



Mideast Division



MIDEAST DIVISION CONFERENCE Minutes

June 28-29, 2024

**Hosted by the Department of West Virginia and Eastern
Panhandle Marines Detachment 1143
At the Holiday Inn, Martinsburg, WV**

Joint Opening Session

0901 – Joint Opening Session MCL & MCLA – Department of West Virginia

75 Members were in attendance for the opening session.

Division Sergeant At Arms:

Colors Presented by: Berkeley County Schools AF Jr ROTC

Department Commandant -

“Good morning, I’m George Gill, Commandant of the Department of West Virginia and I would like to welcome all of you to Martinsburg, West Virginia and the 2024 Mideast Division Conference hosted by the Department of West Virginia and the Eastern Panhandle Marines Detachment 1143. I will turn over the meeting to NVC Thomson.”

NVC Rick Thomason

“Thank you, Sir Commandant.

Welcome everyone to the 2024 Mideast Division Conference and thank you for attending. Before we begin, let’s recognize some people that truly made our morning and Opening Ceremony an event to remember!”

Present Certificates of Appreciation to:

1. The Opening Ceremony Color Guard – Berkeley County Schools AF Jr ROTC
 - Alexzander Wolff
 - Collin Brown
 - Izaik Tasker
 - Timothy Hetrik III

2. The singer of the National Anthem during the Joint Opening

Ceremony – Ric Ledford

Joint Memorial Service - Division Chaplain, Leonard Stielper rings the bell for each Department with total number deceased assisted by MCLA National Sr VP Dotty Sanning:

DoDE – 3 MCL / 0 MCL Auxiliary

DoMD – 18 MCL / 0 MCL Auxiliary

DoNC – 44 MCL / 0 MCL Auxiliary

DoVA – 31 MCL / 0 MCL Auxiliary

DoWV – 24 MCL / 0 MCL Auxiliary

-There were 120 total deceased in the MED this past year.

Recognition of our Medal of Honor, Navy Cross and Silver Star Recipients (if present) All recipients please stand:

Department of North Carolina. Have you any recipients present that we should recognize? *None*

Department of Virginia. Have you any recipients present that we should recognize? *None*

Department of West Virginia. Have you any recipients present that we should recognize? *None*

Department of Maryland. Have you any recipients present that we should recognize? *None*

Department of Delaware. Have you any recipients present that we should recognize? *None*

Recognition of MCL National Officers & Guests

1. Craig Reeling – ADVC Mideast Division

2. Denny Mathias- National By-laws Committee Member
(*absent*)
3. Charles Minton – National Scouts Committee Member
4. Greg Ciesielski- National MCL History & Anniversary
Committee Chairman (*absent*)
5. Patricia Smith - MED MCLA Vice President
6. Dotty Sanning – MCLA National Sr VP

Recognition of Special Guests:

NVC to welcome the membership and guests.

1. Brian Gillespie - HAMSAL and Suicide Awareness
2. LtCol. Paul Steketee (USMC Ret) (*absent*)
3. Wilson Lee – Deputy Director of the Young Marines Program

Recognition of MCL National MOY's - (if present):

- Frank Mathers – 2022
- Scott Kirby – 2021
- Rick Thomason – 2020
- Jeffrey Jones – 2018 (*absent*)
- Mike McLain – 2017 (*absent*)
- Roger Ware – 2016 (*absent*)

Recognition of MCL National AMOY's - (if present):

- Alison Noger - 2023
- Patti Leib – 2022

Recognition of Past Mideast Division Commandants

- Jr. Past NVC Roger Ware (*absent*)
- Past NVC Bruce Rakfeldt
- Past NVC Mike McLain (*absent*)
- Past NVC Jim Tant (*absent*)
- Past NVC Stephen T. Wilson (*absent*)

Recognition of Past Division Marines of the Year

- Evie Remines – 2023 (*absent*)
- Kenny Joyner - 2022
- Scott Kirby - 2021
- Frank Mathers - 2020
- Rick Shank – 2019 (*absent*)
- Rick Thomason – 2018
- Jeffrey Jones – 2017 (*absent*)
- Mike McLain – 2016 (*absent*)
- Roger Ware – 2012 (*absent*)

Recognition of Past Division Associate Member of the Year

- Alison Noger – 2023
- Patti Leib – 2022

MCLA Mideast Division Vice President – Patricia Smith

1. Dotty Sanning – National MCLA Sr Vice President
2. The MCLA numbers are dwindling due to several factors – Age, going to the MCL as associate members, no desire to be part of it.

Military Order of the Devil Dogs - MED VCDD PDD Ric Ledford

MED Vice Chief Devil Dog – PDD Ric Ledford addressed the meeting and recognized MODD officers present:

Honorable Kennel CDD –Alan Sanning

Honorable Kennel Sr Vice CDD –Jeffrey Jones (*absent*)

Honorable Kennel Jr Vice CDD – Joe DeAngelo (*absent*)

Honorable Kennel Executive Director – Ben Wells

Honorable Kennel Dog Trainer – Lisa Ciesielski (*absent*)

Honorable Kennel Mad Dog - Charles Minton

Honorable Kennel Jr Past CDD –Tom Hazlett (*absent*)

MED AVCDD – Omar Jbar
Honorary CDD – Jack Severn

Conference Host Department – George Gill - Commandant

Thank you to everyone for coming to the Conference. Thank you to the Eastern Panhandle Marines for hosting the conference.

0925 - DoWV Commandant: There being no further business, we will take a 20-minute break.

20-minute Recess

0946 - NVC Thomason: Called the meeting will come to order.
62 Members were in attendance for the morning session.

NVC Thomason: Roll Call of Officers by the Adjutant.

Adjutant:

M-E Div. Nat. Vice Commandant – Rick Thomason

M-E Div. Asst. Division Vice Cmdt Craig Reeling

M-E Div. Paymaster & Chief of Staff - Fred Wise

M-E Adjutant - Laura Hamilton

M-E Chaplain – Leonard Stielper

M-E Asst. Chaplain – Mike Maddox

M-E Sgt.-at-Arms & Scouts Chairman - Charles Minton

M-E Asst. Sgt.-at-Arms – Ric Ledford

M-E Web / Facebook Sergeant & MOY Chairman – Frank Mathers

M-E Historian - Evie Remines (*absent*)

M-E Photographer – Alison Noger

M-E Marine for Life Liaison – Mike Lyon (*absent*)

M-E Chapel of the Chaplains – Robert Hare

M-E Young Marines Liaison – Mario Meaux

M-E Bulletin Editor – Patti Leib

M-E Compliance – Kenny Joyner

Roll Call of Department Commandants (and number of members present)

Adjutant:

Department of Maryland – Tony Rust / Joe Fay - 30

Department of Delaware – Richard Corbit - 6

Department of North Carolina – Robert Hare - 14

Department of Virginia – Sherri Moore - 5

Department of West Virginia – George Gill - 14

Mideast Adjutant:

Minutes of the 2023 MED Conference:

The 2023 Mideast Division Conference minutes were previously posted on the Mideast Division website and sent by email to all Division Officers and Department Commandants for distribution to members. They were redistributed by email on 23 May 2024. If there are no corrections to be made on them, I ask for a motion from the Floor to accept them as written.

NVC Thomason asked for a motion from the Floor.

Frank Mathers made the motion to accept the minutes as written.

Second by Fred Wise. Approved by members present.

0951 - NVC Thomason

Wilson Lee, Deputy Director of the Young Marine Program & YM Sgt.Maj. Lenz to address the Mideast Division

1. Wilson Lee

- YM starts at age 8. We are the only military group who does this.
- YM are the only youth component of the Military Council.
- 77% of young Americans are unfit for serving in the military.
- YM from age 8 through high school graduation.
- There are 207 units. Over 1.1 million hours of community

service.

- They are realigning divisions more to match the MCL than the current format.
- YM YouTube Channel has news and information produced by the YM.

2. YM Sgt Maj Lenz (Division YM of the Year 2024) -

- Joined at 8 years old.
- Confidence and personal growth are a couple of the biggest components.
- Leadership school is a huge growth opportunity for each YM.
- YM are teaching the new YM. They can help the students learn better.
- Help inspire our youth. This program can help all students for any amount of time they spend in the YM.

NVC Thomason - “We will now have the Reports from the Mideast Officers”

Adjutant’s Report – No other report.

Chaplain’s Report – **Anything not covered in memorial service.**
No other report.

Department Commandant’s Reports –
Commandant to give oral report on their department’s activities and specific outline emailed out requested by NVC Thomason.
(see attached reports)

Department of Maryland – Tony Rust (absent) / Joe Faye

Department of Delaware – Richard Corbit

Department of North Carolina – Robert Hare

Department of Virginia – Sheri Moore

Department of West Virginia – George Gill

M-E Division Commandant Thomason report:

-We are down in membership and up in unpaid.

-We need to improve this.

-Recruiting will be best in the age bracket of 40s.

-MAL is an option to gain membership. They are there for various reasons. He will send a list to the Department Commandants.

-- Sherri Moore asked what is national doing to help the detachments? Such as helping with websites.

NVC Thomason responded national only has a couple full time persons. If they have a couple more then they could process things better.

-- Al Soto stated there is software out there to help with checks and balances and don't need more personnel.

-- Ben Wells stated a roster has all of the data.

-- Life Membership due increase has hurt the members wanting to become a life member.

NVC Thomason responded with life membership, the income gets hurt because it is paid only once and the annual amount for each level is lost.

-- Stewart Blair stated when transmittals are submitted with the money, and they are incorrect, they keep the money and send the transmittal back.

NVC Thomason responded they will not send the money back, only the form for fixing.

-- We only have a Junior Past Commandant why not a Senior Past, and others.

NVC Thomason responded it is just a title. The Junior Past is usually the newest past commandant. There should always be 5 members on the Board of Trustees. This keeps ties on voting from happening. If the Junior Past is no longer active, the board appoints another past commandant to fill that title.

John Stollery – the schedule is slightly different from posting. There is a silent auction as the primary fundraiser for this conference.

1156 - NVC Thomason: “We will resume back here at 1300”

(Recess for lunch on your own from 1200-1300)

1301 - NVC Thomason: “Sgt. At Arms. Reconvene the MED Conference Business Session.”

50 Members in attendance for the afternoon session

**M-E Division Commandant Thomason:
Reports of Staff Officers**

1. MED Asst. Vice Commandant Craig Reeling
 - Everyone in the division is invited to the leadership class he conducts. This can be taken on the road.
 - He has tried to make it to each department in the division.
 - He tries to go to local events in his travels. He enjoys going to MCL meetings and events.
 - He tries to mentor detachments, especially if their meeting is not going well.
 - Voting strength at national level, you can register and not attend.
 - Six of the last seven National MOY and the first two AMOY are from the MED.
 - Get out in the public and do public events. Take your kids and grandkids with you.
2. MED Paymaster Fred Wise
 - \$2611.10 last meeting balance.
 - Thank you to the departments who have donated for operations of the division.
 - \$2939.33 current balance.

*-Frank Mathers made the motion to accept pending audit.
Second by Kenny Joyner. Approved by members present.*

-Rick Thomason – thank you to the department commandants for sending in your prorated amounts to help make us financially sound. We spend about \$800 per year on items.

3. MED Adjutant Laura Hamilton - no report.

4. MED Chaplain Leonard Stielper

-Please keep account of the NOD so an accurate report for the next conference.

5. MED Historian Evelyn Remines – no report.

6. MED Photographer Alison Noger – no report.

7. MED Chapel of the Chaplains Robert Hare

-He has not done any C4C awards lately.

-The Foundation has changed the requirements = must be a recipient and there is about a 90-day requirement.

-There are 5 awards: gold medallion award, bronze medallion award, humanitarian award, lifesaving legion of honor, junior legion of honor

-A recipient does not need to be a MCL member, they can be a civilian.

8. MED Young Marines Liaison Mario Meaux – no report.

9. MED Bulletin Editor Patti Leib – no report.

10. MED Sgt. At Arms/Boy Scout Chairman Charles Minton

-MED was #1 at Mid-Winter with 146 certificates presented that we know of.

-Central division right behind us.

-He needs numbers 2x per year – January and July.

-Have your department coordinator contact him.

-He also needs detachment coordinator contacts.

-The electronic submittals are being used very much.

-The scripts and forms are on the website.

-Girl Scouts goes through the MCLA.

-We are working the Scouting change to accept the girls.

-Scouting and MCL are talking to each other, and we are using up the existing certificates.

- The girls are out-performing the boys.
 - We are not authorized to use the symbols of the other organizations. We are working trying to get them all on board.
11. MED Marine For Life Liaison Mike Lyon (absent)
 12. MED Compliance Kenny Joyner
 - In the division there are 95 detachments.
 - WV is the only 100% compliance.
 - The compliance is to see where the detachments are and to help where needed.
 - Sec of State is required by all states except NC.
 13. MED Web / Facebook Sergeant / MOY Chairman Frank Mathers
 - National member library has a lot of information. Look at it to help empower yourself. If you need the password, please ask.
 - MED website – he tries to keep it updated with the current information. Let him know if something is missing.
 - Detachments – make sure your department has your current website.
 - FB – keep the political stuff off it. Only MCL related!
 - MED has a Twitter (X) account.
 - If you get an odd email, look into it before clicking on anything.
 - MED MOY / AMOY – he is frustrated with the lack of applications not coming up for recognition. Also the lack of information in the packets.
 - Use the MOY for Dummies book.
 14. MED MCLA Vice President Patricia Smith – no report.
 15. MED Vice Chief Devil Dog Ric Ledford
 - Last night there was \$1541.50 collected in fines.
 - At your Pound and Pack levels, please help the Operation Chow Hound program.

NVC Thomason asked for a motion from the floor to accept the reports.

Robert Lee made the motion to accept the reports as given. Second

by Ben Wells. Approved by members present.

New Business

2025 Mideast Division Conference - Commandant Sheri Moore

Hosted by the Department of Virginia will be in 2025. They are trying to be around Quantico, so it is close to the Museum as they will be putting on a show for the 250th birthday of our Corps. The last weekend in June 2025. Additional information is forthcoming.

ADVC Craig Reeling – 2024 National proposed Bylaws and Admin Procedures

-a very brief overview given.

-you can download all of them from the National convention website.

Calendar of future Hosts for the Mideast Division Conference

1. Virginia – 2025
2. Delaware – 2026 – looking at option to hold in April due to the cost of a June meeting.
3. North Carolina – 2027
4. Maryland – 2028
5. West Virginia - 2029

New Business

NVC Thomason: The MED Standard Operating Procedures were drafted, revised and disseminated prior to the last conference and approved during the conference for adoption. This year, with the help of past MED NVC Bruce Rakfeldt, we developed a **MED Conference Guidelines** and disseminated it to the Department Commandants for review and acceptance. The last of the revisions

have been made and approved by the Commandants. Hopefully this will make all MED Conferences in the future easier for the hosting entity and answer a great deal of questions. Both the SOP and Conference Guidelines will be on the MED website. ... I will entertain a motion to adopt the MED Conference Guidelines as published.

-Fred Wise made the motion to accept the Conference Guidelines as proposed. Second by Robert Hare. Approved by members present.

-there will be changes allowed as needed.

Good of the League

1. DoMD - History – 100th anniversary of the USMC conducting training at Antiqua Battlefield.
2. Ben Wells – During colors, if saluting, then keep your mouth shut, same with pledge.
3. John Stollery – The silent auction is the primary fundraising for this conference.
4. Joe Faye – Department of Maryland has a firearm raffle.
5. Rick Thomason – If you want to sell any tickets at a conference, you must clear it with that department and host detachment first.
6. Rick Thomason – Recognition of Host Hotel (Holiday Inn of Martinsburg, WV (certificate presented at the evening Banquet).
7. Rick Thomason – Recognition of Host Department of West Virginia and Eastern Panhandle Marines Detachment 1143

Announcements

The Marine of the Year/Associate Member of the Year Society will meet in front of the podium immediately following the recess of the business session.

2024 MCL National Convention will be in Rancho Mirage, CA
Monday, August 12, 2024, 8:00 AM - Friday, August 16, 2024
Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort and Spa, 7133 Dinah Shore Dr,
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270 Cut-off for reservations is 08 July
2024. All information is available on the MCL National website.

2025 MCL Midwinter Conference will be Feb 27-Mar 1, 2025,
held at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, 900 S. Orme St.
Arlington, Va. 23510. Group code: National MCL, Phone: (800-
325-3535) Room rate \$131.00 per night + prevailing tax (currently
14%) Please make your room reservation direct to the hotel.
Parking onsite at \$10 / day. Reservation deadline is February 10,
2025. All information is available on the MCL National website.

2025 Mideast Division Conference - Hosted by the Department
of Virginia. Additional information is forthcoming.

Bruce Rakfeldt

- National officer candidate emails due to stepping down.
- He was asked to put his name in the hat for National Judge Advocate.
- Most of his campaigning is by email due to the late notice of officer changes.
- He read his campaign letter.

NVC Thomason – We need to consider getting a bell for the MED. *Frank Mather made the motion to look into the purchase of a bell for the Chaplain memorial service. Second by Craig Reeling. Approved by members present.*

NVC Thomason: This afternoon we will be having presentations by a very noteworthy individual.

Brian Gillespie of the Department of NJ, Chairman of Warrior Fund & Scholarship Committee, and founder of HAMSAL (Help A Marine, Save A Life).

- Power Point presentation will be available on the website.
- Craig Reeling presented Brian a police shield with the EGA on it.

NVC Thomason: swore in the newly appointed officers of the MED.

Chaplain – Leonard Stielper
Asst. Chaplain – Mike Maddox
Asst. Sgt. At Arms – Ric Ledford
Young Marine Liaison – Mario Meau
Bulletin Editor – Patti Leib

NVC Thomason: “There being no further business, we will proceed to recess until the Social Hour and Banquet starting at 1730 this evening.”

2024 MED Marine of the year is: Gregory Irwin

2024 MED Associate Member of the year is: Mariano Meaux