



Department Of Florida Mentoring Program Standard Operating Procedures



Rational:

Among the basic tasks of every Detachment in the Marine Corps League is the recruitment and induction of new members. The purpose is to promote growth of the League and its subsidiary units. Only in this manner can the organization grow and prosper.

Until recently, the League has struggled to increase its members on a sustainable track. We lost members as fast as they were sworn in. There were and are understandable reasons for this. A number of our Marines pass on, some become less active due to health or medical issues, and many leave because of inactivity within their detachments.

These are all viable reasons, but they can all be countered with good reasons why the membership should and could sustain their members even with the scenarios suggested above. We lose more members for one reason and one reason only. "They don't feel included in the social fiber or culture of the detachment". Our National Leadership receives letters and e-mails daily voicing these same concerns. This is where the "Mentoring Program" enters into the equation.

If you examine this closely, you will find two major concerns. First is the "fading away" of many older members. Second is the loss of new members. Both situations must be addressed. Following are suggestions aimed at improving the "communication gap" we seem to have.

The fact that we are vigorously building a detachment that we can be proud of should stimulate greater interest among area Marines who want to belong. This is good. In order to build upon this renewed interest it is proposed that all detachments develop a "Positive Approach" to the induction of its new members and in an effort to reach out to our members who are either temporarily or chronically unable to take an active role in the detachment's programs.

In an effort to grease the wheels, so to speak, it is proposed that all detachments initiate the "Mentoring Program" that will match up "Old Salts" with our new recruits as a way to ease them into full membership in the detachment. At the same time, it is also proposed that we initiate programs within the detachment to reach out to our brother and sister Marines whose ability to get around is restricted.

Goal:

- Create a bond between old and new members so new members will feel more accepted into the mainstream of the detachment.
- Develop in new members a stronger feeling that they too are part of the team that is your detachment.
- Increase the retention rate and active participation of old and new members in the activities of the detachment.
- Encourage and increase open communication among the membership

Programs and Objectives:

- A Mentoring Program is to be put in place in all Detachment.
- All prospective regular and associate members of the detachment shall be assigned a "Mentor" prior to their induction.
- Once the inductee has been accepted and sworn into the detachment, his /her sponsor should immediately assume an active role in assisting the new member in his/her introduction into the formal and informal programs of the detachment.

- If possible, the sponsor of the new member should be the Mentor. No member should be required to mentor more than two members at a time.
- If possible, the mentor and new member should live in a relatively close proximity geographically.
- The mentor relationship should continue until the new member feels it is no longer needed.
- Introduce the new member to the Commandant, officers and as many members as possible. Foster a friendly sense of belonging. We want YOU. We're glad you're on board.
- Make yourself available to assist and answer any and all questions the new member may have. Encourage the new member to ask questions.
- Call the new member to remind him/her of scheduled meetings. Offer to pick up him/her and drive to the meeting.
- Sit with the new member at the meetings preferably at or near the front until the member is comfortable about attendance.
- Explain what is happening at the meetings. Why we have certain procedures, protocols and traditions. Understanding by the member cultivates understanding of whom and what we are and why we do things in a certain way.
- Encourage the new member to volunteer or serve on different detachment projects. Involvement generates a sense of belonging.
- Encourage the new member to attend social events such as the Birthday Ball, detachment breakfast, lunch, a beer after the meeting, etc.

Homebound Buddy Program:

Along with the Mentoring Program, we need to develop a system for maintaining contact with Marines who, for a myriad of reasons, are having difficulty getting to detachment meetings and other functions. These men and women probably started the detachment and kept it operating through difficult times. They now find themselves unable to keep up the pace and are in danger of falling out of the ranks. Many of them have begun to lose contact with the league and even the community at large.

Marines have a long history of taking care of their own. However, we sometimes lose contact with old friends and shipmates. That should not be allowed to happen. Unless we take positive action to prevent it, we shall soon lose an important part of our history.

In that light, the Detachment and the Auxiliary, under the direction of the Detachment Chaplain, initiate a program to organize volunteers responsible for maintaining contact with fellow Marines and Auxiliary members who because of age or infirmity can no longer be as active as they once were. The volunteers would make regular contact by telephone, e-mail or other means of communication. The goal is to improve communication and to generate the process of inclusion.