



2026
MID-WINTER
CONFERENCE
MT. PLEASANT, MI
January 23-25, 2026

1/23/2026

Joint Opening Ceremony

13:30 Opening Ceremony commenced by PDC Phil Zamora

Joint Memorial Service and Chapel of Four Chaplains Service- Fred Green read those that have passed since summer convention. PDC Ray Rayl and Commandant Tracey Tippet received the very distinguished Chapel of Four Chaplains Humanitarian Award.

MCL Business Meeting

Called to order at 1447.

Recognition of Dignitaries:

PNC, PDC John Tuohy	PNC, PDC Jim Tuohy
PDC Phil Zamora Central Division Vice Chief	PDC Gerald Alcorn
Central Division Historian Dale Erion	ACDNVC Roger Smith
Central Division Aide de Camp Richard Monroe	PDC Ray Rayl
Central Division Chaplain Fred Green	PDC Bruce Blackmir
Director of MI VA Affairs Brian Love	PDC Dave Masunas

Officers Absent

Junior Vice Commandant Steve August (excused)
Vice Commandant Central Zone Steve Kelley (excused)
Assistant Sergeant Of Arms Tracy Berg
Assistant Sergeant Of Arms Jeremiah Skutt
VAVS Director Jon Dewitt
Department Emailer Emil Franz III
Great Lake National Cemetery Liaison William Brown
Marine for Life Coordinator Daniel Guerrero

Detachments Absent:

146 Belcher-Lane-Williams	149 Cascade	151 Fred Cochran
165 Yagle Brothers	550 George St. Martin	684 Cpl Davenport
690 Northern Michigan	722 Wolverine	1016 Keweenaw
1027 Shoreline	1182 Irish Hills	1327 Alpena
1337 SSGT Burgess	1423 Edson-Kline-Vanslyke	
1478 UP Devil Dogs		

Reports Given

Commandant Tracey Tippett- Thanked the Flint Detachment and the Flint Auxiliary Unit for hosting this year's Midwinter Rally. She attended the National Convention, the installation of the Muskegon Auxiliary Unit, Toys for Tots training in St. Louis, the USMC 250th Resolution Day at the Capitol, and three birthday celebrations at 3 different detachments. She had the honor of being inducted into the Hall of Heroes at the Oscar G. Johnson VA in Iron Mountain. She was a guest on Andrew Cox's podcast, The Lost Art Project: Veteran's Voice. Her Toys for Tots campaign supported more than 1,500 kids. She also installed the new officers at Detachment #444. Also, had our first Zoom Fall Staff meeting. She discussed how several of our detachments are getting below their minimum 15 members and need help. Currently, there are 32 active detachments and 6 MCLA units in Michigan.

She encouraged detachments to get into compliance with their ROIs, LARA, and Bank and Charter forms. Included important dates as listed in her report.

Senior Vice Commandant Scott Hellman- current raffle tickets and monies are due 5/15 to Phil Smith. Told members he will have the specifics tomorrow regarding his fundraiser. Discussed that some detachments have welcome kits for their new members-kind of like a who/what/when/why box. Currently, there are 1,132 PLM, 360 PRM, and 152 unpaid members on the department roster.

(JA Mark Sutton interjected with the etiquette of the purpose of Midwinter-essentially for the Board of Trustees.)

Junior Vice Commandant Steve August-excused absent. His report was previously sent to the Department.

Judge Advocate Mark Sutton- Currently, he is digitizing all historical documents. If you have questions/bylaws/recommendations, please submit to him by April. If redoing Bylaws, please send to Mark first before sending out to all in your detachment-this will ensure things are good to go. Aide de Camp Richard Monroe asked about licensing for detachments with alcoholic beverages. A detachment CANNOT stock a fridge and then charge members for them-this is illegal as it violates liquor laws.

Vice Commandant Northern Zone Ray Rayl- Met with the Yagle Brothers detachment. Reported helping with detachments needing help with paperwork after installation. He attended an Honor Flight. Attended the USMC Birthday Resolution Day with Commandant Tippett and MCLA President Rayl at the Capitol in Lansing. Installed the Detachment Commandant at Davenport Detachment.

Junior Past Commandant Ray Rayl- has assisted Commandant Tippett in transition to her new position. Attended funeral of a Flint marine. Attended the National Convention in Texas. Attended the SSGT Burgess detachment meeting to assist them in resigning their charter. Conducted an installation of officers at the Macomb detachment. Attended a USMC birthday celebration at the David Murnighan detachment and Muskegon detachment. Discussed being a guardian (\$600) and being a Vet (free) on the honor Flight.

Vice Commandant Southeast Zone Randall Clemons- Attended National Convention, picnic with all detachments and families. Montford Point and Downriver adding many new members. Army 250th, Navy 250th birthdays as well-spoke at the Detroit Port Authority as Marines for the Marines' 250th. Trunk or Treat with over 200 kids. Installed Commandant at Montford Point and a new board at Downriver. Attended all 4 USMC birthday parties at the detachments.

Vice Commandant Eastern Zone Norm Root- Has been struggling with meeting attendance, his Jr. Vice Commandant has died due to heart conditions. Met with all detachments except Macomb County. Cpl Stanley L. Moore detachment is the "poster child" of detachments, also 6 new members. Extremely saddened by seeing detachments turn in their charter.

Vice Commandant Southern Zone Wendy Zamora-absent

Vice Commandant Southwest Zone Michael Moross- Visited Wolverine detachment twice (very low attendance), helping with compliance issues with a backdate of compliance to 3/2024. Branch detachment also has had very low attendance. Attended 11/6 event at the Capitol. 11/10 attended an event at the Capitol sponsored by the National MCL Foundation.

Vice Commandant Western Zone/Eagle Scout Coordinator David Masunas- Had a great zone meeting. Has had troubles with the Shoreline detachment in the past-years ago they were chastised, and now, they have one of the largest

detachments in the zone. Encouraged Zone Vices to have zone meetings as it is a GREAT way to meet with members and motivates them to stay active in the League. He was greatly surprised, at the end of the meeting, he was asked by zone members, “when are we going to have another one?” If detachments are apprehensive to involve themselves with the Department, at least get them active in your zones. Reach out to your failing detachments-”what can we do to help??” Discussed the candy mold from the U.P and how lucrative it is. Dave discussed how the sales of the candy actually fund the scholarships that his detachment supplies. Said, “if you’re going to sign up for the job, do the job” regarding Zone Vices being Zone Vices.

Eagle Scout Report: Thanked members for attending Court of Honor-it means a LOT to that Eagle Scout. Instructed members to reach out to the Scout units and tell them about our certificates that we hand out to Eagle Scouts. Attending a Scout banquet with a computer and printer to catch all the Scouts who have fallen through the cracks that have not received said certificates. If members go to the Department of Michigan, under Scouts, there is a great power point and form for a photo release form to help guide you through the process and to possibly have your photo with the Scouts in the Semper Fi magazine. He sends out with each certificate: a great mantra regarding becoming an Eagle Scout and warrant-like promotion certificate for each Eagle Scout. MCL follows what the Marine Corps does-if there are issues with scouts and Scouting America. This program is a great way for recruitment-Eagles to Marines.

Vice Commandant Southern Zone Wendy Zamora(now present)- Discussed how she is now working full time and apologized to her detachments for being unable to meet with her detachments. Will put together a Zone meeting and if there is someone in the Zone that would like to replace her, please let her know.

Vice Commandant Upper Peninsula Michael Miller- Detachment 444 made \$7,236 in candy mold chocolates as profit. Had a zone meeting in Munising. Worked with them to fill out the online forms (990s) is VERY difficult-make a call vs. staying online if needed. Keweenaw is most likely to turn in their charter. They will meet in March to determine the outcome.

Commandant Tippet discussed the growl, hospitality room and Deco-Bingo with the Auxiliary.

Adjourned at 1603

1/24/26

MCL Business Meeting

Called to order at 0905

Adjutant Roll call of Officers/members not present yesterday, now present:

Vice Commandant Southern Zone Wendy Zamora

Detachments now present:

146 Belcher-Lane Williams

Phil Zamora re: summer convention 2026 Convention Downtown Lansing, Doubletree hotel, formally the Radisson, 111 North Grand Ave . \$117 + tax (13%) Cutoff: 5/4 for room rates. 6/4-6/6 dates of convention. Groupcode: 92R \$15/day for parking. Consider putting in an ad for the convention. MODD Pound 138 and Capitol detachment are putting on the convention.

Time and Place (in place for Art Menard) **Wendy Zamora**- working to secure additional places for Midwinter and Summer Conferences and gave tribute to previous committee chairman PDC Jim Tuohy. 2027 Midwinter is wide open for any detachment/unit that would like to host. Currently, Northern Wolves Pound #174 is pursuing to host the 2027 Dept. of Michigan Convention possibly at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste. Marie or Bay Mills Casino in Brimley. Phil Zamora mentioned Helms-Briscoe (at no cost) as being a fantastic resource to help with the planning of any convention/rally.

Department Chaplain/Young Marines- Fred Green-new way to notify for a deceased member per the National website. Needed: Profile number
Thanked all members for working so hard for the Department. 35 members have past since the last reporting at Summer Convention in Flint.

Young Marines- a group of Young Marines were able to visit Hawaii and took a tour of the Missouri. Please get involved in the Young Marine program... they are wonderful young individuals to work with.

Department Adjutant Christy Faymonville- Encouraged all members to get on the Department email list via Dutch. Individuals need to email him,

michmarines@gmail.com. Encouraged Zone Vices to reach out to their detachments to encourage members to get on the email list. Discussed the need to get ROIs and Bank and Charter (every year-even if there are no changes) forms turned in. In order to be an elected officer, you MUST be a member in good standing. Bank and Charter forms are imperative if for any reason a detachment goes defunct/charter gets pulled, the Department can go into the bank, show our bylaws, and able to retrieve those funds.

Wreaths Across America Lisa Fountain- 2025 theme was “Keep Moving Forward”. Theme was established from the words of a dying Marine that told his next in command, after an IED hit, “keep moving forward.” 3.1 million sponsored wreaths were placed in 2025. Only 1 detachment and 1 auxiliary unit in Michigan is currently sponsoring a group for this. Flint Detachment places wreaths the day before the Wreaths Across America Day for their passed members at the Great Lakes National Cemetery.

Department Historian Dale Erion- Discussed where all the materials he has that are in his house. Looking for copies of charters of certain detachments. Asked for detachments to elect a historian to write a brief history their detachments to give to him. There is a difference between “organized” and “chartered”. “Organized” means National and Department recognizes you that you are attempting to get a charter. He always keeps a copy of charters-just in case yours goes missing. Currently updating history of the Department. The National Commandant from Michigan was John Halsgow (spelling?)

Toys for Tots Phil Smith- If a detachment does NOT have a local T4T coordinator, you must provide a report to National and then to Department (cc). 9,800 children received toys in the Detroit area. Reserve units and I & I units do not necessarily have enough Marines, so we MUST help. You must apply to be a coordinator, then you will have to do a background check. Once accepted by the T4T Foundation, you can become a coordinator. Dave Masunas interjected: River Rouge School that has a JROTC program in the past has received two awards-1 girl 1 boy (discussion) award-\$500/annual given to them in support to use for necessities needed. Wanted to know if we are still doing that.

Raffle discussion (started last year): Slow start, deadline 5/15 for tickets and money. 5/25 is the pull date. Still has tickets to sell if interested. Unable to answer how much so far as many detachments turned in tickets at this rally- will give that report later via email.

10 min recess

Reconvened at 1011

Foundation President Gerald Alcorn- Thanked all for showing up. He stated the Foundation was started in 2007. The Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Department (scholarships and VAVS). Referred to the Midwinter Rally book as it contains the QR code to reach the Foundation website, mimarinesfoundation.org.

Encouraged all to go back to their detachments and show so people can apply for scholarships, etc. Norm Root encouraged members to leave the Foundation in their will or penalty-free IRA deductions. Dave Masusnas encouraged the Foundation to reach out to corporations to support the Foundation. Members requested a grant writer to help raise funds. JA Sutton mentioned that grants need to make a SPECIFIC need in order for the grant to be written. 501c3 must be non-discriminatory. VAVS reps: please get pictures when you and other parties are receiving funds.

Foundation Treasurer Jeff Salzeider - There is now a button on our Foundation website that says, "donate". We are the MCL Department of Michigan Foundation-checks should be addressed as this. We need to establish some procedural points for the VAVS to receive funds. The VAVS rep. for the Dept of MI will have some authority HOW the funds are disbursed. Currently, there is no policy on how monies are disbursed-can a Marine walk off the street asking for money? Eight VAVS reps. are already vetted as they are appointed by the Department Commandant. Current balance is about \$71,000 (used for scholarships) and in the savings \$60,000 (the Corpus Fund).

Scholarship Coordinator Christy Faymonville- Information given as to what and who our scholarship is for-referred to the requirements and application. Discussed that there were 15 applicants last year that did not follow through with part 2 of the scholarship process. She encouraged the members to assist with the scholarship process, but not DO the application for them. Encouraged the members to encourage the scholarship recipients to send a thank you note to the Foundation/MCL/MCLA. Foundation Treasurer Jeff Salzeider discussed the gift from the Keweenaw Detachment of \$20,000 with the stipulation that it remained at the Foundation, while the interest accrued be used solely for scholarships. (Photos were taken with detachments donating checks.)

5 minute recess

Auxiliary President Cathy Rayl came to speak while Commandant Tippett went to speak at MCLA. Thanked the membership for helping with their project, Little Angel. Thanked the Commandant and how easy it was to work with her and PDC Rayl. "We would not be here without your support." If any of you would like to start an Auxiliary Unit at your detachments, please reach out to Cathy. Scott Hellman was effusive with Cathy's help in helping his wife start a new Auxiliary unit in Muskegon.

Legislative/Michigan Marine News/Department Website Mark Sutton- MMN deadline is 2/15 for articles for a 3/1 release.

Currently trying to update website that is easier to facilitate on a phone; however, may have to switch companies in order for that to happen. (Madame Commandant returns).

Legislative- there are currently 45 Veterans'-issue bills and 13 military bills in the state. (A thorough report of all bills, etc was given as a report and dispersed in a Department email.) Taxation, exemption bills regarding disabled Veterans were discussed. Vietnam Vets bonus possible changes-to include an extension. Would like to create an office specifically for homeless Vets/ predatory and abuse of Vets. A bill regarding the Honor and Remembrance flag to be the official flag of vets who died in the line of duty. Michigan Veterans Coalition is looking to have any unspent funds transferred to the next year. Many of the house bills will not go anywhere as we have a Republican House and a Democratic Senate and a Democratic Governor. Federally- many things happening. The state of Michigan is looking to possibly double their homeless Veteran population as the Big Beautiful Bill pulled funds 90% down to 30% subsidies to help home those that have drug addiction, etc. The bill has them sending them to temporary housing and substance abuse facilities as opposed to permanent housing-where it has been proven addicts/homeless are more likely to turn their life around with permanent housing as opposed to temporary housing. Currently, this bill is under judicial review. We now have 473 homeless vets, it could rise to 1,600. The VA is rolling out electronic record systems that are updated. The VA will not privatize-no one is going to take on that debt-that debt belongs to the taxpayers. We may see services go away as there are community facilities that would be cheaper/easier to use. The VA is the largest healthcare system in the world. It will

reduce in size as there are less vets alive that need the care. There is now a women' s veterans license plate.

Budget and Finance Christine Tonegatto-Salo- Developing a Department credit card framework-who, what, max, etc. PNC Bank is who we are staying with. The accounting firm has currently been our accountant for 25 years and currently working on a backup in case he retires. They have 4 recommendations for the budget:

- 1) Move defunct Porta detachment funds, \$12,000 to the operating budget income line-distribution decided later.
- 2) Increase Dept. Commandant travel from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- 3) Increase Paymaster's line item from \$300 to \$450.
- 4) Increase plaques and awards line item from \$250 to \$325.

If anyone needs anything for the 2027 budget, they meet 60 days prior to the convention and commended Dave Masunas as the Eagle Scout Coordinator by always letting Budget and Finance where his funds are, etc.

Paymaster Larry Sweerin- See Paymaster report for specifics. 19 Detachment turned in the PLMs. Down a bit for dues. Asked for the Fundraising bills from Phil Smith. Dewey Award getting new spots added, currently at Kalamazoo.

Motions made by Larry: (Only those on the Board of Trustees can vote)

- 1) \$12,815.50 Porta funds from escrow to general income fund Mark Sutton
2nd
No discussion, motion passed
- 2) Increase Commandant travel - JA Mark Sutton 2nd
No discussion, motion passed
- 3) Raise plaques and Awards- Sr. Vice Hellman 2nd
Discussion: no more funds can be spent for the year. Motion passed
- 4) Paymaster's increase (ink, etc), JA Mark Sutton 2nd
Question if that included postage-answered no, motion passed.

Investments are making money...continuing to rollover. New transmittal forms-follow instructions. If you have any questions, please contact Paymaster Sweerin. If you have a renewal and person is not on the National list, you MUST fill out a new application. If the member wants to keep their original join date, then the member must pay all back dues. New application forms-do NOT include sending in the DD214, that is only for members joining at-large. Transfer

form changed just a little as well. JA Mark Sutton mentioned that our bylaws state that Paymaster must be audited by the past 5 Department Commandants. Requested that this be done or the bylaws be changed. Need to come up with a process to make this happen-we need to do that at the summer convention. Larry has not had one in 5 years.

Fundraising Scott Hellman- Presented the proposal for the following year 6/2026-5/2027:(Board of Trustees vote)

- 1) Share the Dream Raffle \$10/ticket -1st prize\$25,000, 2nd prize \$1,500, 3rd prize \$250 and the detachment that sold the winning ticket will receive \$250. Will have 5000 tickets printed and if 3000 are not sold, will turn into a 50/50 drawing.
- 2) Scavenger Hunt prior to 2026 Summer Convention-\$1/entry with a \$20 max. It will be a 50/50 drawing. Banquet night, winner will be drawn.

Norm Root 2nd, discussion: member asked if this was two different fundraisers and answered, yes, concurrent. Asked about previous discussion, of “choose your winnings”, and decided to make it solely a money prize. Motion passed.

JA Sutton made a proposal to make a \$200 line item addition for the Sr. Vice to fund the fundraiser. Discussion: ask the Paymaster if we have the funds to spend that. 2nd Sr. Vice Hellman. Motion passed.

Adjourned at 1145.

1330 **Awards** given to: hotel staff, Jim and Gerri Tuohy for hosting the rally, Flint Auxiliary Unit (co-host of rally), Marine Nathan Joliff for the Michigan Parkinson work and to the Macomb County Detachment for Fundraising for Michigan Parkinsons patients. Commandant Tippett encouraged members to put in others for their distinguished service that they provide for veterans. Lisa Fountain -awarded 1st place Class 3 for the National Newsletter Award-she is now on the committee for National's Americanism. Marine Robert Witt-recruiting 5 new members. Fred Cochran, Dearborn, David Murnighan, Yagle Brothers, Cpl. Davenport, Lake Superior, John C Rock, Shoreline, Alpena, Edson-Kline-VanSlyke received citations for membership.

1345 Bylaws Initiating and Updating given by JA Mark Sutton-Mark encouraged people to label bins/property regarding the MCL with directions as to what should be done with it if you should pass. Bylaws updating- strikeout in

black what you want changed and print in red what you want it changed to. If you do not have a quorum, you CANNOT change bylaws. Do NOT put exact times, dates, and location of meetings in the bylaws-if you had to change that, you would need a quorum to change that. Making an SOP is extremely helpful for these things. It was requested that an Administrative Procedure be put out to the Department for help with this. According to National and Department bylaws, you MUST have the following elected individuals: Commandant, Sr. Vice, Jr. Vice, and Judge Advocate. If you want additional positions as your Board of Trustees, they must be elected. For example, Adjutant, Paymaster-they cannot be appointed. Members at Large as well, they must be elected in order for them to have a vote. Needs Department Bylaw suggestions by 1 April. Must notify ALL members within 14 days of changes to your bylaws at the detachment-this may be email or snail mail.

15 min break

1430 Jon Van Tol absent for the 990/LARA Reporting- Mark Sutton

Must do three years in a row to stay compliant. If not, you can lose your charter. Michael Moross mentioned that a detachment can pay for missed years OR start brand new. A member from Montford Point asked if Department funds are available if a detachment is struggling to stay afloat.

Sound system MUST be tested and put out so all members can hear.

Closing prayer was not done by Department Chaplain Fred Green as he had a family emergency.

We will reconvene at the Summer Convention in Lansing on 6/4-6/6.

Following this meeting, Sr Vice Commandant Hellman held the Detachment Commandant's meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christy Faymonville
Department Adjutant

