

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE SOUTHEAST DIVISION COMMANDANTS CONFERENCE MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 1930 by Assistant National Vice-Commandant (ANVC) Bill Backus at the Wyndham Atlanta Galleria Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia on Thursday March 7, 2013.

Roll call of Department Commandants was conducted:

- Department of Alabama Commandant Johnny Baker present;
- Department of Florida Commandant Lou Calleja present;
- Department of Georgia Commandant Michael Clark present;
- Department of Louisiana Commandant Dennis Bergeron absent;
- Department of Mississippi Commandant Patrick Tutor present,
- Department of South Carolina Commandant Archie Sweet present;
- Department of Tennessee Commandant Russ Martz present.

There were also many guests present to include National Junior Vice-Commandant (JVC) Richard Gore.

Division Commandant Dave Gardner called for a meeting of the Commandants only, following the Commandants Council.

Each of the Department Commandants presented their reports with a written copy provided and attached to these minutes for the record. The consistent theme from each Department focused on problems with the new membership database from the National MCL.

National JVC Gore addressed the concerns expressed. He reported that the problem is in the system and that the system after 5 years of development does not work. He praised the staff particularly Johanna Hill and Meg Thoburn for their tireless efforts but they are hampered by a system that is not working.

Department of Alabama Cmdt. Johnny Baker asked National JVC Gore to communicate the collective disappointment and frustration of the Department Commandants in the Southeast Division with the new database.

Department of Florida Cmdt. Lou Calleja explained that the program for the database is a generic program used by other veterans organizations but is not providing for the needs of the MCL.

Additional comments addressed the problem with active members being dropped from the rolls and the difficulty in Departments and Detachments to address retention and delinquency when active members cannot even receive their Semper Fi magazine.

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The discussion was tabled as it had been thoroughly vetted with each Department expressing their individual and collective frustration. The message must be sent to National for corrective action.

Department of Florida Cmdt. Lou Calleja reported on his recent attendance at a VAVS conference reported on two programs in particular:

1. My Healthy Vet Program is one that is very beneficial to all veterans in tracking their services from the VA.
2. The other program is that of suicide by veterans. Many of these suicides are by veterans age 50 and over; indicating it is not solely a problem of recent returning veterans. The rate of suicide is more than 1 every 7 minutes. One effort to provide help to these veterans and hopefully prevent some of the suicides is a 24/7 hotline. The number is available on the VA web site and should be communicated by each Detachment so that every veteran is aware of it.

The meeting was adjourned at hours.

Respectfully Submitted,

George LaMont, Acting Adjutant