



Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II  
Memorial Fund

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**Military Appreciation Night with the BlueClaws -  
A Night of Camaraderie for Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families**

**July 15, 2019, Lakewood, New Jersey** – Despite dark skies and the threat of a strong thunderstorm, First Energy Park in Lakewood was packed Thursday for its annual BlueClaws Military Appreciation Night. “I was grateful to see the showing of support for our military and their families. The positive impact created by the camaraderie shared among soldiers, their spouses, and their children is priceless,” said Marion Zilinski, Co-Founder and Board Member of the Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund.

The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund hosts this annual outing each year on Military Appreciation Night to honor all service men and women past and present. Although the baseball game was cancelled due to lightning and heavy rain, soldiers and their families were able to enjoy conversation with other military families, the fun atmosphere, and a picnic dinner before the announcement. A supply drive for deployed troops and special ceremonies with our military were also held.

The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund is a non-profit organization created and founded in 2006 to honor local hero Lt. Zilinski who was killed in action in Iraq by a roadside bomb. Twenty-three-year-old Lt. Zilinski was a Middletown resident, a Christian Brothers Academy alumnus, a distinguished West Point graduate, and a member of the 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. Since his untimely death, family and friends have united with the Memorial Fund to provide support to improve the morale and welfare of members of the United States Armed Forces and their families.

“This has a whole new meaning this year. Usually, Matt (Dennis’ brother) is here to attend. I’m proud, trying to explain to my kids. We always talk about Uncle Dennis, but this year, we’re here for Daddy, too,” said Brie Zilinski, wife of Matt Zilinski, who is currently deployed in Kosovo with the Army National Guard. While Matt is deployed, Brie is home raising their three girls, Ellie (7), Quinn (4), and Piper (2). “Being at an event like this, dedicated to military and their families, teaches our girls that we are a military family and to be proud. It is important for us to instill these values in our girls at an early age,” she added.

Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund, a 501(c)(3) a non-profit organization  
Tax ID No. 030-601077  
P.O. Box 124  
Adelphia, NJ 07710  
732-431-1713

“Being back and seeing all the support is nice. Especially the way people look at military these days, it’s nice to have the appreciation for us being away from family. It’s awesome to see people still care. You don’t realize it until you see things like this – a whole night dedicated to military,” said Eric Trust of Pine Beach. The married father of a seven-month-old son served in Afghanistan during his four years in the Army. He’s now a welder with Local 9.

“It’s wonderful for all the soldiers and their families. We all appreciate it,” said Willie Armhold of Freehold Township. “Unfortunately, it brings bad memories back of people who lost their children. I was very lucky with what I went through, not everybody is.” Armhold was an Army paratrooper in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne. He is currently a member of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Chapter 74, in Freehold. The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund appreciates the support of DAV, Chapter 74, for this event.

### **More About the Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund**

One of the main accomplishments of the Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund is sponsoring service dogs for wounded soldiers suffering from PTSD and TBI. To date, the Memorial Fund has sponsored 87 dogs at a sponsorship of \$15,000 per service dog.

Additionally, the Memorial Fund provides scholarships to students at Lt. Zilinski’s alma mater, Christian Brothers Academy, and its sister school, Trinity Hall High School. By providing these scholarships, the Memorial Fund invests in the future of high school students who embody the leadership qualities and community spirit of Lt. Zilinski.

To help us raise awareness about all the good we do, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Donations may be sent to: Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 124, Adelphia, NJ 07710.

The public can also support our mission by joining us for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual “A Toast to Dennis – A Night of Remembrance” Gala that will be held at Eagle Oaks Country Club in Farmingdale, on Friday, September 13, 2019. Individual tickets are \$150 each. Sponsorship opportunities are still available, including sponsorship of a serviceman or servicewoman to attend. For more information about sponsorships or placing an ad journal, please contact Annie O’Pray-Stattel, Board Member and Gala Committee Chairperson, at [astattel@gmail.com](mailto:astattel@gmail.com).

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