



Westfield River Valley Detachment 141 Scuttlebutt



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Marine Corps League



141 Upcoming Events

**Department Convention in Burlington
May 29—June 1**

**Detachment Meeting
June 9 @1900**

**Saturday Breakfast
First Saturday of the month**

**Father's Day Weekend Flag Pins
Friday June 13-15**

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



Elected Officers:**Commandant:**

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Commandant's Corner

Commandant
Chris Cekovsky

Hello Detachment 141,

It's been a busy spring. Thank you for a great turnout at Geissler's for Flag Pin Sales on Mother's Day Weekend. With Memorial Day weekend around the corner many of you will participate in your local parades and ceremonies honoring our fallen. The Marine Corps League State Convention is on the 30th of May in Burlington MA that some will attend. It doesn't slow down for June either, but we're excited to award \$3000 in scholarships for college at our Det meeting on June 9th. Thank you for all you do for our Marine Corps League and our community. Uniform up!

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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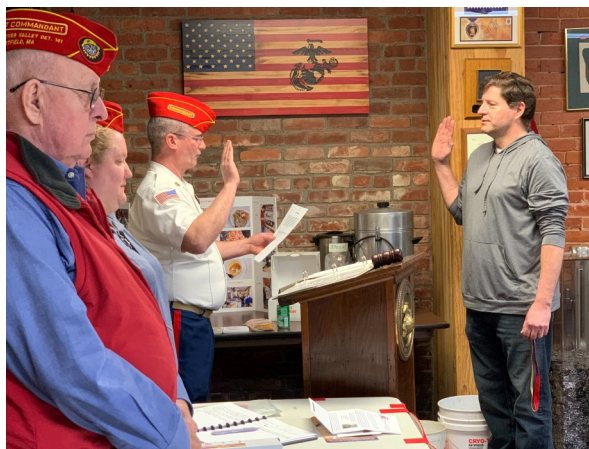
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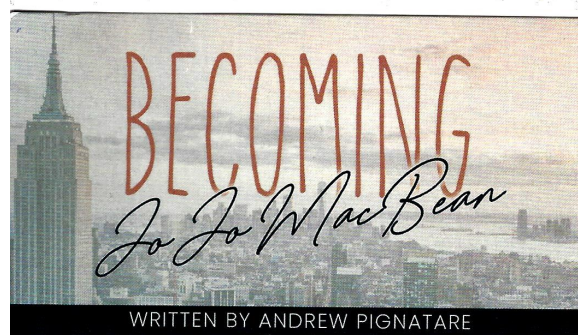
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Thanks But No Thanks

By Bill Federman

I was sitting quietly with my wife at a town political meeting when a stranger approached us and pressed into my hand a large coin, about the size of a silver dollar. He said, "I'd like you to have this. Thank you for your service." He gave us a smile and a curt nod and disappeared into the crowd. I looked at the coin in my hand. It was painted red, white and blue and said Thank You for Your Service on one side and Your Nation Proudly Salutes You on the other.

"How did he know?" I mused.

My wife said, gently: "Know what? That you're a Marine Corps veteran? Possibly your USMC hat, your USMC shirt, your USMC jacket, your USMC ring and your general air of disdain. That would be my guess." And she smiled with that look of puzzled patience I know so well.

I've had similar encounters with well-meaning strangers who offer a vague thank-you for services they imagine were rendered and I never knew how to react, mainly because I wasn't sure what I was being thanked for. I fear that one day I'll lose control and forcefully demand from a well-wisher: "Thanks for what? I did it for me, not you!" Enlisting in the Marine Corps was not, as some people assume, a selfless act of sacrifice on my part. Nor was it, as my high-school buddies insisted, a senseless and headlong rush to certain death before I was legally old enough to drink. I signed up in 1968, immediately after graduating from high school, not because the United States was threatened with an invasion by foreign hordes (that eventuality seemed remote, even to a sheltered 17-year-old) or by mindless patriotism but out of a desire for travel and adventure and to test my blooming manhood in mortal combat. The Corps gave me all of that as well as the lifelong feelings of pride and superiority that exists within all Marines.

Part of the disconnect between surly veterans and clueless civilians is that military service is not the one-way street the uninitiated believe it to be; this may account at least in part for their unctuous gushing. Life as a Marine offers rewards — spiritual as well as material — unimaginable by civilians. But whatever the reason, I found this compulsion to thank a veteran puzzling until it dawned on me that the people offering their thanks were usually seeking a kind of absolution for their own perceived lack of sacrifice. Veterans are handy conduits, and thanking one is a way to assuage those feelings of wonder and regret for the path not taken that haunt the untested.

The aggressive thanks I sometimes get in public are in direct contrast to the way I was treated when I returned from Vietnam. Back then, verbal abuse was common and often vehement. That's why I have to crack a smile — a very sardonic one — when I am thanked, today, for my military service. In 1970 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and whatever members of the Coast Guard are called — anyone in uniform, really — was presumed to be morally tainted, homicidal and deserving of hard-edged contempt; today veterans are venerated for the same things that sparked scorn and hatred a generation earlier; to veterans, either perception means as much, or as little, as the other. We were, and remain — forever — United States Marines. We are by definition volunteers; gratitude is neither sought nor expected. What matters most is the respect and esteem of our fellow Marines, past and present.

So, by all means, thank a veteran. But don't be surprised if you get in return a look of puzzlement and a heavy sigh.

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