



**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA**



MINUTES - QUARTERLY MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2021

OPENING CEREMONY:

The meeting was opened per ritual by Commandant Larry Heard at 0900. The Mission Statement of the Marine Corps League was read. Commandant Heard welcomed all in attendance.

PROGRAM:

Commandant Larry Heard welcomed Mike Robey, Commissioner of Georgia Department of Veterans Services; Col. (Ret.) Patricia Ross, Chairman of Georgia Veterans Service Board and Sr. Executive Officer of Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center (VECTRC); Vince Pritchett, Director of the South Georgia Region of the Georgia Department of Veterans Services, and Richard Dyer, Director of Operations of the Georgia Regional Department of Veterans Services.

Col. (Ret.) Patricia Ross shared information about the services provided by the Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center and provided an update of COVID-19 immunization availability.

Mike Robey spoke about Col. (Ret.) Ross and Vince Pritchett and explained what they do for Georgia's veterans. He gave an overview of what the Department of Veterans Services is doing and things that are planned. They are a small agency with most of their personnel in the field. Seven percent of Georgia's population are veterans, ranked 7th in the United States. Georgia is ranked 5th in the United States for funding. The Benefits program is their busiest department, currently working on an appointment system. There are 50 field offices across the state, some of which are housed in VA facilities. They are partnered with the Department of Labor, Drivers' Services, and VECTRC. Mr. Robey talked about nursing homes and burial services, both of which were hit hard by the pandemic. In the past year, they lost 21 veterans in the Augusta and 24 in the Milledgeville facilities. Burials are still being performed but loved ones cannot be at the gravesite during burial services. The Georgia Department of Veterans Services will have the first subacute clinic in the nation. It is a 14-week program with 58 beds. This is a \$17 million project. The Department's budget is less than \$42 million. Mr. Robey reported that the Vietnam War Certificate program was suspended due to COVID, but it is up and running again.

The meeting recessed at 0949 and reconvened at 0955.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS AND DETACHMENTS:

Department officers in attendance included:

Commandant Larry Heard
Sr. Vice Commandant Bill Miller
Jr. Vice Commandant Rex Delk
Judge Advocate Lisa Delk
Jr. Past Commandant Al Yates
Adjutant/Paymaster LuAnn Miller
Sergeant-at-Arms Levi McKenna
Sergeant-at-Arms Bobby Shepherd

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:

- District 3 – Russ Johnson
- District 5 – Frank Goalen
- District 6 – Frank Goalen
- District 9 – Tim McClelland
- District 10 – Tim McClelland

Appointed Positions:

- Marine for Life – Bill Sirmon
- Young Marines – Jim Berres
- Newsletter – Al Yates
- Web Sergeant – Brent Eaton
- Historian – Bernard Bledsoe

Detachments in attendance included:

- Detachment 647 - L/Cpl Squire “Skip” Wells
- Detachment 970 - Middle Georgia
- Detachment 1020 - “Jake” Puryear
- Detachment 1040 - 1st Sgt Charles F. Waller
- Detachment 1196 - Maj Stephen W. Pless
- Detachment 1260 - Maj Lawrence Des Jardines
- Detachment 1280 - North Georgia Mountain
- Detachment 1311 - MajGen Warren R. Johnson
- Detachment 1325 - Sgt Clyde Thomason MOH
- Detachment 1326 - West Chatham
- Detachment 1333 - Waycross
- Detachment 1373 - Central Georgia
- Detachment 1402 - Columbus
- Detachment 1424 - Byron

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Commandant Heard noted that the minutes of the October 24, 2020, quarterly meeting are available and have been posted on the Department website. Michael Clark moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and accept the minutes as posted. Al Yates seconded the motion, and it was approved. The minutes were accepted as published.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A Certificate of Appreciation was received from the Mitchell County Young Marines in recognition of the Department’s donation.

REPORT OF PAYMASTER:

The Paymaster’s report was read. Harry McCann moved to approve the Paymaster’s Report as submitted pending financial review. Mike Hester seconded the motion, and it was approved.

REPORT OF MEMBERS SICKNESS OR IN DISTRESS:

Members with health problems include James Craig, Guy Mitchell, and Larry Wolst. Members who have passed away include Glenn Fish and Ken Bramlett.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Judge Advocate: Judge Advocate Lisa Delk reported that it is Secretary of State renewal season. Renewals are due now. She also noted that the Board of Trustees has discussed designating a uniform officer. The successful candidate must be familiar with Marine Corps League uniform regulations (Enclosure 3 of the National Bylaws). Bernard Bledsoe agreed to take on the position. Judge Advocate Delk also commented on receipt of an email from Dennis Tobin, National Commandant, regarding political social media postings and attendance at political events. Improper activities could result in revocation of a Detachment's federal tax-exempt status.

Jr. Vice Commandant: Jr. Vice Commandant Rex Delk reported that there are 14 detachments in attendance, and he encouraged other detachments to attend. He reported that Department elected officers have been visiting detachments and aiding with Bylaws and other requirements. Half of the detachments in Georgia have been visited to date, and Department elected officers will be visiting the north part of the state next. Jr. Vice Commandant Delk noted that an MCL decanter set is up for raffle with the proceeds going to the Detachment hosting the meeting.

Sr. Vice Commandant: Sr. Vice Commandant Bill Miller spoke about embracing more technology. All elected officers and the Adjutant/Paymaster have individual OneDrive accounts. Sr. Vice Commandant Miller also noted that anyone interested in purchasing Grits Bowl coins should see the Department Paymaster.

Commandant: Commandant Larry Heard reported that Friday night Meet and Greet events will be held prior to our quarterly meetings. Last evening's event was a success. It is a great opportunity to exchange information. Commandant Heard noted that a new or change only Report of Officer Installation (ROI) is required whenever any information on the last ROI has changed, including addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, meeting location place, and time. Also, Detachment bank information (routing number and bank account number) is required by National for distribution of PLM funds. At this time, electronic banking is being used only for PLM disbursements; however, use of electronic banking will grow.

REPORTS OF APPOINTED OFFICERS:

None

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

2021 Department Convention Committee: Brent Eaton reported that Detachment 1402 is hosting this year's Convention at the VFW 665 in Columbus, Georgia. The convention is May 21-22, 2021. Marine of the Year and Associate of the Year nominations will be acceptance in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Department Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. Due to the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, there will not be a banquet this year. Commandant Larry Heard requested that Detachments consider hosting the next quarterly meeting.

TRAINING:

Judge Advocate Lisa Delk presented training on Bylaws.

Commandant Larry Heard recognized Past Department Commandants Michael Clark, Bernard Bledsoe, and Al Yates. He provided clarification on ceremonial rifle requirements and noted that National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division Butch Raynes believes there are unaccounted rifles which they are trying to locate. Commandant Heard advised that a rifle inventory must be completed every four years.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Sr. Vice Commandant Bill Miller requested that, when sending in reports or paperwork, please follow the proper procedure for submission. Nothing should be sent directly to National Headquarters unless you are specifically told to do so. Commandant Heard also suggested not waiting until the last minute as Department officers need timely submissions to facilitate tracking and reporting.

GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:

Bernard Bledsoe recommended taking multi-vitamins to help avoid COVID-19 or to recover more quickly. He appreciates the telephone calls he has received for information and noted that he is pleased to be the Department's Uniform Officer.

Bill Sirmon, Department Marine for Life Coordinator, suggested using Linked In as a tool to get the word out. Marine for Life helps with employment, housing, and reintegration into civilian life, among other things.

Jim Berres, Regimental Commander for Young Marines in Georgia and South Carolina, reported that they have 180 Young Marines in 11 units. Eight units are in Georgia, and 3 units are in South Carolina. The Regiment has 60 registered adults, and they are looking for volunteers. The Young Marines program focuses on drug awareness and was started by the Marine Corps League in 1965. The units are involved in their communities, and leadership schools are provided at three levels at Unit, Battalion, and Regimental encampments. Each unit has a color guard, and shooting competitions are held at local and national levels. The cost to provide this program is \$510/year/person. The Young Marines do their own fundraising; however, they appreciate the continued support of the Marine Corps League.

Merrill Tindall, Detachment 1333 Commandant, recommended that all members attend the quarterly meetings, but also suggested attendance at the Meet and Greets the evening before.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The 2021 Southeast Division Conference has been cancelled.
- No determination has been made for the 2021 Mid-Winter Conference.
- No determination has been made for the 2021 National Convention.
- The 2021 Department of Georgia Convention is May 21-22, 2021, in Columbus, Georgia.
- Boy Scout Coins are available.
- Ruben Scott telephoned to acknowledge receipt and thank the membership for the donation received by the Metro Atlanta Young Marine Unit.
- A growl will be held following the meeting.

CLOSING CEREMONY:

There being no further business, the Quarterly Business Meeting was closed by ritual at 1108.

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