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## MARINES CELEBRATE FOURTH ACROSS NATION



From the nation's capital to Disneyland, Marines participated in Independence Day celebrations throughout the United States. In New York City, five Marines and their families attended the Macy's Fourth of July fireworks show at Chelsea Piers. In Washington, D.C., Col. Michael T. Cuccio served as Marine Corps Reviewing Officer for the National Independence Day Parade and the Quantico Marine Corps band performed at "A Capitol Fourth" on the

West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. The Quantico Marine Corps Band and color guard led the annual parade in Dale City, Va., for eager families lined up along Dale Boulevard. Aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Marines, Sailors and local citizens celebrated with performances by the 2nd Marine Division Concert Band. Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Division Concert band entertained audiences during a free concert in Reno, Nev. and joining Mickey Mouse, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Band performed while parading down Main Street Disney at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif.

**[Read More: Dale City Parade](#)**

**[Read More: Deployed Marines Celebrate Abroad](#)**

**[Read More: An Old Carrier, New U.S. Citizen](#)**

# NEWS

## FIRE AND BRIMSTONE IN NEW ZEALAND



Mortars ripped through the air for three straight days on the North Island of New Zealand as part of Exercise Brimstone June 18-21. For the annual training and evaluation event, Marine artillerymen from Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment joined New Zealand Army gunners with the 16th Field Regiment to enhance their mortar skills. The skills of the New Zealand soldiers impressed Marine Cpl. Gabriel M. Gonzales, an artillery section chief with Alpha Battery, 1/11. "It's good to

know that Marines aren't the only ones out there training hard," said Gonzales. Exercise Brimstone is part of Exercise Galvanic Kiwi, aimed at fostering relationships between New Zealand's Army and the United States Marine Corps.

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## TOP INFANTRY, MARSOC MARINES HONORED



Top infantry and special operations Marines received honors at the ninth annual Marine Corps Association Ground Awards Dinner June 28 in Arlington, Va. Capt. Casey Brock of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., received the prestigious Lt. Col. William G. Leftwich Jr. Trophy for Outstanding Leadership; and the unit's gunner, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Keith A. Marine, was awarded the Gunner Henry Lewis Hulbert Trophy for Outstanding Leadership. Both awards recognized the battalion's deployment to Afghanistan last year. From Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Capt. Daniel Brooks received the Douglas A. Zembiec Award for Outstanding Leadership in Special Operations, and Gunnery Sgt. Timothy Hogan was named the MARSOC



Noncommissioned Officer Critical Skills Operator of the Year Award. Other honorees at the dinner were Chambers Award recipient Capt. Adam P. Wivell and the Marines of the Year for the four ground combat divisions: Cpl. Daniel Godina, 1st Marine Division; Sgt. Jeremy D. Butler, 2nd Marine Division; Sgt. Jeff Majka, 3rd Marine Division; and Sgt. Brian A. Phillips, 4th Marine Division.

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## DYING VETERAN'S WISH TO SEE HIS SON GRADUATE BOOT CAMP COMES TRUE

Not even a series of strokes, diabetes and heart failure could keep Charles Burns from traveling to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., June 29 to watch his son Ryan graduate from boot camp. The dying wish of the 65-year old former Navy chief petty officer was to make the 1,000-mile trek from Rockland, Mass., to see his son don the Marine Corps uniform. "Me and my dad had a bet," said the new Marine.

"When I came here to Parris Island, it was 'I'll finish boot camp as long as you make it to my graduation.' So we both had mission accomplished. And we're here today. So I couldn't ask for anything more." As a fourth-grader, Ryan saw the events of 9/11 unfold on the television and was resolved to join the military. Twelve weeks ago, he left for boot camp, becoming the third generation of the Burns family to serve in the military.



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## DOD HOSTS FIRST LGBT PRIDE MONTH EVENT



The Department of Defense (DoD) hosted the Pentagon's first-ever panel of current and former gay and lesbian service members June 26 to discuss their experiences before and after the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. DoD's General Counsel Jeh C. Johnson opened



the event and discussed the process leading to the repeal. "For those service members who are gay and lesbian, we lifted a real and personal burden from their shoulders. They no longer have to live a lie

in the military," he said. Before the repeal, gay troops could serve but be discharged if they revealed their sexual orientation. Marine Capt. Matthew Phelps, one of the panelists, recalled the day the policy ended. "I went to work on the 20th of September, thinking my life was going to change. I sat down at my desk and I kind of braced myself on the desk, waiting for everyone to come and ask me if I was gay," he said. "And believe it or not, nobody did." Although there was concern that the repeal would cause problems, officials report that there have been no big issues.

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## CHESNEY, MCGRAW ENTERTAIN MARINES IN N.C.



More than 70 Marines from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., enjoyed an evening of country music by superstars Kenny Chesney and Tim McGraw at the "Brothers of the Sun" concert June 24 in Charlotte, N.C. The Marines from the Cherry Point Single Marine Program (SMP) received free tickets to the concert courtesy of the United Services Organization (USO) of North Carolina and the National Football League (NFL). "It's nice to take part in the SMP trips and other events without having to

spend a lot of money or scramble for a ride just to do something fun," said Pfc. Victoria E. Cook, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 2.

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## REGISTER TO VOTE



With the presidential election fast approaching, service members across the country are encouraged to register and exercise their right to vote. During Armed



Forces and Overseas Citizen Voters Week June 28 - July 7, Installation Voter Assistance Offices (IVAO) are raising awareness at military installations while also providing federal post card application assistance to eligible voters. Each military installation has an IVAO that can provide voting applications, forms, guides and

computer access to service members inquiring about the voting process. "[Voting] is a freedom that we have," said Dora Rodriguez, assistant installation voting officer at Camp Pendleton, Calif. "You should do it because you're loyal to your country and because you love your country."

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[Federal Voting Assistance Program \(FVAP\) Website](#)

## HEROES

### HONORING THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA



More than 5,000 Okinawans, as well as members of the American and Japanese militaries, attended a ceremony June 24 at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman City, Okinawa, Japan, to commemorate the World War II Battle of Okinawa. Peace Memorial Park was built in 1995 to remember one of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific campaign. Stones bearing the names of 240,931 civilian and military personnel killed during the battle line the pathways of the park. "Today's ceremony

gives us an opportunity to reflect on a crucial part of history and to remember those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today," said Lt. Gen. Kenneth J. Glueck Jr., III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) commanding general. "It is great to be here and see everyone join together to honor those who died during the Battle of Okinawa."

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## TRANSITION

### IN 4 YEARS, 745,000 HAVE USED POST-9/11 GI BILL

The Post-9/11 GI Bill has helped more than 745,000 Iraq and Afghanistan-era combat veterans and dependents take advantage of educational opportunities. To date, an additional 500,000 service members have applied for GI Bill benefits since the bill was signed into law four years ago but have not yet started using them. Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., who was instrumental in the bill's creation, praises the positive effects on veterans' access to education. "The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is the best veterans' educational program in history. It pays for tuition, books and a monthly stipend, in order to give our veterans a first-class shot at the future," he said. "We can all take pride in saying that we have made a proper investment in the future of those who, since 9/11, have given so much to this country."

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[Post-9/11 GI Bill Website](#)



## SEMPER FI

### FALLEN SERGEANT'S LETTER RESONATES WITH MANY

Sgt. William C. Stacey was killed in action Jan. 21 in Helmand province, Afghanistan, but his words live on in his final letter to his



parents. In the letter, he writes that he hopes his death will have a greater meaning. "There will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home country to come to his. And this child will learn in the new schools that have been built. He will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long," he wrote. "If my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change the world, then I



know that it was all worth it." Although his letter was only intended for his family, it gained significant attention from politicians and the news media since his death. Stacey was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan as a squad leader with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, when an improvised explosive device detonated and fatally wounded him.

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