

2020 Winter Message

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Commandant

Department of Pennsylvania

Marine Corps League



To all members of the Department of Pennsylvania:

During the Holiday Season, it is customary to send an uplifting message to our membership that is anchored in feelings of good will and charity, our traditions, what we accomplished this year and what we hope to accomplish in the future. But this is not a normal year.

During a "normal" year, most of us are busy during December with holiday preparations, religious and school programs, Toys for Tots, or other volunteer work. And none of us are trying to think of ways to celebrate the holidays with family and friends but yet have no direct contact with people other than members of our immediate households.

Yet here we are. The media is filled with statistics and grim reminders of the pandemic that we are in. The most realistic projections that I've seen suggest that it will be next summer before restrictions due to COVID19 loosen up. For example, the State Veterans Commission, which I am on as Commandant, will be meeting via video conference until June 2021. The staff of many state agencies will continue to telecommute until June as well. Businesses, especially small local businesses like restaurants and bars, continue to be in a tough situation and we all realize that many have not or will not survive.

So, what do we do? I think the answer is that we stay the course and be true to who and what we are and true to our mission. We continue to improvise and adapt, be creative in how we meet, support our communities, honor our departed, assist transitioning Marines, try new ways of fundraising and so on. And we stay safe, wear masks, practice social distancing and continue using technology in ways we never did before.

I realize that this sounds somewhat simplistic but consider this. Since the shutdown last Spring, our Detachments have done everything I mentioned and more. Some Detachments meet outside, our honor guards wear masks, we are collecting toys, fundraising outside or using the mail, we held elections by email, and we held the first (and hopefully last) virtual Convention. And when a series of hurricanes hit Louisiana we pulled together with the Auxiliary and Pack and raised \$8,500 to assist with relief efforts. Things changed, but the League and members improvised, adapted and overcame.

My message for the holidays is this: Stay safe and take care of your families; take care of each other; stay true to who you are. Innovate and try new ways of doing what we do. And communicate. We need to share new ideas and practices with each other. Things may get worse before they get better, but we will get through this pandemic by staying true to our core values and to each other. Happy Holidays and Best Wishes!

Once a Marine, always a Marine. It is who we are. Semper Fidelis.