



Westfield River Valley Detachment 141 Scuttlebutt



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**Editor/Publisher: Roger Beer
June 2022**

Chartered November 28, 1945



Marine Corps League



141 Upcoming Events

Detachment 141 Meetings have resumed

**Walmart Flag Pin Donations
June 17-19**

**Independence Day Parade at Hampden Pond
July 4
Color Guard needed**

**Westfield Fair
August 20-22
Volunteers needed**

**July Calendar Raffle
Everybody pitch in and sell cards!**

**Get Involved, Volunteer!!
Uniform Up!**



Elected Officers:**Commandant:**

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Commandant's Corner

Commandant
Chris Cekovsky

To my fellow Detachment members,

You never know when you will see a piece of history form in front of you, but it is something that will last with you forever. As a young Marine in 1995, I was in the Mediterranean Sea aboard the USS Kearsarge headed towards a port in Egypt. We were warned that the ship would turn around to head to a situation in the North Adriatic Sea. While enforcing the "no fly zone" over Bosnia, one of our F16s was shot down and the pilot ejected. I wasn't a member of the TRAP team that would go, but you couldn't but help feeling the excitement around you as the mission was put together. One early morning on June 8th 1995, the Marines we saw on the ship every day rescued USAF Capt. Scott O'Grady from hostile territory. History was kind to us those days and we were very fortunate to save one of our own. It was a proud moment for all of us aboard to hear the bell and announcement of his safe return to our ship.

Semper Fi,
 Chris Cekovsky
 Commandant

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Detachment 141 meets monthly on the second Monday at 1900. Social hour at 1800. Detachment phone number is 413-562-4850.

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From the Paymaster:

Annual renewals are expiring soon. The year begins September 1 for annual members. Please submit your dues to the paymaster and stay current/

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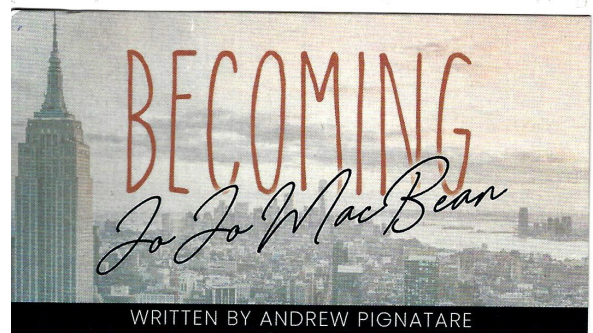
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THE HIGH POINT

By Bill Federman

Every Marine is familiar with the iconic Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. It raged from February 19 to March 26, 1945, and was one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war. About 7,000 Marines died before that flyspeck of an island was captured from the Imperial Japanese Army.

Marines of Detachment 141 have a special connection to that time and place in Don Dorrington, a Westfield native and past detachment commandant who stormed ashore with the Fifth Marine Division and survived the fighting to live to age 90. Don died in 2016 at his home in Cummington.

I didn't know Don. I had seen him a couple of times at detachment functions — he was resplendent in his dress blues — but I hadn't met him. I was unaware of what a remarkable person he was until I watched an interview he did for the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress in 2015. You can find it here: <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.101568/mv0001001.stream>.

Don tells of his ardent desire to become a Marine and his attempt to drop out of high school in Westfield, which was vetoed by his father, in 1943. But Don kept pestering his father to let him enlist ("I was a real nuisance to him") until he relented, believing that because a bout of scarlet fever had prevented Don from playing football for Westfield High School the Marine Corps would certainly turn him down. Much to his surprise — Don's and his family's — he passed the physical and was told that he'd be shipped to boot camp at Parris Island as soon as he graduated.

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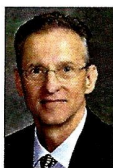
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The High Point (continued)

And so began his adventure, which took him to, among other places, Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, Hawaii and, eventually, to Iwo Jima. He returned to Westfield after his discharge in 1946 and joined Detachment 141 of the Marine Corps League. In the detachment's early days, he said, attracting members was a struggle (sound familiar?) making it necessary for Don and another Marine to rotate the position of commandant: Improvise, adapt and overcome. He was also a strong proponent of the Young Marines and believed that there were few finer things a young person could do.

Don never lost his love of the Marine Corps or his great pride in being a Marine. Looking back across the years not long before he died, he said, "The high point of my life was the Marine Corps." Don said the Marine Corps made him a better man; that's undoubtedly true. But Don and those like him make the Marine Corps what it is — an embodiment of excellence seldom matched and never surpassed.



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