



**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA**  
**MINUTES - ANNUAL MEETING – MAY 22, 2021**



**OPENING CEREMONY:**

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

Commandant Heard welcomed all in attendance and introduced the following dignitaries:

National Sr. Vice Commandant Johnny Baker;  
Assistant Division Vice Commandant, Southeast Division, Jerry Holt;  
Aide-de-Camp, Southeast Division, Jim Stone;  
Past Commandant, Department of Alabama, Jack Hopping;  
Past Commandant, Department of Georgia, Michael Clark;  
Past Commandant, Department of Georgia, Bernard Bledsoe;  
Past Commandant, Department of Georgia, Al Yates; and  
Past Commandant, Department of Georgia, Ron Kirstatter.

**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  
Chaplain Mickey Edwards  
Sergeant-at-Arms Levi McKenna  
Sergeant-at-Arms Bobby Shepherd  
Sergeant-at-Arms JR Millhorn

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:

District 3 – Russ Johnson  
District 5 – Frank Goalen  
District 6 – Frank Goalen  
District 7 – Marty Habecker (outgoing) and Ed Barbee (incoming)  
District 9 – Tim McClelland  
District 10 – Tim McClelland

Appointed Positions:

V.S.O. – John Pless  
Fallen Marines – Merrill Tindall  
VAVS – Bonita Johnson  
Marine for Life – Bill Sirmon  
Boy Scout Coordinator – Mickey Edwards  
Newsletter – Al Yates  
Web Sergeant – Brent Eaton  
Historian – Bernard Bledsoe

Detachments in attendance included:

- Detachment 647 - L/Cpl Squire "Skip" Wells
- Detachment 783 - Unicoi
- Detachment 970 - Middle Georgia
- Detachment 1040 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Charles F. Waller
- Detachment 1188 - Gen Ray Davis - MOH
- Detachment 1196 - Maj Stephen W. Pless
- Detachment 1260 - Maj Lawrence Des Jardines
- Detachment 1311 - MajGen Warren R. Johnson
- Detachment 1312 - Aubrey Gilbert
- Detachment 1325 - Sgt Clyde Thomason MOH
- Detachment 1333 - Waycross
- Detachment 1373 - Central Georgia
- Detachment 1402 - Columbus
- Detachment 1424 - Peach County

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Commandant Heard noted that the minutes of the January 23, 2021, business meeting are available and have been posted on the Department website. Bernard Bledsoe moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes and accept the minutes as posted. Michael Clark seconded the motion, and it was approved. The minutes were accepted as published

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

A thank you letter, organization magazine, and photograph of the unit members was received from the Metro Atlanta Young Marines acknowledging a donation from the Department of Georgia.

**REPORT OF PAYMASTER:**

Adjutant/Paymaster LuAnn Miller reported that the annual financial review of the Paymaster records was conducted and no issues were reported. The Paymaster's report was read. Merrill Tindall moved to approve the Paymaster's Report as submitted pending financial review. Bernard Bledsoe seconded the motion, and it was approved.

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

Chaplain Mickey Edward reported 13 deaths since the last Department meeting including Henry Jackson; Gary W. Locke, Jr.; Billy W. Hammack; Raymond Frazier; Mathew J. Farrell; Clarence E. Johnson; Andrew Glenn Martin; Oliver G. Moorehead; Ruthie I. Breton; William B. Wilson, Jr.; Henry L. Watson, Jr.; Douglas A. Barringer; and Ken Bramlett.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS:**

**Judge Advocate:** Judge Advocate Lisa Delk reported that it has been productive year with 19 Detachments having been visited by one or more members of the Department Board of Trustees. Her focus has been Bylaws and assisting Detachments in compliance matters. We now have 8 Detachments with complete Bylaws, 11 Detachments are in the process of amending or rewriting their Bylaws, and 6 Detachments have not submitted Bylaws. Six Detachments have submitted Reports of Officer Installations (ROI) forms, and one Detachment has not provided a copy of their Georgia Secretary of

State filing for this year. Judge Advocate Delk noted that there is a new ROI form available on the National website and offered her assistance should questions arise.

**Jr. Vice Commandant:** Jr. Vice Commandant Rex Delk reported that the Big Al Meade Award, the Burkhardt Award, and the Grits Bowl will not be awarded this year due to inaccuracies in the National membership rosters. Next year, these awards will be calculated from March 2020 to March 2022. As noted, rosters currently include inaccurate information, and the Board is working on correcting this. Jr. Vice Commandant Delk will be speaking with Detachment Jr. Vice Commandants to assist with the clean-up efforts.

**Sr. Vice Commandant:** Sr. Vice Commandant Bill Miller reported that nine Detachments and several guests attended this Convention's Commandants Council. He was impressed by the discussion regarding retaining members, which resolved into wellness checks for members. This will aid in membership retention. Sr. Vice Commandant Miller noted that at last October's quarterly meeting, technology and document retention were discussed. As a result of that discussion, the membership approved up to \$600 for technology items. Since then, the Department Board of Trustees has been meeting via Zoom about once every two weeks, and the Department has hosted Paymaster training for Detachments. Testing of the single OneDrive account was successful, and individual OneDrive accounts have been created for the elected officers and the Adjutant/Paymaster. Sr. Vice Commandant Miller wants to hold additional trainings utilizing this technology and noted that Detachment involvement is essential. He also wants to use an online survey tool to solicit feedback. From August 2020 to April 2021, technology costs were \$282.33. Costs from May 2021 to April 2022 are estimated at \$422.88. Sr. Vice Commandant Miller suggested the membership authorize a continued allowance of \$600 per year. Barbara Brammer moved to authorize \$600 annually for technology costs. The motion was seconded by Levi McKenna and approved by the membership.

**Commandant:** Commandant Larry Heard advised that Detachments are required to submit a new Report of Office Installation (ROI) form whenever there is a change to their elected or appointed officers. He also noted that Permanent Life Member (PLM) distributions were sent out, with funds being directly deposited into Detachment bank accounts. At the Commandants Council, Commandant Heard learned that Georgia has the second highest occurrence rate of members going directly to National officers or staff with problems, thereby skipping the chain of command. He emphasized that Detachments need to go to the correct Detachment officer first, then to the correct Department officer. The Department is authorized to escalate the issue to National, if necessary. Commandant Heard reminded District Vice Commandants that they need to visit all the Detachments in their District that they can and relay their reports to the Department Commandant. Information on the next quarterly meeting will be announced when finalized.

### **REPORTS OF APPOINTED OFFICERS:**

Historian Bernard Bledsoe reminded the membership that information about Detachment histories is needed. Information should include chartering data, a list of members who have served as Detachment Commandant, a catalog of Detachment Marine of the Year recipients, a record of members who have been Department, Division, and/or National officers; and other things you'd like to mention (i.e., Honor Guard, Toys for Tots, etc.). Begin compiling this information for your Detachment and bring a draft to next year's Department meeting so we can review what we have and determine what we still need.

Boy Scout Coordinator Mickey Edwards reported that, when we distribute coins to Eagle Scouts, a report must be provided to Department for inclusion in National's totals. Please prepare and submit your reports.

Department Marine 4 Life Coordinator Bill Sirmon advised that Major Kim is the Active-Duty Coordinator for the State of Georgia, and he has been working with her. They are using LinkedIn as an

information portal. He urged the membership to keep reaching out to Marines and to look for ways to reach out to families, including informal activities at family-friendly times.

Web Sergeant Brent Eaton noted that we update the Commandants' email distribution list when ROIs are submitted. He recommended Detachments maintain their own email distribution list for their Detachment members and offered to assist in setting up email distribution lists.

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

Commandant Larry Heard noted that he is looking into establishing a special budget committee. Anyone interested in serving on the committee with Chairman Bill Miller and LuAnn Miller should contact Commandant Heard or Sr. Vice Commandant Bill Miller.

### **PRESENTATION:**

National Sr. Vice Commandant Johnny Baker reported on what is happening at the National level. He is dedicated to the Southeast Division and wants to make it the best he can. He is our representative at National and has been working with the membership staff on the database. Last year we transitioned from the old database to a new database. A significant amount of bad data was transferred to the new database, and the staff at Headquarters is working on cleaning it up. Sr. Vice Commandant Baker just ran a new roster. He requested that Detachment Paymasters review their Detachment rosters and submit changes with documentation to the Department Paymaster who will forward them to National staff. Sr. Vice Commandant Baker believes the National organization is getting better every day. He explained the Member Portal and identified what Detachment Commandants and Detachment Paymasters can access. Individual members can access their own profile if their email address has been input into the database. Sr. Vice Commandant Baker explained how to access the Member Portal for the first time. National recently introduced a new system associated with submitting Notices of Death. Currently, Notices of Death are sent to the Department Chaplains who send the Notices to the Division Chaplains, who then forward them to National. In addition to maintaining this process, Detachments are also required to send Notices of Death to the Department Paymaster accompanied by a Dues Transmittal using the NOD code. He urged officers to always use the forms from the National website as they are the most up-to-date versions available. National is currently working on the ability to submit Dues Transmittals electronically, and National Sr. Vice Commandant Baker encouraged Detachments to set up a process for receiving electronic payments from their members. Headquarters is reviewing annual dues and updating life membership dues. For distribution of PLM funds, over 600 Detachments provided banking information to National, and only a few disbursements were returned. Sr. Vice Commandant Baker assured the members that banking information is secure. Only the Chief Operating Officer has the banking information, and he is unable to withdraw funds from Detachment accounts; he is only able to deposit funds. National Sr. Vice Commandant Baker posed the question, "Where do we find age 50 and younger members?" He said that Detachments must become more social media savvy. Engage new members, keep them active, and include their families. He also referred to the Commandant's Corner on Facebook, where the National Commandant chats with attendees about anything. He ended by saying that his four focuses, should he become the next National Commandant, are Young Marines, Toys for Tots, funeral support, and growth of the Marine Corps League.

The meeting recessed at 1013 and reconvened at 1026.

Alton Coleman, Commandant of Detachment 783, announced that he created a Facebook page called Georgia Marines United. He will provide contact information for those that want to join. Sr. Vice Commandant Johnny Baker recommended vetting people, and Bill Miller suggested that we invite our friends.

Commandant Heard reported that he sent out an email to all Detachment Commandants regarding elections for the positions of National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division and Assistant Division Vice Commandant. These positions are open to any regular member. Those interested must send their resume to Butch Raynes, who will compile all resumes and send them out to the Departments. Commandant Heard will then forward the nominees to the Detachment Commandants. Commandant Heard also vouched for Johnny Baker for the position of National Commandant.

Bill Miller announced his nomination for Assistant Division Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division. He provided his Marine Corps League history at the national, department, and detachment levels as well as his involvement with the Marine Corps League Foundation.

Jerry Holt announced his nomination for National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division. He provided his Marine Corps League history at the national, department, and detachment levels. In addition, he spoke about his work with the Scholarship Committee. He is currently the Assistant Division Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division. Jerry also reviewed the nomination and election process and explained the job description for a National Vice Commandant. He emphasized training and noted that the National Vice Commandant is responsible to make sure that training opportunities exist. He also noted that communication with National is a key priority, should he be elected National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division.

Al Yates announced his nomination for National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division. He will be posting his resume shortly and asked for the support of the members.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Commandant Larry Heard reported that the 2021 National Convention will be August 9-14 in Springfield, Illinois.

Commandant Johnny Baker reported that Neil Corley resigned his position as Chairman of the National Exhibit Committee, and Harry McCann has been appointed to succeed him.

The Marine of the Year presentation was presided over by Al Yates as our past Marine of the Year. He noted there were five nominations, and Ed Barbee was awarded 2021 Marine of Year.

**NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Judge Advocate Lisa Delk announced the requirements for delegate voting and noted that only seven Detachments timely submitted their Delegate Registration forms. Members of other Detachments will be allowed to cast their individual votes. Reported voting strengths are:

- Detachment 647 - 37
- Detachment 783 - 23
- Detachment 1040 - 28
- Detachment 1083 - 130
- Detachment 1196 - 75
- Detachment 1260 - 48
- Detachment 1402 - 38

Commandant Larry Heard advised that, in the case of more than one candidate for an office, Detachments will be afforded time to caucus before voting.

Bernard Bledsoe chaired the election, explained the election process, and noted the order of elections.

**Commandant:** Russ Vermillion nominated Larry Heard who accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received. Chaplain Mickey Edwards cast one unanimous vote for Larry Heard.

**Sr. Vice Commandant:** Russ Vermillion nominated Bill Miller who accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received. Chaplain Mickey Edwards cast one unanimous vote for Bill Miller.

**Jr. Vice Commandant:** Harry McCann nominated Rex Delk who accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received. Chaplain Mickey Edwards cast one unanimous vote for Rex Delk.

**Judge Advocate:** John Pless nominated Lisa Delk who accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received. Chaplain Mickey Edwards cast one unanimous vote for Lisa Delk.

Elections were closed.

Commandant Larry Heard noted that the appointed officers will continue to serve in their respective positions. The newly elected and appointed officers were sworn in by Bernard Bledsoe.

Commandant Larry Heard stated that he has a great set of elected and appointed officers and noted that the officers will continue visiting Detachments. He advised that the Department officers are here to assist the Detachments and reminded members to follow the chain of command, beginning at the Detachment, then moving to Department, if necessary.

**CLOSING CEREMONY:**

There being no further business, the Annual Business Meeting was closed by ritual at 1120.

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