OPENING CEREMONY:

The meeting was opened per ritual by Commandant Randy Barnes at 0900. The Mission Statement of the Marine Corps League was read.

Commandant Barnes welcomed Southeast Division Vice Commandant Archie Sweet, Assistant Southeast Division Vice Commandant Michael Clark, and National Comptroller Bill Miller.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS AND DETACHMENTS:

Department officers in attendance included:
- Commandant Randy Barnes
- Sr. Vice Commandant Al Yates
- Jr. Vice Commandant Larry Heard
- Judge Advocate Silas Brown
- Jr. Past Commandant Ron Kirstatter
- Adjutant/Paymaster LuAnn Miller
- Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Barbee
- Sergeant-at-Arms Richard Jones
- Sergeant-at-Arms Tim McClelland

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:
- District 4 – Craig McNabb
- District 6 – Harry McCann
- District 7 – Levi McKenna
- District 8 – Tim McClelland
- District 9 – Tim McClelland
- District 10 – Barbara Brammer

Appointed Positions:
- Historian – Bernard Bledsoe

Detachments in attendance included:
- Detachment 647 - L/Cpl Squire “Skip” Wells
- Detachment 783 - Unicoi
- Detachment 970 - Middle Georgia
- Detachment 1040 - 1st 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 1325 - Sgt Clyde Thomason MOH
- Detachment 1333 - Waycross
- 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 July 29, 2017, business meeting are available and have been posted on the website. Bernard Bledsoe moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes as they have been posted on the website. Bill Miller seconded the motion, and it was approved. The minutes were accepted as posted.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

A letter was received from Randy Riggs thanking the membership for their support in his run for National Judge Advocate. Thank you letters for financial support were received from the Semper Fi Fund (donation to the Sons of the Pacific Heroes for the Marine Corps Marathon), the Marine Corps League Foundation (donation for disaster relief), and the Department of Florida (donation for Irma Disaster Fund). The Waycross Fallen Veterans Memorial dedication will be held November 11, 2017, at Plant Park in downtown Waycross.

**REPORT OF PAYMASTER:**

The Paymaster’s report was read. National Headquarters will no longer be sending out renewal notices; Detachments need to take an active role in reminding their members of expiring memberships. A new Dues Transmittal form has been posted on the National website; please use the new form making sure it is filled out (including the new Department Paymaster information section). PLM audit deadline is December 30, 2017; all audits must be submitted through the Department Paymaster and must be received by National by December 30. Georgia annual corporation registrations are due early in the year; make sure you send a copy of your Georgia registration documents to the Department Paymaster. IRS 990 filing deadline is November 15, based on fiscal year ending June 30; please get it filed and send a copy to the Department Paymaster for forwarding to National. The issue of IRS deductibility codes was discussed. About half the Detachments in Georgia have a “2” deductibility code; these need to be changed to a “1” code. The National Commandant has been working with the IRS to develop a procedure to make the correction; documentation will be provided when it is available. Bill Miller reported that National Headquarters has already determined the amount available for PLM distribution, and they plan to begin cutting checks by the end of January.

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

Members with health problems include Department Chaplain David Epps (Detachment 1325), Donna Tindale (Detachment 1333), several members of Detachment 1333, Jan Maynor (Detachment 1402), Chris Murch (Detachment 1196), Ron Wikander (Detachment 1438), Karen Lawrence (Detachment 1311), Dennis Loeb (Detachment 1311), Howard Gould (Detachment 1402), and Jerry Willis (Detachment 1402). Members who have lost loved ones include Charles Santoriello who lost his ex-wife (Detachment 1196).

**REPORT OF OFFICERS:**

**Judge Advocate Silas Brown:** No Bylaw amendments were passed at the National Convention. The deadline for Department Bylaws amendments is February 15 for consideration at the Department Convention in April. Silas Brown reported that he has been visiting Detachments. He noted that in 2016, the National Judge Advocate sent out an email advising that baseball caps are not the official cover of the Marine Corps League. Please ask your members to remove them during meetings and League functions.
Judge Advocate Brown noted that his email address on the Department website is not correct. Please use silasbrown.jadeptga@gmail.com.

Jr. Vice Commandant Larry Heard: Bonita Johnson will give a report on Detachment 1188; they are currently looking for a meeting place. Jr. Vice Commandant Heard is working on revitalizing Paulding County. He has had contact with a Lake Park, Georgia, Marine who is interested in forming a Detachment in southern Georgia; a list of prospective members is being compiled. A Marine in Dublin, Georgia, is also putting together a list of prospective members. Larry Heard, Levi McKenna, and Michael Clark will be attending a parade and will be collecting names of interested individuals. The Jr. Vice Commandant asked if anyone has information for Tifton, Thomaston, or Forsyth activities. Bill Miller noted that Tifton and Forsyth information was given to the previous Jr. Vice Commandant. Jr. Vice Heard reported that he has been visiting Detachments and requested that Detachments contact him if they want Department representation at any of their events.

Sr. Vice Commandant Al Yates: Only seven quarterly reports were received. Detachments need to submit quarterly reports so the Sr. Vice Commandant can send them out to other Detachments via a newsletter. Reports are due two weeks prior to the meeting. A suggestion was received that reports be standardized. Sr. Vice Yates noted that a standardized report will be sent out to the Detachments prior to each meeting. Sample copies were distributed at the meeting.

Commandant Randy Barnes: There are too many members on the delinquent roster; 513 unpaid regular members, 107 unpaid associate members, 10 unpaid multiple members for a total of 630 total members unpaid. This is partly due to the change in membership expiration dates. Commandant Barnes encouraged Detachments to process transmittals on a timely basis; if Department does get them, National will not get them. Michael Clark noted that National is running out of money because no one is paying their dues; please take care of your delinquents. Archie Sweet recommended that Detachments set up procedures to notify members of due dates. He suggested creating a membership committee, calling members, offering to pick up dues payments, and reading a list of delinquent members at meetings. Bill Miller noted that many Detachments don’t start asking for renewal dues until the member is delinquent; be proactive and send notices or make calls several months in advance of the expiration date. National no longer uses the multi-part renewal forms because they are so expensive. Bernard Bledsoe noted that you will not have a recurring monthly problem with delinquents since we all have the same renewal date. Barbara Brammer said that people are in such a hurry to recruit that they enroll members before the member knows if they really want to join. Al Yates suggested asking new members what they are interested in instead of telling them what your Detachment does. Commandant Barnes recommended giving members something to do; it will give them something to look forward to.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Bylaws Committee: Silas Brown reported that no information has come in for addressing Department Bylaws. Please send Bylaws questions to the Department Judge Advocate instead of going directly to National Headquarters. If the Department Judge Advocate doesn’t have the answer, he’ll research it.

Toys for Tots: Michael Clark reported that we currently have no Toys for Tots Coordinator. If you participate in the Toys for Tots program, you must work through an official Toys for Tots Coordinator. All money and toys must go to the Coordinator. Notify the Coordinator of any special need families. You can find your coordinator on the Toys for Tots website. Russ Vermillion suggested each Detachment send a representative to the annual training. Craig McNabb noted there is a problem in the Atlanta area; they need a warehouse facility. Bernard Bledsoe said you need to contact the Toys for Tots Foundation in Quantico each January to qualify for that year. If you have not gone to the training before, the Toys for Tots Foundation will pay for one person from each organization to attend the training. In subsequent years, costs are taken out of your Toys for Tots account; however, you must pay your own transportation
costs. All funds sent to the Toys for Tots Foundation will be credited to the local Toys for Tots organization.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Commandant Barnes reported that the 2018 National Convention will be held August 12-17 in Buffalo, New York, at the Hyatt Hotel. Please refer to the Marine Corps League National website for further information. The 2018 Southeast Division Conference is March 22-25 in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Hotel reservations can be made through Country Cascades by calling 865-428-1194. Archie Sweet reported that he and Michael Clark inspected the facilities. The meeting facilities are good with a very nice room for the banquet. The food will be prepared by an excellent off-site catering restaurant. Ron Kirstatter asked the Detachments to support National, Division, and Department conventions with their ad support.

Michael Clark reported that the Southeast Division is under consideration for an upcoming National Convention and noted that Georgia has never hosted a National Convention.

Commandant Barnes reported that General Ray Davis MOH Detachment 1188, which has been defunct for several years, is being reconstituted. It will move from Covington to Dekalb County. Bonita Johnson, Detachment Commandant, reported that meetings will be held on Tuesday evenings. By the end of next month, they expect to have 25-30 members with their first meeting being held in mid-November. They will provide video conferencing for members who cannot attend the meetings in person.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:**

Commandant Barnes presented a National Convention streamer to Middle Georgia Detachment 970.

Levi McKenna had discussed The Ride Home at the last staff meeting. This event was cancelled due to the hurricane but will be back again next year; however, they will not have The Wall. He reported that The Wall will return to Warner Robins in 2019.

Russ Vermillion, Georgia Pack Leader, requested that all Georgia pounds provide him with meeting times, meeting locations, and contact information,

Craig McNabb offered congratulations to West Chatham Detachment 1326 for stepping up to attend an Eagle Court of Honor in the Savannah area.

Tom Coursey said that Detachments want to be organized as 501(c)(3) entities. Bill Miller noted the National Commandant said all Detachments must be 501(c)(4) organizations. Michael Clark agreed that Detachments must first be a 501(c)(4) entity, then they can form a separate 501(c)(3) organization. Bill Miller noted that the Marine Corps League Foundation is a 501(c)(3) entity and funds can be channeled through the Foundation to the individual Detachments. He also reported that the Marine Corps League Foundation has over $20,000 in a disaster relief fund, and to date they have received only one request for assistance.

Rusty Hurst talked about the museum and monument in Columbus and noted that a new Global War on Terror monument was recently unveiled.
Barbara Brammer discussed the importance of hurricane aid and noted that these people’s lives are impacted beyond imagination and they still don’t even know what they need. Check with your detachment members to identify needs.

Archie Sweet spoke about No Roof Left Behind. A company in Florida takes pictures of houses needing roofs; then people vote to determine who gets the new roof. A Korean veteran is in the running. You can get information on the No Roof Left Behind program at www.941get.info. The deadline for voting is early November. Archie Sweet commended the Department of Georgia on its dedication and thanked the members for their commitment to the League and for their hospitality.

Commandant Barnes noted the next staff meeting will be held January 27, 2018, with the location to be announced.

The 2018 Department Convention is April 27-28 in Warner Robins, Georgia. Levi McKenna reported that the hotel is the Courtyard by Marriot, and rooms are $119 a night. The backup hotel is the Fairfield Inn. There are five restaurants within walking distance, and Host Detachment 1373 has received good feedback from the local vendors.

A host detachment is still needed for the 2019 Department Convention. Bernard Bledsoe reported the Great Wolf Resort is being built in the LaGrange area, and rooms are expected to be $300 a night. A Courtyard by Marriott is expected to open in Spring in the area, but information on facilities is hard to get. The Best Western, site of two past conventions, has experienced a lot of turnover in ownership.

Levi McKenna requested the status of the Commandants’ email distribution list. Commandant Barnes noted that the list’s capacity is limited and will only include Detachment Commandants, Detachment Judge Advocates, Department officers, National officers, Past Department Commandants, and a few exceptions as authorized by the Department Commandant. The email distribution list is updated based on Detachment Reports of Officer Installation received by the Department. Barbara Brammer urged Detachment Commandants to disseminate the information received via the email distribution list to their Detachment members. Bernard Bledsoe recommended that each Detachment set up its own distribution list including all their Detachment members. Bill Miller suggested that we look at increasing the number of members that can be added to the distribution list. Ron Kirstatter confirmed the list capacity could be increased by reconfiguring an application on the website but deferred to the Department Web Sergeant on this matter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

CLOSING CEREMONY:

There being no further business, the Staff Meeting was closed by ritual at 1050.

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