



Southeast Division Marine Corps League

- Chartered by Congress – 7 August 1937 –



MINUTES 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Mobile, Alabama 30 MARCH – 1 April 2017

Conference host:

P. L. WILSON DETACHMENT 447

DEPARTMENT COMMANDANT'S COUNCIL

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, 30 March 2017 by NDVC Jim Hackbarth.

Present at the meeting were officers and staff of the Southeast Division, Commandants from each of the Departments except Tennessee (represented by Department Paymaster Glenn Barry Evans), and many other members of the Marine Corps League. National Judge Advocate Johnny Baker was present for a portion of the meeting to answer questions concerning National procedures and administrative issues.

ANDVC Sweet conducted a roll call of Department Commandants with all present other than Tennessee.

ANDVC Sweet called for reports from the Department Commandants. (Note: each written report is archived to the Adjutant records)

- Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne reported on membership and Detachments. A new Detachment will be receiving their charter in the next week or so and will be introduced during the business session at this conference.
- Department of Florida Commandant Ronald Ashley reported on membership and delinquency. A new Detachment #1440 was recently chartered. The Eagle Scout program is doing well. There was a Chapter 9 hearing resulting in the expulsion of a member from the League. The Florida Injured Warrior Fund, Inc. program has been successful in helping veterans of all services in filling the donut hole they experience from other aid programs. He asked about the process for National to return transmittals to the Detachments. Why is National returning copies to the Department Paymaster instead of the Detachment? ANDVC Sweet acknowledged that there is a problem and is hopeful that National is on track to correct the issue. He and NDVC Hackbarth will communicate the concerns to National staff. Louisiana Commandant Dave Martin asked if one of the National officers could join the meeting for further discussion.
- Department of Georgia Commandant Randy Barnes reported on membership. There were not any Chapter 9 hearings. He reported on the activities of the Detachments in Georgia.

- Department of Louisiana Commandant David Martin reported on membership and delinquency. He is concerned that some members may be waiting to renew until August with the mistaken belief that they will not have to pay for 2016 dues. Although the number of members has decreased, he reports that some Detachments that were in danger of losing their charters due to inactivity have really improved their activity level and work in their respective communities. Further discussion followed on the new dues structure.

National Judge Advocate (NJA) joined the meeting. Commandant David Martin asked about the process for returning transmittals to the Detachments. Most of the Departments continue to receive transmittals after being processed by National. Tennessee Paymaster Glen Barry Evans reported that he has recently notice transmittals going to Detachments rather than the Department. NJA Baker noted that much of this issue will likely be resolved once the new database is implemented.

- Department of Mississippi Commandant Ron Polk reported on membership. One of the Detachments surrendered their Charter with most of the members transferring to other Detachments. There is an application for Charter in process with the possibility of another Detachment being formed in the Biloxi area. There was one Detachment with a 990 problem that has been resolved. He spoke on the upcoming Trail of Honor event; and encouraged everyone that can to visit the event. The Department Convention is the end of April and all are invited to attend. Commandant Polk suggested that Departments coordinate their convention dates to allow others to attend as many different conventions as possible.
- Department of South Carolina Commandant John Tharp reported on membership and delinquency. There is a Detachment having 990 difficulty but that should be resolved soon. Most of the Detachments are proactive in fund raising and recruiting events. Commandant Tharp asked about the VAVS awards at the National level. NJA Baker and NDVC Hackbarth said they will check on the program. Commandant Tharp spoke about the FOCUS program and the benefit of recruiting new and younger members. There is a movement to have a FOCUS program begin in South Carolina which will be beneficial to all the SED. For now, the only program is in Missouri.
- Department of Tennessee Paymaster Glen Barry Evans reported for Commandant Kenneth Kotchevar on detachments, membership, and delinquency. There is a pending Chapter 9 but the respondent has not been located.
- Department of Louisiana Commandant David Martin reported on membership and activities such as marksmanship. Annual convention will be in June. The Detachments have turned around and improving with focus on Marine Corps League programs.

NJA Baker commented that even those Detachments that support USMC Reserve units rather than being a standalone program for Toys for Tots need to report their results to the Toys for Tots program. When reporting it should be clearly identified as being part of the reserve unit so as not to duplicate numbers. If not reported the amount of support from the League is not known as the reserve units do not break out their results from the League when reporting. This is not a criticism of the reserves but rather a result of the reporting format.

Marine Larry Frelin of the Department of South Carolina commented on SED MOY/Carter Award program. ANDVC Sweet responded with an explanation of the MOY levels. The SED MOY society basically controls the program requirements. PDC Department of Florida, Lou Calleja commented that it can be confusing but the Carter Award and the Division MOY is one and the same. Marine Frelin noted that the SED criteria are heavily weighted to community service rather than service as a member of the League. NJA suggested that the criteria for the Division MOY be amended to more closely follow the criteria for the National MOY award. The discussion closed with comment that any change to the SOP be sent to the SED MOY Society for consideration.

Marine Tom Drum commented on recruiting and the need for the membership to recruit others.

Convention Chairman A. B. Grantham reported that registration for the conference is likely to be one of the highest ever.

Commandant's meeting adjourned by ANDVC Archie Sweet.

JOINT MCL/MCLA OPENING CEREMONY AND MEMORIAL SERVICE

Friday 31 March 2017

NDVC Jim Hackbarth recognized the following dignitaries:

- National Commandant Richard Gore;
- National Junior Vice Commandant Dennis Tobin;
- National Judge Advocate Johnny Baker;
- MCLA Division Vice President SED Joyce Brickett
- Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne;
- P L Wilson Host Detachment 447 Commandant Elizabeth Davis;
- Conference Committee Chair A. B. Grantham.

Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne welcomed everyone to Mobile and the conference. He recognized A. B. & Dianna Grantham and the committee for their work in planning and running the conference.

Conference Chairman A. B. Grantham welcomed everyone to Mobile and the conference.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth recognized:

- National Senior Vice Commandant Wendell Webb.

Colors were presented by Marines from 3rd Force Recon with the Pledge of Allegiance.

SED Chaplain Terry Witt provided the opening prayer.

A. B. Grantham introduce Mobil Alabama County Sheriff Sam Cochran who provided some opening remarks and welcomed everyone to Mobile.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth introduced SED MCLA Vice President Joyce Brickett. She welcomed everyone to the conference and invited all to visit the MCLA meeting room and to view a display by the Gold Star Mothers. The following MCLA officers were recognized:

- National Junior Past President Deborah Evans;
- Past National President Alice Blackburn;
- National Junior Vice President Evelyn Joppa;
- Division Assistant Vice President Nancy Calleja;
- National Big Flea Rogene Hackbarth.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth recognized the following:

- National Judge Advocate candidate Randy Rigg from Southern Division;
- National Judge Advocate candidate Warren Griffin from New England Division;
- Past SEDNVC David Gardner;
- Past SEDNVC Michael Clark;
- Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne;
- Department of Florida Commandant Ron Ashley;
- Department of Georgia Commandant Randy Barnes;
- Department of Louisiana Commandant David Martin;
- Department of Mississippi Commandant Ron Polk;
- Department of South Carolina Commandant John Tharp;
- Department of Tennessee Commandant Kenneth Kotchevar;

NDVC Jim Hackbarth called on SED Chaplain Terry Witt to lead a Memorial Service. Chaplain Witt noted that in the Southeast Division 238 MCL members and 4 MCLA members have passed. Chaplain Witt dedicated the conference to each of our fallen comrades from the past year.

SED Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes placed the meeting in recess for 30 minutes to allow for MCL and MCLA to prepare for their respective business meetings.

SOUTHEAST DIVISION MCL BUSINESS MEETING

Friday 30 March 2017

The business meeting of the SED MCL was called to order by Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes at the direction of NDVC Jim Hackbarth.

Adjutant George LaMont conducted a roll call of officers and staff of the Division. All were present or accounted for other than: Veteran Service Officer, Gerald Kiehl; Awards Chair, Jimmy Smith; and Youth Physical Fitness Chair, William Gonzalez.

Adjutant George LaMont reported the minutes of the 2016 SED meeting have been posted to the Division website for nearly a year. A motion and second from the floor (names not captured) was made to approve the minutes as posted. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjutant George LaMont reported no correspondence that had not already been distributed.

Paymaster Glen Barry Evans presented his report and announced that the oversight committee has reviewed the financial records and statements without any discrepancies being found. A copy of the report may be obtained by contacting Paymaster Glen Barry Evans. (NOTE: A copy is archived to the Adjutant records)

Report of members sick or in distress. Marine Don March provided an update on PNC John Kovalcik who is hospitalized in South Carolina following a stroke. Don Marsh can be reached at his phone 843-215-3895 for additional updates.

Report of officers:

- NDVC Jim Hackbarth reported that he will not be seeking re-election as NDVC having nearly completed his 2-year term. He encouraged all to attend the National Convention in Overland Park, Kansas.
- ANDVC Archie Sweet reported. He thanked all for their support during his term as ANDVC. He was able to stand in for NDVC for a portion of the Mid-winter conference. He thanked NDVC Hackbarth for his service.
- Sgt.-at-Arms had no report other than a few announcements. The SED will follow the procedure of National for presenting attendance streamers until the streamers are all distributed.
- Web-master Bill Lamar reported that web site security has been changed to his password and control. Submit any needed changes to him.
- Chaplain Terry Witt reported that his report was submitted to the adjutant (archived in the SED Adjutant records) with additional copies on the table.
- Carter Award/SED Marine of the Year Chair Karl Ekstrom reported on the sale of raffle tickets and the need to submit any nominations by the close of today's business meeting session.

Southern Division NVC Randy Riggs presented on behalf of the Vietnam War Commemorative committee. He noted that brochures and Gunnery Sgt. Stewart are available outside the meeting room. He encouraged all to join as "Commemorative Partners." The website is www.vietnamwar50th.com

- ANDVC Archie Sweet reported on a successful Department Commandants meeting. Several questions of concern will be addressed with National HQ. ANDVC Archie Sweet asked the Department Commandants for any additional comments;

- Department of Florida Commandant Ron Ashley reminded all of the upcoming proposed amendment to the National Bylaws/Administrative Procedures and how that may affect the Department and Detachment Bylaws.
- Department of Louisiana Commandant David Martin spoke on new members concerning having a 1 up and 1 down mentor for each new member.
- Department of Mississippi Commandant Ron Polk spoke on the Trail of Honor event and encouraged everyone to attend. He also invited everyone to the Department Convention.
- Department of Tennessee Commandant Ken Kotchevar reported that the 2018 SED Conference will be in Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee.
- Young Marines Liaison John Gionet reported that he is available to assist in any way concerning the Young Marine Program.
- VAVS Chair Cary Haerlin announced that 5 of the 7 Departments have reported. He provided the totals of service for the Division.
- Marines Helping Marines Chair Cary Haerlin reported that there was one call for assistance that was handled within a few hours of being received. That one incident is exemplary of what Marines Helping Marines means.

ANDVC Archie Sweet called on Department of Louisiana to report on the status of their recent flooding. Commandant Martin reported that a final report is not yet available but did provide a synopsis. Marines, active and reserve, together with Marine Corps League members received assistance from various sources. The most significant was \$41,000.00 donated from the Departments and Detachments of the SED. Every cent was distributed to the families in need. The member (name not provided) that coordinated the relief effort for the Department was nominated for and presented with the MCL Distinguished Citizen Gold Award for his service.

National Comptroller Bill Miller reported on server issues at National.

Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes placed the meeting in recess for 10 minutes.

The Department of South Carolina invited the SED convention to Columbia, South Carolina Embassy Suites on 21 – 24 March 2019. Motion by Marine Bernie Bledsoe and second by Marine Don (last name not captured) to accept Columbia, S.C as the location for the 2019 SED Conference. Motion carried unanimously.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth called for nominations for the position of SED NDVC. Marine Archie Sweet of South Carolina was nominated by (name not captured). There were no other nominations for the position. NDVC Jim Hackbarth closed the nominations for NDVC until the following day's session.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth called for nominations for the position of SED ANDVC. Marine Michael Clark of Georgia was nominated by Marine A. B. Grantham of the Department of Alabama. Marine Archie Sweet of South Carolina was nominated by Department of South Carolina Commandant John Tharp. There were no other nominations. NDVC Jim Hackbarth closed the nominations for ANDVC until the following day's session.

ANDVC Archie Sweet asked the Department of Tennessee to report on any Marines in need from the recent fires. Department of Tennessee Commandant Ken Kotchevar reported that there were Marines effected but all known needs have been met.

ANDVC Archie Sweet asked the Department the Department of Georgia to report on any Marines in need from the recent severe weather. Department Commandant Randy Barnes reported that all reported needs have been met. A Detachment Commandant from Georgia (name not captured) reported that she received an email from someone in Florida within a day of the tornadoes' impact, asking if there were any Marines in need. She thanked the unknown but also recognized that this was a perfect example of Marines taking care of their own.

Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes recessed the meeting until the next day at 0900.

SATURDAY 31 MARCH 2017

The members and Commandant Wagner of the newly formed Sgt. Foster Harrington Detachment from the Department of Alabama were introduced by Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne.

Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes reconvened the meeting.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth welcome the following National MCL Officers:

- National Commandant Richard Gore
- National Senior Vice commandant Wendell Webb
- National Junior Vice Commandant Dennis Tobin
- National Judge Advocate Johnny Baker

The meeting was placed into open session by Direction of NDVC Jim Hackbarth.

Hope Derrick and Beth Well from the University of South Carolina presented on the topic of archiving the many films of the United States Marine Corps. This project will preserve some of the Marine Corps history. Once digitalized the films will be available for public viewing via the web.

Travis Ellis and James Peterson of the Shepherd's Men presented on their program. The group serves as ambassadors and advocates for the Shepherd Center Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. The center is focused on providing a program to treat veterans with TBI and spinal cord injury. The treatment program is a more in depth treatment than provided by the VA and is multi-focused to treat all the needs of the veteran patient. The program begins with 21 days of assessment followed by 10 weeks of acute specialty care. The program is completely donor funded. There is zero government funding.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth issued a challenge to all Departments and Detachments in the Southeast Division to support the Shepherd's Men.

Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne introduce United States Representative Bradley Burns who welcomed the membership to Mobile and thanking all for their service. He spoke on current and future National legislative issues concerning veterans.

The business meeting reconvened.

National Commandant Richard Gore addressed the meeting. He reminded everyone of the need to perpetuate the Marine Corps League by involving younger Marines. He suggested to learn their needs and provide for them.

National Senior Vice Commandant Wendell Webb addressed the meeting. He spoke on a program known as FOCUS and the need to network with program participants. He reminded all the need to strive for "50/50" in membership. 50% under and over 50 years old.

National Junior Vice Commandant Dennis Tobin spoke on membership. The numbers are down while delinquency is up. It may be the result of the new dues structure. He reminded all that the Junior Vice Commandants are responsible for membership which includes delinquency. It is important to the League to maintain the membership.

National Judge Advocate Johnny Baker spoke briefly on the proposed revision of the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures. The proposal has been submitted and should be posted soon for all to view in advance of the National Convention,

Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes placed the meeting in recess for 10 minutes.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth introduced the National Scholarship Chair David Hatfield who recognized 2 of the committee members present: George LaMont and Jerry Holt. He spoke on the importance of accuracy and following of procedures in applying for the National Scholarship.

A presentation was provided on the 2018 SED Convention 22 – 25 March 2018 in Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee. The Smokey Mountain Resort is the Convention location. Most of the meetings will take place at the Country Cascades

The 2019 SED Convention will be in Columbia, South Carolina at the Embassy Suites on Greystone with a room rate of about \$119.00 per night.

Marine Randy Riggs, candidate for National Judge Advocate addressed the membership concerning his candidacy in August.

Marine Warren Griffin, candidate for National Judge Advocate addressed the membership concerning his candidacy in August.

Marine Michael Clark, of Georgia and candidate for SED ANDVC spoke on his candidacy.

Marine Butch Raynes, of South Carolina and candidate for SED ANDVC spoke on his candidacy.

Motion by Ron Polk, Department of Mississippi Commandant and second by Ron Ashley, Department of Florida Commandant to accept all reports provided. Motion carried.

Nominations were reopened. There were no additional nominations. NDVC Jim Hackbarth closed the nominations

Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes placed the meeting in recess for 5 minutes to prepare for elections.

On re-entrance to the room the Assistant Sgts.-at-Arms verified the credentials of all entering the room.

On reconvening National Judge Advocate Johnny Baker conducted elections. He explained the process for voting and introduced his assistants as one each from the Departments of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. The count will be by the cover of the standing member in order to identify regular members of the League.

Marine Archie Sweet of South Carolina was the sole candidate for the position of SED NDVC. Adjutant George LaMont cast one vote on behalf of the membership to elect Marine Sweet.

Marine Michael Clark and Marine Butch Raynes accepted the nomination and were escorted from the room. A stand-up vote was conducted and counted. The individual counters brought their results to the Adjutant and Election Chair Johnny Baker for verification. A sheet was prepared by the Adjutant showing the election results and signed by the Adjutant and each of the counters as verification of the election results (archived in the SED Adjutant records). The candidates were re-called to the room. Marine Michael Clark was introduced as the next ANDVC for the SED.

Marine Michael Clark thanked everyone for their support.

NDVC Hackbarth resumed the meeting.

Karl Ekstrom reported that a booklet for planning and conducting conventions and conferences is available to anyone interested.

A motion was presented by Marine Barbara Ramer of Department of Georgia and second by Greg McNab of the Department of Georgia to donate \$1000.00 to Shepherd's Men. There were 2 questions on the motion concerning the availability of the funds and validation of the program. The Paymaster's report indicates there is sufficient funds for the motion. Call for the vote result in approval.

ANDVC Archie Sweet thanked everyone for their support as ANDVC and for electing him as the next NDVC for SED beginning August 2017.

Announcements were made concerning flag streamers and the banquet.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth thanked all for their support and hospitality.

Sgt.-at-Arms recessed the meeting until the banquet.

2017 BANQUET

Guests and dignitaries were introduced.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a memorial service was led by SED Chaplain Terry Witt.

Chaplain Terry Witt provided the dinner prayer.

Convention Chairman A. B. Grantham introduced Matthew Schrier as the guest speaker. Mr. Schrier spoke on his captivity by al Qaeda and subsequent escape.

SED MCLA NVP Joyce Brickett recognized MCLA officers and staff present at the banquet. She presented the Watts/Liner award to Barbara Smith from the Spring Hill, Florida Unit of the MCLA. Florida President Jean Tamburrino accepted the award on behalf of Barbara Smith.

NDVC Jim Hackbarth presented Distinguished Citizen Silver Medals to the following members for their service to the SED:

- Department of Alabama Commandant Jerry Cherne;
- Department of Florida Commandant Ron Ashley;
- Department of Georgia Commandant Randy Barnes;
- Department of Louisiana Commandant David Martin;
- Department of Mississippi Commandant Ron Polk;
- Department of South Carolina Commandant John Tharp;
- Department of Tennessee Commandant Ken Kotchevar;
- SED Adjutant George LaMont;
- SED Paymaster Glen Barry Evans;
- SED Young Marine Liaison John Gionet;
- SED Aide-de-Camp Lou Calleja;

- SED Sgt.-at-Arms Butch Raynes;
- SED Chaplain Terry Witt;
- SED Conference Chair A. B. Grantham;
- SED ADVC Archie Sweet;
- P. L. Wilson Commandant was awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Karl Ekstrom presented the Carter/SED Marine of the Year Award to Clifton Addison from the Department of Mississippi.

The recipients of other SED awards will be announced in the near future.

The 2017 SED Conference was adjourned until 2017 in Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee.

Respectfully submitted,

George LaMont SED Adjutant