



Westfield River Valley Detachment 141 Scuttlebutt



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Marine Corps League



141 Upcoming Events

**Detachment Meeting
October 13 @1900**

**Saturday Breakfast
First Saturday of the month
October 4**

**Give back weds at EBs restaurant fundraiser
November 5**

**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,

The October 13th meeting will be busy with some proposed changes to our Detachment bylaws so we need maximum attendance. Food is available at 1800 and the meeting starts at 1900. Equally important is that we will be voting on our Officer positions as well. Come out to the barracks for Saturday breakfast on Oct 4th 0730-1100. Right around the corner is the Marine Corps 250th Birthday as well as Veterans Day in November.

Give back weds at EBs restaurant fundraiser Weds Nov 5th. Look for flyers in October to bring with you the Det will get 10% of the days sales.

We are collecting canned goods for the food pantry.

Annual dues is due.

Semper Fi,
Chris Cekovsky
Commandant

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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.

Appointed Officers:**Paymaster:**

Joe Delaney
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 413-527-9901 (H)

Adjutant:

Brianna Torrey
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Chaplain:

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Web Sergeant:

Carrieann Dymon Bailey
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Jr. Past Commandant:

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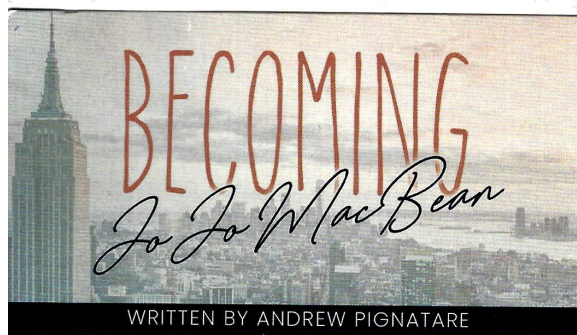
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What If?

By Bill Federman

“Robert is being promoted,” my wife said as she peered at her computer screen, “and we’re invited to the ceremony. It’s in Colorado. Shall we go?”

I froze. Among my declining faculties, the inability to recall people, places and things is one of the most irksome. Robert? Promoted? Colorado? I hated to appear to be the doddering old man that I undoubtedly am, but I was stumped. My wife had given me several clues to something I should probably have already known and I stalled for time as I sought to form them into a coherent memory.

“Yeah, maybe we should,” I shrugged, my back turned. “I mean, uh . . . yeah, maybe . . .” and it suddenly hit me: She was talking about her nephew Robert, who has long been an object of fascination for me. I’ve known Robert since he was in high school and I have followed his military career with a combination of pride and envy. He’s a 41-year-old, unmarried West Point graduate who owns a house in Colorado and — why not? — several muscle cars. The Army paid for his master’s degree in international relations (or something) at a prestigious East Coast university and he’s been stationed all over the U.S. and eastern Europe, with further overseas postings to come. He’s had at least one combat tour. He is now a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army. When he retires (which he can do when he chooses) he’ll still be young enough to start a second career; or not. If he wants to take up, say, competitive napping, he could do that. The point is, he’s had a life of travel and adventure that most men would covet and his future’s still so bright that, as they say, he’s gotta wear shades; Army-issue aviator shades presumably.

I quiver with envy when I run into Robert these days, usually at a family wedding or funeral; his presence never fails to launch me into a “what if” reverie of speculation about what my life might have been if I had stayed in the Marine Corps past my first enlistment. I took the oath when I was 17 and to put in 20 years so I could retire at 37, such a sweet-seeming deal now, was an eternity to a sheltered teenager. My daydreams always end in rapid promotion and exotic duty stations, never in death or dismemberment, and I imagine myself thrust by worldly events into perpetual motion, serving valiantly in both war and peace before fading away with the respect and admiration of my peers as I embark on a prosperous and genteel seniority. Oddly enough, I always imagine myself wearing those iconic USMC dress blues, as if I had just stepped off a recruiting poster, even though I wasn’t issued a set when I was on active duty. I was disappointed then but, as I was to learn of so many things, if the Marine Corps wanted me to have a set of dress blues . . . well, we all know how that goes.

(continued on page 5)

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What If? (continued)

Then, of course, reality smites me with a series of vivid recollections about the less pleasant but necessary side of military life: the endless hours of walking guard duty in the frigid darkness, eating cold C-rations, sleeping on a patch of dirt, being shot at, burning 50-gallon barrels of human waste mixed with diesel fuel; that's the stuff no one's dreams are made of — except a Marine's.

Robert's career may resemble that of G.I. Joe on armor-piercing (he was a tanker for a while) steroids but it comes at the expense of a stable (OK, boring) home life. He's been too busy to marry and have kids but, as far as I can tell harbors no regrets. Military life doesn't preclude marriage and a family, of course, but the opportunities for acquiring them are less numerous. Besides, Robert likes to travel light; so he goes alone.

I'm one of the vast majority who did their active-duty time and returned to civilian life. I have a wife and family and, like Robert, I have no regrets about the choice I made. But it's easier for me; I'll always be a Marine and the Corps will always be a part of me; that tie may fray with the passage of time but it will never break.

One of my commanding officers, Capt. James Marion Wheatley, figured out how to have it both ways. Capt. Wheatley was a gung-ho Marine and one of the people I most admire in life. I served under him in California and in Vietnam. When I was due to rotate back to The World he asked me, a young sergeant, if I intended to re-enlist when my three-year hitch was up. I told him no, that I planned to attend college although I didn't have a major in mind.

"That's good," he said. "Keep your options open. Don't get locked into something."

I paused in confusion. Those were unexpected words, I said, coming from a career officer. Capt. Wheatley nodded and said, "I suppose so but I've only been in the Corps for 17 years and I like to keep my options open." We both stood up, a gleam in the captain's eye. "I'm no lifer, sergeant," he said. "Not me." He paused and smiled: "I'm just going to put in my thirty years and get out."

Semper Fi, Capt. Wheatley, wherever you are.



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