

# USMC

MARCH 2021

Once a Marine, Always a Marine



## MARINE CORPS LEAGUE BETT-TOOMEY DETACHMENT 216

1794 ELECTRIC AVENUE, LACKAWANNA, NY 14218 ★ 716.823.0998

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 311, LACKAWANNA, NY 14218



## NEWSLETTER

### THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 OFFICERS

COMMANDANT..... KENNETH BLACHURA

SR. VICE ..... JAMES TAYLOR

SGT.-AT-ARMS..... RONALD GULCZEWSKI

JR. VICE ..... RICK CHMIELOWIEC

CHAPLAIN..... EUGENE HESS

ADJUTANT ..... DENNIS CHAPMAN

PAYMASTER..... **POSITION IS OPEN**

JUDGE ADVOCATE ..... JOHN KAITANOWSKI



**Kenneth D. Blachura**  
Commandant  
716.471.1002

## Report from the Commandant

**WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO CONTINUE SENDING YOU THESE NEWSLETTERS. PLEASE CALL OR TEXT 716-471-1002.**

It's important for us to have open communications, so that all of our members are informed.

Welcome to the second newsletter! We have great news! To further keep our members informed, we are also creating a website specific to Bett-Toomey. Our sincere gratitude to the skills and time of webmaster, Mike Coffman, who has devoted hours upon hours to this venture. Check out <https://bett-toomey.org>. Now that 2020 is behind us, hopefully the vaccine will allow us to return to normalcy, and open the club for social gatherings.

It has been a difficult year, and I thank everyone for their patience and continued support.

It is difficult to plan with certainty any functions except for the second Tuesday of every month when we have regular meetings at the post (per NYS regulations). We do need to consider future events and request suggestions.

As promised, we have delivered our first newsletter via mail or in-person. We hope you have enjoyed the communication which we intend to pursue. There will be one more mailing before we go completely digital. In order to be cost effective, however, we need your email address. Yes, I realize that I have already mentioned this, but it is important. I intend on expanding upon our community functions and wish for everybody to be aware.

I am also asking if there are any illnesses, or bereavements, that we are informed. We are a family of fellow veterans and appreciate knowing when one of us is grieving or lost.

We would like to do a feature on our members one at a time. The first Featured Marine is about **Tom (Curly) Krakowski** in this publication. Please contact me if you would like to be featured. We would like to continue getting to know our members in greater detail.

## MCL SITES OF INTEREST

NATIONAL MCL WEBSITE

<https://www.mclnational.org>

NEW YORK STATE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

[www.mclnewyork.net](http://www.mclnewyork.net)

NYS FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://facebook.com/DepartmentOfNewYork>

NEW YORK STATE TWITTER

<https://twitter.com/DepartmentOfNY>



*Kenneth D. Blachura, Commandant*



## Note from the Sr. Vice

**James Taylor**

As your Sr. Vice Commandant, I am praying for your well-being. When this pandemic is over, we are going to have functions, as we used to!

Yours in Marine Corps,  
James A. Taylor



## Note from the Jr. Vice

**Rick Chmielowiec**

Congrats to Commandant and Donna for designing this new newsletter. It looks awesome. Great Job.



## Role of the Judge Advocate

**John Kaitanowski**

Our apologies to John Kaitanowski, our Judge Advocate, who we overlooked in the last Newsletter. The Judge Advocate is essentially the detachment's legal advisor, who assures that Bett-Toomey Detachment 216 follows the rules as set forth by the law and the Marine Corps League. His role is essential, and his efforts are greatly appreciated.



## From the Adjutant

**Dennis Chapman**

Information on restoration committee update to come.



## Chaplain's Message

Eugene Hess

Sincere condolences are extended to the friends and family of **Charles "Chuck" Marsillo**, of Blasdell, who passed away on January 4, 2021. Chuck was a hard working member that supported our detachment with his efforts towards fund raising. Flowers were sent. He will be greatly missed. Have a safe 2021. May God bless America. Let's keep John K. in our prayers also.



## Paymaster Needed

THE PAYMASTER POSITION NEEDS TO BE FILLED.  
THE NEW PAYMASTER WILL RECEIVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT.  
IF INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMANDANT.

### ALERT

#### DO NOT SEND TICKET MONEY TO THE CLUB!

There have recently been 3 break-ins. Two were in December and one in January. All the money that was in the building was taken, and some damage done. Please send future mailings to:

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE  
BETT-TOOMEY DET. 216,  
P.O. BOX 311, LACKAWANNA, NY 14218

**REMINDERS:** As a reminder from Dennis Tobin, National Commandant, it is important to abstain from political commentary, especially on social media. Your actions reflect the entire Marine Corps League even if it's not intended.

On a similar note, if forwarding an email message, please delete others' personal information, because not doing so could expose them to spam and risk of identity theft.

### WE NEED HELP

locating some members who have moved.  
Several newsletters were returned, and we wish to include everyone in our news.



# Featured Marine

MARCH 2021



## TOM KRAKOWSKI

**2020 CO-MARINE OF THE YEAR**  
**ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE**

Tom Krakowski, a humble Marine veteran, known as Curly to his friends, now lives in a quiet suburban neighborhood and weekly devotes several hours volunteering at the Marine Corps League. His life was not always so idyllic, though. To see him now, you would never know what he has experienced, so this bio will enlighten.

At the age of 19, Tom was drafted into the Marine Corps in September of 1969. Like so many others, his journey began at Paris Island, and then to Camp Lejeune for training. He then received his Motor Transport training at Camp Pendleton. After duty at El Toro Air Base, he was assigned overseas. Although Okinawa was supposed to be a stopover, once landed however, his orders quickly changed. He would spend the next year of his life on the island as a truck driver, where he was responsible for transporting supplies anywhere needed on the island. After serving proudly, Tom was discharged in 1971 with the rank of L/CPL.

His assignment in Okinawa was a world away from his hometown of Lackawanna. But once discharged and returned stateside, Tom returned to Lackawanna for employment where he worked at Bethlehem Steel as a Millwright.

To make a better life for himself, Curly dedicated himself to advancing his education studying Industrial Engineering, first at Erie Community College, and then at Buffalo State College. In 1985, Tom began his 30-year career at Attica Correctional Facility, and ultimately retiring proudly as the Senior Industrial Superintendent.

It was in 2008 that he became an active member of the Marine Corps League. He is now a life member and for several years, served as Sr. Vice. Furthermore, he has served on the board of directors for approximately 10 years. Without hesitancy, Curly assists with maintenance to the MCL meeting space owned by LMC. Other organizations fortunate enough to have Curly as an active member are the American Legion and Amvets.

It was the Marine Corps, that Tom credits with teaching him values of discipline and respect. He carries those attributes with him today. The Marine Corps was lucky to have him then, and the Marine Corps League is fortunate to have his support now. Because of his dedication, he was honored as one of the Marines of the Year for 2020, and rightfully so. You live it daily -- Semper Fi, L/CPL Krakowski, Semper Fi.



## Announcements & Events

We are always open to suggestions for organizations worthy of donations that will benefit the community and those in need.

Please forward any ideas to the detachment.



### Suggestions Needed

In order to stay viable, we need to bring in new members. We are considering hosting social gatherings to acknowledge the efforts of our Iraqi and Afghanistan veterans and entice them to join. On a similar note, we would like to plan some activities and community events for 2021, COVID allowing. Please share any ideas you may have or would be willing to volunteer for.



## Be a Feature Marine

We would like to feature a Marine for each newsletter. It would be an honor to respectfully share your story. If you submit the information, we will help write it. You always have the final say. Please contact Commandant Ken Blachura to discuss it.

Some of the highlights to your bio could include, but aren't necessary:

- Were you drafted or did you volunteer?
- What years did you serve?
- What was your rank at discharge?
- Did you participate in any major conflicts?
- Have you met any of the notable veterans?
- What was your MOS during your tour(s)?
- Do you have any service memories, if any?
- Primary units while attached?
- Of your duty stations, which do you have the fondest memories of?
- Any memories that you still reflect upon?
- Any memories of any friends you served with?
- Can you recount a particular incident from your service which was funny at the time or still makes you laugh?
- What career path did you pursue after serving?
- What military associations are you a member of?
- Any other points of interest you would like to share?
- What did you feel when you first stood on the footprints?



# Supporters

Commandant Ken Blachura  
and his lovely wife, Joan  
want to thank the membership  
for their camaraderie.

Thank you!

01.22

Donna & Gary Hildebrandt  
extend their gratitude  
to all veterans.

Thank you!

01.22

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you!

Thank you!

This space could be yours or a  
business supporter for an  
annual donation of \$40.

Thank you!

