Dear Board Members,

The Marine Corps Association Winter Board meeting is for 31 January to 2 February 2022.

Recently I was elected and assumed the responsibilities to serve as the Chairman of the Marine Corps Association Board of Directors and Governors this month January 2022. It is not lost on me the significance of my position in serving the Marine Corps. The professional exchange and the products that emanate from the MCA Board and the Management Team, led by LtGen Chuck Chiarotti since September 2021, are absolutely first class. The transition from the former Chairman to me has been very smooth, especially when considering the many disruptions caused by the coronavirus and its many strains.  Despite the Pandemic’s significant effect, we have not withered away, but in fact in several areas improved. We have changed the Modern Day Marine (MDM) event and forged stronger commercial relationships with industry and the Marine Corps League.

During this board meeting, we will assess the 19 areas of focus that we identified for evaluation at the summer board meeting in August 2021. We need to evaluate the progress and identify the objectives either fully achieved or partially achieved. We need to review the “Strategic Plan 2025” and where necessary extend our desired end state, update our operational approach and ensure that our stated goals and objectives are in line with the strategic plan. We need to review our past priorities and consider establishing new priorities, as we continue to grow and meet the very challenging era the Corps is engaged in. The MCA management team is lean and is still involved in change and growth. The board must weigh the complexity of the change as outlined by the Commandant in his Gazette article “A Case for Change”.  Our mission is to be the pre-eminent professional association for all Marines and friends of the Corps. Dedicated to leader development, recognition of excellence and expanding awareness of the Marine Corps' rich traditions, history and esprit de corps.

The former MCA Chairman’s and CEO’s Strategic Assessment was published after the August 2021 Board Meeting. Here are the key focus areas:

MEMBERSHIP: Assessment - Red

There are efforts to understand the continual decline in membership, but we have dropped almost 20,000 memberships.  We have identified several areas that could have adversely affected membership. What do we need to do, and should this focus area continue to be a priority area of focus?

RETAIL PERFROMANCE: Assessment - Yellow

The results are still impacted by COVID 19. The virus limits foot traffic, but as the virus diminishes, and Col Reinwald and her Retail Team inject more aggressive efforts to improve retails operating results. Also, there is an existing PD to hire a Retail Director with significant retail experience. Lastly, there is a Retail Sub-Committee led by the Futures Committee, who are trying to assist in identifying improvements in the retail’s performance.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS: Assessment - Green

This is a good news story and an effective way of raising funds. Are we leveraging our attention to corporate advertising and opportunities that may develop as a result of the Modern Day Marine EXPO. The MCA staff, together with the Marine Corps League, Emerald Expos, and close cooperation with HQMC, have the wheels turning in order to make the 10 to 12 May 2022 event a success. In addition, we have narrowed the talented pool of candidates for selection of an Executive Vice President, and the interim VP is in the process of lining up interesting leaders, from industry, defense and the Marine Corps for the EXPO and the future of warfare.

THE NATONAL MILITARY ASSOCIATION (NMA): Assessment – Green

This is close to approval. We need to follow through with OSD and SECNAV. This will enrich the relationships with Sister NFEs including AUSA, AFA, USNI. As we look to MAY and the MDM, we anticipate a successful event which could enhance relationships with various foundations. Right now, the focus is MDM, but we anticipate growth and increased revenue that will benefit the Marine Corps Association and Foundation.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT: Assessment - Green

We need to sustain a solid Audit record as well as maintain investment results at designated benchmarks. The board is looking forward to our overall investments, cash flow, and delivery of Foundation Programs.

TO ALL BOARD MEMBERS: First and foremost, I want to thank all of you for your very valuable time and resources. You could be sitting outside the Boards, and criticizing the MCA’s efforts, policies and initiatives. Rather you have joined forces with the MCA Management team in order to help make the Association the pre-eminent professional association for all Marines and friends of the Corps. “It is not the critic who counts, the credit belongs to the man in the arena”. The Marine Corps has embarked upon a new organizational structure, designed to provide greater speed, and agility. Eliminating tanks, reducing Amphib ships, and other heavy assets. These efforts have generated lively discussion about the future of the Naval integrated 2030 force. The Commandant is leading the way, investigating new technologies, designing multi-Domain operations and adjusting maneuver warfare concepts against the threats that our National Military Strategy is focused.

I want this board meeting to be informative and help each and every member to understand the complexity inherent in the evolving threats. Ask questions and use the briefs as open doors to better understand the challenges facing the Marine Corps. I look forward to working with all of you. We have a great team and a chance to make a difference in the Corps.

Semper Fidelis,

John A. Toolan

Lieutenant General USMC (Ret)

Chairman of the Board

