

# LISTEN UP!

CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT

#636

Marine Corps League  
of Pennsylvania, Inc.

VOLUME XXIII, Number 8

AUGUST 2010

Commandant: JAMES POWELL

Editor: DON H. GEE

## AWARDS PRESENTED TO DETACHMENT & MEMBERS

The July Meeting of the Central Bucks Detachment was highlighted by the numerous awards earned by the Detachment and its members. **Commandant Jim Powell** picked up the awards during the Department of Pennsylvania Convention, June 23-26.

Streamers for achieving 100 percent membership during the past year and attending the convention were added to the Detachment Colors and the Detachment earned a **National Meritorious Unit Commendation** for its support of community activities and programs.

The **Distinguished Citizens Medal (Gold)** was presented to **Adjutant/Paymaster Don Gee**, PC, for his years of service to Corps, League and community

and the **Distinguished Citizens Medal (Silver)** was awarded by the Department



**GOLD MEDAL--Adjutant/Paymaster Gee and Commandant Powell with medal.**

to **Chaplain Budd Pearce**, PC, for his years of service and dedication to the Department Rifle Matches.

**Marine Anthony Verrecchio** earned the **Individual Meritorious Commemoration** from the Department for his ser-



**SILVER MEDAL--Chaplain Pearce and Commandant Powell with medal.**

vice to Corps, League and community

*Please see AWARDS, Page 6*

## Bad 'Judge'ment: Stolen Valor Act 'Unconstitutional'

A law that makes it illegal to lie about being a war hero is unconstitutional because it violates free speech, a federal judge ruled July 16 as he dismissed a case against a Colorado man who claimed he received two military medals.

**Rick Glen Strandlof** claimed he was a former Marine who was wounded in Iraq and received the Purple Heart and Silver Star, but the military had no record he ever served. He was charged with violating the Stolen Valor Act, which makes it a crime punishable by up to a year in jail to falsely claim to have won a military medal.

**U.S. District Judge Robert Blackburn** dismissed the case and said the law is unconstitutional, ruling the government did not show it has a com-

elling reason to restrict that type of statement.

A spokesman for the U.S. attorney in Denver said prosecutors are reviewing the decision and haven't decided whether to appeal. The spokesman said that decision would be made by the U.S. Justice Department in Washington and prosecutors in Denver.

Strandlof's lawyer, **Bob Pepin**, said he hadn't spoken to Strandlof since the ruling was issued. Pepin said he would advise Strandlof not to comment publicly because the case might be appealed.

"Obviously, we think this is the right decision, or we wouldn't have been making the objections to the statute to begin with," he said. Pepin said Strandlof has been living in a halfway house in Den-

ver while his case is in the courts.

The law has also been challenged in California and in a case now before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Denver attorney **Christopher P. Beall**, who filed a friend-of-the-court brief for the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado, said the Stolen Valor Act is fatally flawed because it doesn't require prosecutors to show anyone was harmed or defamed by the lie.

"The government position was that any speech that's false is not protected by the First Amendment. That proposition is very dangerous," Beall said.

"It puts the government in a much more powerful position to prosecute people for

(See VALOR,

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## COMMANDANT'S COLUMN

Marines,

The weather has been pretty brutal so far this summer. The heat has been unbearable at times but we did get through the Independence Day Parade in Chalfont and had a nice turn out. Several of our Detachment Marines also attended Marine Flanagan's funeral on the same day and did a great job paying tribute to him. Again we missed the picnic that **Suzanne Pearce** usually puts on at North Branch Park, but attended the opening of the Veterans Memorial after the Parade.

On June 18 and 19 I attended the New Jersey Pack Grand Growl and Department Convention in Woodbridge, NJ, again this year. Bob Fackina, who is a member of the Hunterdon County Bulldog Detachment, which I am dual member of, again was elected as Commandant. I was also lucky enough to be awarded a Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award at this convention.

**Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller** and I attended the Department of PA convention again this year. It was held June 23-26 at the Holiday Inn, New Cumberland, PA. Some of the highlights were:

- ü We received a **Meritorious Unit Citation (National)** from **National Senior Vice Commandant Vic Voltaggio** who attended the convention.

- ü We were recognized for again participating in the Newsletter Program (we won 2nd place this year).

- ü **Chaplain Budd Pearce** was awarded the **Distinguished Citizens Medal – Silver** by the Department Commandant for his work at the Rifle and Pistol Matches.

- ü **Marine Anthony Verrecchio** was awarded a Meritorious Commendation (Individual) from the Department Commandant for his work at the Washington's Crossing National Cemetery.

- ü We were recognized for again participating in the Website Program.

- ü We were recognized for again maintaining 100% membership.

- ü **Department Commandant Leanna Dietrich** was elected to her second term.

- ü **Junior Past Commandant Bill**

**Miller** was again elected Southeast District Vice Commandant and he again appointed me as one of his assistants.

- ü I was reelected Pennsylvania Pack Dog Robber (Adjutant/Paymaster). The Military Order of Devil Dogs is the fun and honor society of the Marine Corps League.

- ü I was also appointed as Assistant Adjutant for the Department.

I'd like to thank everyone, because it has been an outstanding effort by everyone, to have our Detachment recognized so often.

At the July Meeting, I presented **Doreen Stratton** the Distinguished Service Award for her work the past five years assisting the United Veterans of Doylestown with the Memorial Day Parade. She has been a valuable asset and worked very hard making the parade a huge success.

At our last meeting we also discussed the Applebee's Breakfast fund raiser and we will discuss the results at our next meeting. **Junior Vice Commandant Jack Gentile** has put together a Birthday Ball Committee and they will soon be starting is doing the preliminary work on the Ball. We hope to have more information at the August meeting. Bill Miller and I will again be attending the National Convention, this year in Greensboro, North Carolina, and will be reporting on it at the August meeting.

And finally I like to recognize one very outstanding Marine in our Detachment, **Past Commandant Don Gee**. Don won the 2nd Place Award for the Department Newsletter Editor Competition. But most importantly he was awarded the **Distinguished Citizens Medal-Gold** by **National Commandant James Laskey**. It is a very well deserved award and everyone should congratulate him on receiving this prestigious award.

That's it for now. See you in September.

Semper Fi,

Jim Powell

# JULY DETACHMENT MEETING



# M I N U T E S

The regular meeting of Central Bucks Detachment #636, Inc., of the Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania, Inc., was held July 14, 2010, at the Albert E. Atkinson American Legion Post, 315 North St., Doylestown, PA.

There were 18 members present including all officers except the Senior Vice Commandant. Distinguished members in attendance included **Past Commandants Don Gee, Don Parzaneze Sr., Budd Pearce, and Bob Sundling, Department of Pennsylvania Southeast Division Commandant/Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller, Past National Northeast Division Commandant/Past Department of New Jersey Commandant Ed Hoth.**

The **Minutes** of the June Meeting were unanimously accepted.

The **Paymaster's Report** was presented and was unanimously accepted.

## OFFICER REPORTS

**Commandant Jim Powell** reported he and **Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller** attended the Department Convention (June 23-26). He discussed the Marine Corps trademarking the emblem and other Marine Corps exclusive items. He and Junior Past Commandant Miller will be attending the National Convention next month. He expects the National Convention will be interesting in dealing with the 41 proposed ByLaws changes, more than two dozen of which involve the khaki shirt. The Detachment earned streamers for Convention Participation and 100% Membership. At the Department Convention, the Detachment received Certificates of Participation in the Department Newsletter program for **LISTEN UP!** and for our WebSite in the Department's WebSite program. He also announced the Detachment had been awarded the **Meritorious Unit Commendation (National)** for the Detachment's dedicated service to the community, the Marine Corps, the Marine Corps League, the Military Order of Devil Dogs, and numerous veterans and civic organizations during the period September 2009 through April 2010. He reported the Veterans Wheelchair Games for 2011 will be held in Pittsburgh and volunteers are needed to help with the program and donations are also being sought. Anyone interested should contact the Commandant. He also reported the annual Wyoming Veterans Project (and buffalo kill) is on again. It is a fund-raising program.

In the absence of the Senior Vice Commandant, **Junior Vice Commandant Jack Gentile** reported the Detachment strength at 68 members including 29 Life Members, 30 Regular Members, 2 Dual Members, 6 Associate Members, and 1 Honorary Member.

**Junior Vice Commandant Gentile** discussed the Breakfast Fund-Raiser at Applebee's in Newtown on Saturday, July 17, from 8 a.m. until 10 a.m. He is looking for volunteers to help at the site, collecting tickets, etc. If you can help out, give him a call. He is also beginning to work on the Birthday Ball and was seeking help with the planning.

**Judge Advocate Bill Mickelson** reported the Detachment had no known legal problems.

**Sergeant-at-Arms Bob Sundling, PC,** reported there had been no requests for the Color Guard since the last meeting.

**Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller** discussed the death of and awards to his friend **Marine Ed Ringer.**

**Chaplain Budd Pearce, PC,** reported he and other Detachment members had attended the funeral for **Marine Chuck Flanagan** on July 3.

The **Public Relations Officer** set July 20 as the deadline for submission of material for the next **LISTEN UP!** The Detachment has again been requested to participate in Nockamixon Day in September. More on this at the next meeting.

**Quartermaster Corey Fisher** reported sales of \$91.00 at the last meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Young Marines Liaison Bob Sundling** reported the Liberty Young Marines Unit will be holding a "Boot Camp" for its 10 new members shortly. The Unit is also still planning a trip to Washington

in August. Anyone interested in participating should contact him as soon as possible.

**Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator Budd Pearce** announced the next highway clean-up will be on Saturday, Aug. 14.

**Rifle & Pistol Team Captain Budd Pearce** reported the Department Rifle Match will be held Sept. 24-26 at Ft. Indiantown Gap. Anyone interested in joining the Detachment team should contact him as soon as possible.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Audit Committee--Junior Vice Commandant Gentile** reported the annual audit of the Paymaster's records had been completed and everything was in order.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Commandant Powell** presented the **Distinguished Service Award** to **Doreen Stratton** for her dedication and service as Coordinator of the Annual Memorial Day Parade for the past five years.

Certificates from **Department Commandant Leanna Dietrich** acknowledging the service of World War II veterans were presented by Commandant Powell to **Marine Bill Jerrom** and **Judge Advocate Bill Mickelson**. Certificates for **Marine Ray Krout**, **Marshall E. Mosher (USN)**, **Honorary Marine Bill Neis (USA)**, and **Marine Clifford W. Tice** will be presented to them.

An **Individual Meritorious Commendation** was announced for **Marine Anthony Verrecchio** for his "meritorious service" with the Guardians of the National Cemetery and the Patriot Detachment at the National Cemetery at Washington's Crossing.

**Chaplain Budd Pearce** received the **Distinguished Citizen Medal (Silver)** for his long and "dedicated service to the Department Pistol Match" from the Department Commandant.

During the Department Convention, the Detachment received a Second Place Award in the 2010 Newsletter Competition and a Second Place Award for Newsletter Editor.

The **Distinguished Citizens Medal (Gold)** was presented to **Adjutant/Paymaster Don Gee, PC**, for his "meritorious service" in Detachment, League and community activities.

A motion was unanimously accepted to donate \$75.00 to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation in the name of **Marine Charles (Chuck) Flanagan Sr.**

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 11.**

**GOODIES FOR THE TROOPS**

**Peggy Sundling**, who continues to send "Goodies to the Troops," has provided a sampling of items which are needed for the shipments. She cautions, "NO CHOCOLATE!" Items include Moist Wipes--with or without aloe (some people are allergic); Beef Jerky/Slim Jims--very popular; Hard Candy--no lollipops; Lotions and Moisturizers; Lip Balm; Chewing Gum; Crackers/Snacks/Granola Bars--in individual packages for easy toting; Fruit Snacks/Raisins--in individual packages; Writing Tablets/Envelopes/Pens; Crossword Puzzles; Magazines--military, automotive, hunting, etc. (used, are fine); Drink Mixes--individual envelopes.

**Thanks, Marines, for your continued support!**

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

NATIONAL CONVENTION  
8-14 AUGUST

DETACHMENT MEETING  
11 AUGUST

Labor day  
6 september

DETACHMENT MEETING  
8 SEPTEMBER

patriot day  
11 september

GRANDPARENTS DAY  
12 SEPTEMBER

FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN  
23 SEPTEMBER

COLUMBUS DAY  
11 OCTOBER

DETACHMENT MEETING  
13 OCTOBER

DEPARTMENT STAFF MEETING  
22-23 OCTOBER

ELECTION DAY  
2 NOVEMBER

## Gen. Mattis Tapped to Head CENTCOM

WASHINGTON--**Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis** has been picked to take over U.S. Central Command, the Pentagon announced July 8.

Mattis would replace **Gen. David Petraeus**, who is now in Afghanistan as the U.S. and NATO's top military officer there.

The shake-up comes as the American public questions whether the fight in Afghanistan can be won, and the Defense Department is reeling from losing its top war commander--**Gen. Stanley McChrystal**.

As head of Central Command, Mattis would oversee U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as across the Middle East, including Iraq and Iran.

**Defense Secretary Robert Gates** told reporters that he was impressed with the general's "strategic insight and independent thinking."

Mattis is a blunt-talking, seasoned war veteran best known for leading troops into the bloody battle of Fallujah in Iraq in 2004.

He is a bit of a surprising pick. On the one hand, Mattis has significant ground combat experience and is considered an intellectual who grasps the nuances of fighting a complicated counterinsurgency.

But he is also known to speak bluntly and off-the-cuff--much like Petraeus' predecessor Gen. McChrystal who was fired for speaking ill of his civilian bosses.

In 2005, Mattis was chastised by his superiors for saying in a public speech in San Diego that it was "fun to shoot some people." Mattis was a three-star general at the time, stationed in Quantico, VA, when he told an audience that some Afghans deserved to die.

"Actually, it's a lot of fun to fight," he said. "You know, it's a hell of a hoot. . . . It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right up front with you. I like brawling."

He added, "You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil. You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

His comments evoked laughter and applause from the audience.

His boss at the time, **Gen. Mike Hagee**, said that the comments reflected the "unfortunate and harsh realities of war" but that Mattis had been asked to watch his words in public.

Gates said July 8 that appropriate action was taken at the time. He also said he raised the issue with Mattis when interviewing him for the job and was confident that such statements would not be made in the future.

"I think the subsequent five years have demonstrated that the lesson was learned," he said.

**Adm. Mike Mullen**, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he has been impressed watching Mattis interact with

NATO allies, most recently as Mattis served as head of U.S. Joint Forces Command.

In 2004, Mattis' Marine division led the assault on Fallujah and he played a key role in helping Iraqi security forces negotiate with insurgents inside the city.

His remarks at the time of the battle suggest his thinking is very much in line with the counterinsurgency strategy pursued by Petraeus and McChrystal, which restricts military operations in order to win the support of the local population.

"All along we had intended a softer approach, using civil-military operations... unless someone chooses to fight, and then we would fight," Mattis said in 2004. "Welcome to war with all its complexities and shifting centers of gravity."

## Korean War Armistice Marked on Sat., July 24

Each year for the past 11 years, a Memorial Service has been held at the Korean War Memorial in Doylestown. The Memorial, which was dedicated by members of the Bucks County Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association in 2000, was the first Korean Memorial in eastern Pennsylvania. It's located in the small memorial park in front of the Bucks County Courthouse.

The service is usually held on July 27, the anniversary of the day the war ended in Korea. July 27 has been designated "Korean War Armistice Day" by Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama. This year, the ceremony will be held three days earlier, on Saturday, July 24.

This change of dates was to accommodate a group of 12 Korean dignitaries who are visiting Bucks County from Incheon, Korea, and who will be in attendance.

As the solemn part of the service begins, wreaths are laid at the base of the memorial by members of individual military and veterans organizations

This is followed by a "roll call of the dead," during which the names of the 38 young men from Bucks County who died in Korea are read, accompanied by the peeling of a large bell. Several of these men died at the Chosin Reservoir. As each name is called, a friend, family member, or another Korean War veteran places a

rose on the memorial. This is followed by a rifle salute (by a Marine Corps, or intra-service color guard and ceremonial rifle squad), taps, and a benediction.

For the past four years, the names of the 18 individuals from Bucks County who died in Iraq or Afghanistan have been read and members of their families attend and place a rose on the memorial.

A Korean-American children's choir, composed of boys and girls 4 to 10 years old will also participate, singing several Korean folk songs - including "Arrirang," a song familiar to most Korean War veterans.

Traditionally, the service has always included a special keynote speaker. This year's speaker is **LtGen. John F. Kelly**, USMC. LtGen. Kelly has already had two tours in Iraq, led the attack on Fallujah, and today has the largest command in the Marine Corps.

The memorial service is scheduled to begin at noon, and should last about one hour. Prior to this year's ceremony, there will be a military band concert by **The Old Comrades Concert Band** at 11 a.m.

The Bucks County courthouse is located at 55 E. Court Street in Doylestown. There is a large free parking lot across Main Street from the Courthouse that should be relatively empty on a Saturday morning.

**AWARDS from Page 1**

vice with the Guardians of the National Cemetery at Washington Crossing.

Other awards included special World War II Service Certificates from **Depart-**



**STRATTON with Gee and Powell and medal.**

**ment Commandant Leanna Dietrich to Judge Advocate Bill Mickelson; Marines Bill Jerrom, Ray Krout and Clifford Tice; and Honorary Marine Bill Neis.**

A **Second Place plaque** in the Department Newsletter Competition was



**JERROM with Powell and Certificate.**

awarded to the Detachment's LISTEN UP! newsletter. **Editor Don Gee** also received a **Second Place plaque** in the Newsletter Editor category.

**Certificates of Participation** were earned by **WebMaster Jim Powell** in the Department's Web Page program and



**MICKELSON with Powell and Certificate.**

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**Editor Don Gee** in the Department's Newsletter program.

Additionally, the Commandant presented the **Distinguished Service Medal** to Doylestown resident **Doreen Stratton** for "her dedicated selfless service" to the United Veterans of Doylestown and the community for the past five years as the Coordinator of the annual Memorial Day Parade.

**VALOR from Page 1**

speaking out on things they believe to be true but turn out not to be true," he said.

Beall said the ACLU was not defending the actions Strandlof is accused of, but took issue with the principle behind the law.

**Rep. John Salazar**, who sponsored the Stolen Valor Act in the House, predicted the decision will be overturned on appeal.

"This is an issue of fraud plain and simple," Salazar said in a written release. "The individuals who violate this law are those who knowingly portray themselves as pillars of the community for personal and monetary gain."

**Pam Sterner**, who as a college student wrote a policy analysis that became the basis of Salazar's bill, said the issue isn't free speech but misrepresentation. Sterner, a former Coloradan who now lives in Virginia, said authentic medal winners' credibility suffers when impostors are exposed because the public becomes suspicious of even true stories of heroism.



**CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT, Inc.**  
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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



***"ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE"***

**Application for Membership  
Marine Corps League**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date of Enlistment/Commissioning \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Discharge/Separation/Retirement \_\_\_\_\_ SSN \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Application -- New ( ) Renewal ( ) Associate ( ) Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply for membership in the **CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT**, Marine Corps League, and enclose **\$35.00** for one year's membership (which includes subscription to **MARINE CORPS LEAGUE MAGAZINE**).

I hereby certify I have served as a U.S. Marine for more than 90 days, the character of my service has been honorable and, if discharged, I am in receipt of an Honorable Discharge. By signature on this application, I hereby agree to provide proof of Honorable Discharge/service upon request.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Sponsor - where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Applicant's Signature)



Remit this form with check or money order (made payable to **CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT, MCL**)  
to: **CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT, P. O. Box 1372, Doylestown, PA 18901-1372**