

Dec 2010 Dept. Commandants Report

Greetings Marines,

As would be expected the third quarter of our year has been an extremely busy time for most of us. I was grateful to be able to attend two of the very best Marine Corps Balls I have ever seen this month; both were extremely well planned and executed. If any of you ever have the chance to get to one of the Balls hosted by Samuel F Gearheart or South St Louis Det's, you will be well rewarded for doing so.

The Dept. is currently working to form two new Det's one in Warrensburg and another in Troy, we expect both to be up and running in the first quarter of 2011. We really need to get these new Det's up and running to keep our membership levels growing. We continue to add new Members at our current Det's; however we are having a real problem in maintaining members in good standing. During the quarter ending Sept. 2010 our total membership grew by only 2 members, but our "unpaid" members grew to 208 which is 12.37% of total membership which is the highest we have had over the past twelve months. Jr. Vice Toodle will be addressing this in his report today and I need to have ALL Commandants address this issue with your staff, and get our unpaid membership below 8% by our June meeting.

There are two other factors that have an impact on acquiring and maintaining membership levels. In many cases when a new member joins a Det., they feel out of place and don't know other members or what is required or expected of them, from my own personal experience, I have seen this time and time again. We have tried to address this issue with our "mentoring" program, with somewhat limited results. We now have a new tool that has been put together at Division level which is called a "Welcome Aboard" package. The Jr. Vice will cover this in his report today, and I encourage All Det's to utilize this program. You will receive both a hard copy and a disk that will allow you to customize the program specifically to your membership. Bottom line here is that it is much easier to keep a member than to find a new one to recruit.

The other program we need to focus on is the "Professional Development Program". This is a program that we all need to get ourselves and the potential future leaders of the Det. and Dept. involved in. This program is available to us on the National Website (under programs). I would recommend that this program be made mandatory for all Det's and for anyone wanting to run for Dept. Office. If we are not professional / proficient leaders we should not be surprised when we encounter issues in our areas of responsibility. I would suggest that this be a formal training program set up at Det. level and Dept. level under the responsibility of the Sr. Vice or if you choose under a Past Commandant. Records of successful completion of this program need to be maintained at the Det. /Dept. level. I would ask that all Det. Commandants include progress on this project in their report at the May Dept. Conference.

As a housekeeping note, please be very careful with any information that is posted on your website or published in your newsletter. We should Never put any information out to the public that contains and Det/Dept. financial information, or anything that might be considered to be politically partisan or offensive. We have a PIO for the Dept.(Marine Fletchall) whose duties include review of any information that is to be released to the public. Please remember it is much easier to run newsletters or other press releases past the PIO than it is to explain to the National Commandant why this information was released. While on the topic of newsletters please remember that all articles for the Dept. Quarterly newsletter are due to Eddie Flores by 18 Dec. You will not need to run these articles by the PIO as the Dept. Newsletter will be reviewed by the PIO prior to publication.

One further item that I would like to address, but one that will be covered in depth by the Sr. Vice is the shooting competition that we have been discussing over the past 18 months. I think we finally have a program that will meet with everyone's approval and add a lot to our League. I would ask that all involved approach this with an open mind and positive attitude.