

# LISTEN UP!

CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT

#636

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE  
OF PENNSYLVANIA, INC.

VOLUME XXII, Number 5

MAY 2009

Commandant: JAMES POWELL

Editor: DON H. GEE

## FEMALE MARINES CONDUCT FIRST AFHGAN MISSION

### *Marine Corps News*

FARAH PROVINCE, Afghanistan--Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment--the ground combat element of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Afghanistan--now have a special group of people to help them complete their mission in Afghanistan.

The task force's all-female Marine team is interacting with the Afghan female population in southern Afghanistan -- a task considered culturally unacceptable for the male Marines operating there.

A similar program has been used in combat operations in Iraq, but this is the

first time Marine forces in Afghanistan have employed the concept, officials said.

Marine **Capt. Mike Hoffman**, Commanding Officer of 3/8's Company I, said the all-female team is an important asset for his Marines.

"[The team] provides us access to half of the population that we normally do not have access to," Hoffman said. "They did extremely well interacting with the female villagers."

**2ndLt. Johanna Shaffer**, the team leader, said their first mission, a cordon-and-search operation in support of *Operation Pathfinder*, was very successful.

"We were accepted by both the men and women villagers and were able to obtain valuable information about the way they lived and what they thought about the Marine Corps operating in the area," Shaffer said.

During the mission, the female Marines donned brightly colored head and neck scarves as a sign of cultural respect to the Afghan women.

"The scarves showed the Afghan women that we were women too, and we respect their culture," Shaffer said.

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## Caring for Veterans is Matter of Honor, President Says

### *by Jim Garamone*

#### *American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON--Caring for veterans is a responsibility and duty for all Americans, and the employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs are those who are charged with repaying "that debt of honor," **President Barack Obama** said during a ceremony here marking the Department's 20th anniversary today.

The President promised the VA employees that he will make good on his promise to create a 21st-century department.

VA, formerly called the Veterans Administration, became a cabinet-level department in 1989. The employees are charged with providing education, training benefits, health care, home loans and cemeteries for American veterans. "It's a commitment that lasts from the day our veterans retire that uniform to the day that

they are put to rest, and it continues on for their families," the President said.

U.S. servicemembers are the country's best and brightest, Obama said... "They are our bravest, enlisting in a time of war, enduring tour after tour of duty, serving with honor under the most difficult circumstances and making sacrifices that many of us cannot begin to imagine," he said. The department must take care of these people and of their families, he added.

The VA mission always is vital, Obama said, but it is even more so during long and difficult conflicts like today's. "Last month, I announced my strategy for ending the war in Iraq, and I made it very clear that this strategy would not end with the military plans and diplomatic agendas, but would endure through my commitment to upholding our sacred trust

with every man and woman who has served this country," the President said. "And the same holds true for our troops serving in Afghanistan."

The President has requested an extra \$25 billion for the Department over the next five years. The agency -- under the leadership of retired Army **Gen. Eric K. Shinseki**, former Army chief of staff -- is reviewing its operations.

"With this budget, we don't just fully fund our VA health care program," the president said. "We expand it to serve an additional 500,000 veterans by 2013, to provide better health care in more places and to dramatically improve services related to mental health and injuries like post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury."

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# COMMANDANT'S COLUMN

Marines,

As I begin another term as your Detachment Commandant, I'd like to thank those Marines whom again stepped up to represent their Detachment. Our slate of officers remains the same except for Senior Vice Commandant and Judge Advocate. Our new Judge Advocate is **Bill Mickelson** and **Jim McComb** is the new Senior

Vice Commandant--these Marines will be switching offices. I'd like to personally thank all of these Marines for their dedication and the support they have shown for the Central Bucks Detachment and I'd like to especially thank **Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller** and **Adjutant/Paymaster Don Gee** for the support they have give me and the Detachment this past year.

sylvania Pack MODD Dog Robber (Paymaster) and Webmaster.

I learned much more about the Marine Corps League and got to meet many Leaguers at the Department and National levels. This helped reinforce my understanding how important we at the Detachment level are to the overall Marine Corps League success and as we go, so does the Department and National.



**CENTRAL BUCKS  
DETACHMENT, Inc. #636  
P. O. Box 1372  
Doylestown, PA 18901-1372  
Meets  
7:30 p.m.  
2nd Wednesday of Month  
American Legion Post 210  
315 North Street, Doylestown, PA**

**Sr. VICE COMMANDANT  
JAMES McCOMB**

**Jr. VICE COMMANDANT  
BEN JONES**

**ADJUTANT-PAYMASTER  
DON H. GEE, PC**

**JUDGE ADVOCATE  
WILLIAM MICKELSON**

**QUARTERMASTER  
COREY A. FISHER**

**CHAPLAIN  
ELLIS M. (BUDD) PEARCE, PC**

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS  
BOB SUNDLING, PC**

**MESS SERGEANT  
VINCENT J. HAGAN**

**WEB SERGEANT  
JAMES POWELL**

This past year was busy for the Detachment as we participated in many different functions throughout the year such as Color Guards, fund raising, scholarship ticket sales, highway cleanups, and parades.

The one place I hope we can improve on this year is in recruitment.

In order for the Detachment to thrive, we must constantly increase our membership. I would like to challenge everyone to recruit at least one new member in the coming year and to participate in as many of the Detachment functions as possible.

As for myself, this past year I attended the Department of Pennsylvania Convention and the Quarterly meetings, my Military Order of Devil Dogs (MODD) "Growls" at the Chester County Detachment home, the National Northeast Division Conference, and the National Convention in Orlando, FL.

I served as Department of Pennsylvania Assistant Southeast District Vice Commandant, and Penn-

sylvania Pack MODD Dog Robber (Paymaster) and Webmaster.

There are plenty of upcoming events that we will need help with. A-Day is just around the corner on April 25-26. **Chaplain Budd Pearce** heads up this committee so, if anyone can help, please contact Budd.

The Youth Scholarship Raffle tickets are still available. If you need more please contact **Junior Vice Commandant Ben Jones**. Remember, the Detachment gets a percentage for every ticket sold.

Once again we will be doing our Memorial Day weekend fundraiser at the State Store in Doylestown (Croos Keys) followed by our participation in the parade. If you can volunteer for any of these activities, please contact Budd or me.

Again, thank you and congratulations to our new slate of Detachment Officers.

Semper Fi,

# APRIL DETACHMENT MEETING



# M I N U T E S

The regular meeting of the Central Bucks Detachment #636, Inc., of the Marine Corps League of Pennsylvania, Inc., was held April 8, 2009, at the Albert E. Atkinson American Legion Post, 510 North St., Doylestown, PA.

There were 16 members present including all officers except the Junior Vice Commandant, the Mess Sergeant and the Web Sergeant. Distinguished members in attendance included **Past Commandants Don Gee, Budd Pearce, and Bob Sundling; Past Department of New Jersey Commandant Ed Hoth; Past Commandant & Department Southeast Division Vice Commandant Bill Miller; and Marine of the Year Jim McComb.**

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

The **Paymaster's Report** was presented by the Adjutant/Paymaster and was unanimously accepted.

**Sick Call:** Mess Sergeant **Vince Hagen** is still undergoing therapy for hip surgery, **Marine Chuck Flanagan** is bed-ridden, suffering from extreme back pains, and **Marine Bob Duff's** wife had taken a bad fall.

**Visitor:** **Al (Kamikaze Al) Morris** from Doylestown Airport was visiting at the invitation of **Marine Mike Waldron**. He was formerly a member of All-Divisions Detachment and has recently relocated to the Doylestown area.

## OFFICER REPORTS

**Commandant Jim Powell** reported he had attended the Department Quarterly Staff Meeting and the Northeast Division Conference. He discussed the overdue MCL "Mentoring" program and brought the members up to date on those Marines running for Department office. Additionally, he reminded the members about the Department Southeast District Meeting on May 3 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 327 N. Newtown Street Rd., Newtown Square. He reiterated the Young Marines will celebrate their 50th Anniversary on Apr. 24-25 in Waterbury, CT. He also noted that recommendations for Department awards should be made to him between now and the next meeting so they can be forwarded to the Department in time for the Convention. He also reported a War Dog Memorial will be dedicated May 18 in Flemington, NJ. The Commandant announced there will be a 25th Anniversary of the Bucks County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication on at noon on Saturday, June 20, at the County Courthouse.

**Senior Vice Commandant Bill Mickelson** reported the Detachment strength at 57 members including 28 Life Members, 24 Regular Members, 4 Associate Members and 1 Honorary Life Member. There are two members delinquent and three members on active duty.

**Judge Advocate Jim McComb** reported the Detachment had no legal problems.

**The Adjutant/Paymaster** reported the Detachment had received correspondence from the Department about the Department Convention 24-27 June at the Holiday Inn & Convention Center, New Cumberland. Forms for those desiring to attend the convention and banquet are available from the Adjutant/Paymaster. He also reported on future Department events including the Fall Staff Meeting (23-24 October), including the "Roast & Toast" for **Commandant Dick Brown**. **Sergeant-at-Arms Bob Sundling, PC,** reported the Color Guard had not been requested since the last meeting.

**Chaplain Budd Pearce, PC,** reported his services were available but not needed since the last meeting.

**The Public Relations Officer** set Apr. 20 as the deadline for submitting material for the May issue of "Listen Up!"

**Quartermaster Corey Fisher** reported the new Detachment baseball caps had been received and will be available at the May Meeting.

**Junior Past Commandant Bill Miller** requested the members attend the SE District Meeting in Newtown Square.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator Budd Pearce** reported the next highway clean-up will be on Saturday, April 11. Rain date will be the weekend after the May Meeting.

**Young Marines Liaison Bob Sundling** reported the Young Marines unit provided a Color Guard for the recent Phantoms hockey game. The unit is planning to spend a night on the Battleship USS NEW JERSEY in the near future. The unit will be holding its "Coin Toss" fund-raiser at the end of the month in New Hope.

**Rifle & Pistol Team Captain Budd Pearce** reported the Pistol Match will take place June 5-6. The Detachment will have a four-man team competing.

**A-Day Parking Coordinator Budd Pearce** reported the Detachment will again be manning the Ironwood Parking Lot Apr. 25-26 as a fund-raiser. He also reported arrangements had been made to again hold our Memorial Day Fund-Raiser at the State Store in Cross Keys.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Judge Advocate McComb** discussed the Global War on Terrorism plaque honoring Central Bucks School District veterans who participated in that campaign. He made a motion to donate \$100 (amended to \$200) to the effort. The amended motion carried unanimously. The plaque is scheduled to be dedicated on Memorial Day at War Memorial Field.

A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to take a 1/2-page ad in the Department Reunion Journal.

**Southeast District Vice Commandant Miller** conducted the Installation of Officers with the assistance of **SE District Aide-de-Camp Dick Kondash** and **Department Chaplain Johnny Gill**.

**Chaplain Pearce** reported on the poor status of the Detachment Parade Float. He is looking for ideas about redesigning the float. A date will be set at the next Detachment Meeting for members to assemble to help refurbish the float.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Judge Advocate McComb** reported the Vietnam Veterans "Traveling Wall" will be in Allentown on May 21-25 and "The

Wall That Heals" will be in Quakertown Aug. 13. Both are seeking volunteers to help man the displays.

**Young Marines Liaison Sundling** reported that our own **Marine Jessica Clymer**, who recently returned from a tour in Iraq, had been promoted to Sergeant. She is now on extended active duty.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until 7:30 p.m. on May 13.**

**HONOR**

*Continued from Page 1*

Obama said technology also will help to cut red tape and ease the transition from active duty... He promised new help for homeless veterans, "because those heroes have a home."

"It's the country they served -- the United States of America," he said. "And until we reach a day when not a single veteran sleeps on our nation's streets, our work remains unfinished."

He called on VA employees to help to implement the GI Bill for the 21st century.

Just as the veterans of World War II formed the backbone of the progress after that war, the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan too, can be the catalyst for

progress.

The deadline for putting the rules for the new GI Bill in place is Aug. 1.

"That's how we'll show our servicemen and women that when you come home to America, America will be here for you," Obama said. "That's how we will ensure that those who have borne the battle, and their families, will have every chance to live out their dreams."

Transforming the agency is a tall order, Obama said, but he added that he has the fullest confidence that the men and women of the department can do it.

The United States will "fulfill our sacred trust and serve our returning heroes as well as they've served us," he said.

**CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT  
MARINES ON THE NET**

- CAPRIO, Paul ..... midupe@aol.com
- CODY, Bob ..... codyrj@att.net
- CUPITT, Steve ..... scupitt@aol.com
- ..... scupitt@motorola.com
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- ..... sundling@tiniusolsen.com
- WALDRON, Mike ..... waldron@quigleyco.com
- WIMER, Lee ..... leewimer@aol.com

**SCHEDULE  
OF EVENTS**

**MOTHERS DAY  
10 MAY**

**DETACHMENT  
MEETING  
13 MAY**

**MEMORIAL DAY  
PARADE  
25 MAY**

**DETACHMENT  
MEETING  
10 JUNE**

**FLAG DAY  
14 JUNE**

**FATHER'S DAY  
21 JUNE**

**FIRST DAY OF  
SUMMER  
21 JUNE**

**DEPARTMENT  
CONVENTION  
24-27 JUNE**

**INDEPENDENCE  
DAY PARADE  
4 JULY**

**DETACHMENT  
MEETING  
8 JULY**

**DETACHMENT  
MEETING  
12 AUGUST**

## VA Budget Adds Mental Health Services for Returning Combat Vets

by Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON--The proposed Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding request will provide more post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury services to combat veterans, as well as other mental-health care and services for wounded warriors, **President Barack Obama** said last week.

"The nightmares of war don't always end when our loved ones return home," Obama said.

"Untold thousands of servicemen and -women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or other serious psychological injury."

The President called the growing incidence of suicide among active-duty servicemembers and returning combat veterans "disturbing."

"Sometimes the deadliest wounds are the ones you cannot see, and we cannot afford to let the unseen wounds go untreated," he said. "And that's why this

budget dramatically increases funding for mental-health screening and treatment at all levels."

The proposed budget represents the largest single-year increase in VA funding in three decades.

"All told, we will increase funding by \$25 billion over the next five years," the President said.

Obama recognized that thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have suffered from traumatic brain injury, and said the budget will provide improved services for these cognitive injuries.

"Many with TBI have never been evaluated by a physician," he said. "And because such injuries can often have long-term impacts that only show up down the road, this funding will help ensure they received the ongoing care they need."

The budget proposal also will increase the number of Vet Centers and mobile health clinics, expanding access to mental-health care in rural areas, he said. Meanwhile, it also aims to reduce the

stigma of seeking care by adding mental-health professionals to educate veterans and their families about their injuries and their options.

In addition to more comprehensive mental-health services, Obama said the funding request will provide other improvements in the medical care and other benefits veterans receive.

"This budget doesn't just signify increased funding for the VA health-care program," he said. "It significantly expands coverage so that 500,000 more veterans who have previously been denied it will receive it, and it strengthens care and services across a broad range of areas."

The proposed budget also will:

- Invest in better technology to deliver services and benefits to veterans with the quality and efficiency they deserve;
- Provide greater benefits to veterans who are medically retired from service;
- Combat homelessness by safeguarding vulnerable veterans; and
- Ensure the timely adoption of new, comprehensive education benefits that veterans earn through their military service.

Obama said all Americans "share the shame of 154,000 veterans going homeless on any given night."

His budget request will fund a pilot program for not-for-profit groups to ensure that veterans at risk of losing their homes have a roof over their heads. "And we will not rest until we reach a day when not one single veteran falls into homelessness," he said.

Obama also expressed optimism over Senate support for a measure that would provide advanced medical-care funding for veterans.

"The care that our veterans receive should never be hindered by budget delays," Obama said, adding that the plan he and **VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki** have advanced will ensure there's no disruption.

"What that means is a timely and predictable flow of funding from year to year, but more importantly, that means better care for our veterans," he said.

### MISSION

*Continued from Page 1*

"They automatically felt more comfortable with us.

"They showed us their homes, and even though they didn't have much, they were still very generous to us. They accepted us as sisters, and we're glad that we were here to help them."

Although Afghan women tend to be more reserved than Afghan men, they still have a large influence on their children, Shaffer said, so engaging with them is important.

"If the women know we are here to help them, they will likely pass that on to their children," she said. "If the children have a positive perspective of alliance forces, they will be less likely to join insurgent groups or participate in insurgent activities."

Hoffman said the female Marines also were accepted by the village men.

"They were not opposed by the villagers," Hoffman said.

"They had no problem allowing [the

team] the chance to interact with their women."

The concept employed by her team varies greatly from the program in Iraq because of differences in Afghan culture, Shaffer said.

"The cultural background here is completely different than that of Iraq," Shaffer said.

"Women here are more timid than in Iraq. There is less of a chance that an Afghan woman would try to harm us, because they understand that we are here to help them.

"We also do not know much about the daily life of Afghan women," she continued.

"This provides us not only the opportunity to learn about the women, but also to build and maintain faith and trust of the Afghan women."

*(Marine Lance Cpl. Monty Burton serves with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Afghanistan.)*

**BUCKS COUNTY VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL  
25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**Saturday, June 20, 2009  
South Lawn – Bucks County Courthouse  
Noon**

**A DAY OF SOLIDARITY AND REFLECTION**

**Stand shoulder to shoulder with other Vietnam Veterans in a show of support and remembrance of the 133 young men from Bucks County who were killed in action, and the 3 that are still Missing In Action.**

**Join Gold Star Family members as the names are read of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War and to recognize those who have died of their service connected injuries.**

**The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program will provide a unique opportunity for all Vietnam War Veterans, family members, and supporters to come out and show support for those who served and those who died.**

**Support services and information will be available after the program for such issues as exposure to Agent Orange and mental health.**

**For Further information - Please contact the Bucks County Office of Veterans Affairs at (215)345-3307 or (215) 345-3885**



**CENTRAL BUCKS DETACHMENT, Inc.**  
**P. O. Box 1372**  
**Doylestown, PA 18901-1372**

**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**