OPENING CEREMONY:

The meeting was opened per ritual by Commandant Al Yates at 0901. The Mission Statement of the Marine Corps League was read.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS:

Commandant Al Yates welcomed Michael Clark, Assistant National Vice Commandant for the Southeast Division.

Commandant Yates gave a brief report about a homeless Marine mother with twin boys living in their car in the Marietta area. Detachment #647 assisted them by providing two nights’ lodging and a Thanksgiving invitation to the family as reported by Detachment Commandant Tony Gasper. Commandant Yates then introduced Brandon Watts representing Operation Rally Point whose mission in the greater Atlanta area is to get homeless veterans off the streets. Brandon Watt related that the organization was started three years ago, and they spend the night once a week with homeless veterans to learn their situations. Then, Operation Rally Point finds organizations to assist with hotel rooms, housing, job, and car connections. He noted that Georgia Detachment #665 recently assisted a family with a hotel stay. Operation Rally Point receives no government funding, so they have a wide latitude to assist. Currently they operate in the Atlanta area but are willing to go beyond if they are able. Their goal is to become a nationwide organization within five years.

ROLL CALL OF OFFICERS AND DETACHMENTS:

Department officers in attendance included:
  Commandant Al Yates
  Sr. Vice Commandant Larry Heard
  Jr. Vice Commandant Silas Brown
  Judge Advocate Bill Miller
  Jr. Past Commandant Randy Barnes
  Adjutant/Paymaster LuAnn Miller
  Chaplain David Epps
  Sergeant-at-Arms AJ Polk
  Sergeant-at-Arms Jim Martin

District Vice Commandants in attendance included:
  District 6 – Harry McCann
  District 7 – Marty Habecker
  District 8 – Tim McClelland
  District 9 – Tim McClelland
  District 10 – Barbara Brammer

Appointed Positions:
  Newsletter – Al Yates
  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 1312 - Aubrey Gilbert
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 Yates noted that the minutes from the October 6, 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. Bonita Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Commandant Yates reported the following correspondence:
1. Thank you card from the Semper Fi Fund for our donation.
2. Thank you card from Daniel Kirk for our donation.
3. Report on Florida hurricane disaster relief and aftermath from Archie Sweet. Funds are available when needed.
4. Hotel reservation announcement from Archie Sweet for the Southeast Division Conference, which will be March 21-24, 2019. There is no registration mechanism on the current form, but they are working on it. This year, delegate voting will be utilized at the Division Conference, and information is forthcoming.
5. Request for submission of Southeast Division program book ads from Archie Sweet. We all need to participate.
6. Funeral Home Honors Committee – Several Detachments reported on the number of honor guard missions in which they participated during the year.
7. Southeast Division Marine of the Year – Commandant Yates recommended that each Detachment nominate someone for the William D. “Bill” Carter Award. Bernard Bledsoe noted that full details and submission address information are posted on the Southeast Division website, and nominations must be submitted by the Detachment in accordance with the Bylaws. Rich Sabo suggested that the recommendation letter should be read for whoever is awarded Marine of Year.

REPORT OF PAYMASTER:

The Paymaster’s report was read. Bernard Bledsoe moved to approve the Paymaster’s Report as submitted pending financial review. Bonita Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved.
REPORT OF MEMBERS SICKNESS OR IN DISTRESS:

Chaplain David Epps reported seven members deceased since the last quarterly meeting including Sam Darden, Jr.; George C. Hitchcock; Lawrence D. Simpson; Jimmy Lee Evans; Frank “Jerry” Hairston; Bobby Charles Blair; and Everett A. Stewart. Since the last Department Convention, 24 members have passed. National requested that Notices of Death be sent directly to National Headquarters; however, Chaplain Epps requests that we continue to send reports to him through the end of his term. Members with health problems include Carl Wilcox (#1260), Guy Mitchell (#1325), Jerry Maxwell (#1325), David Epps’ wife (#1325), and Roger Paulin (#1260). Additional members who have passed away include Gwendolyn Crosby (#1188). Members who have lost loved ones include Crystal Dickens (#1188).

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Judge Advocate: In response to a previous Detachment Bylaws question, Judge Advocate Bill Miller noted that each Detachment is required to adopt their own Bylaws in accordance with Georgia Statute and National Bylaws. He noted that IRS requirements need to be included in Bylaws as well as not for profit and discrimination clauses. Judge Advocate Miller reported that the National Bylaws now state that the term of office for elected officers is one year. Detachments may set the number of terms their officers can hold, and elections must be held between September 1 and May 15 of each year. Installment of officers must be completed by the end of the month following the election, and appointed officer terms end at the time of elections.

Following are the deadlines for Department Bylaws amendments:
- February 15 – Proposed Bylaws amendments are due to the Department Judge Advocate
- April 1 – Submission of proposed National Bylaws amendments are due to the Chief Operating Officer
- April 3 – Department Adjutant sends out proposed Bylaws amendments to the Detachments

There is a provision in the Department Bylaws that delegates cannot vote at the Department Convention if their Detachment is in arrears, including past years’ convention support. The Delegate Voting form will be sent out by the end of the month, and it must be mailed to the Department Paymaster bearing a postmark no later than April 15. Delegate voting strength will be based on the Department Paymaster’s records as of May 3.

Judge Advocate Miller also reported that National Jr. Vice Commandant Johnny Baker is working on a Bylaws template according to information received from Michael Clark.

Jr. Vice Commandant: Jr. Vice Commandant Silas Brown spoke on recruitment and retention. He noted that he has printed material for recruiting and suggested that prospective members attend several meetings before joining. There were 336 delinquent members as of September 30, 2018. Jr. Vice Brown noted that many renewals process in the last quarter of the year, and new rosters should be out in the next week or so. Reporting on the status of Detachment #1339, Jr. Vice Brown stated that the Detachment cannot be shut down completely until all members have either transferred to another Detachment or transferred to Member at Large. The same is true for Kings Bay, Detachment #1229. Detachment #1462 (DLC Marines) is being chartered on January 29, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in Dublin, Georgia. Their Detachment chartered with 33 members. The uniform is blazer. Roscoe Foster suggested that different members wear different uniforms to the chartering ceremony to show the various acceptable uniforms.

Sr. Vice Commandant: Sr. Vice Commandant Larry Heard reported that he and Commandant Yates have been splitting the state to attend Detachment meetings. He suggested that Detachments encourage every member to attend meetings at the Department level and beyond. He requested that Detachment Sr.
Vice Commandants encourage their members to get involved outside of their local Detachments. Marty Habecker recommended including children and spouses in Detachment activities to encourage greater participation.

**Commandant:** Commandant Al Yates spoke about Reports of Officer Installation forms and noted that they need to be complete and accurate. He also reported that District Vice Commandants are not turning in Detachment visit reports. Consequently, Commandant Yates discontinued the District Vice Commandant positions until the next meeting to allow time to investigate alternatives. He indicated he may replace District Vice Commandants. Judge Advocate Bill Miller noted that the Big Al Meade award is based on districts. The districts will remain in place, but the District Vice Commandants are relieved of their responsibilities. Tim McClelland noted that there are some Detachments that have nothing but life members, and he asked how you make them follow the uniform code and the Bylaws. Assistant National Division Vice Commandant Michael Clark recommended suspending Detachment charters.

**REPORT OF APPOINTED OFFICERS:**

Paymaster LuAnn Miller reported that the annual corporation registration filing is due to the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office by April 1.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

2019 Department Convention Committee: The registration and ad forms are out, and the Host Detachment is working on a speaker for the banquet. They are tentatively looking into a Friday afternoon wine/beer tasting and hope to be able to include some activity on the base. Detachments were encouraged to take out ads in the program book; information is on the Department website.

2020 Department Convention Committee: Detachment #1196 is trying to find a location in McDonough that will accommodate the Convention.

2020 National Convention Committee: The National Convention Committee is still working on a venue.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Commandant Yates noted that a Marine for Life Coordinator needs to be named for each Detachment as this information must be provided to National. Bill Sirmon is the Department Marine for Life Coordinator. The Southeast Division and National will hold classes.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Walt Scott spoke on behalf of Unicoi Detachment #783, which runs the Iwo Jima reunion each year. He is seeking veterans to attend. Marine Scott reported that many years ago the Department of Georgia promised to fund the reunion, but his Detachment has never asked for assistance. This year, however, they are seeking support. A motion was made by Walt Scott for the Department to donate $750 for the 74th Iwo Jima reunion to be held on February 18, 2019. Bernard Bledsoe seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Rich Sabo reported that the first national statue for homeless veterans will be dedicated in Cherokee County Veterans Park on January 25, 2019.
GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:

Commandant Yates reported that the next business meeting will at the Department Convention. The National Mid-Winter Conference is February 28-March 2, 2019, in Fredericksburg, Virginia; the 73rd Southeast Division Conference is March 21-24, 2019, in North Charleston, South Carolina; and the Department of Georgia Convention is May 17-19, 2019, in Albany, Georgia.

Harry McCann noted that Ernest Smith of Detachment #1196 wrote a poem that was published in the recent issue of Semper Fi (page 37). Lisa Delk requested that members forward any extra Semper Fi magazines to Detachment #1196 for Ernest’s wife.

LuAnn Miller reported that it is an ongoing practice to place ads in the program books for the National Mid-Winter Conference, the Southeast Division Conference, the Georgia Department Convention, and the National Convention. Because of our relationship with the Department of Alabama, she requested a motion from the floor to authorize placement of an ad in Alabama’s 2019 Department Convention program book. A motion was made by Bernard Bledsoe authorizing placement of full-page ads in the upcoming five conferences/conventions. The motion was seconded by Roscoe Foster and was approved.

Bernard Bledsoe advised that the 2023 National Convention will be the 100th National Convention. National Headquarters is requesting a history of Departments and Detachments for publication, and he suggested we begin pulling together charter dates, Marines of the Year, a listing of Commandants, special events for your Detachments, and other noteworthy information.

Merrill Tyndall of Detachment #1333 reported that they received two pickup trucks and one trailer of donated toys. They distributed toys and still have some available for next year. They plan to have a Toys for Tots program in their area for the upcoming year.

Commandant Yates displayed a Georgie Department of Veterans Services calendar featuring the Griffin Detachment Honor Guard as the centerfold.

Barbara Brammer suggested that a list of service groups, including today’s presenter, be posted on the Department website to be available for all. Levi McKenna recommended that the list be locally maintained, and Bill Miller suggested the Department VSO or the Department Marine for Life Coordinator create and maintain the list.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Russ Vermillion reported that there will be a Growl of the Pack following the business 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