



Westfield River Valley Detachment 141 Scuttlebutt



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Chartered November 28, 1945



Marine Corps League



141 Upcoming Events

**Detachment Meeting
December 8 @1900**

**Saturday Breakfast
First Saturday of the month
December 6**

**Wreaths Across America Agawam —Veterans Cemetery
December 13**

**Kids Skate Party -Amelia Park
December 30 11:30**

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



Elected Officers:**Commandant:**

Chris Cekovsky
 ccekovsky@gmail.com
 413-427-8456 (cell)

Sr. Vice:

Rene Cote
 lrcote924@yahoo.com
 413-335-5666 (cell)

Jr. Vice:

Dan Bishop
 bishopdan@aol.com
 413-237-5360

Judge Advocate:

Keith Buckhout
 kbuckhout@hotmail.net
 413-230-4882 (cell)

Commandant's Corner

Commandant
Chris Cekovsky

Hello Detachment 141,

I hope you are doing well and are enjoying Thanksgiving with your friends and family.

Thank you to all who donated to and set up our tree, all proceeds benefit the Melha Shriners Hospital. All trees are raffled off so get your tickets and win a tree!

Calendar card winners were pulled. Welcome to our new members. Thank you to everyone that participated in our Give Back Wednesday Event @ EB's Restaurant in Agawam.

Thank you to everyone that participated in our Stop & Shop Community Bag program for the month of November.

Food Pantry Food Drive - VAVS Food Pantry - drop off at the Detachment

December Events

Wreaths Across America 12/13 Agawam —Veterans Cemetery

Kids Skate Party -Amelia Park 12/30 11:30

Semper Fi,
Chris Cekovsky
Commandant

From the Paymaster:

Annual renewals begin September 1 for annual members. Please submit your dues to the paymaster and stay current.

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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 Southampton, MA 01073
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Appointed Officers:**Paymaster:**

Joe Delaney
 smsgtjoed@gmail.com
 413-527-9901 (H)

Adjutant:

Brianna Torrey
 binman1022@gmail.com
 413-326-5792

Chaplain:

Brian Dupee (acting)

Sergeant-At-Arms:

Aldo Mancini
 manscruffy@comcast.net
 413-789-0830 (H)

Web Sergeant:

Carrieann Dymon Bailey
 skitterto@yahoo.com
 860-335-7456 (cell)

Jr. Past Commandant:

Keith Buckhout
 kbuckhout@hotmail.net
 413-230-4882 (cell)

Souvenir from Bill Federman's Marine Corps Birthday



Medal Of Honor Recipient
 Col. (Ret.) Harvey "Barney" Barnum

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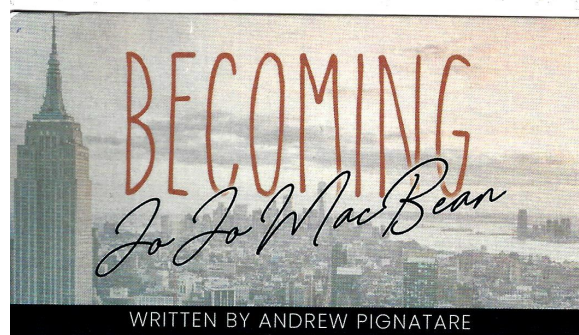
CHARLES E. SAGAN, CPA
 CSAGAN@AJPCPA.COM

1089 ELM ST
 W. SPRINGFIELD, MA 01089
 TEL: (413) 746-9465
 FAX: (413) 746-3330

6 MAIN ST
 WESTFIELD, MA 01085
 TEL: (413) 562-9676
 FAX: (413) 562-9723

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Semper Fi in Philly

Comedian W.C. Fields supposedly said he spent a week in Philadelphia one day. After my recent (and first) visit to The City of Brotherly Love to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of our beloved Marine Corps, I find that witticism to be amusing but wildly inaccurate. Philadelphia opened its arms -- and its heart -- to the Marines past, present and future who were there to celebrate among brethren. There was an event for every taste, from a formal ball to an uninhibited block party to impromptu gatherings of old and new comrades. We were all there: the young and the old, the halt and the lame, the sacred and the profane, united in reverence for our common heritage.

Accompanied by my two sons, I sallied forth without a clear idea of what to expect. I began to understand, though, when we checked into our hotel and encountered a lobby full of men, and women, who could only be Marines and their families: The stolid veterans, their long-suffering spouses and their uncomprehending children of all ages were everywhere. It was past 9 p.m. when we arrived and, after a quick conference with the desk clerk, we were directed to a nearby bar for food and drink. The place was busy, with an air of joviality, and everyone seemed to know each other. The next morning my sons reported that, after I had gone back to the hotel, they bellied up to the bar and discovered that most of the patrons were Marines, who, when told I was a Vietnam veteran, urged my boys to wake me up and drag me back to the bar for a few drinks. They wisely declined to do so but the tone was set: It was all about us, the few and the proud. And even me: the sleeping.

The next few days were a blur of activity. We had hoped to visit some of Philadelphia's historical exhibits but the political squabbling of petty tyrants had caused most of the exhibits to be closed. Better yet, we attended a parade of veterans of all ages and military branches whose pride and ardor the intermittent rain failed to dampen; on a gray and soggy Sunday morning, their spirit was on triumphant display as they marched through the city. Rowdier and more unrestrained was the block party near the Tun Tavern site on Nov. 10, that sacred holiday. The drone darting overhead had a much better view than I of the festivities, surrounded as I was by thousands of Marines and well-wishers. A stage had been erected for a succession of speakers, one of whom read the proclamation establishing "the First and Second Battalions of Marines" by the Second Continental Congress. After that came the usual speeches extolling the virtues of the Corps, and the birthday cake-cutting ceremony, all accompanied by applause and shouts of "Ooh-rah!" The youngest Marine in attendance had the deferential demeanor of one who had yet to be tested and the oldest Marine, a World War II veteran, was merely confused. After a rousing version of the Marine Corps hymn the crowd dispersed to other parties and celebrations amid a sea of good will and bonhomie.

Our stay included a dinner cruise on the Delaware River with Col. (Ret.) Harvey "Barney" Barnum, Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War, as the guest speaker. The colonel, I learned, gets around and still cuts a wide path in Marine Corps affairs, as would be expected of a decorated and revered officer. His speech, piped throughout the ship, was meant to rouse and inspire his audience, which it did, to a degree. But Col. Barnum's disembodied voice didn't have the impact that meeting him in person did, as I found out the next morning, when I was having coffee in the hotel lobby. I saw, emerging from the bank of elevators, a diminutive but imposing man with a mustache, a cane and, around his neck, a pale blue ribbon attached to a medal. It was, of course, the Medal of Honor and I recognized it immediately. During one of my previous

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Semper Fi in Philly (continued)

hospital stays, an acquaintance from my hometown had gotten together with Col. Barnum and Gen. Joseph Dunford, Marine Corps commandant and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to send me a short get-well video. That video was a real morale-booster for me, but that connection seemed a bit too tenuous to bring up with the colonel and I was unsure how to proceed. What does one say to a legend? Anything I could come up with would sound obsequious, groveling or just plain stupid but the colonel had been cornered by tongue-tied admirers before and knew how to handle the situation. He asked me where I had served in Vietnam and a few other routine questions, shook my hand, posed for a photo and bid me a hearty "Semper Fi." I have met three Medal of Honor recipients in my life and each time I have asked myself the question that always lingers after encountering an extraordinary Marine: Could I have done what he did? That's impossible to know, of course, but I believe selfless and heroic behavior such as the colonel's springs largely from devotion to our fellow Marines and pride in our Corps, powerful ideals that guide and inspire us. Semper Fidelis, Marines.

I was mulling over the nature of valor when my sons and I arrived at the site of the after-party for those who wanted more camaraderie following the block party. A bouncer was checking entry tickets but I couldn't find mine as I searched pocket after pocket while I was in line. When I got to the door the bouncer glanced at me and waved me in.

"Sorry, I can't find my ticket," I stammered, still checking pockets.

"That's OK," he said. "You're good. C'mon in." I looked at him inquiringly and he said: "You're a Marine. I can tell."

I smiled and said: "Yes, I'm a Marine." And I always will be.



Michael Markiewicz
Financial Advisor

The Mill 180 Building
180 Pleasant St Suite 212
Easthampton, MA 01027
Bus. 413-203-5850 Cell 413-875-5642
Fax 888-817-1654
mike.markiewicz@edwardjones.com
www.edwardjones.com/mike-markiewicz

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