Upon assumption to the elected office of Commandant, it is appropriate that a plan for the way forward be developed by the Commandant and distributed to the membership of the department. A vision statement should give clear guidance on the direction of operations and set achievable goals for the department. The following topics are among the main emphasis that I believe will help us achieve the best efforts in accomplishing the stated mission of the Marine Corps League in our area of operations and geographical sphere of influence.

1. Leadership. Objective: Every newly elected Detachment Commandant will attend the first Professional Development Program (PDP) offered after their election. Each detachment in the department of Florida conducts an annual election of leaders. As leaders change and new leaders move up, a recurring problem often prevails – a lack of understanding Marine Corps League procedures. The department’s PDP was developed for just such individuals – the new leader! All indications are that new leaders who attend this program go back to their detachment and help their members grow into highly successful unit. Leadership in the detachment is that critical. The Director, PDP has offered to conduct an on-site class for your unit, district and those detachments nearby. Coordinate through your District Vice Commandant.

2. Membership. Objective: Develop a plan of attack to grow their membership by 10% and to retain 100% of current members through FY 22 (1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022). You have probably heard it said, membership is the lifeblood of an organization. It’s true for our League. With the Pandemic simmering down, members are crawling out of their bunkers and beginning to feel safe about attending meetings. It is time to take stock of our unit strengths. Membership growth depends on two factors – recruiting and retention. I challenge each detachment commandant and their chief recruiter, the Junior Vice Commandant, to be extremely vigilant and active in the pursuit to meet the objective stated above. A Commandant’s Award will be established to recognize excellence in membership growth. Remember, members can be awarded the Recruiter Medal for joining the most members during the year.

3. Public Relations. Objective: Develop a Detachment Trifold combining your unit’s story and a prospective member tear off. Too often Marines who arrive at our Membership Drive Booth in an event held in the public can be heard to say, “I didn’t know we had a Marine Corps League”! Marines don’t know about us because we have not explored more ways to tell the public what we are doing. The trifold is a basic membership drive document. Every member should have a half dozen on hand all the time. Your glove box is an excellent holding place. Explore all forms of media to tell your story. If you don’t have a unit trifold, there is a MCL application form available via download from the National website or the smaller packets available also from National via the Semper Fi store; both at no cost.
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4. History. Objective: Appoint a unit Historian and Submit a unit folder in competition for the Americanism Award for FY2022. The Detachment’s history is the most forgotten area of responsibility throughout the department. It is shameful that all the hard work dedicated by members of the unit are forgotten as time slips by. Maintaining a historical file is inspirational to members who follow in the same footsteps of service. It’s a permanent record that can be used to recall what was done in the past that can be implemented once again. It’s also a tribute to the past members, many who pass on to their final roll call. Recording the history of a unit is what helps develop unit pride.

5. Awards. Objective: A Marine of the Year and Associate Member of the Year will be presented each year by all detachments at the detachment level. I consider these awards to be the bare minimum in your awards program. Awards say “Thank you for your hard work and sacrifice” even when the recipient says they don’t need recognition. I’ve never had a Marine say they didn’t want the award during the presentation ceremony. Awards are not just for the recipient; they are as much for the audience as well. There are so many other awards in the National Bylaws that were developed especially for different levels of recognition and specific types of recognition. Many detachments have exceptional members who qualify for the Department, Division and even the National Marine of the Year or Associate Member of the Year awards. Do not overlook these awards.

6. Bylaws. Bylaws are required to be reviewed annually. With recent changes to the National Bylaws and Administrative Procedures, all detachment’s bylaws have required update. Take time during this CY to have your Judge Advocate conduct a review and present his finding to the detachment so revisions can be approved for submission to the Department Judge Advocate for final approval. The bylaws are the rules of the road for how your unit legally operates. During the past two years, only 20 of the 50 detachments had their bylaws updated.

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