



LISTEN UP!

CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT #636

Marine Corps League Of Pennsylvania, Inc.

VOLUME XVIII, Number 2

FEBRUARY 2006

Commandant: **WILLIAM R. MILLER**

Editor: **DON H. GEE**



**CENTRAL BUCKS
DETACHMENT, Inc. #636**
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7:30 p.m.
2nd Wednesday of Month
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MARINE OF THE YEAR
WILLIAM E. JERROM

MARINE 'GUNNY' DEFIES IRAQI INSURGENTS

Gunnery Sergeant Michael Burghardt, known as "Iron Mike" or just "Gunny" is on his third tour in Iraq. He had become a legend in the bomb disposal world after winning the Bronze Star for disabling 64 IEDs and destroying 1,548 pieces of ordnance during his second tour. Then, on September 19, 2005, he got blown up.

He had a bomb had chose not to tion suit.

"You can't regret tunnel-victoried by just a flak jacket, he officers term gingerly into a ter. The earth Senao base sta- it. He cut the

knife to probe the ground.

"I found a piece of red detonating cord between my legs," he says. "That's when I knew I was screwed."

Realizing he had been sucked into a trap, GySgt. Burghardt, 35, yelled at everyone to stay back. At that moment, an insurgent, probably watching through binoculars, pressed a button on his mobile phone to detonate the secondary device below the sergeant's feet.

"A chill went up the back of my neck and then the bomb exploded," he recalls. "As I was in the air I remember thinking, 'I don't believe they got me.' I was just ticked off they were able to do it. Then I was lying on the road, not able to feel anything from the waist down."

His colleagues cut off his trousers to see how badly he was hurt. None could believe his legs were still there.

"My dad's a Vietnam vet who's paralyzed from the waist down," says Burghardt. "I was lying there thinking I didn't want to be in a wheelchair next to my dad and for him to see me like that. They started to cut away my trousers and I felt a real sharp pain and blood trickling down. Then I wiggled my toes and I thought, 'Good, I'm in business.'" As a stretcher was brought over, adrenaline and anger kicked in.

"I decided to walk to the helicopter. I wasn't going to let my team-mates see me being carried away on a stretcher."

He stood and gave the insurgents who had blown him up a one-fingered salute.

(See GUNNY, Page 2)



**'GUNNY' BURGHARDT GIVING
'SPECIAL' SALUTE**

rived at a chaotic scene after killed four U. S. soldiers. He wear the bulky bomb protec-

act to any sniper fire and you sioned," he explains. So, pro-helmet and standard-issue began what bomb disposal "the longest walk", stepping 5-ft deep and 8-ft wide cras- shifted slightly and he saw a tion with a wire leading from wire and used his seven-inch

COMMANDANT'S COLUMN

Marines.

I'm under the assumption that everyone had a most wonderful and festive holiday season with family and friends which should carry you through the rest of the year until it's time to do it all over again twelve months from now. I know we did. Also wish to thank all of the members who sent us holiday greetings as well. Jeanette and I spent the week between Christmas and New Years at our get-a-way up in the Poconos and had a house full of family from as far away as Chicago. The kids really loved it. The biggest problem was maintaining law and order within the household which became my responsibility. Of course, you know that I rule with a big mouth and a size 12 boondocker.

After returning from vacation, I did not feel so good and every day became a little worse. The house commandant ordered me to report to sick bay which I did. Turns out that I had a slight case of pneumonia which I was able to nip in the bud with some prescribed medication and just plain rest. Unfortunately this happened during the week of our detachment meeting and I had to call on our Senior Vice, Jim Powell to preside. As usual Jim did a fine job and reported to me the events of the meeting. Thank you Jim. I did ask Jim to remind the membership in attendance that the February meeting will include the nomination of members in good standing who wish to become candidates for elected office in our detachment. The election of officer candidates will take place at our March meeting with installation in April. There are many members of our detachment qualified to assume responsibilities of leadership and for the life

of me I can't understand the reluctance to step forward and answer the call. It can be a rewarding experience and the only way to find out is to jump in and show us you stuff. We have a great detachment, however, it can be even better with some new blood and fresh ideas. So come on Marines! Lets see some enthusiasm at our next meeting.


Senior Vice Powell reported that mess sgt. and past commandant Bob Sundling has stated that he can no longer continue providing refreshments for our post meeting social. I'm asking for a volunteer to take over the roll of mess sgt. It's not a difficult assignment. The menu consists basically of pizza, hoagies, fried chicken, and anything else that's quick and easy along something soft to wash it down with. I will continue to provide adult beverage as I have been doing until further notice.

I'm sure that everyone has heard that we now have a new veterans cemetery in eastern Pennsylvania located in Up-

per Makefield near Washington Crossing. This news came about all of a sudden with the announcement to be made official on Sunday Jan. 8th at the Washington Crossing visitors center. I did manage to drag myself to that event to represent the Marine Corps League knowing that a lot of MCL and Dept. of Pa. members were at the winter meeting in Grantville and would not be able to attend on such short notice. The place was packed with veterans and dignitaries. It was well covered by the news media. Including myself, I only recognized two other MCL members in attendance, Rich Scott of our detachment, and Ed Hackett of the Bethlehem Detachment.

That's about it for this month. I'll see you at the February meeting.

Semper Fi!



GUNNY

(From Page 1)

"I flipped them one. It was like, 'OK, I lost that round but I'll be back next week.'"

Copies of a photograph depicting his defiance, taken by Jeff Bundy for the *Omaha World-Herald*, adorn the walls of homes across America and that of Col. John Gronski, the Brigade Commander in Ramadi, who has hailed the image as an exemplar of the warrior

spirit.

GySgt. Burghardt's injuries--burns and wounds to his legs and buttocks--kept him off duty for nearly a month and could have earned him a ticket home. But, like his father--who was awarded a Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts for being wounded in action in Vietnam--he stayed in Ramadi to engage in the battle against insurgents who are forever coming up with more ingenious ways of killing Americans.

LISTEN UP!

LISTEN UP! is the internal information publication of the CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT #636, Inc. of the Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania, Inc. It is published monthly by and for the members of the Central Bucks Detachment.

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 and 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 for your continued support!**

Highlights

The regular meeting of the Central Bucks Detachment #636, Inc., of the Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania, Inc., was held January 11, 2006, at the Albert E. Atkinson American Legion Post #210, 315 North St., Doylestown, PA.

There were 15 members present including all officers except the Commandant and the Quartermaster. Distinguished members in attendance included **Past Commandant and Marine of the Year Budd Pearce**, **Past Commandants Don Gee** and **Bob Sundling** and **Past Commandant of the Department of New Jersey Ed Hoth**.

The **Minutes** of the December Meeting were unanimously approved.

The **Paymasters Report** was delivered by **Paymaster Bob Cody**. The Paymasters Report was unanimously approved.

OFFICER REPORTS

Senior Vice Commandant Jim Powell reported that **Commandant Bill Miller** attended the Dedication Ceremony for the new Veterans Cemetery to be located at Washingtons Crossing. He further reported the strength of the Detachment at 49 including 23 Regular Members, 22 Life Members, 3 Associate Members and 1 Honorary Member.

Junior Vice Commandant Jim McComb reminded the members about the Department raffle. He has raffle tickets available.

Adjutant Gary Smith reported he had received no communications from either the National Headquarters or the Department since the last meeting.

Judge Advocate Bill Jerrom reported the Detachment had no legal problems.

Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Mickelson reported the Color Guard had not been requested since the last meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE--Senior Vice Commandant Powell activated the Nominations Committee and appointed **Junior Past Commandant Budd Pearce** as chairman. Nominations are due at the February Meeting. Anyone wanting to nominate a member for or who is personally interested in seeking Detachment office should contact Budd at (215) 343-5609.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE--The Public Relations Officer set Jan. 20 as the deadline for submitting material for the February issue of Listen Up!

NEW BUSINESS

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE--**Past Commandant Don Gee** reminded the members that volunteers from the Detachment will be needed at staff this year's Memorial Day Parade. More information will be available at next month's meeting after he meets with former **Mayor Bill Neis**.

MEMORIAL DAY FUND RAISER--**Past Commandant Budd Pearce** announced the Detachment will hold its annual Memorial Day Fund Raiser at the State Store from Thursday, May 25, through Sunday, May 28. Detachment members will be needed to man the donation table during those dates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GOODIES FOR THE TROOPS--**Past Commandant Bob Sundling** reminded the members of the continuing need for items for the "Goodies for the Troops" program.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

Marines Hit Recruiting Goal, Won't Lower Bar

By Tony Perry
Los Angeles Times

SAN DIEGO — Unlike the Army, the Marine Corps met its national recruiting goals for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30 and has no plans to lower its standards for recruits, officials said.

The Marine Corps achieved 102% of its goal for enlistments in the reserves and 100% of its goal for active-duty enlistments, according to figures released by the Defense Department.

The Army's figures were 84% for the Army Reserve, 80% for the National Guard, and 92% for its active-duty force. As the nation's largest service, the Army needs to attract a larger number of recruits than the Marine Corps, the Navy or the Air Force.

To aid in its recruitment program, the Army announced last week that it had increased from 2% to 4% the percentage of recruits it would accept who score near the bottom of the military aptitude test, so-called Category IV recruits.

The Marine Corps will continue restricting Category IV recruits to 1% of the total, officials said.

Also, Army officials said they were lowering from 67% to 60% the Army's goal for signing recruits who scored in the top half on the aptitude test.

The Marine goal remains 63%. In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 69.5% of Marine recruits scored in the top half of the test, said **MSgt. James Edwards** of the recruiting command at Quantico, VA.

With casualties mounting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army and Marines have found recruiting more difficult. Overcoming opposition from parents of potential recruits is often the biggest challenge, officials said.

Both services have added recruiters. For several months this year the Marine Corps missed its monthly goal for recruits.

Military sociologist David Segal, director of the Center for Research on Military Organization at the University of Maryland, said the Army's recruiting problems are partly due to a decade-long decline in enlistments among African Americans, who have come to doubt whether the military is an equal-oppor-

tunity employer.

The Marine Corps has a smaller percentage of African Americans in its ranks and thus is not as affected by the decline, Segal said. African-Americans make up 23% of the Army and 12% of the Marine Corps, according to a recent Government Accountability Office study.

Also, Segal said the Marine Corps has done a better job of overcoming opposition among parents of all races to having

102%
for Reserves,
100%
for Active Duty

their children enlist. "My sense is that more Marines come from Marine families so the parents are already on board," he said.

Marine recruiters send a video to the parents of would-be recruits explaining how boot camp will make their son or daughter more physically fit and more mature. School counselors are invited to visit boot camps at San Diego and Parris Island, SC.

For fiscal 2005, the Marine Corps had recruited 8,350 men and women for the

reserves and 32,955 for the active-duty force. Of the four services, only the Army missed its active-duty recruiting goal. The Army had hoped to enlist 80,000 recruits but fell short at 73,373.

The Air Force Reserve (113%) and Marine Reserve (102%) exceeded their recruitment goals.

The Army and Marine Corps differ in their advertising pitches to potential recruits.

In their pop-up ads on the Internet, for example, the Army says, "Join the U.S. Army. Discover all the opportunities the U.S. Army has to offer," while the Marine Corps asks "Do you have what it takes? Contact a Marine recruiter."

In one of the Army's television ads, an African American youth tells his mother he is enlisting so that he can earn money for college.

In a TV ad that debuted Oct. 1, the Marines emphasize the demands of boot camp.

"The main thing we show, or sell, if you will, to young men and women are the intangibles: self-discipline, service to country, service to team," said **Maj. Joe Kloppel**, spokesman for the Western Recruiting Region based in San Diego.

"Those things don't change with the economy," he said.

Limits Extended for VA Home Loan

WASHINGTON, DC-- America's veterans and their families now have a greater chance to make their dreams of home ownership a reality, thanks to an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty limit.

Effective January 1, changes in the loan guaranty limits means veterans are able to get no-down payment loans up to \$417,000. The previous ceiling was \$359,650.

"For more than 60 years, VA has assisted our veterans to become home owners," said the **Honorable R. James Nicholson**, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This increase is another example of our commitment to ensure VA benefits keep pace with the needs of our veterans in today's housing market."

The Veterans Benefits Improvement

Act of 2004 tied increases in the VA guaranty to increases in the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation's conforming loan limit. When this limit increases, VA guaranty limits also go up, allowing VA to keep pace with rising home values.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With the Department of Veterans Affairs guaranteeing a portion of the loan, veterans can receive a competitive interest rate without making a down payment, making it easier to buy a home.

More information about VA home loan benefits is available on the Web at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov> <<http://www.homeloans.va.gov>> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

North Carolina Marine Barracks Helps Wounded Troops

By Estes Thompson
Associated Press Writer

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. (AP) -- From the first day of boot camp, a Marine is part of a team, rarely serving or fighting alone. That ends when a Marine is severely injured in combat and rushed from the field for medical care. Those without family to care for them at home can find themselves alone with no place to go.

"They don't even have uniforms," said **LtGen. James Amos**, commander of the II Marine Expeditionary Force. "A lot of their stuff was left in Iraq or lost."

To give recovering Marines daily support and companionship, the military created the Wounded Warrior Support Section, a renovated barracks at North Carolina's Camp Lejeune, the Corps' largest base on the East Coast.

There is nothing else like it in the Marine Corps, Amos said. Some battalion commanders were initially reluctant about the idea, he said, but the experience of wounded Marines living and recovering with each other has proven to aid their healing process.

"Some of these kids have seen things that few humans will see in life," said Amos, whose commands include more than 47,000 Marines and sailors. "When you're in a huge gun battle, you come away with thoughts and memories. Some may struggle with it. What we found is these kids need to talk to one another."

Unlike a typically spartan Marine barracks, the new facility has the look and feel of an all-suite motel, with carpeted hallways, separate bedrooms and sitting areas, and door handles and bathroom bars designed specifically for injured residents.

"If they went to a regiment (barracks), there's nothing there for them," said **GySgt. Ken Barnes**, the top noncommissioned officer on support section. "It's four walls and a bed. Here, they've got a little bit more. But the number one thing is we've got Marines here who understand what it was to be wounded, because they all were."

In previous wars, most of those severely wounded in combat would have left the military. But leaps in medical technology mean that even amputees can return to the battlefield, Barnes said, cit-

ing a Marine lieutenant with a prosthetic leg now leading a combat unit in Iraq. Up to 30 percent of those wounded will remain in the Corps, Amos said.

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, 955 Marines from the II Marine Expeditionary Force have been wounded in combat, including more than 200 troops from Lejeune that deployed in March.

Most of the 200 are with parents at home or in hospitals around the country, Amos said, but others are without an obvious place to convalesce.

LCpl. Johnny Burra, 19, of Rochester, NY, is among the about a dozen Marines living in the new barracks, arriving after shrapnel ripped through his legs and broke two bones in his left foot.

"This place is awesome because first and foremost you're with other people who have been wounded and people who just came back from Afghanistan and Iraq," Burra said. "We talk about getting wounded, we talk about Iraq or Afghanistan. We talk about back home, pretty much everything."

He also said he appreciates the ramps that make it easier for him to get around on crutches, as well as dependable trans-

portation to the base hospital, chow halls and base shopping mall.

It cost about \$50,000 to upgrade the barracks on the ground floor of a building near Amos' headquarters on the New River.

Computers ready for Internet surfing greet incoming Marines in one room, while in another plush recliners and sofas line walls in view of a big-screen television.

In each suite, furniture donated by businesses in nearby Jacksonville creates a homelike setting.

All have TVs with cable and telephone - in normal barracks Marines have to set up those services themselves - as well as a DVD player, a mini-refrigerator and microwave.

The Corps has plans to open a similar facility at Camp Pendleton, CA, and at other bases. Being in such a barracks "makes the time easier," said **LCpl. Ryan Cahill**, 19, of Baton Rouge, LA, who was wounded in the leg by a roadside bomb.

"It's a big change from being with people you've been with the past year," Cahill said, "to all of a sudden not seeing them at all."

VA Prescription Co-Pays Increased by \$1

Co-payments for outpatient medicines prescribed through Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities will rise by \$1, according to an announcement by VA. The \$1 increase for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs took effect on Jan. 1, the first change in VA prescription drug co-payments in four years.

"Through sound management practices, efficient pharmacy operations and price negotiations that put veterans first, VA has been able to contain prescription drug costs," said the **Honorable R. James Nicholson**, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, noting that co-payments paid by veterans will still be lower than similar expenses in the private sector.

The increase to \$8 from \$7 for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs is required by federal law, which bases VA's co-payments for outpatient prescriptions on increases in the Medical Consumer Price Index.

The \$1 increase will not effect veter-

ans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a 50 percent or greater disability. Also known as "Priority Group 1" veterans, these patients will see no change in their current prescription drug benefit, Nicholson said.

Other veterans with less pronounced service-connected ailments - those classified as Priority Groups 2 through 6 - will see their prescription drug co-pays rise by \$1, but their annual out-of-pocket expenses for VA medicine will remain capped.

The new cap will rise to \$960 per year, up \$120 from the previous level. This means veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 will pay no more than \$960 annually for VA outpatient medicine.

Veterans who have no injury or illness related in any way to their prior military service - referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 - will also see their co-payments increase.

The Few, The Proud, The Marines

Recently, a Marine Corps Harrier squadron was invited to attend the annual Air Force Red Flag exercises at Nellis Air Force Base, NV. This is one of the USAF's big exercises, where they test combined arms employment of tactical air assets.

The USAF F-15 pilots showed up on the ramp with dozens of rear echelon airman types and tons of equipment such as Ground Power Units, Accessory Power Units, Hummers, Trucks, Air Conditioners, etc. The Marines appeared ready to operate in a combat environment and showed up with only their Harriers.

The Air Force commander commented to the Marine commander:

"Where is all your support stuff? Geez,

you guys really are just Grunts that know how to fly."

Not wanting to disappoint the Air Force commander, the Marine commander got an idea of his own. He talked to his 1st Sergeant and later that night, the 1st Sergeant had his Marines make up bayonet studs on hose clamps. (There's a pitot tube sticking out of the nose of a Harrier.) In the hours of darkness, the 1st Sergeant had the clamp with the bayonet stud tightened onto the pitot tube of each Harrier.

The next morning, the Air Force pilots fell out on the ramp in front of their F-15s. The Marine pilots fell out on the other side of the ramp in front of their Harriers. Each Marine pilot had on his deuce gear with a bayonet in the scabbard. The USAF commander ordered his pilots to "man your planes."

The USAF ground crews by the dozens scrambled to their trucks, APUs, GPUs, etc. and the pilots ran to their planes. The Marine commander ordered his Marines to "Fix Bayonets," whereupon each pilot ran to the front of his Harrier and fixed his bayonet on the stud attached to the pitot tube. The Marine commander then ordered "CHARGE," and the Marines jumped in their Harriers, dusted airborne, and flew off.

The Marine commander turned to the USAF commander and said; "This is what we Marines consider Close Air Support."

VA Scam Alert

The Department of Veterans Affairs has received several reports of an organization identifying itself as "Patient Care Group" contacting veterans and falsely telling them that PCG is now dispensing prescriptions for VA. Callers are asking veterans for a credit card number to ensure the veteran will continue to receive his/her medications. Veterans should not give the company any information. The Department of Veterans Affairs has not changed the process of receiving and dispensing prescriptions. Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, 1-877-222-8387. The entire story can be found at: <http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,78982,00.html>.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DETACHMENT MEETING
8 FEBRUARY

LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
12 FEBRUARY

VALENTINE'S DAY
14 FEBRUARY

PRESIDENT'S DAY
20 FEBRUARY

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
22 FEBRUARY

DETACHMENT MEETING
8 MARCH 2005

ST. PATRICK'S DAY
17 MARCH

SPRING BEGINS
MARCH 21

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS
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12 APRIL

EASTER SUNDAY
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DETACHMENT MEETING
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MOTHERS DAY
MAY 14

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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.

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