

# Dezil's Dispatch

Issue 010

Newsletter

Summer 2023

Dezil's Dispatch is sponsored by the Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund.

**Welcome to our quarterly newsletter!**

**In each edition of Dezil's Dispatch, we will share exciting news of our happenings and accomplishments. Family and friends will give us "A Dose of Dennis" so you will learn more about our hero and son.**

## **A Dose of Dennis**

**"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13**



## The Best Race I Remember

By Greg Elzer

Growing up, I had the privilege of calling Dennis my teammate and friend at the Red Bank YMCA. From a young age, Dennis was a natural leader, always sporting an infectious smile that could light up a room. He was someone that I could always rely on to be there for me, both in and out of the pool. I remember spending countless hours with him, listening to Metallica and getting pumped up before swim meets. His unwavering work ethic and dedication to the team were truly inspiring.

Dennis was a selfless individual who never complained, always pushing himself to be the hardest worker in the room. Even when things got tough, he remained focused on the bigger picture, never losing sight of his goals. I remember the team dubbing him "Darth Vader" because of the fully tinted prescription goggles he wore, but Dennis never let this phase him. He wore them with pride, always ready to take on any challenge that came his way.

As part of the original relay squad in our age group, Dennis and I saw many changes in coaches and new members joining the team. Despite this, Dennis never wavered in his commitment to the team, always doing his part and keeping his focus no matter what. As we got older and the meets got bigger, the goal was Nationals. While some made the cut early and others didn't, Dennis remained steadfast in his belief in the process and went back to being the hardest worker in the room.

I remember when Dennis started to turn his head to the 200 Butterfly in high school. It was a brutal race that required tremendous training and strategy, but Dennis was always ready to take it on. Our final swim meet together was Nationals, and Dennis was about to have one of those moments that would change things forever moving forward. He was determined to make finals and had us all behind him as he stepped up to the block.

In that race, Dennis swam with pure passion, something different from anything we had ever seen before. He beat his own record by a mile, missing finals by just a hair. Despite this, Dennis had entered his moments of brilliance, going on to achieve more than any of us in our age group. He became the Captain of the West Point swim team, a true testament to his unwavering dedication and hard work.

Looking back on those times, I feel lucky to have had Dennis as my friend, teammate, and also a distant cousin (which we found out in our teens). He was someone who always inspired me to be my best, both in and out of the pool. The best race I remember was not just about that one moment in Nationals, but about the journey we took together to get there. Dennis will always be a true champion and a friend that I will never forget.

**\*If you'd like to share a short story about Dennis in an upcoming issue, please send us an email at [runwithdennis@yahoo.com](mailto:runwithdennis@yahoo.com).**

**DONATE TO OUR FUND**

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**Play Ball!**

***Honoring Our Veterans on D-Day at BlueClaws Stadium!***





Donning khaki-colored t-shirts with the words, “Their Day at the Beach” on the back, the Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund and our supporters honored World War II veterans, and all veterans, on the 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, on Tuesday, June 6, 2023, with a special night of baseball at Jersey Shore BlueClaws Stadium in Lakewood.

“We got a little worried when we felt rain drops early in the night, but luckily the skies cleared up for our ball game. It is of utmost importance to all of us at the Zilinski Memorial Fund to recognize our veterans, especially those who fought for our freedom in World War II. It warms my heart to see so many people wearing our t-shirts tonight specifically made to never forget our Greatest Generation. This time of year, so many of us go to beach with our families, and we don’t want people to forget that their day on Normandy Beach allows us that freedom,” said Marion Zilinski.

“We are grateful that everyone at Jersey Shore BlueClaws recognized our mission to help veterans and our service members tonight, and for their longtime support. We were able to play a video at the stadium for everyone to watch that showed pictures of what we do all year long. It included videos of several of our wounded warriors and their service dogs which we sponsor, and it included images taken when we pack up boxes filled with supplies, care items, and goodies to send to our troops deployed all over the globe. We received so much positive feedback from the fans, and we appreciate the awareness about our mission,” said Dennis Zilinski.

“I am honored and humbled that the Zilinskis asked me to throw out the first pitch in Dennis' memory. The Memorial Fund has been a blessing to me,” said David Crenshaw, MSGT US ARMY and Zilinski Memorial Fund Board Member, with his service dog, Doc, by his side. Our longtime supporter, Michael Dowens, Petty Officer Second Class and his service dog, Emery, also threw out a pitch on behalf of the Zilinski Memorial Fund. “I am proud to represent this organization dedicated to our veterans and deployed troops. Being down on the field was truly an honor.”

The Memorial Fund hosts this annual outing each summer for veterans, troops, and their families to enjoy a great night of baseball, conversations with other military families and supporters, and a picnic dinner – with hotdogs, hamburgers, baked beans, barbeque chicken, macaroni and cheese, cookies, and more.

Special thanks also to our Board Chair Steve Hoptay. Steve was interviewed live in the press box by the announcer during the game providing details of the Memorial Fund’s many events throughout the year. The Zilinski Memorial Fund also proudly sponsored the tickets for several



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**Welcome to The Family, Josh and Eleanor!**



Our Marion and Dennis Zilinski, along with Board Member Joanne Trust, recently spent a beautiful evening supporting Mission Working Dogs and our first sponsored graduate Josh and his service dog, Eleanor. Mission Working Dogs was founded by Christy Gardner, a member of the U.S. Sled Hockey Team, and a wounded warrior who has been assisted by the Zilinski Memorial Fund.

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**Meet Rosie The Riveter!**



The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund named and sponsored Rosie the Riveter, this precious Golden Retriever puppy, to one day be a service dog for a wounded American veteran through Mission Working Dogs. The organization is led by Christy Gardner, a wounded warrior who has also been assisted by our Memorial Fund and is on the U.S. Women's National Ice Sled Hockey Team. We look forward to following your progress, Rosie!



## Another Fantastic Fisher House!



Fisher House #94 was recently dedicated in Columbia, South Carolina. The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund has PROUDLY supported Fisher House since 2006, donating \$80,000 to help build these homes over the years. Fisher House builds homes near hospitals so that loved ones of seriously injured wounded warriors can stay close to them when they are receiving medical care. Bravo on another absolutely beautiful home to bring comfort to the spouses and children of our wounded American heroes!



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**Teenager from Hazlet Leads Collection for Deployed Troops at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Partnership with Zilinski Memorial Fund.**





About forty boxes were packed at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Hazlet recently by Brandon Ortiz, his friends in the Parish Youth Group, and volunteers with the Zilinski Memorial Fund with supplies, care items, and goodies to send to deployed troops. The 16-year-old rising junior at Christian Brothers Academy in Lincroft organized the church-wide collection for his service project as part of the high school scholarship he receives from the Memorial Fund.

“My dad was in the military, so it means more to my family and me than to someone who might not have a veteran in their family. I think it holds a special place in their heart (the troops) to receive these gifts from home, I really do think it’s great for their morale overseas,” said Ortiz.

The Zilinski Memorial Fund covered the expense of shipping the boxes to troops across the globe. They were sent to troops in Africa, Iraq, Germany, Poland, and other undisclosed locations.

Sheila Ortiz, Brandon’s mom also assisted in the sorting of items and packing of boxes. She said, “It’s really touching to me because my husband was in the military as well. Brandon wanted to create his own service project, and the hope is it will be annual after he graduates high school, that another student will take it over for him.”

“It’s very special to our family that this effort is being made by a CBA student, as CBA is our Dennis’ alma mater. Dennis was a leader and was committed to service. He was dedicated to our church and this country, and he gave his time and energy to help the community. We know Dennis would love this project as much as we do,” said Marion Zilinski.

Sean King, the Parish Youth Group Coordinator, added, “We had eight high school students participate from our youth group, and I think it’s fantastic! I’ve known Brandon for years. It’s great that we have our youth giving back to the community in such a profound and impactful way.”

Special thanks also to Knights of Columbus St. Benedict Council 11349 for its

generous donation to the Zilinski Memorial Fund to further assist our deployed troops.



**To Everyone at Thorne Middle School – THANK YOU!**



Nearly sixty boxes were packed with goodies and necessities for our American service members overseas thanks to the hard work of students, teachers, and families who participated in the 6th Annual Collection for Deployed Troops at Thorne Middle School in Middletown.

“On behalf of all of us at The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund – a

giant thank you! We are grateful to all for honoring our son Dennis with this tremendous collection of items which they can't buy overseas," said Marion Zilinski, Dennis' mother

"This is extra special to our family and everyone at The Memorial Fund as Dennis and all of our siblings attended Thorne. The teachers, students, and their families outdid themselves, and we are grateful for their continued support," said Matthew Zilinski, Dennis' brother.

At the culmination of the three-week collection, students sorted and packed boxes for the Memorial Fund to label and ship. The New Jersey State Police helped carry the boxes to the vehicles headed for the post office. The boxes will be mailed to troops stationed in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. They will receive soups, protein and granola bars, chips, cookies, crackers, shaving cream, shampoo, soaps, powdered drink mixes, Pop Tarts, and more.

"My grandpa was in the military, so this means a lot to me. It's great to all gather together in a positive way to make a difference for our troops," said Noah Wright, 8th grade student at Thorne Middle School.

"It's an honor for us to do this care package drive each year in remembrance of Dennis and in support of our active military. I went to school here with Dennis, we were classmates. It's a great way to get the kids involved and to show our appreciation for our military," said Jessica DeLumeau, teacher organizer at Thorne Middle School. "Fourth graders at Harmony School made cards to send out as well, so it truly is a community effort."



## Beautiful Words

A special thank you from a Middletown Resident following the recent Troop Collection held at Thorne Middle School...

"A big thank you to the kids at Thorne Middle School for collecting items to send to our Troops! My son's unit deployed in the Middle East received 10 boxes of snacks today!!"  
- Melissa M.



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## **Ways You Can Help!**



**MOST NEEDED  
ITEMS**

- GATORADE DRINK POWDER
- GRANOLA BARS
- TRAIL MIX
- APPLE SAUCE
- CHIPS/DORITOS/  
PRETZELS/SNACKS
- CANNED SOUPS
- CEREAL (CHEERIOS, RAISIN BRAN,  
FROSTED FLAKES, COCOA PUFFS)
- POPCORN
- COFFEE K CUPS OR GROUND
- PROTEIN BARS
- POP TARTS
- BREAKFAST BARS
- OATMEAL
- BEEF JERKY
- DEODORANT
- TUBE ONLY - SHAVING CREAM
- PAPER PLATES
- PLASTIC SILVERWARE
- RICE (10 MINUTE RICE BAGS)
- PASTA
- MAC-N-CHEESE
- CANDY/COOKIES
- LEMONADE AND ICED TEA MIX
- TEA BAGS

Please consider buying "most needed items" from our list above. You can purchase them online from your favorite retail website and have them shipped directly to us at:

Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund  
76 Crooked Stick Road  
Jackson, NJ 08527

The Memorial Fund will cover the postage and box the items according to government protocol for overseas deliveries to our service members. Thank you for your help and support!

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## **A Special THANK YOU!**



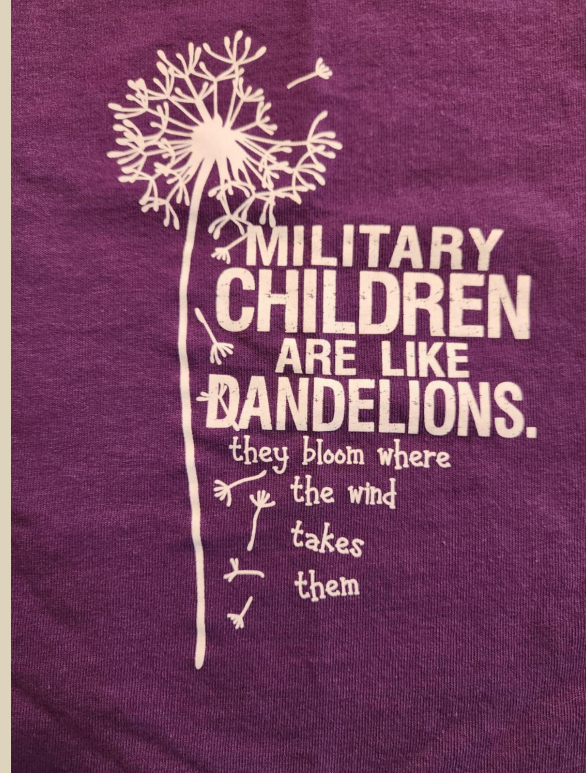
To Girl Scout Ambassadors Brielle and Taryn of Denville, Troop 94946, for delivering three cases of delicious GS cookies for our deployed troops!



And Taylor has once again gone above and beyond for our deployed troops! This time, the Girl Scout in Howell Troop #942 dropped off ten cases of delicious cookies to send to them overseas. During the winter, Taylor also brought us 14 boxes of Girl Scout candy to mail to our deployed troops. Taylor, your efforts are so appreciated!

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## **Purple Up Day in Pemberton**

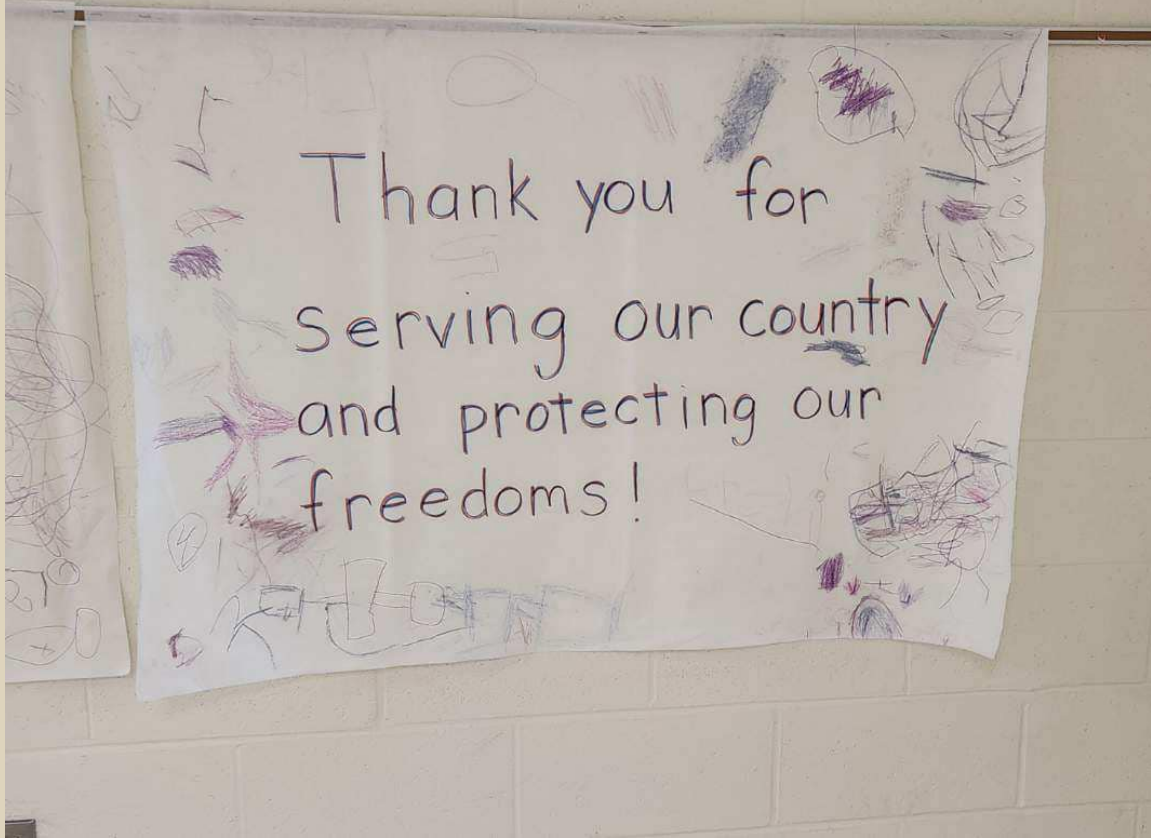


During April- the Month of the Military Child- we were encouraged to Purple Up! It recognizes some of the military's most unsung heroes – their children. The day encourages everyone to wear purple representing all branches of the military and showing unity with each other.

These are pictures from Purple Up Day at the Early Childhood Learning Center in Pemberton. Our Marion and Dennis Zilinski were there with The Memorial Fund to give the military children gift cards, t-shirts, and stuffed animals donated by PetSmart!







**Our Scholarship Recipient Joins the Army!**



Way to go, Madison Huber! Our former scholarship recipient at Trinity Hall and Clemson University graduate, just joined the United States Army as a Second Lt. Our Marion and Dennis Zilinski went up to Cornell University - where she's continuing her education in veterinary school - to celebrate and congratulate her! We are very proud of you, Madison!

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Let's not forget to #RockYourFlag! Proudly hang our stars and stripes, take a picture, and post it. Be sure to use our hashtag #RockYourFlag and tag us!! Be LOUD AND PROUD!

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**[Check Out Our Links!](#)**

[The Journal](#)

[The Monmouth Journal](#)

[Military Breakfast at PECEC](#)

[News12 PSEG collection](#)

[Marion's Podcast](#)

[Zilinski BlueClaws video](#)

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## **Save the Dates Went Out!**

*Keep an Eye Out For Our Formal Invitation Coming Soon!*



IF you didn't get a Save The Date, email us your address ([runwithdennis@yahoo.com](mailto:runwithdennis@yahoo.com)) and we'll add you to our list for the invitations!

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## **2023 Upcoming Events**

Golf with Dennis @ Westlake - July 24th  
A Toast to Dennis - A Night of Remembrance - September 8th  
Golf with Dennis @ Pine Barrens - October 16th

Run with Dennis - November 5th  
Wreaths across America - December 2nd

[DONATE NOW](#)

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

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*The Lt. Dennis W. Zilinski, II Memorial Fund is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law (Tax ID # 03-0601077).*

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Check us out on social media...



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