

Department of Massachusetts meeting, 1½h (-2min) was held at the Pequig Det.#1168, Athol, MA, Sept.17, 2023



Commandant Jon Zwirblia called the meeting to order after the protocol opening of both the Pledge of Allegiance and opening prayer.

AGENDA

First—acceptance of the Convention meeting minutes. Motion made, 2d, and approved.

Second—no correspondence had been received to recognize.

Paymaster's Report

Paymaster Bernie Heaney had handed out his up-to-date reports and reviewed the balances of all of all our a/cs—the debits and the credits since our last meeting. He commented that the Restitution a/c (the “Burke” a/c) has been current, *except* for this month. He also had opened a new CD at a local TD Bank in the amount of \$1,432. This is the amount of \$ recovered from the North Central Det. #1076 when we took their charter. This amount will belong to the Dept. of MA after one (1) year if there is no longer any interest in re-starting the detachment.

Sick and Distressed

National Sr. Vice Cmdt. Warren Griffin’s wife, Cheryl, is at home. Commandant Jon asked that our chaplain send a card to let her know we are thinking of her with our best wishes.

Officers’ Reports (Elected and Appointed)

Commandant Jon Zwirblia:(1.) Attended the National Convention in OK; (2.) New change to TACOM. The TACOM administration will be sending all detachments an email to certify the updating of their rifles on file; (3.) National Commandant is now our own Dept. of MA Warren Griffin, and National Judge Advocate is also our own Dept. of MA Dave Porter (after-3 votes); (4.) There are a number of Bylaws and Procedures on the National website and Jon has directed our Dept. J.A. Bruce Katz to follow-up on the updates; (5.) There had been a number of 100-year medals given out at the National Convention. And Cmdt. Jon has picked up a couple of extras and will be raffling them off at the next Dept. mtg. *FYI: This medal cannot be worn on the uniform and there is no ribbon available. It is a collector’s item and “maybe(?)” in another hundred years will be worth big \$;* (6.) The National Convention for 2024 will be held at Palm Springs, CA ; (7.) Jr. Past Cmdt. Johnny Baker is going to be organizing military-historical tours beginning April 2024. There will be more information forthcoming; (8.) Dept. of MA donations made were to the following: The Little Angels (Auxiliary), MC League Foundation, Young Marines, Youth Foundation,

Chapel of the Four Chaplains, and Project Hope; (9.) Jon also asked that the Dept. donate \$1,000 to the “Worcester Railers Hockey” organization who do help and work for vets’ causes; (10.) The Board of Trustees have voted to return to Sturbridge for our 2024 convention; (11.) Our Dept. zoom meetings have caused a conflict issue w/Worcester’s accommodation to launch. Therefore, it is recommended to record on “Line-item 106” for the Department’s own private app’ at an annual expense of just short of 160.00; (12.) Sgt-at-Arms Keith Buckhout is being replaced by new Sgt-at-Arms Associate member, Kyle Torpi. He will be “shadowing” Keith until he is comfortable in this new position. *FYI: Keith is also the Pack Leader for the Devil Dogs*; (13.) Comment on the Vietnam Wall (Dalton , MA) where Tim McCrory had attended and said that it was a seamless wall “repeating” the names; and that he, “Butch, and “JR” had been there and said it was well received and it was an excellent review; (14.) All the Finance Officers can now view the Department’s a/cs online; (15.) Quad State will be from April 19-23, in Nashua, NH, 2024; (16.) At the round-robin class (OK National convention), it was said that there will be an Honor-Guard Class. Apparently there are those who are not wearing or sporting the correct uniform. There is a distinct difference between the “Color Guard” and the “Honor Guard”. There will be inspectors checking on this; therefore, be mindful; and, (17.) Chapter 9 Marines—try to work out your issues with your own local detachment before the grievance has to go to the Department. Much appreciated!

Sr. Vice Cmdt. Mike Hines: (1.) Will be sending out information on the new procedure for TACOM; (2.) National Jr. Vice Cmdt. T.G. Morgan sent out “Increase-in-Membership” awards to the following: Norfolk, So. Central, Essex Cty, Shutt, LCpl Van Gyzen, Metrowest, Honorable Few, Worcester, Cape Cod, Oak Ridge (*and one more I couldn’t decipher*); (3.) Since last meeting in April, I have attended Quad State; (4.) On May 5th, presented two awards to Haverhill ROTC young Marines where over 100 YM were in attendance; (5.) Attended Connecticut Dept. Convention; (6.) Attended the National Convention in OK; and, (7.) Attended 1st-Annual BBQ at J.J.Harris.

Jr. Vice Cmdt. Steve Cheney: (1.) Presented a \$300 check to the Oxford Jr. ROTC; (2.) Incorporating the Bylaws and Administrative Procedures is a work-in-process; (3.) To date, have received one PLM from the Van Gyzen detachment; (4.) Attended 9/14 zoom meeting with trustees; and, (5.) Involved with getting tickets for the Worcester Railers Hockey game—TBD, sometime in March 2024.

Judge Advocate Bruce Katz: No grievances to report at this time.;

Finance Officers: Nothing to report at this time.

Chaplain's Report: Marine Roger Hoffman's report consists of a most active and busy schedule. From 6/07-9/17/23, Roger has attended 7 Wakes, performed 10 Rituals at 10 Funerals, was an Escort in 7, Rifle squad in 10, and Chaplain for 11. He attended 125th's Burger Burn at Ft. Devens on 8/12, and is presently involved with the Taunton Area Vietnam Vets 41st, 24-hour POW/MIA Remembrance Vigil. In this current report he submitted, he lists a total of 11 deceased members he has been made aware of and has reported the same to National. They are on file and will be remembered in our prayers .

Scholarships: Scholarship's **Chairman Dominic Ricci** reported that the Department had authorized and passed out ten (10) scholarships, each valued at \$1,500.

Young Marines Leader/Chairman Bruce Katz reported the following:

(1.) Thanks to the Department Convention '23, the membership had voted to contribute \$1,000 for a YM Leadership Program. This donation amount is necessary for the growth of the YM organization. The Federal government is no longer funding this program. Bruce originally asked for \$500 to continue sending Young Marines. We doubled that. As a result of our continued interest, there will be an ongoing opportunity for them to continue this program at the Senior Leadership Academy, Newport, RI (*FYI: This leadership school is to train YM to be promoted from SSgt to Gunnery Sergeants on up.*)

Eagle Scouts: Commandant Chris Cekovsky (det. # 141, Westfield) is our M.I.C. of this program and reports that there was little activity but that he had mailed out two certificates.

Unfinished Business

None...

New Business

1. Motion was made and 2d to approve a donation of \$425 for the Van Gyzen detachment to purchase wreaths for the Wreaths Across America program.
2. Another motion was made and 2d to approve \$75 to the Civil Air Patrol in Worcester, also for the Wreaths Across America program.
3. We should be recognizing Marines for their activities in their communities and the names of those members who are recruiting for their detachments. We want to encourage the commandants to make this known in their monthly meetings and to forward correspondence to Commandant Jon Zwirblia via email. It is because of the active participation of the detachments that we are most proud and know they represent their communities with the highest standards. Let's recognize and appreciate *a member's interest and investment for the benefit of all of our detachments' membership*. We need to record *"that"* local Goodwill on behalf of our League.

Good of the League

NEWLY-ELECTED National Commandant Warren Griffin took to the floor and offered up his focus and interests during his tenure.

1st—he commented on the Youth Physical Fitness Program which is something that Massachusetts doesn't have the interest that it should. He

commented that money does come from the MCL Foundation and we should be taking an interest and participating. *More to come on this....*

2d—Commandant Warren also talked about the number of Marines who are not doing well here and throughout the country. He said that it's not only the VA that helps vets but there are many other go-to-resources available Nationally.

He made the point to comment that he is very proud of the Department. He then called Brian Brooks up to the podium. Brian, now to-be-known as Jr. Commandant Brian Brooks, was to receive two state awards from the National Commandant Warren. One was signed by both Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll on behalf of the Commonwealth, dated June 30, '23; the other, signed by the Senate President, Karen Spika and the clerk, Michael D. Hurley, for Brian's 2-years' service as the dedicated commandant to the Marine Corps League.

Open to questions, Paymaster Bernie asked where to send a Department check for MCL Youth Fitness Program? Cmdt. Warren would get back to him. He did mention that the Marine Corps League Foundation is not a part of the "USMC Youth Foundation". He said that he is going to look into what the Marine Corps Foundation *actually does* for us. He also mentioned that the MCL Association is moving their offices to Quantico, Va. It is a move to be under the same roof as the MC Hq. Another question asked was about the Ship Store. There have been problems. Warren said to give him a call *if there is a problem(?)* but to first go through the chain of command. And , he said that "finally" after many years in legislation, the Purple Heart license plate is available for those vets wounded in combat.

More from Bernie: Bernie had correspondence from recipients' letters of appreciation from the following: Women's Shelter, Vets home in Holyoke, Fisher House in Boston, Young Marines in Virginia, and the Chiefs Voluntary Veterans Association from Providence.

Awards:

1. The Sgt-at-Arms was called up front to receive guidon ribbons to give to the following detachments: Pequig, Van Gyzen, Metrowest, Honorable Few, Worcester, and Oak Ridge.
2. Jr. Past Dept. Commandant Brian Brooks, once again, was called forward to receive a plaque of appreciation for his years of commitment and dedication to the Department of MA Marine Corps League.

Closing

Commandant Jon's words to the membership was that the next meeting will be held at the Van Gyzen detachment at 1100; the April meeting is TBD. He asked for a motion to adjourn which was 2d. The membership was asked to stand and observe a minute of silence for the deceased. Sgt-at-Arms retired the colors and the Acting Chaplain read a closing prayer. The Senior Vice then performed the last duties of his post followed by the Sgt-at-Arms declaring the meeting officially closed.

SF, Frank Serra, Adj.