

Sept 2015

# The Sitrep

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**Next Detachment  
Meeting:  
Emmaus VFW  
#7088  
316 Main St.  
Emmaus, PA  
Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 1930**

**Current  
Elected/Appointed  
Officers**

- Commandant -  
Jason Smith
- Sr. Vice  
Commandant -  
Michael Donatacci
- Jr. Vice  
Commandant -  
Robert Hoffman
- Judge Advocate -  
Howard Schaeffer
- Adjutant -  
Terry Keiser
- Paymaster -  
Terry Keiser
- Chaplain -  
Joseph Malia
- Sgt. at Arms -  
Ronald Thompson
- Web Sgt. -  
Jason Smith



## Message from the CP

September 10<sup>th</sup> was a great day for our detachment. We held a special meeting to bring in Anthony Ross as a new member. For those of you that don't remember, Anthony had come to a couple of meetings before going down to Parris Island. Well he graduated and is now one of the newest members of our extended family. It was a great honor to be able to hold the meeting for him while he is home on leave. Having him join the detachment gives us and him the opportunity to spread the word to our active duty marines about the existence of the league. In addition to Anthony we were able to swear in Josh Brown, a purple heart recipient, and Enduring Freedom veteran. It is great to see us start getting an influx of youth into our midst. I would also like to thank everyone for the surprise birthday cake that was given to me. I couldn't think of a better way to spend my birthday than welcoming home Anthony and being able to swear in these two young marines.

## Meeting Minutes

- ❖ It was announced that Allentown Band (America's oldest community concert band) will be doing a concert called Americans We – (a Pearl Harbor remembrance and holiday annual concert) Sunday December 6 at 3pm at the Miller Symphony Hall in collaboration with the City of Allentown, Arts Quest, Bethlehem Lehigh valley Veterans living history project, Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum, Muhlenberg College, Lehigh Conference of Churches.
- ❖ The Bethlehem detachment has scheduled a trip to the 9/11 Memorial on October 3. Information has been distributed. Leave at 8:30 a.m. from the Reserve Center and Leave the Memorial at 5:00 p.m. to return.
- ❖ Vets for Vets will be having a beef and beer horseshoe tournament (charity event) on Saturday 9/19 from 1-6 at the American Legion in East Greenville, PA, featuring live music. Kids 10 and under are free, \$15 for under 18, \$25 for adult beef and beer and \$10 for the horseshoe entry. There will also be a gun and basket raffle.
- ❖ Information received for No Veterans Die Alone. Coatesville VA medical center presented the first in a series of training for volunteers who wish to sit with veterans at the end of life. Five volunteers participated in this training and found it to be enlightening. The four hour training gives a quick overview of hospice, the volunteers experience with death, grief and loss, the physical signs and symptoms of death. This is a national VA initiative and we are grateful to have these volunteers who are available on short notice.
- ❖ Chaplain Joe Malia reported that a card was sent to the National Commandant as requested at last meeting in remembrance of his wife and to express concern over his health.

*This Month's Birthdays/Anniversaries*

- Ron Heckman joined the MCL in Sept. of '14

- Joe Malia joined the MCL in Sept. of '98

- Jason Smith turns 34 on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>

- Josh Brown turns 27 on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>

- Howard Cooper turns 49 on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>

## Meeting Minutes Cont....

- ❖ At the July 3<sup>rd</sup> fireworks, a few members spoke to Liz Thompson, a past commandant from Massachusetts. She started an organization called Balanced Warriors.net. One of their goals is to do yoga training for veterans, especially those with PTSD. An e-mail is available to be sent to anyone who would like further information.
- ❖ An e-mail was sent out to several members concerning the shooting in Chattanooga, TN. Peyton Manning and his organization has made a sizeable donation to the service member's families, mainly for educational funds for their children. I would like to send his organization a thank you card and maybe we can get him to come to the Lehigh Valley.
- ❖ The question arose as to why we have two separate accounts as well as a CD. The money market has been around for years and the checking account is used to make necessary distributions.
  - A motion was made to inquire about putting the money market funds into a CD. Further information will be obtained by Shane Patton and will be discussed at next month's meeting.
  - **VOTE:** 19 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions
- ❖ Commandant Smith reported that the newsletter was late this month and the website wasn't updated due to his computer dying.
  - Judge Advocate Howard Schaeffer spoke to the Commandant about it and his real estate company will donate a laptop to the detachment
- ❖ The members present were asked if anyone would like to make any changes to the newsletter. Suggestions: adding humor, job sources (job fairs), anecdotes, etc.
- ❖ It was announced that there are still two seats available for the Oliver North speech/dinner
- ❖ More information is required to apply for the grant from Brown Daub. We don't believe we would be able to meet the requirements.
- ❖ The toys for tots shooting match was briefly discussed. It was determined that unless we get more information the detachment is not ready to put our name on it.
- ❖ We are getting low on challenge coins. We have about 6 or 7. Howard has a contact that was a lot cheaper – the Marine Corps Museum in Parris Island gift shop - \$5.00 a piece, minimum of 100. Manny Wassum is making a donation to get another 100 coins.
- ❖ Fred Babcock mentioned that ever since we've been in this location I've been super impressed with the Emmaus Veterans Committee. He made a motion to send them a check for \$100.00. It was brought to his attention that we had just made them a donation of \$100.00 right after the Memorial Day Parade.
  - Motion seconded.
  - **Vote:** 15 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention
- ❖ Henry Brokate asked if there was anybody could volunteer to assist the Emmaus Veterans Committee Honor Guard.
  - At this past National Convention a ribbon was proposed for honor guards which we will look into further.
- ❖ It was brought to the detachments attention that It is customary at Marine Corps League meetings that when the bible is open there is a fine for salty language during the meeting. A \$1.00 fine for salty language was proposed when the bible is open.
  - **VOTE:** 15 voted in favor, 0 opposed, 3 abstentions
- ❖ Johnny Gill gave a report on what happened during the national convention.
  - He also made a motion that the colors can be taken to Tulsa and we would get a streamer for having the colors.
  - **VOTE:** 19 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions
- ❖ It was announced to the detachment that Johnny Gill had been selected as the national chaplain for the marine corps league
- ❖ We will be creating a picnic committee in order to plan next year's picnic. Mike, Fred, Ron and Manny will be on the committee. Rhonda and Terry were thanked for having the picnic at their home in the past.
- ❖ Ron Thompson announced that he would be having a books signing at the Moravian Book Store in Bethlehem on Sunday Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> from 1pm – 3pm.



## Paymaster's Report

- ❖ As of 8/26/15 the money market account has a balance of \$3,240.25
- ❖ As of 8/26/15 the checking account has an available balance of \$2,699.58

## Welcome Aboard



**Far left:** Bill Waelchli went to Parris Island in 1971. His MOS was electrician and he served at the rifle ranges while at Camp Pendleton. He would later go into the reserve program

**2<sup>nd</sup> from left:** Bill Stoudt had original MOS was a cook which he later changed to wireman with a secondary MOS of radio operator. He was also stationed at Camp Lejeune twice, 29 Palms once and Pendleton twice. He was honorable discharged at the rank of Sgt.

**Middle:** Terri Thompson earlier this year was sworn in as an associate member at large. Before that time and since then Terri has attend/assisted at the vast majority of detachment events. Due to her due diligence and support of the detachment we decided to swear her in as an associate member of the detachment.

**2<sup>nd</sup> from right:** Josh Brown, originally from Chattanooga, TN, joined the corps in 2007 in the infantry. He served in Operation Enduring freedom and was honorable discharged after receiving two purple hearts and a bronze star. He now lives with his wife here in PA.

**Far right:** Anthony Ross graduated boot camp Friday September 4<sup>th</sup>. He is proud to have become a marine and looks forward to continue his training and being a member of the league.



## Wounded or in distress

Unfortunately there is a lot to report here and if I forgot somebody please forgive me. Sr. Vice Donatacci's mother passed away. Commandant Smith had a close friend pass away. Judge Advocate Schaeffer's mother is recovering from surgery for treatment of cancer. Hank Tomasko had fallen and broken his wrist. Jeff Warner is recovering from an injured knee. Charlie Kresge had a recent

hospital stay. Charlie Helfrich is getting treatment for kidney stones. Rich Stoudt has been diagnosed with bladder cancer and will be going in for treatment on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. Shane Patton's wife's uncle is being treated for cancer. Past National Commandant John Kovalcik's is dealing with health issues and the recent passing of his wife. Please keep these marines and their families in your thoughts and prayers

### Upcoming Events

- Vietnam Veterans of America – Invitation to Agent Orange town hall meeting on Saturday 9/19/15 at the Lipkin Theater on the campus of Northampton County Community College from 1-4 pm

- Vets for Vets will be having a beef and beer horseshoe tournament (charity event) on Saturday 9/19 from 1-6 at the American Legion in East Greenville, PA, featuring live music. Kids 10 and under are free, \$15 for under 18, \$25 for adult beef and beer and \$10 for the horseshoe entry.

- Monthly detachment meeting to be held Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> is set to begin @ 1930

- Allentown Band (America's oldest community concert band) will be doing a concert called Americans We – (a Pearl Harbor remembrance and holiday annual concert) Sunday December 6 at 3pm at the Miller Symphony Hall.



JUDGE ADVOCATE HOWARD SCHAEFFER AND ANTHONY ROSS STANDING ON THE YELLOW FOOTPRINTS IN PARRIS ISLAND AND IN FRONT OF THE DETACHMENT COLORS AFTER ANTHONY WAS SWORN IN TO THE DETACHMENT

***“WE FEW, WE HAPPY FEW,  
WE BAND OF BROTHERS “***

***- “HENRY V” BY WILLIAM  
SHAKESPEARE***

## **Marine Corps League Detachment 296**

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## Visit with Opha Mae

Opha Mae, an English bulldog, is a certified therapy dog who is available to visit veterans of all branches of the United States Armed Forces. Some may think that Opha Mae is an unusual name for a dog. The English bulldog is the United States Marine Corps' mascot so it was only fitting that Opha Mae was named after the first woman who enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Opha Mae Johnson joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1918.

Opha is available to visit veterans in hospitals, nursing homes, or private residences. Opha will wear one of her four Marine Corps uniforms; Dress Blues Uniform, Service Charlie Uniform, Green Camouflage Uniform, or Desert Camouflage Uniform. The choice is yours. There is no cost for this service as these men and women have already given enough. Opha Mae's certifications are available upon request. Anyone interested in requesting Opha's services can either go to the following link (<http://www.lvmcl.com/visit-with-opha-mae/>) or e-mail Commandant Jason Smith.



## Emmaus Veterans Committee

The Emmaus Veterans Committee is made up of veterans from the Catholic War Vets, the VFW, the American Legion, and the Marine Corps League. The purpose of this committee is for all Emmaus veterans organizations to gather together and ensure the needs of local veterans and their families are being taken care of.

The committee's activities include, but are not limited to:

- replacing the flags at veterans gravesites, multiple times a year
- organizing the Emmaus Memorial Day Activities
- Once a year a flag retirement ceremony is held, in which old and tattered flags collected from gravesites, veterans groups, and civilian contributors are properly retired. The ashes of those flags are later collected and spread around the veterans cemeteries.

The Emmaus Veterans Committee also has an Honor Guard. This is a group of local veterans which volunteer their time to perform military funerals for fallen veterans at the gravesite, including the playing of taps and a gun salute. They will also perform services inside the funeral home per the request of the family. There is no payment requested but donations are accepted. If you would like a military service at a loved one's funeral, please let the funeral director know and contact the committee either at the following link, (<http://www.lvmcl.com/emmaus-veterans-committee-honor-guard/>) or email Commandant Jason Smith.