unable to manage his or her VA benefits without assistance, but did not complete the action by transferring it within VA for appointment of a fiduciary. These cases represent approximately four percent of such proposals since 2000.

VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) became aware of a potential problem when it received inquiries about delayed fiduciary appointments from affected beneficiaries or their families. A system-wide review by VBA using the new technology found claim processing errors that had occurred at each of its regional offices and pension management centers across the country. In these cases, one or more of the procedures for controlling and transferring the workload were not followed, resulting in the fiduciary appointment delays.

"We sincerely apologize to these Veterans and their survivors for this regrettable delay," said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan D. Gibson. "We are taking immediate action to complete these cases, initiate the fiduciary appointment process, and ensure that these errors do not happen again. We must also continue to transform the claim process for beneficiaries needing fiduciary assistance and properly resource our fiduciary program to

ensure that beneficiaries have the help they need to effectively use the benefits they earned.”

VBA has set up a dedicated team to immediately review the cases, notify beneficiaries, complete the claim processing steps, and appoint a fiduciary as quickly as possible. Because the law requires VA to check the qualifications of the fiduciaries it appoints, including conducting a face-to-face interview, VA anticipates that it may take as much as six months or more to complete the fiduciary appointment process for these beneficiaries. However, the beneficiaries will continue to receive their monthly benefits as VA works to appoint a fiduciary to assist them.

Additionally, VBA has already modified its systems to better track this workload and plans to remove manual transfer processes that are prone to error through enhancements to its automated claims processing system, the Veterans Benefits Management System.

For more information, Veterans can contact (1-888-407-0144).

Additional Information on VA’s Fiduciary Program:

The VA fiduciary program provides oversight of beneficiaries who, due to injury, disease, or the infirmities of age, are unable to manage their VA benefits. VA’s role is to conduct oversight of beneficiaries to ensure their well-being, and oversee the fiduciaries it appoints to assist beneficiaries with the management of their VA benefits. In 2015, VA protected more than 224,000 beneficiaries, who received over \$3 billion in VA benefits. Beneficiaries in the fiduciary program include Veterans, surviving spouses, dependent parents, adult children, and minor children. The number of beneficiaries served by the program has grown by 50 percent since 2011 and VA projects continued growth as it increases its benefit claims production (1.4 million claims in 2015) and the beneficiary population ages.

Pending Calendar

2016 Marine South Expo will be April 6-7, 2016 at Camp Lejeune, NC

2016 Department of Delaware Convention and election of officers will take place on Saturday 30 April 2016. 10:00 to 14:00. Heritage Shores Country Club, 1 Heritage Shore Lane, 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.

2016 Department of Maryland Department Convention will be April 28-30, 2016 at the Princess Royale Oceanfront Hotel & Conference Center, 9100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland 21842-2745. 1-800-4 ROYALE, (1-410-524-7777) Ocean-view/Pool-view. Ocean Front: Includes free continental breakfast.

2016 Department of West Virginia Convention will be May 6-8, 2016 and hosted by Jones, Wolin & O'Brien Detachment 771 in Wheeling, WV at Oglebay Resort & Conference Center. Wilson Lodge room rate is \$115 per night plus room tax. Tele: 800-624-6988 or 304-243-4090. The room block rate is reserved until April 6.

Mention: MCL attendee. Banquet: Buffet with country menu of beef, chicken and salmon with assorted side dishes and desserts. Cost: \$15.00 Pack Growl 7 pm on May 6. Advance registration \$5. POC: John Nanny, P.O. Box 2121, Wheeling, WV 26003-0234. Tele: 304-233-5289 or 304-281-2950. Guest speaker: USMC BGEN Austin Renforth, CG of Training Command, Quantico, Va

Directions: Oglebay is located in Wheeling, West Virginia on Route 88 North, just 4 miles off I-70 at exit 2A. Driving time is 1 hour from Pittsburgh via I-79 S to I-70 W to Wheeling Exit 2A, 2 1/2 hours from Columbus via I-70 E to Wheeling Exit 2A & 3 hours from Cleveland via I-77 S to I-70 E to Wheeling Exit 2A. Destination address: 465 Lodge Drive, Wheeling, West Virginia 26003. GPS Coordinates: N 40 degrees, 5 minutes, 58 seconds, and W 80 degrees, 39 minutes, 39 seconds.

2016 Department of Virginia Department Convention will be May 13-15, 2016 at the Sand Castle Beachfront Hotel, VA Beach, Va. Beach call 757-428-2828 to make reservations. mention Marine Corps League Room rate is just \$119.00 + tax per night Reservations need to be made no later than 15 April due to high volume of sports events in the area Banquet Sat. cost \$40.00 per person. POC David Hord -757-567-1252 yogih220@verizon.net or Don Coons - 757-510-4145 djc1954@verizon.net

2016 Department of North Carolina Convention will be June 10-11, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott, Charlotte Gastonia, 1856 Remount Rd, Gastonia, NC 28054, 704-852-4411 or 1-800-891-3766. Room Rate = \$89 +tax, Ask for the Marine Corps League rate. Registration = \$10 per person, Lunch = \$8 per person. Lunch will be Honey Baked Ham Cafe catering ham, roast beef or turkey box lunches. Banquet = \$30 per person, Banquet will be a choice of Grilled Chicken Fillet, Ham, or Roast Beef., Friday night will be hotdogs / pizza / pick ups., Water, soda and tea will be available. ALL activities will be at the hotel.

2016 Mideast Division Conference will be June 24-26, 2016 at the Wilmington- Christinia Hilton, 100 Continental Drive, Newark DE 19713. Telephone; 302 781 7049. It is conveniently located off I-95 exit 4B. Room rate is \$124.99 a night and includes full breakfast buffet. Banquet is \$34.00.

Note: The Mideast Division Annual Conference, hosted by the Department of Delaware, is scheduled for 24-26 June 2016 at the Hilton Wilmington/Christiana, 100 Continental Dr., Newark, DE 19713. The hotel is conveniently located off I-95, Exit 4B. Guestrooms are \$124.99 per night and include two (2) full breakfasts per room daily (omelets made-to-order). The two entrée banquet will be held in the Hilton Grand Ballroom. A few unique destinations nearby include Delaware Park Raceway & Casino, Longwood Gardens, Delaware Museum of Natural History, and for shopping — the Christiana Mall and The Colonade - featuring Cabela's. Of course, Delaware has no sales tax making shopping much more affordable. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel directly at 800.348.3133, or 302.454.1500. Also, see their website at <http://hiltonestate.com>.

To have your name tag printed and packet prepared prior to your arrival, you must be pre-registered by

27 May 2016. Please make your check payable to “Mideast Division Conference,” and mail it and your completed registration to: Jack Flood, Jr., MCL Dept. of DE Adjutant, 5 Canvasback Circle, Bridgeville, DE 19933.

2016 MCL National Convention will be August 7-13, 2016 at the Hyatt Regency, 100 East 2nd St, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Tele: 918-234-1234, contact reservations: 1-888-591-1234. after August 17, 2015. room rate: \$91.00 plus tax for total \$103.30. Free WiFi, Pets allowed, Breakfast available (Self parking , There is no RV parking and Good Sam’s RV park is about 7 miles.

Note: Overflow Hotel 8 - 12 August 2016 Courtyard by Marriott - Tulsa Downtown 415 South Boston Avenue, Tulsa, OK (800) 721-7033 or (918) 508-7400 Online reservations Rate \$107.00 per night (plus tax) Standard King or Double Queen includes valet parking and breakfast **Group code is MCL**

2016 Modern Day Marine Expo will be Sept 27-29, 2016 at MCB, Quantico, VA

2017 MCL National Convention will be August 2017 at the Sheraton Overland Park at the Convention Center, 6100 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS, 66211. Book By Phone: 1-800-628-8491 Room rate: \$115.00 with 18% tax, free parking, free breakfast and free wifi.

2016 DEPARTMENT OF WV MCL CONVENTION
MAY 6-8, 2016 - Wheeling - Hosted by Detachment 771

Will be held at Oglebay Resort & Conference Center, in Wheeling, WV. Wilson Lodge room reservations call 800-624-6988 or 304-243-4090. Mention MCL attendee. Room rate \$115 plus room tax double occupancy: **The room block rate is reserved until April 6.** \$5 early registration fee for conference, \$7 at the door; **Banquet:** buffet with country menu of beef, chicken and salmon with assorted side dishes and desserts. **Cost: \$15.00** Mail advance registration fee and banquet to: Jones, Wolin & Obrien Detachment 771, Marine Corps League, PO Box 2121, Wheeling, WV 26003-0234. POC John Nanny: nanny1007@comcast.net (304) 233-5289. We are requesting each detachment to bring two items for the Hershel "Woody" Williams Scholarship Auction. Guest speaker will be B Gen Austin "Sparky" Renforth, CG of Training Command, Quantico, Va. **Note:** Woody Williams is booked for both days.

Directions: Oglebay is located in Wheeling, West Virginia on Route 88 North, just 4 miles off I-70 at exit 2A. It is 1 hour from Pittsburgh via I-79 S to I-70 W to Wheeling Exit 2A, 2 1/2 hours from Columbus via I-70 E to Wheeling Exit 2A & 3 hours from Cleveland via I-77 S to I-70 E to Wheeling Exit 2A. Destination address: 465 Lodge Drive, Wheeling, West Virginia 26003.

Wilson Lodge is a non-smoking facility. All rooms are non-smoking. Use of outdoor pool at Oglebay is free to all lodge guests subject to season, weather conditions and hours of operations. Use of indoor pool, Jacuzzi, fitness center and sauna is free to all lodge guests. Use of other recreation facilities is not included unless specified in each package. Newspaper and in-room coffee service available Monday-Friday. Check-In Time begins at 3 pm, but is not guaranteed. If you intend to arrive before this time please notify the front desk and we will make every effort to accommodate you, but we suggest that you plan to occupy your guest room after 3 pm. Check-Out Time 11 am. A late charge of \$50 will be applied to rooms that are not vacant by 1200. Pets are not permitted. Hospitality room open Friday May 13 from 1700-2230. **Breakfast is not included in room price.** There are several dining areas in Wilson Lodge and meals are priced accordingly.

Ad book prices: \$100 full page ad, \$50 ½ page, \$25 ¼ page. Please mail copy ready ad and registration information with check to POC as listed. Deadline for ad submission is March 30, 2016. We are also including an "in Memoriam" section where tribute can be paid to our fallen Marines. the same rate as other ads. Also ask that each Detachment make a donation and to place an ad as well as obtain names for the Patron Page in order to help us with convention costs.

Please print off and mail in for advance registration and for your name tag.

Attendee	Guest
Name _____	Name _____
Title _____	Title/Relation _____
Detachment _____	
Address _____	\$5.00 pre-registration each \$ _____
_____	\$15.00 banquet each \$ _____
	Total \$ _____

Attendee	Guest
Name _____	Name _____
Title _____	Title/Relation _____
Detachment _____	
Address _____	\$5.00 pre-registration each \$ _____
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Attendee	Guest
Name _____	Name _____
Title _____	Title/Relation _____
Detachment _____	
Address _____	\$5.00 pre-registration each \$ _____
_____	\$15.00 banquet each \$ _____
	Total \$ _____

2016 MCL Department Meeting Schedule
Department of West Virginia
Wheeling, WV
MAY 6-8, 2016

Friday, May 6, 2016

- 0600-0945 Breakfast
 - 0900-1200 MCL Registration
 - 1000-1200 MODD Registration
 - 1200-1300 Lunch on your own
 - 1300-1600 MCL Registration
 - 1300-1600 MODD Registration
 - 1300-1600 Professional Development Training
 - 1300-1700 Department Audit Committee
 - 1600-1700 Commandant's Council - Detachment Commandants/Staff Officers meeting
 - 1700-1830 Dinner on your own
 - 1700-2230 Hospitality Room open
 - 1830-1900 MODD Pack Board Meeting*
 - 1900-2100 MODD Growl of the Pack
- * At call of Department Commandant, MCL; Pack Leader, MODD, PMOY Chairman

Saturday, May 7, 2016

- 0600-0930 Breakfast
 - 0800-1000 MCL registration
 - 0800-0815 Flag-Raising Ceremony
 - 0820-0930 Memorial Services, all hands attending
 - 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 Grand Banquet
- * At call of Chairman for Budget and Nominations Committee