OPENING CEREMONY:

The annual business meeting was opened per ritual by Commandant Randy Barnes at 0910. The Mission Statement of the Marine Corps League was read.

Commandant Randy Barnes welcomed all to the annual Convention and recognized A.B. Grantham, Department of Alabama Commandant.

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
- Chaplain David Epps
- Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Barbee
- Sergeant-at-Arms Richard Jones

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:
- District 2 – Frank Corrick
- District 5 – Bill Stevens
- District 6 – Harry McCann
- District 7 – Levi McKenna
- District 10 – Barbara Brammer

Appointed Positions:
- V.S.O. – Mickey Edwards
- Boy Scout Coordinator – Mickey Edwards
- Web Sergeant – Bill Stevens
- Historian – Bernard Bledsoe

Detachments in attendance included:
- Detachment 647 - L/Cpl Squire “Skip” Wells
- Detachment 921 - Lt.Col Jimmie Dyess
- Detachment 970 - Middle Georgia
- Detachment 1040 - 1st Sgt Charles F. Waller
- Detachment 1083 - Joseph Schmittou
- Detachment 1188 - Gen Ray Davis - MOH
- 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 1333 - Waycross
APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Commandant Barnes noted that the minutes from the January 27, 2018, 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. Russ Vermillion seconded the motion, and it was approved. The minutes were accepted as published.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Since the 2018 National Convention is being held in Buffalo, New York, Commandant Barnes advised members that they cannot carry concealed weapons into New York State. Please do not transport firearms in New York.

REPORT OF PAYMASTER:

The Paymaster’s report was read. Bernard Bledsoe moved to approve the Paymaster’s Report as submitted and noted that the annual financial review was completed with no issues noted. Ron Kirstatter seconded the motion, and it was approved.

REPORT OF MEMBERS SICKNESS OR IN DISTRESS:

Members with health problems include Bob Kotz (1325), Tom Zaworski (1325), Karen Lawrence (1311), Libby Stadler (647), C.C. Hinton (1196), Everett Stewart (1020), Howard Gould (1402) Art McNitt (921), Roy Staff and his daughter (1333), and Arly Ermy. Members who have passed away include William Cuff (1260), Fay Schmittou (1083), David Adams (1196), Robert Nix (1196), W.C. Monkus (1083), John Schoenecker Jr. (1311), and Marty McNulty (1325). Chaplain David Epps reported 19 members deceased since the last quarterly meeting and 38 members deceased since last year’s convention.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Judge Advocate: Judge Advocate Silas Brown reported that it has been a good year because we’ve done what is best for the Department, which is what is best for the individuals. Two Chapter 9 hearing were concluded resulting in one expulsion from the League and a one-year suspension from the League. Also, one member resigned with prejudice in lieu of the hearing process. Thanks were extended to Bernard Bledsoe for assuming the duties of Jurisdictional Judge Advocate for the hearings due to Silas Brown having to recuse himself because of a conflict of interest. After the 2018 National Convention, Judge Advocate Brown noted that we will need to rewrite the Department Bylaws. Then the Detachments will need to review and revise their Bylaws.

Jr. Vice Commandant: Junior Vice Commandant Larry Heard reported that formation of the Dublin Detachment is still in the works. He recommended that Detachment Commandants praise their Jr. Vice Commandants if they are doing their job, since what they do is critical to our mission.

Sr. Vice Commandant: Sr. Vice Commandant Al Yates reported that we had an excellent Commandants’ Council last night with lots of great ideas shared. The Department Newsletter will be
published on May 1. Sr. Vice Commandant Yates requested that Detachments send in their quarterly reports by July 11 or 12 for inclusion in the August 1 newsletter.

**Commandant:** Commandant Randy Barnes thanked everyone for their attendance at this year’s convention. He noted that the past two years have been a learning experience, and he encouraged everyone to continue working with the upcoming slate of officers. He recommended trying to mitigate conflicts without having to file grievances, and he thanked the membership for their support.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Barbee reported that convention streamers are available, and he noted that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the last two years.

**Boy Scout Coordinator:** Boy Scout Coordinator Mickey Edwards reported that we had 80 Eagle Scouts this year, and he encouraged Detachments to turn in their Boy Scout reports.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**2019 Department Convention Committee:** Joe Najjar (1260) reported that Albany would like to host the next Department Convention. A hotel has not yet been finalized. His Detachment is unanimously behind hosting the convention, and the Marine Corps Logistics Base is also supporting the effort. Detachment 1260 will have a formal proposal by the July quarterly meeting. Bernard Bledsoe (1040) reported that LaGrange also wants to host the convention at the Great Wolf Resort, which is not yet open. The Resort offers a water park, and they are currently offering discounted rates. The banquet would be about $50 per person. The Resort normal room rate is over $300, but we can get room rates of $119 for the May 2, 2019, weekend. Detachment 1040 will have a formal proposal by the July quarterly meeting. Commandant Barnes said we need to coordinate our convention with the other Departments in the Southeast Division. Roscoe Foster moved that we postpone a decision on the 2019 Convention until the next quarterly meeting. David Epps seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Bylaws Committee:** The Bylaws Committee reported that, once we get information back from National, we will move forward with amendments to the Department of Georgia Bylaws. Bill Miller noted that the National proposed Bylaws amendments have not yet been posted, but they are scheduled for publication by May 1. Last year’s Bylaws amendments have been submitted to the National Judge Advocate and will be presented to the membership upon approval.

The meeting was recessed at 1002 and reconvened at 1018.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Boy Scout Coordinator Mickey Edwards noted that we are running low on Boy Scout Coins and requested authorization to purchase more. Ron Kirstatter moved to purchase 200 Boy Scout coins. Roscoe Foster seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:**

Marine for Life Department Coordinator Bill Sirmon (1373) noted that it is hard for active duty Marines to reintegrate into civilian life. He plans to work with the Vectr Center for rehiring assistance. Trish Ross from the Vectr Center spoke about the Center’s mission. They are here for Georgia’s veterans and
their families. They help veterans transition by assisting them navigate higher education and job searching as well as providing resources and elevated training. In one and one-half years, the Center has helped 15,000 veterans. They assist with veteran disability claims, and they work with government and charitable organizations for all types of situations (including housing, education, medical, among other things). Bernard Bledsoe asked how we can find out who is separating from the service so that we can be available to assist them. The Vectr Center participates in service transition programs so the veterans know that assistance is available to them. Ms. Ross confirmed that the Center works with all branches of the service. They are part of the Governor’s High Demand Career Initiative, and funding comes from the Hope Career Grant and the Hope Grant. Randy Hirsch reported that the Leatherneck magazine had two good articles dealing with Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Bill Miller reported that the Marine Corps League is establishing stronger ties with the United States Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is striving to expand the Marine for Life Program with the help of the Marine Corps League. Each Detachment needs a Marine for Life Coordinator, who will work with the Department Coordinator. The Department Coordinator will work with the National Coordinator.

Bernard Bledsoe noted that the Department of Georgia has received a lot of recognition for attending and working at the Marine South and Modern Day Marine events. He noted that it is a great opportunity to share the mission of the Marine Corps League. Barbara Brammer suggested that we advertise on the Together We Served website.

Bill Miller stated that Lt. General Rex McMillan, Commander of Marine Forces Reserve, made a presentation at the Mid-Winter Convention regarding rendering funeral honors and showed a video which emphasized how important the Marine Corps League is to this effort.

Jr. Vice Commandant Larry Heard presented the 2018 Recruiter of the Year Award to Levi McKenna, Detachment 1373.

Bill Stevens presented a short training session regarding preparation of Report of Officer Installation (ROI) forms. He noted that it is important to ensure that email addresses are provided for each Detachment Commandant and Detachment Judge Advocate. The Detachment Commandant’s email address should be listed in the “E-Mail Official Correspondence To” section. National Headquarters would prefer that you include individual addresses and contact information on ROIs, but it is a decision that each Detachment must make.

Commandant Barnes presented Certificates of Appreciation to Barbara Brammer, Silas Brown, Guy Mitchell, LuAnn Miller, David Epps, Ed Barbee, Richard Jones, Bill Stevens, Mickey Edwards, and Larry Heard. He noted that a Certificate of Appreciation will be presented to Al Yates at the next quarterly meeting.

Frank Goalen reported that the Department Marines of the Year Committee will meet immediately following the recess to review Marine of the Year nominations.

The meeting was recessed at 1130 and reconvened at 1146 as mandated by the Department of Georgia Bylaws to caucus for the election of Department officers.
CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE: Credentials Committee Chair Silas Brown reported the voting strength and delegates for each Detachment as follows:

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*Detachments in default

Bernard Bledsoe noted that, if a Detachment is in default, the members of that Detachment can still cast their individual votes. Tallies will be conducted by Roscoe Foster, Bernard Bledsoe, Ron Kirstatter, and Harry McCann.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Randy Barnes conducted the election proceedings.

Commandant: David McDaniel nominated Al Yates; the nomination was seconded by Russ Vermillion. Al Yates accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received, and the Department Adjutant cast one unanimous vote for Al Yates for Department Commandant.
Sr. Vice Commandant: Silas Brown nominated Larry Heard; the nomination was seconded by Levi McKenna. Larry Heard accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received, and the Department Adjutant cast one unanimous vote for Larry Heard for Department Sr. Vice Commandant.

Jr. Vice Commandant: Bill Miller nominated Silas Brown; the nomination was seconded by Barbara Brammer. Silas Brown accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received, and the Department Adjutant cast one unanimous vote for Silas Brown for Department Jr. Vice Commandant.

Judge Advocate: Larry Heard nominated Bill Miller; the nomination was seconded by Russ Vermillion. Bill Miller accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received, and the Department Adjutant cast one unanimous vote for Bill Miller for Department Judge Advocate.

Elections were closed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Russ Vermillion announced the Grand Growl will begin at 1400.

Commandant Randy Barnes announced the banquet will begin at 1830; no covers will be worn.

Marty Habecker announced there is a 50/50 raffle, the Silent Auction will close at 1500, and the 50/50 and weapons drawings will be held at the banquet. He reminded members to check the door prize board to see if they have won.

Sergeant-at-Arms Richard Jones reminded the Detachments to pick up their convention streamers.

The Business Meeting was recessed until the banquet at 1830.

BANQUET NOTES:

Guest Speaker – James E. Sehorn, Brigadier General USAF (Retired)
Grits Bowl – Department of Alabama
Associate of the Year – Paul Matthew “Matt” Albright, Detachment 1373
Burkhardt Award – Lake Blue Ridge, Detachment 1438
Big Al Meade Award – Tim McClelland, District 8
Pack Dog of the Year – Roscoe Foster, Pound 350
Marine of the Year – Levi McKenna, Detachment 1373

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