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Marine Corps League

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Scuttlebutt

Newsletter of Westfield River Valley Detachment 141

Westfield, Massachusetts

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30 Young Marines Boot Camp Grads

The Westover Young Marine Company grew by 30 members February 27 with the graduation of 30 recruits. Sgt.Maj. Ed Mitrook, USMCR ret., unit commander, said the Westover YM unit is up to 65 members. The Westover Young Marines are sponsored by the Marine Corps League and Det. 141. Special guests at the ceremony were YM National Dep.. Dir. Don Shanks and Training Dir. Dave Adams and Det. 141 officers and members.

Dinner Turnout Deemed Success

More than 135 tickets were sold for the recent fundraiser buffet at Alexander's in Feeding Hills and turnout exceed expectations.

Det. 141 Commandant Francis J. Curnow said he was "pleased," at the response from member and friends who attended. "I feel everyone enjoyed the evening with the food, live band entertainment and the raffles." Live music was provided by Associate Member Lou Johnson and his band. "The band alone made the evening," several attendees commented.

Curnow said the amount raised will be reported at the Mondays meeting.



Tall Order

Eight year-old Tyler Laviolette of Springfield accepts his diploma on graduating from recruit training at the Westover Young Marine Platoon from Sgt.Maj. Ed Mitrook, YM Regimental Commander, center, and National Deputy Director Don Shanks. (Photo by Matt Knas)

Commandant's Corner

Another busy month concluded with the help of another 12" of the white stuff .Spring is around some corner , so I'm told. Anyhow, J.R. is back in town and Mrs C has departed the breakfast scene in favor of some Florida time herself. And I'm still here ..whats up with that? For those who attended the fundraiser at Alexander's much fun was had by all and a success for Det. 141. One hundred thirty five tickets sold , excellent raffles and a special donation of \$200 from the NE Div Vice, Dick Gore. The 50-50 winner donated back \$169 . Oorah for Navy Chief Ret Jerry Murphy of the band "Off the Cuff"one of Lou Johnson's guys !! Great tunes from the musical

trio also..and as a special guest the MCL National Commandant Jim Laskey joined us for the festivities as did our Dept Commandant Bob Delong. The Young Marine graduation was the place to be Friday eve the 27th when 30 YM's graduated from "boot" camp. An excellent showing of many family members and a large number of MC Leaguers made it a great event for all. Young Marines Deputy Dir. Don Shanks & Dir. of Training Dave Adams were guests of honor . Both gave some excellent words of wisdom to the graduating class and followed that up with a visit to the Det on sat for some SOS. An absolutely great weekend ..and another success for



Commandant Francis J. Curnow
Sgt. Maj. Mitrook and the staff with the Young Marines. Well that's about all for now..and Oh .. fyi..the cable is reconnected for those not in the know!!Semper Fi, Fran Curnow

March Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the following members of Detachment 141.

- | | |
|----------|--------------------|
| March 1 | John Godfrey |
| March 3 | Edward J. Grzelak |
| March 6 | Daniel O'Brian |
| March 6 | Frank Real |
| March 9 | Michael Braun |
| March 11 | Robert Killam |
| March 11 | Patricia Mathieu |
| March 13 | Aldo Mancini |
| March 16 | Samuel Adams |
| March 18 | Joseph Oleskiweicz |
| March 20 | Douglas Link |
| March 20 | Michael Redfern |
| March 22 | Brian J. Tierney |
| March 26 | Bennie Forester |
| March 28 | Peter Pitoniak |
| March 29 | Donna Magdycz |
| March 31 | Don Dorrington |
| March 31 | Ed Mitrook |
| March 31 | Steven Sklaski |



Three Amigos

Marine Corps League National Commandant Jim Laskey confers with Det, 141 Commandant Francis J. Curnow and New England Division Vice Commandant Richard Gore at the recent fundraiser at Alexander's Restaurant. Mass. Dept. Commandant Robert Delong was also in attendance. *(Frank Real*

Detachment 141 meets monthly on the second Monday at 1900 Hours. Social Hour at 1800 Hours.

Scuttlebutt
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High Level Conference

MCL National Commandant Jim Laskey discusses the Young Marine Program with Sgt, Maj. Ed Mitrook, USMC Ret, regimental commander SNER Young Marines.

Scholarship Deadline
 Detachment 141 Scholarship Chairman Brian Dupee reminds members that April 1 is the deadline to qualify for the local, state, division and national awards.

Member Spotlight

Joe Mucha, Korea Combat Vet, Past Commandant & Vets Volunteer



As a graduate on Westfield Trade School High School Joe Mucha had a leg up as an engineer building air strips, roads and bridges as one of the U.S. Marines fighting their way out of the Frozen Chosin on their way to the safety of the sea. Mucha felt he

Div.1 YM In Competition For National Title

A Westover Young Marine, the Division 1 Young Marine Of The Year has been nominated for the national title and is competing with five other division title holders.

YM Sgt. Major Nicole E. Miller, 17, is a junior at Enrico Fermi High School in Enfield, Conn., is also a leader at school where among other activities is a member of the Student Senate. "She is highly motivated, knowledgeable and physically fit YM. She demonstrates exemplary leadership abilities and serves as an excellent role model for recruits and Young Marines alike," Sgt. Major Ed Mitrook, USMCR, Ret. Westover Unit Commander, said. The YMOTY will be awarded May 9.



Challenged

YM Sgt. Maj. Nicole Miller is congratulated and presented a challenge coin by New England Division Vice Commandant Dick Gore in her quest for national Young Marine Of The Year at the Adult Leaders Conference in Reno, Nev. in May

was on easy street when he completed boot camp at Parris Island in March of 1948 and was assigned to the overhaul and repair squadron at Cherry Point, N.C. as an engineer designing tools, fixtures and gages to be used in the manufacture of aircraft parts.

"Graduating from Westfield Trade enabled me to go right into the engineer field," he recalls. But like many MOS's, an engineer is not limited to a single field and in 1949 he received orders to report to the 2nd Engineering Battalion, 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune.

Several months later his leave was interrupted when North Korea invaded the South and he was ordered to report back to base ASAP. There was no lingering at Camp Lejeune and Joe soon find himself on a troop train bound for California where a troop ship was waiting to take him and a lot of anxious Marines to Korea.

From Inchon, the Marines under the famed Marine Chesty Puller, then a colonel, found themselves at the Yalu River and Chosin Reservoir One of our jobs was to build a 7,000 foot runway for the 1st Marine Air Wing but the Chinese interrupted (See Page 4)

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Marines Faced Chinese Hoards and Below Zero Temps At Chosin

Mucha . . . From Page 3)

construction when they crossed the Yalu in waves and drove the Marines back towards the sea. "It was unbelievable. We had to sleep in two man foxholes so one man could guard the other as he slept. The Chinese would try to sneak in to knife you in your sleeping bag," Mucha related.

He did not escape the onslaught and was involved in several hand-to-hand battles. "We fought with everything we had, our hands, M1's and I even had a .38 police pistol," he said. Needless to say, Joe made it through the fray virtually unscathed. "I had a few scrapes and cuts but not enough to warrant a Purple Heart," he says.

Some of his opponents were not as lucky. "It was them or me." As the fighting continued around



Joe Mucha

him, Joe and his fellow engineers built and rebuilt roads and bridges to clear the way for the evacuation. "If it wasn't for the 1st Marine Air Wing we wouldn't have been able to make it out. They dropped in construction equipment and materials, food and ammo supplies and took the wounded out," he said. Mucha also had high praise of the legendary Chesty Puller. "He really cared for his men and was visiting us on a

regular basis. I admired him." Despite his lack of a Purple Heart, Mucha earned the Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, United Nations Ribbon, Korean Ribbon and Cold War Ribbon. An expert rifleman, he won silver and bronze medals for compiling 2nd and 3rd place in overall Marine Corps rifle and pistol matches. Discharged as a staff sergeant in March 1953, Joe attended Northeastern University where he received a degree in mechanical engineering and plied his profession with Sickles, United Technologies and Smith & Wesson. A longtime member of Det. 141, Joe has served as commandant twice and as vice commandant of the Dept. of Massachusetts. And if he hasn't done enough, Mucha can be seen at the Leeds Veteran's Hospital as a volunteer several days a week. "A true Marines, Marine?" You bet. -fgr

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