THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

Congressionally Chartered in 1937 as a Veteran Service Organization

2026 Birthday Message from the National Commandant of the Marine Corps League

Members of the Marine Corps League,

Welcome to our 251st birthday of the United States Marine Corps. Since 1775 we have been successfully recruiting Marines. It all goes back to our roots at Tun Tavern! We look forward to the day in the not-too-distant future when we will be able to charge our glasses in The Tun yet again. In the meantime, we settle for photos in front of a marker beside a street in Philadelphia until the successful efforts of the foundation working to build the new facility are completed.

This year has special meaning as we celebrate the 250th birthday of our great Nation. Around the same time that we began marking the anniversary of the birth of our Corps with cake cutting ceremonies and birthday balls just over 100 years ago; across the Potomac River from our nation's capital Marine veterans of Belleau Wood, gathered with other Veterans of World War I to demand an accounting for the benefits that they were promised would be waiting for them upon their return from winning the war in Europe. Major General Smedley Butler gave an impassioned speech to those assembled at the encampment in 1932, and not long after that the Marine Corps League was born. We continue as a League to *serve* one another and petition for our earned benefits to this day.

In 2026 we started placing a greater focus on the "S" in Veteran *Service* Organization. Meanwhile, as we maintain our focus on the camaraderie and our traditions that are so richly observed as Marines; we also continue supporting youth via Scholarships, Scouting, Toys for Tots, Young Marines, and Youth Physical Fitness, as they ARE the future of our Nation, our Corps, and ultimately our League. We continue to be a force multiplier for funeral honors with resolute Honor Guards across the nation, while also focusing on Veteran *Service* Officers (VSO's) and Legislative Affairs. Unit cohesion in your detachment and actively demonstrating that your members belong and are greatly valued is a real key to growth as we all work at building a better mouse trap to recruit & retain members.

Finally, in this month especially, wherever and whenever you celebrate the birth of our beloved Corps, raise a glass for our brothers and sisters regardless of generation, for we are all Marines. "Old Breed? New Breed? There's not a damn bit of difference so long as it's the Marine breed." ----- Lt Gen Chesty Puller.

Happy Birthday Marines.

Semper Fidelis,



Russ Miller
National Commandant/CEO
Marine Corps League