



**DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
COMMANDANT BILL BACKES
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE**



**MCL Conference October 6-9, 2011
Host – Morris F. Dixon Det. 54
Safety Harbor Resort and Spa, Safety Harbor Florida**

Minutes of Joint Session, MCL and MCLA

Date: 8 October 2011

Time: 0900

Location: Safety Harbor Resort and Spa, Safety Harbor, Fl.

Presiding Officer: Commandant Bill Backes

Opening Ceremony of the Joint Session of the MCL and MCLA

0900 Call to Order:

Commandant Backes called the Joint Session of the Department of Florida, MCL, and the Ladies Auxiliary to order. He ordered Sgt. at Arms Bruce Marshall to escort National Commandant Vic Voltaggio and the Department of Florida Ladies Auxiliary Sr. V. Pres. Joan Cecil to their seats. He then ordered the Sergeant at Arms to advance and Post the Colors and lead the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

MCL Chaplain Andy Smith opened the Bible and led us in the opening prayer.

Sgt. at Arms Bruce Marshall declared the meeting open for the transaction of official business.

Commandant Backes welcomed all Marines and Ladies of the Auxiliary to the Fall Convention. He paid special tribute, thanks and appreciation to Morris F. Dixon Detachment 54 for hosting the Convention.

Cmdt. Backes acknowledged the presence of the following dignitaries:

National Commandant Vic Voltaggio
Department of Florida Auxiliary Sr. V. President Joan Cecil
National Chief of Staff Lou Calleja
S.E. Division Public Relations Officer Skip Sponheim
Southeast Division Aide de Camps
Mike Roselle
Ed Topoleski
Bob Beale
Robin Barker
47th Jr. Past Dept. Cmdt. Dave Sargent
46th Dept. Cmdt. Richard Booth
45th Dept. Cmdt. Charlie Smith
43rd Dept. Cmdt. Ken Travis
41st Dept. Cmdt. Walter Reid
37th Dept. Cmdt. Tom Neff
14th Dept. Cmdt. Walter Russell (affectionately called the "Ancient One")
Past Dept. Cmdt. of Montana and Honorable Kennel Dog Robber Steve Joppa
MODD Worthy Florida Pack Leader Charlie Smith. "Woof-Woof"

National Professional Development Committee
Lou Calleja
Bill Cona
Bill Backes

Commandant Backes recognized National Assistant Sergeants at Arms Jerry Cecil and Ken Zolna.

Auxiliary President Addresses the Joint Session:

Sr. Vice President Joan Cecil welcomed every one and said that she was very proud to be here representing the Auxiliary. Joan recognized Past Presidents Wanda Russell, Nancy Calleja, Janet Voltaggio, Jr. V. President Jean Sponheim, Treasurer Roslyn Smith, Chaplain Kathy Ashley, JA Evelyn Joppa, Secretary Sue McQuiston, Captain of the Guard Fran Cona, S.E. Div. V. Pres. Lois Struthers-Payne, and Madam Big Flea Glenda Travis.

Guest Speaker

Commandant Voltaggio informed the body of the following:

- As you know the Data Base has been a topic of discussion for some time. It is hopeful that the National Data Base will be operational by the 1st of the new year.
- Protocol: When inviting any officer of the National Staff, a formal letter of invitation is to be sent to that officer to comply with the requirements of the national comptroller. Send your letters early to prevent calendar conflicts. Follow the Protocol on the National Web Site.
- Divisions, Departments and Detachments have no power over the Young Marines Program. This program is a separate operational entity. A memorandum of understanding between National and the Executive Secretary of the Young Marines will take place in the coming week.
- Chain of Command: Without a properly executed chain of command, we will have chaos. When we were on active duty if we went out of the chain of command we were in trouble. "The same goes here". If you have a problem at the detachment level you go to your detachment commandant. You don't call the National Commandant at 11:00 PM to address your issues. Follow the chain of command. It's as simple as that.
- Within the next two weeks Commandant Voltaggio will be doing a two minute public service spot that will be televised all over the country informing the nation about the Marine Corps League.
- Dedicated Funds: For example; funds raised by the Rose Program are dedicated funds and can be used only for that dedicated purpose. Dedicated funds cannot be placed in the detachment's general fund and used for detachment purposes.

Commandant Backes offered complements and praise to the Marines and the Auxiliary assembled in the hall for how exceptional they all looked in their red blazers and undressed uniforms. He said from the dias, their "spit and polished" appearance was a pleasure to behold. Commandant Backes thanked the District Vice Commandants for their demonstration and respect for good leadership. Look sharp, be sharp, feel sharp.

0845 Memorial Service:

Chaplains Andy Smith and Kathy Ashley began the Memorial Service by reading an appropriate prayer. The names of the following deceased were read:

Auxiliary

Katie Reid
Grace Barlock
Patti Camara

Marine Corp League

Howard Webster
Ralph A. Sullivan
Terry Cannon
Alan F. Ellison

Flagler County Det. 876
Bill Hughes, Leathernecks Det.
Col. Phillip C. Delong Det. 1267
Tri-County Det. 1018

Thomas F. Messier	Spring Hill Det. 708
Edward F. Knecht	Tri-County Det. 1018
Robert L. McAloon	E.T. Brisson Det 063
Frederick N. Coryell	Intracoastal Det .1058
William Brown	Pfc. Samuel R. Wall Det. 1139
Ora C. Littleton	Riverview Det. 1226
John Thomas Fox	Col. Phillip C. DeLong Det. 1267
Albert Vena	Maj. B.F. Hickey Det. 57
Jimmie A. Christie	M/GY/Sgt. James Sumner Det. 065
Harry E. Doerr, Jr.	Pfc. Paul E. Ison Det. 060
Rueben Mejia	Flagler City Det. 876
David Norwood	M/Gy/Sgt. James Sumner Det. 065
Orville L. Vance	Gator Det 990
Jim Viril Bryum	Sgt. I. W. Hatcher, Jr., Det. 1120
George F. Schuster	
Gray Hausauer	Holiday Det. 567
Dennis McCleskey	North Lake Det. 662
Willaim K. Taylor	Spring Hill Det. 708
Claude Norman, Jr.	Tamarac Det. 755
Michael Patrick Burns	Tamarac Det. 755
Thomas M. Murphy	Volsia Det. 658
Martin J. Folan	Jack Ivy Det. 666
Marvin Schentzel	Tamarac Det. 755
Elvin Cavanaugh, Jr.	
Efrain Cardonna, Jr.	Intracoastal Det. 1058
Salvatore D'Angelgo	Pfc Paul E. Ison Det. 060
Catherine Altemus	Pfc Paul E. Ison Det. 060
Charles Brandenburg	
Barbara Dickerson	
Charles R. Salvaggio, Jr.	

As the last bell tolled, "Taps" were slowly and reverently played in a silent assembly hall as we saluted our deceased brothers and sisters. With the final note of Taps, hand salutes were slowly lowered to our sides. *"Farewell brother Marines. Let us hope that when our turn comes to report to Saint Peter, you will be the Marines on duty to pass us through those golden, pearly gates. Semper Fidelis."*

Past Commandant Walter Reid Addressed the body to thank all those who sent hundreds of cards from all over the United States to express their sympathy and prayers for Katie Reid; may her soul rest in peace.

Close of Joint Session:

Cmdt. Backes called for a ten minute recess to empty the hall. Sgt. at Arms Bruce Marshall called all to rise and ordered a hand salute. Chaplain Andy Smith closed the Bible.

Department of Florida Business Meeting

Presiding: Commandant Bill Backes

1000 Call to Order:

Commandant Bill Backes called the meeting back in session. Sgt. at Arms Bruce Marshall ordered a hand salute; Chaplain Andy Smith opened the Bible. The Sgt at Arms declared the meeting open for official business. He reminded the members to turn off all cell phones and pagers, and to use the center aisle microphone when addressing the chair.

Roll Call of Officers:

Bill Backes	Commandant	
Lou Calleja	Sr. V. Cmdt; Web Master/Web Sgt., Awards/Citations, Budget Chr.	
Bill Cona	Jr. Vice Commandant, Convention Chairman	
Ron Ashley	Judge Advocate, Boy Scout Liaison	
Dave Sargent	Jr. Past Commandant	
Skip Sponheim	Paymaster, Finance Chr.	
Bob Beale	Adjutant, Leadership School Director	
Andy Smith	Chaplain	
Bruce Marshall	Sergeant at Arms	
Dick Hauck	Communications Officer, Legislative Officer	
Robin Barker	Public Relations, Historian, Newsletter	
Scott Egan	Quartermaster	
Ken Travis	Credentials Chairman	
John Piazza	Ways and Means Committee Chairman	
Dick Booth	Young Marines Liaison	
Lou Slagle	Marines Helping Marines Coordinator	
Bob Ross	Toys For Tots	absent
Charlie Smith	Worthy Pack Leader	

District Vice Commandants:

District 1	William Crawford
2	Scott (Forrest Gump) Dupree
3	Gayle Plant
4	Al Tamburrino
5	Charlie Smith
6	Ted Antone
7	Debbie Steel for Jack Skelding
8	Jack Porshu for Marcel Cartegena
9	Mike Roselle
10	Manny Mereno
11	Ed Topoleski

Minutes of Previous meeting:

The Adjutant announced that the minutes for the June 16-19, 2011 Convention are available for your inspection on the dais and on the department's web site, mclfl.org. Hi-lites of the previous meeting were reviewed by the Adjutant.

Correspondence:

- All Korean War Veterans were asked to stand. A Resolution letter from Rick Scott, Governor of Florida was read declaring July 27, 2011 as Korean War Armistice Day, and also commemorating

the service men and women who served their country during the Korean War. Those standing were thanked for their service to our Country.

- A letter from Michael J. Rooney, Commandant of Detachment 262, Richlands, NC was read thanking all the Marines of the Department of Florida for their generous donation of \$500.00 to assist Cpl Chris Lampman during his time of need.
- A heads-up letter was read concerning Veterans who served at Camp LeJuene prior to 1987 about the potential exposure to contaminants in the water.

Report of Paymaster:

Paymaster Skip Sponheim reported the Department of Florida maintains one Certificate of Deposit with Central Bank in Tampa; three checking accounts and one money market account with Regions Bank of Florida. Currently the Department is aware of no liabilities outside of budgetary allowances. If you have any questions please see Skip at any time.

Report of any member or member's family sick or in distress

Scott Dupree reported the latest condition of Dale Condy's injuries as a result of a motor cycle accident. Under the circumstances, he is progressing as well as can be expected. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dale and his wife during their recuperation. *Semper Fidelis*

Report of Officers and District Vice Commandants:

For your review, reports can be found on the Dept. of Fla. Web site; mclfl.org.

Commandant Bill Backes: Bill reviewed a report that he gave at the National Convention at Boise, Idaho. He cited a department membership total as 4,722; paid members 4,153; delinquent members 587; and deceased member 52. He also mentioned that all detachments are encouraged to use the mentoring program to help retain new member. A survey questionnaire with a self addressed return envelope is being sent to delinquent members to find out why they are not attending meeting. A Leadership School is held twice a year at the fall and spring conferences. Successful completion of the school is required for all members who wish to run for elected offices. We continue to assist veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars through the Wounded Warriors Fund of Florida, LLC. We have also assisted the Marines at Camp LeJuene after their tornado damage. Two members of the MCL have been expelled because of actions detrimental to their Oath of Initiation.

Sr. V. Comdt Lou Calleja: Lou thanked the membership for electing him for a second tour as Sr. Vice Commandant. Lou mentioned a booklet, prepared by his Detachment Adjutant Jack Porshu. The book is given to all new members that mentions all critical and necessary information that a new member needs to know. Lou offers this booklet to any detachments that would like to employ this technique. He cited that our web site has been in operation for a number of years. He has received a large number of hits from all over the United States including the Military Academies and even Japan. On the website are eleven pages for the eleven district Vice Commandants and Detachment Commandants to report their activities and events. Not all District Vice Commandants and Detachment Commandants are using their web site page to place notices, events, pictures, etc. You are urged to take advantage of this method of communication. Detachment Commandants are responsible for appointing a Web Sergeant.

Jr. V. Cmdt. Bill Cona: National Jr. V. Cmdt. John Kovalcik has issued an edict that all MCL members should encourage new members and retain old members. To help in this regard Bill distributed over 5,000 promotion placards to the District Vice Commandants who will in turn distribute them to their detachment commandants with the goal of getting new members. Bill has developed a questionnaire to be sent to delinquent members to find out why they are not coming to meetings with the goal of finding out why and then initiating strategies to correct the problem. He said we have to reach out to the members. We just don't know their reasons for non-participation and we have to find out why. Detachment commandants are urged to take the lead in the development and use of this strategy.

Judge Advocate Ron Ashley: Ron thanked the membership for electing him to the office of Judge Advocate. He promised to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the office in keeping with the

standards as set by the previous JA. Since the June Convention Ron has answered numerous phone calls and tons of emails from officers and detachment members with By-Law questions. He has inspected the hotels for the June convention and the fall conference and recommends them for membership approval. Ron has also attended District 4 and 5 meetings. Ron has also revised the guide for conventions to bring them in line with present day requirements. He has posted on the web site the guidelines for solicitation of funds. He has approved the By-Laws of two detachments. The new Rust Insurance document has been received and placed on the web site. Ron requests if you have questions about by-laws, etc, he prefers that you call him on the phone rather than emails. That way interaction over the phone can take place to help resolve any issue.

Frank Correa, Commandant of Morris F. Dixon Detachment, addresses the membership: Frank spoke in behalf of a Tampa born and raised 22 year old Marine, Michael Nicholson, who joined the Marines several years ago. He was deployed to Afghanistan and this past July Corporal Nicholson was hit with an IED and lost both legs and one arm. For the last few months he has had many operations. Frank saw the father just a few weeks ago and saw a man who was weak and who had aged twenty years. He is very concerned for his son's future. Frank told the father that his son had a family, a family of Marines called the Marine Corps League and that he would advise the League of his son's situation. This young Marine has a long road ahead. His father wants to build an addition to his house to accommodate the needs and attention that his son will require. He needs your help. He needs our donations. Frank asked that we send donation checks to the Injured Warriors Fund of Florida, LLC, please write Michael Nicholson's name on your check so that it will go to his fund.

Commandant Backes assured Frank Correa that our MCL will see that Marine Mike Nicholson will be taken care of. Cmdt. Backes asked all Commandants to take this message back to their detachments and make donations to Mike for his future quality of life.

The Department of Florida made a motion by Sr. V. Cmdt. Lou Calleja to donate \$2,000.00 from the separate Injured Warriors Fund, not the Injured Warriors Fund of Florida, LLC.

The motion was seconded by Jr. V. Cmdt. Bill Cona.

Discussion on the motion: Send all donations to Department Paymaster Skip Sponheim with Mike Nicholson's name on the lower left hand corner of the check.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Commandant Joe Olimpio, Col. Phillip DeLong Det 1267, was recognized by the chair. Cmdt. Olimpio cited the case of Marine Mike Jernigan who was seriously injured in Iraq with the loss of both eyes. After a storm, Mike had a leaking roof problem along with the remodeling of his house to accommodate his injuries. Cmdt. Joe Olimpio contacted a builder who did the work for free. Joe is not saying that the builder will do the work free, but he will contact him to see if he can get him involved.

Report Of Standing Committees:

Leadership School: Bob Beale asked all the instructors from yesterday's Leadership School to please stand and be recognized for the exceptional job they did. He thanked them for their time, talent and treasure. Beale reported the attendance of 50 participants at the school. From the feedback heard at the end of the instructional day, the Leadership Program was a success in the accomplishments of its goals and objectives. All students received their certificates of completion and attendance. Each participant had the opportunity to complete a critique sheet and all of them will be read and their recommendations will be seriously considered. At the conclusion of the instructional day, a critique session was held with the instructional staff to critique themselves for the purpose of suggesting ways to improve the instructional process for the benefit of our attending participants. It is tentatively planned to have a "Drive-in Brain Storming Session" somewhere in the central part of the state to brainstorm ways to improve the Leadership School. Date, time and place to be announced later.

Public Relations:

Chairman Robin Barker announced the winner of the Jim Spears award. The award is based on the number of quality news worthy articles published in the news media. The criteria for this award are listed on the Department's website. The winner of this year's Jim Spears Award goes to the Morris F. Dixon, Jr. Detachment 054.

A special award was presented to Public Relations Officer Arthur Hayes, Morris F. Dixon, Jr. Det. 054 for his outstanding dedication and accomplishments in promoting the interest of his detachment and the MCL.

Young Marines:

Dick Booth reported that the Florida 1st Regiment has 554 Young Marines. The Young Marines will be attending an event in Hawaii this year and he is seeking financial support. The Young Marine of the year this year is a young lady from Texas. Dick Booth encouraged all Marines to continue to buy the Marine Corps Florida State license plate because 50% of the fees come back to support the Young Marines Program.

Ways and Means:

Chairman John Piazza reported that the Alice Messenger Scholarship Fund currently has a total of \$13,246.00. Last year the committee received 43 applications, and this year the committee has received 60 applications. The committee is pleased that the number of applicants is growing. However, of the 53 detachments in the Dept. of Fla. less than half have made a commitment to donate and support this very worthwhile cause for our grandchildren who will eventually become the leaders of our communities and nation. Next year, if every detachment will commit to supporting the scholarship program the financial amount for scholarships can be doubled. We can do this by just buying the raffle tickets. If the tickets cannot be sold, then all detachments are encouraged to buy the tickets. In fairness, the number of raffle tickets is distributed to the detachments using a formula based on membership. Thank you for your consideration and support

John Piazza, reported for The Injures Warriors Fund of Florida, LLC. He said you can go to the department's website where you can find a donation button to make contributions to this worthy cause from \$1.00 to as much as you want. Also, please send your detachment fund raising Injured Warriors event pictures to Lou Calleja and he will place them on the website.

Special Donations:

Glenda Travis, representing the Ladies Auxiliary, presented a donation of \$521.00 to The Mike Nicholas Fund

Conferences/Conventions – Bids

Adjutant Bob Beale reported that no bids have been received for the 2012 Spring Conference.

Commandant Joe Olimpio, Col. Phillip DeLong Det. 1267, submitted a verbal bid for the 2012 Spring Conference. The bid is contingent upon acquiring a hotel that meets the specifications as required in the Conf/Conv Guidelines. Commandant Backes instructed Convention Chairman Bill Cona to work with Commandant Olimpio. A decision is to be made within two weeks.

GOOD OF THE LEAGUE:

Ken Zolna distributed fliers to the membership urging them to complete and mail to Weichert Realtors in support of having the USO located in the Tampa International Airport. Throughout our country's history, Americans have felt profound appreciation and gratitude for the dedication and sacrifice of our troops and their families. The USO provides a tangible way for all of us to say thank you, as it has for 70 years.

Proceed to Recess:

Cmdt. Backes ordered Sgt. at Arms Bruce Marshall to recess the meeting. The Sgt. At Arms called for a hand salute and Chaplain Andy Smith closed the Bible. The Convention is in recess until 1800 when it will reconvene for the banquet.

1800 Banquet:

The guest speaker for the banquet was Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant First Class Gary L. Littrell, United States Army. He spoke with a proud Kentucky drawl laced with humor, enthusiasm and authenticity.

He spoke the hard truth backed up with solid intel about our country's involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the middle east. They have no respect for their women, they can't or won't grasp the concept of Democracy, they hate us, they don't want us there, they don't want our beliefs forced on them, so why stay there for political reasons.

He said it's time to bring our troops home after ten years of stalemate combat costing our government trillions of dollars and the senseless killing and maiming of our young men and women; that's the biggest tragedy. He said, and he quickly qualified it by saying "this is my opinion", "but I think it's time to bring our troops home and turn the fighting over to General Petraeus, the CIA, Special Operations Forces and the Drones. Let's fight their kind of war, because we have the resources and technology to quickly bring them to their knees.

80% of the American people agree with Sgt. Littrell, distinguished Medal of Honor recipient. Why, then, is it so difficult for our government leaders to not realize and understand the needless waste of government resources and the human tragedy inflicted on our young warriors.

The President of the United States of America,
Authorized by Act of Congress, March 13, 1863,
Has awarded in the name of the Congress
The Medal of Honor

To

Sergeant First Class Gary L. Littrell, United States Army

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty, Sfc. Littrell, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Advisory Team 21, distinguished himself while serving as a Light Weapons Infantry Advisor with the 23rd Battalion, 2nd Ranger Group, Republic of Vietnam Army, near Dak Seang. After establishing a defensive perimeter on a hill on April 4th the battalion was subjected to an intense enemy mortar attack which killed the Vietnamese commander, one adviser, and seriously wounded all the advisers except Sfc. Littrell. During the ensuing four days Sfc. Littrell exhibited near superhuman endurance as he single handedly bolstered the besieged battalion. Repeatedly abandoning positions of relative safety, he directed artillery and air support by day and marked the unit's location by night, despite the heavy, concentrated enemy fire. His dauntless will instilled in the men of the 23rd Battalion a deep desire to resist. Assault after assault was repulsed as the battalion responded to the extraordinary leadership and personal example exhibited by Sfc. Littrell as he continuously moved to those points most seriously threatened by the enemy, redistributed ammunition, strengthened faltering defenses, cared for the wounded and shouted encouragement to the Vietnamese in their own language. When the beleaguered battalion was finally ordered to withdraw, numerous ambushes were encountered. Sfc. Littrell repeatedly prevented wide spread disorder by directing air strikes to within fifty meters of their position. Through his indomitable courage and complete disregard for his safety, he averted excessive loss of life and injury to the members of the battalion. The sustained extra ordinary courage and selflessness displayed by Sfc. Littrell over an extended period of time were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him and the U.S. Army.

WE THANK YOU ! *Semper Fidelis*

Respectfully submitted,

Robert C. Beale

Adjutant, Department of Florida