



**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE  
DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA**



**MINUTES - QUARTERLY STAFF MEETING – FEBRUARY 4, 2017**

**OPENING CEREMONY:**

The meeting was opened per ritual by Commandant Randy Barnes at 0903. The Mission Statement of the Marine Corps League was read.

**ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS AND DETACHMENTS:**

Department officers in attendance included:

Commandant Randy Barnes  
Sr. Vice Commandant Al Yates  
Jr. Vice Commandant Guy Mitchell  
Judge Advocate Barbara Brammer  
Jr. Past Commandant Ron Kirstatter  
Chaplain David Epps  
Adjutant/Paymaster LuAnn Miller  
Sergeant-at-Arms Larry Heard  
Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Barbee

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:

District 4 – Craig “Doc” McNabb  
District 5 – Bill Stevens  
District 6 – Harry McCann  
District 7 – Levi McKenna  
District 8 – Tim McClelland

Appointed Positions:

V.S.O. – Hank Berkowitz  
V.S.O. – Mickey Edwards  
Fallen Marines – Charles Polk  
Boy Scouts – Mickey Edwards  
Web Sergeant – Bill Stevens

Detachments in attendance included:

Detachment 647 – L/Cpl Squire “Skip” Wells  
Detachment 783 – Unicoi  
Detachment 970 – Middle Georgia  
Detachment 1020 – “Jake” Puryear  
Detachment 1040 – PFC George Eiland  
Detachment 1083 – Joseph Schmittou  
Detachment 1196 – Maj. Stephen W. Pless  
Detachment 1260 – Maj. Lawrence Des Jardines  
Detachment 1303 – Currahee Mountain  
Detachment 1311 – Maj.Gen. Warren R. Johnson  
Detachment 1312 – Aubrey Gilbert  
Detachment 1325 – Sgt. Clyde Thomason MOH  
Detachment 1326 – West Chatham  
Detachment 1339 – Henry County Leathernecks

Detachment 1373 – Central Georgia  
Detachment 1402 – Columbus  
Detachment 1424 – Byron  
Detachment 1438 – Lake Blue Ridge

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Commandant Barnes noted that the minutes from the December 3, 2016, business meeting are available and have been posted on the website. Chad Long moved to accept the minutes as posted. Michael Clark seconded the motion, and it was approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Barbara Brammer received email correspondence from a Detachment in Tallahassee, Florida, asking if any of our members needed assistance to help us with thunderstorm damage. No League members were affected. Tim McClelland noted that one individual had house damage, but there were no personal injuries. Also, no VFW members requested assistance.

**REPORT OF PAYMASTER:**

The Paymaster's report was read. Bill Miller noted that the Department of Louisiana has closed out their flood relief program; no further funds are needed. Russ Vermillion moved to approve the Paymaster's Report as submitted pending financial review. Harry McCann seconded the motion, and it was approved.

**REPORT OF MEMBERS SICKNESS OR IN DISTRESS:**

Craig "Doc" McNabb noted that Karen Lawrence will be having surgery for two masses in her lungs. She has been undergoing chemotherapy treatments for the last year. Jim Marsh reported that George Lewis was moved to assisted care. Jim Dunn reported that his daughter, Melanie Dunn, has been battling a bad virus for 5 years. She lost half her right foot and her left leg from mid-calf. Chaplain Epps' grandson will be leaving for Parris Island. Russ Vermillion suggested we provide a League presence at his graduation. Chaplain Epps reported that 20 League members have died since last year's convention, 8 of which were reported since our last staff meeting. Bill Miller reported that National is no longer mailing out Notice of Death forms. Electronic forms are available on the National website.

**REPORT OF OFFICERS:**

**Judge Advocate:** Judge Advocate Brammer reported that it is time to distribute Delegate forms for the upcoming Department Convention. Following a discussion on submission deadlines, it was determined that Delegate forms must be postmarked by April 15, 2017. She reported that Delegate forms will be in the mail before February 15, 2017; and she recommended that all Detachments send in their forms even if no one is expected to attend. To be counted in the delegate voting strength totals, Dues Transmittals must be received by the Department Paymaster by April 14, 2017. Judge Advocate Brammer also noted that she still has not received Bylaws from all the Detachments, and she recommends that all Detachments have Bylaws in place. Ron Kirstatter asked when Bylaws changes are due, and it was confirmed that amendments must be in the hands of the Department Judge Advocate by February 15, 2017.

**Junior Vice Commandant:** Junior Vice Commandant Guy Mitchell requested that each Detachment pick up a membership package after the meeting. He noted that membership growth from March 31, 2016, through December 31, 2016, is not encouraging. He recommended a strong concerted effort to bring in fresh blood. He also suggested that Detachments validate the rosters

they receive from National to ensure their accuracy. Overall, 20 Detachments are down in membership, 4 Detachments are up, and 6 Detachments have no change. He provided the following 3 suggestions: (1) validate numbers from National, (2) focus on the unpaid members, and (3) review H-AD program guidelines and implement the program in your own Detachment. Levi McKenna asked if the H-AD program includes reserve personnel. It was noted that the H-AD program only covers active duty personnel. Junior Vice Commandant Mitchell requested that Detachments submit recruitment, retention, and recovery suggestions for inclusion in a manual. The Burkhardt award will be presented at the Department Convention for the Detachment with the highest percentage growth as of March 31, 2017.

**Senior Vice Commandant:** No report.

**Commandant:** Commandant Randy Barnes thanked the members for their attendance at this quarterly staff meeting. He recommended that each Junior Vice Commandant should personally call each delinquent member. He also noted that he will be forming a Bylaws Committee and an Awards Committee for the upcoming Convention.

### **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**2017 Department Convention Committee:** The 2017 Department Convention will be held in Athens, Georgia, from April 28-30, 2017; and it is being hosted by Joseph Schmittou Detachment 1083. Registration and ad forms are available at the staff meeting and on the Department of Georgia and Southeast Division websites. The Host Detachment noted several activities in the local area during the Convention including the University of Georgia baseball team hosting the Florida Gators, the Twilight Criterion (bicycle race) in downtown Athens, and the Botanical Gardens. Preparations are going well, and the Host Detachment reminded the membership that each Detachment is asked to provide three raffle items.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Commandant Barnes announced the following upcoming events:

1. Southeast Division Conference - March 30-April 1, 2017, in Mobile, Alabama. Information is available on the Southeast Division website;
2. 2017 National Convention - August 13-18, 2017, in Overland Park, Kansas; and
3. 2017 Department of Georgia Convention – April 28-30, 2017, in Athens, Georgia.

He noted that April 1, 2017, is the cut-off date for reservations for the Department Convention Banquet. The Department of Georgia is requesting bids for the 2018 Department Convention. Detachment 1373 is considering hosting the Convention in 2018.

Hal Gosnell noted that there are remaining IRS exemption issues. Paymaster Miller said she would follow up with National Senior Vice Commandant Wendell Webb.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Chris Roberts noted that membership dates on the roster are incorrect and asked what is happening at National Headquarters. Bill Miller reported that the current database is a problem because it is a shared database. Data is often lost when restores are required. National is looking into replacing the database with a solo database that will provide additional functionality.

Scouting Coordinator Mickey Edwards reported that there are only 3 Scout coins remaining and moved that the Department purchase replacement coins. Mark Albright noted that his Detachment gives out about 10-15 coins per year. Ron Kirstatter seconded the motion and amended the motion to authorize the purchase of 200 coins. The amended motion was seconded by David Epps. The amended motion was approved, and the original motion was approved.

### **GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:**

Major Jason Quinn with the SHARE Military Initiative, Bravo Company, Force Reconnaissance Detachment, spoke about the Shepherd's Men program for service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who suffer from Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The program is not currently backed by the Veterans Administration. The Shepherd's Men raise money for the SHARE Initiative, which is a 2-12 week program depending on the needs of the individual. There is no cost to the participant and dorms are provided for family members. There have been zero suicides from their graduates, and families of the participants have expressed thanks for the return of their loved ones. The participants wear 22-pound vests and run 22 kilometers per day for their annual run in May. Last year they ran from Boston to the Shepherd's Center. The first year, they had 30 participants; this year, they are expecting 75 participants. Tom Coursey, Clyde Thomaston Detachment, said his Detachment supports this effort; and Russ Vermillion noted that his Detachment has a member who has been through the program and speaks very highly of it. Major Quinn said 100% of the donations go to the program. Michael Clark made a motion to donate \$1,000 to the Shepherd's Men. Michael Clark amended his motion to increase the donation to \$1,500. The amended motion was seconded by Levi McKenna and was approved by the membership.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Silas Brown announced that he will be running for Department Judge Advocate and requested support from the membership.

Bill Miller reported that he spent 3 days at National Headquarters last week. He requested a printout from the membership database of life member distributions. Detachments are encouraged to contact him to confirm receipt of their Detachment's PLM Audit and to find out how much to expect when funds are distributed. He reminded the membership that National issues should go through the chain of command. If issues are not resolved, he will try to assist.

Michael Clark encouraged Detachments to clean up their delinquent members so that the Department of Georgia can keep the Grits Bowl. He also reported that the University of South Carolina, in conjunction with the Marine Corps Museum, has taken custody of Marine Corps-related film stock. The film stock will be digitized and made available online. The University already has a vault built, but they are looking for donations to advance the project.

The Unicoi Detachment is running a program in Hiawassee to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the Iwo Jima landing. Contact Bud Johnson at 706-970-0195 for further information.

Craig “Doc” McNabb reported that the Traveling Wall that Heals will be in Johns Creek the weekend of April 29 and again in October. He also noted that a Veterans for Veterans Outdoors Program is scheduled for March 25, 2017.

Hank Berkowitz noted that Congressman Drew Ferguson will host a workshop on February 27, 2017.

Russ Vermillion reported that Marine South Expo will be in April.

Ron Kirstatter thanked the members who contacted his Detachment when severe thunderstorms went through the Albany area. Casualties were low because the storms went through on a weekend. The area is still recovering, but the Marines did a good job getting them back up and running.

Commandant Randy Barnes noted that Paymaster training will follow the staff meeting.

Charles Polk asked the District Vice Commandants to see him about the Fallen Marine Program if they have not already received information.

**CLOSING CEREMONY:**

There being no further business, the Staff Meeting was closed by ritual at 1038.

Submitted by:  
LuAnn K. Miller  
Adjutant/Paymaster  
Department of Georgia  
Marine Corps League