

**JIM SPEARS AWARD
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
NEWS ARTICLE COMPETITION
2016-2017**

Judging Committee:

Commandant Ron Ashley, DoF, MCL
Senior Vice Commandant George LaMont
Past Dept Cmdt Lou Calleja

Details for the Department News Article Competition for the Jim Spears Award are as follows:

Award:

To provide a more equitable competition environment for all DoF Detachments, there shall be two (2) categories of competitors: (1) Detachments with an official MCL roll of 101 or more Members; (2) Detachments with an official MCL roll of 100 or less Members. Honorary Members shall not be counted. All active Detachments, in good standing, will be eligible to compete in this competition program. The Jim Spears Award(s) will be presented at the Department Convention to the winning two (2) Detachments; one (1) from each of the two (2) above noted categories.

Entries:

Up to three (3) newspaper / publication published Detachment news articles, which were in fact the direct result of a Detachment generated 'press release' for the current DoF fiscal year, June to June, are eligible for judging consideration. Published news article(s) that have previously been submitted are still eligible; all submissions must be postmarked or bear a transmittal receipt, and be mailed, shipped or received by June 1st.

Form:

All news article submissions must clearly indicate the following to be considered for judging:

1. Name of publication / newspaper; publisher, etc.
2. Publication date; section; page, etc.
3. Complete news article must be submitted and mounted either upon a page backing, or within a proper presentation 'sheet protector' document holder.
4. Must be accompanied by a completed News Article Competition Information Sheet. Entries do not require a 'cover letter' but entries must be under cover of a completed 'News Article Competition Information Sheet' form. (Blank form provided hereafter on page 4)

Submission Method:

All competition participants are asked to mail (via the USPS), or similar service, their submission(s), and have postmarked / transmittal receipted, no later than June 1st to:

George LaMont
3048 Longford Lane
Brooksville, FL 34601

GUIDELINES FOR NEWS ARTICLE COMPETITION

Competition Guidelines:

All individual Detachments within the Department of Florida (DoF) are encouraged to regularly produce informative Detachment generated 'press releases' to local news media (newspapers, periodicals, radio stations, etc.), to keep all members of the public, and Detachment members informed of the activities of the Marine Corps League (MCL). To this end there exists an annual DoF competition to recognize the best Detachment generated and 'published' news article, which originated directly from a submitted Detachment press release, within the DoF.

The Commandant of the DoF created and maintains the Jim Spears Award program to recognize the best apparent annual result(s) of Detachment/Member 'press releases.' In keeping with the League's ongoing practice of fostering and encouraging good communications, etc., the production of 'press release' news articles to be distributed to public print media outlets by individual Detachments further enhances opportunities for the Marine Corps League to keep the public informed of our the League's: organization; history; activities; mission; philanthropy; patriotism; ceremonial excellence; nationalism; exemplary leadership and our collective L'Esprit du Corps.

Understanding that news publishing entities routinely edit press releases they receive, sometimes significantly, competition participants are encouraged to submit for this competition not only a copy of the published news article; **but also a copy of the original 'press release,'** and photo(s), that were originally provided to the news media publisher.

By doing so competitors may further demonstrate to the competition judges the quality of their original submitted news stories. These press releases are considered objective evidence of hard work performed to produce positive new stories for the public that were later seen in print. Further, recognizing that *quality is better than quantity*, careful consideration will be made to judge the quality of the original press releases.

All competition participants should be reminded that the initial judges of their work are apparently the various editors of the news media publications who receive their submitted press releases. These editors, by their own actions of accepting, editing, and then publishing a news story submitted by a MCL Detachment / Member are deemed to have apparently judged favorably on the subject press release, and thus have found it to be 'news worthy' to appear in print.

Participating Detachments / Members who produce 'press releases' are encouraged to reference the following guidelines enumerated in Marine Corps League publications, including:

Marine Corps League Guidebook for Detachment Officers: Beginning in the Guidebook's Part II – Detachment Information – Section 2.4, starting on page 35 thereof are excellent resources for information to lead to a successful published news story. The following sub-sections can be found thereat: Promotions, Publicity, and Press Releases; The Press; News Writers/Photographic Coverage; Public Service Announcements.

Finally, all news article submissions from Detachments of the two (2) differing member size categories, will be primarily judged upon the apparent news worthiness of the article's subject, e.g.: Special Act; Special Milestone; Special Meeting; Special Award; Large Scale Group Function(s); Historic Event, etc. Please note that 'simple' small 'notifications' are not acceptable for this competition as these types of published information should be considered routine communications activity by Detachments.

JIM SPEARS AWARD – COMPETITION JUDGING CRITERIA

Judging Criteria:

The Judging Committee's criteria employed for the 'Jim Spears Award' competition, for the best published newspaper article submission(s), does more than merely establish standards for judging a published news article. The criteria purports to represent the efforts of a proactive Department of Florida, Marine Corps League.

This competition is designed to help construct an outline of what a Marine Corps League news article contributor should look for in developing a news story / press release that is both interesting, informative and sheds a positive light on the Marine Corps League, and the heritage of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Why do we do press releases? *"To create or change attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of people by influencing them – primarily with information disseminated through the media."*

The judging process for the news articles submitted will be predicated upon multiple critical factors: Evaluation of the original submitted 'press release' as it was prepared and how it addresses: Who? – What? – When? – Where? – Why? - & How?; The photograph(s) submitted with the press release will be considered, even if they were not published by the news entity; Finally, the judging will be positive for those new articles that objectively appear to carry the most impressive article information/content on a particular event, cause, milestone, etc. Most news editors are looking for human interest stories that intrigue a wide variety of people. They are not seeking to promote a particular business, but often that happens in the telling of a story. For those 'press releases' that have 'told a good story' and also clearly promote the Marine Corps League they will garner exceptional value during judging.

**JIM SPEARS AWARD
NEWS ARTICLE COMPETITION INFORMATION SHEET**

Detachment Name: _____

Detachment Number: _____

Detachment's Number of MCL Members: _____

Name of submitting member(s): _____

Name of 'Press Release' Author(s): _____

Detachment Commandant's Name: _____

News Publication Source: _____

News Publication: Page(s): _____ Section(s): _____

News Article Appearance Date: _____

Detachment's Number of MCL Members Certified by: _____
(Signature)

PLEASE USE YOUR KEY BOARD TO FILL OUT FORM