

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
GENERAL "HOWLN MAD" SMITH DETACHMENT #592
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA



MARINE CORPS LEAGUE
BIRMINGHAM VA HOSPITAL VISITATION
TEAM

HANDBOOK

**OUR BELIEF: "EVERY VETERAN ON OUR WATCH IS TREATED
AS A PERSON. THEY EARNED IT AND THEY DON'T LOSE IT."**

January 2016

Mission Statement

Marine Corps League VA Hospital Visitation Team

General "Howlin' Mad" Smith Detachment #592

Birmingham, Alabama

The Birmingham Alabama Veterans Hospital's Volunteer Team of the Marine Corps League, General "Howlin' Mad" Smith Detachment #592, Birmingham, Alabama was established twenty plus years ago to develop and maintain a devoted humanistic group of United States Marines as volunteers to offer an extra dimension of care, compassion, respect, courtesy, safety and service to patients, family members, visitors, the community and offer supportive services for the Birmingham Alabama Veterans Hospital's administrative leadership, physicians and staff to serve and honor our Nation's Veterans. Our Marine Corps heritage is inspired by the ideals and traditions of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps League's Hospital Visitation Team recognizes and respects our responsibility to serve all Veteran patients and their family members as they are the ultimate judge of how well we listen, respond and care for all our Veterans.

Our belief: "Every Veteran on our watch is treated as a person. They earned it and they don't lose it."

Marine Corps League VA Hospital Visitation Team

General "Howlin' Mad" Smith Detachment #592

Birmingham, Alabama

Contact Information

Team Leader: John Birmingham 205-612-8480

Co-Team Leader: Brian Gierlatowicz 205-854-4515

Photographer: John Whitmire

Visitation Team Lead Recruiter: Kay Gillion Martin 205-437-3499

Handbook Editor: Kay Gillion Martin

Birmingham VA Hospital Appointed Positions

**John Birmingham: Co-Chair Patient and Family Care Committee
Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services Subcommittee
Representative BVAMC
Marine Corps League Lifetime Member
VA Volunteer Service Representative**

**John Whitmire: Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services Subcommittee
Representative BVAMC
Marine Corps League Lifetime Member
VA Volunteer Service Representative**

**Kay Gillion Martin: Veterans Advisory Board /Patient Centered Care
Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services Subcommittee
Representative BVAMC
Marine Corps League Associate Member/Lifetime Member
VA Volunteer Service Deputy Representative**



Pictured Left to right:

Front: Henry Williams, Brian Gierlatowicz, John Birmingham, Wayne Odell, Douglas Dunn

Back: John Whitmire, Russell Casterlin, Wayne Jones, David Baldwin, Kay Martin, Roger Ledbetter, John Hilmer, Gene Hopper, Rufus "Whitey" Glanton, and Chris Gill from the Brute Krulak detachment

Not Pictured: R.T. Smith, Sidney Laterrade, Van Meyers

Marine Corps League
VA Hospital Visitation Team Members

January 2016

(listed alphabetically)

David "Doc" Baldwin

John Birmingham

Russell Casterlin

Douglas Dunn

Brian Gierlatowicz

Chris Gill

Rufus "Whitey" Glanton

John Hilmer

Gene Hopper

Wayne Jones

Roger Ledbetter

Kay Gillion Martin

Van Myers

Wayne Odell

R.C. Smith

John Whitmire

Henry "Hank" Williams

INTRODUCTION: The Marine Corps League VA Hospital Visitation Team enlists and trains volunteers to visit the Veterans that are hospitalized. The team makes rounds every Tuesday. We meet on the 7th floor in the Volunteers Office for a brief gathering time and to pick up our assignments. On average, the team will visit between fifteen and twenty five Veterans. We split up in team groups and make rounds on the Veteran patients and their Family Members. The MCL team serves as a reminder to the hospitalized Veterans and Family Members that they are wished well and not forgotten. Visits generally last from five to ten minutes depending on each patient's needs. After we visit the Veterans we meet in the VA café and have lunch together.

****DRESS CODE for the team:** Red shirt, khaki or black pants, black shoes, black belt, cover. Red Coat, if you would like.

What Should Happen in a Typical Visit: You do not have to have a planned program to visit someone. Just being there matters more to them than what you do or say. Your presence communicates that you care and that is the bottom line in visiting someone in need.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

1. Wash your hands before entering the room and after you leave the room. Do not shake hands.
2. Observe signs, notices, and precautions on the patient's door.
3. Knock before entering the room and identify yourself.
4. Enter the rooms with a smile and a warm hello. (EX.) the yellow footprints
5. Thank the Veterans for their service.
6. Ask if there is anything the Veteran/Family Member needs.
7. Be prepared to help the Veteran/Family Member if they ask.
8. Spend most of the time listening. Do not ask many questions.
9. Shape the tone and substance of your conversation from cues offered by the Veteran/Family Members.
10. Be sensitive with what you do say. Especially in Safe Harbor with the terminally ill Veterans.
11. Let the Veteran/Family Members know you are there to support them.
12. Invite the Veteran to a MCL Saturday meeting.
13. Leave something with them as a reminder you were there.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

14. Ask for reminders to give out on Tuesdays before leaving the 7th floor.
15. Another factor that increases the effectiveness of our hospital team is a friendly relationship with the Hospital Staff and with the Administrative Staff.
16. Show compassion. Doing this will help the Veterans with their concerns.
17. Become familiar with the layout of the hospital.
18. Don't touch anything in a patient's room.
19. Don't participate in criticism about a doctor, the hospital, or their treatment.
20. Don't whisper when talking to family members or the medical staff in the patient's room.
21. Don't break hospital rules or violate confidentiality issues.
22. Don't awaken a sleeping patient.
23. Don't assume a comatose patient cannot hear.

While the above list is not inclusive, it contains the primary information and suggestions that can enhance the quality of our team's hospital visitations.

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER

Volunteering in a major medical facility is a serious responsibility. A volunteers' dedication of their time and their talents are not taken lightly by the staff. The kindness and generosity of a volunteer giving of their time and talents is an important part of the quality health care the Birmingham VA Hospital provides to their patients, their family members, friends and care takers. The patient's hospital experience is important in obtaining the best medical outcomes. Volunteers have a mission to promote the health care facility in every possible situation. The volunteers help by supplementing staff and resources in the areas of patient care. Volunteers increase community awareness of the vital role the Birmingham VA Hospital plays in the Greater Birmingham, Alabama area, statewide and beyond.

Vision vs. Mission

VISIONARY MISSIONARY

A **VISIONARY** IS SOMEONE WHO SEES WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND SEES THE POTENTIAL. A **MISSIONARY** IS SOMEONE WHO CARRIES OUT THE WORK. OUR VOLUNTEER'S WORK, DECISIONS AND ACTIONS REFLECT THE VALUES OF OUR VISION AND OUR MISSION BEING ACCOMPLISHED.

1. Introduce yourself
2. Address the patient and family members by name
3. State why you are there/ to participate in providing a good experience for the patient/family members
4. Use first person language
5. Minimize disruptions while speaking with the patient/family members
6. Turn off your cell phone/pager
7. Listen to the patient/family members and be responsive to their needs
8. Thank patients/family members for their time in helping you to help them have a good experience
9. Should follow up be necessary do not drop the ball
10. Do not promise anything you cannot follow up on
11. Be mindful of the patient's needs



Mission Statement

Members of the Marine Corps League join together in camaraderie and fellowship for the purpose of preserving the traditions and promoting the interests of the United States Marine Corps, banding together those who are now serving in the United States Marine Corps and those who have been honorably discharged from that service that they may effectively promote the ideals of American freedom and democracy, voluntarily aiding and rendering assistance to all Marines, FMF Corpsmen, and FMF Navy Chaplains and former Marines, FMF Corpsmen, and FMF Navy Chaplains and to their widows and orphans; and to perpetuate the history of the United States Marine Corps and by fitting acts to observe the anniversaries of historical occasions of particular interest to Marines.

Commandant	Joe Findley	(205) 680-1276	joefindleyUSMC1967@yahoo.com
Sr. Vice Commandant	Danny Rooks	(205) 989-8949	cjrooks@att.net
Jr. Vice Commandant	James Davis	(205) 536-6074	coljedavis@yahoo.com
Judge Advocate	Henry Williams	(205) 608-4611	
Junior Past Commandant	Paul Kellogg	(205) 358-7703	phkjr@charter.net
Adjutant	Brian Gierlatowicz	(205) 854-4515	bgierlatowicz@yahoo.com
Paymaster	John Hilmer	(205) 612-4198	hilmerjh3@bellsouth.net
Chaplain	John Burks	(205) 854-3360	jburks1964@gmail.com
Sergeant-at-Arms	David (Doc) Baldwin	(205) 567-6616	Davwin2@ml1.net
Web Sergeant	Mike Ryan	(205) 529-6265	michaeldryanjr@gmail.com

Marine Corps League VA Hospital Visitation Team

General "Howlin' Mad" Smith Detachment #592

Birmingham, Alabama

CONFIDENTIAL TEAM MEMBER PROFILE

Name

Address

Phone Home

Cell

Email

Birthday/ Month

Date Joined League

Date Joined Hospital Team

Dates of Active Duty Service/MOS/Duty Stations

Occupation/ if retired, what type business

Interests/Hobbies

The Marines' Hymn

*"From the Halls of Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land, and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marine.*

*Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off Northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job
The United States Marines.*

*Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines"*

