

Marine on mission to find special coin's owner

Publish date 10/09/2009

By Sarah Bultema

Loveland Reporter-Herald

Loveland's Tom Buchanan — commandant of the Loveland Marine Corps League and a retired Marine himself — knows how important a challenge coin can be to a Marine.

The embellished coins are presented to Marines as a memento of their service during a certain battle or time.

So when Buchanan was given a challenge coin that someone had lost at a local restaurant, he immediately committed himself to finding its owner.

“Challenge coins are a way to keep mementos of where we've been and what we've done,” said Buchanan, noting Marines can get fairly sentimental about these coins and what they represent.

“We want to get this Marine and his coin connected again.”

The red, black and gold coin was given to Buchanan by a manager at Loveland's Applebee's, 219 E. 29th St.

The manager had recently found it in one of the restaurant's booths and was holding on to it in hopes the owner would come back.

After some time passed, the manager gave the coin to Buchanan, who was at the restaurant arranging the Loveland Marine Corps League's upcoming breakfast fundraiser.

“He took out a tiny envelope, rolled out the coin and asked if I could help find the owner,” Buchanan remembered. “It seemed like a big task ... but you never know if you go out and ask.”

The coin's inscription led to a few clues about its owner.

On the front, it reads: “Al-Anbar Province, Iraq,” as well as listing Camp Gannon, Camp Al-Asad and

Camp Al-Qaim. It has a date inscribed: Feb — Sept 2005.

The back of the coin is inscribed with “Third Battalion, Second Marines; Betio Bastards, Unus Supra.”

After asking around town and posting information on the league's Web site, Buchanan turned to the Reporter-Herald in hopes of finding the coin's Marine.

“This coin seemed like a pretty special one, since he served in battle,” he said.

“I'm putting the plea out there. If anyone knows this Marine or who it might belong to, please contact me.”

Buchanan can be reached at 667-6269 or through the league's Web site, www.mcl-loveland-1250.com.



Special to the Reporter-Herald
Both sides of a Marine challenge coin are shown.
The coin was found at Applebee's in Loveland.

If You Go

What: The Loveland Marine Corps League will host an all-you-can eat pancake breakfast to raise money for the league.

When: 8-10 a.m. Oct. 17.

Where: Applebee's, 219 E. 29th St. in Loveland.

Cost: \$7

Contact: Call 667-6269.

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Marine memento returned to owner in Loveland

Publish Date 10/15/2009
By Sarah Bultema
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Last week, Loveland veteran Tom Buchanan was given a Marine's challenge coin that had been accidentally left behind at a local restaurant.

The embellished coins are presented to Marines as mementos of their service during a certain battle or time, and he knew it probably was important to its owner.

So Buchanan, the commandant of the Loveland Marine Corps League, took on his own challenge: to find the person it belonged to.

And a few days later, he did.

However, it wasn't a Marine who had lost the coin. It was originally presented to a Navy sailor, 27-year-old Michael Ackman of Aurora, who had served as a hospital corpsman with the Fleet Marine Force in Iraq.

On his return to Colorado, Ackman gave the coin to his grandfather, Loveland's Glenn New.

"It was such an honor," said New's wife, Patsy.

New cherished the coin, so much so that he carried it in his pocket everywhere he went. "It reminded me of Mikey," he said. "It's like a good luck charm."

About a month ago, New had the coin in his pocket, as usual, when he ate with his wife at Loveland's Applebee's.

That's where it must have fallen out of his pocket.

Soon, New realized he'd lost his coin, but he didn't know where.

"I felt really bad about it," he said. "It meant a lot to me."

The grandfather had given up on finding the coin — until Friday when he opened the Reporter-Herald to find a picture of his lost treasure.

"That's my coin!" he remembered exclaiming. Buchanan, desperate to find the coin's owner, had turned to the newspaper in hopes of spreading the word.

The day the story ran, he received a call from New.

Monday evening, at the Applebee's where it was lost, Buchanan returned the coin to New.

"It's great," New said when the coin was back in his hand.

After the exchange, New, his wife and Buchanan had dinner together (compliments of the restaurant) and shared stories about Ackman, who is stationed in Sicily.

"You know the importance of one of these things," Buchanan said of the coin. "I love the story, all is well that ends well."

However, from now on, New will be keeping his coin at home.

"I told him he can't keep it in his pocket anymore," Patsy New said.



Reporter-Herald/Christopher Stark
Patsy New shows Tom Buchanan, right, where her grandson is currently stationed with the assistance of husband Glenn's hat at Applebee's at 29th Street and Buchanan Avenue. The three met at the restaurant where an employee found a Marine Corps challenge coin. Assistant general manager Michael Storrer, left, gave the coin to Buchanan to help find the owner. The coin was given to Glenn New by his grandson, Michael S. Ackman.

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