

Marines, Associates and Friends,

I am sure that if I were to ask any one of you Marines what the words Semper Fidelis stand for, you would be able to quickly tell me that it is the Marine Corps motto meaning Always Faithful. Further, I have no doubt that you could tell me to whom we are Always Faithful to (God, Country and Corps).

On 17 January, I had the pleasure to attend the Department of North Carolina Marine Corps League Winter Quarterly Meeting in Salisbury. I left the meeting that day with a renewed sense of what the words Semper Fidelis really mean after hearing a story of how one young Marine radioman in Vietnam lost his entire squad; yet, he himself survived thirteen months of very intense combat without suffering so much as a scratch.

The Marine said that after his tour had ended, he went through a barrage of different emotions and feelings of guilt. He soon realized that God had spared him for a reason. It was then and there that he resolved to honor the memory of his fellow squad members by devoting the rest of his life to the Marine Corps. The Marine served for as long as he could in the Corps on active duty, and after separation, he became a member of the Marine Corps League.

He said that since joining the League, he has always volunteered for any and every project that has come along, no matter how large or how small. As a member of the League, he has always done what was asked of him to the utmost of his abilities.

The Marine Corps League gives us all a unique opportunity to remain Always Faithful to the Marine Corps even after we leave active duty, and until the day we die. I personally think that is what General Lejeune had in mind when he founded the League. Our Mission Statement is very specific in terms of the League helping our fellow Marines, Marine widows and orphans of Marines.

Let us all reaffirm our faith in God, country and the Marine Corps, and give of our time whenever possible to help our fellow Marines. Let us remember our motto Semper Fidelis the next time someone asks for volunteers, or the next time we are trying to decide whether to come to a Marine Corps League meeting or not.

Semper Fidelis,

Mark Byrd
Commandant