



TIP OF THE SPEAR

OFFICER RECEIVES SILVER STAR FOR HEROICS IN CAMP BASTION ATTACK



Maj. Robb McDonald was presented the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest combat valor award, Dec. 9 for his role repelling the deadly 2012 attack on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan. When 15 insurgents infiltrated the camp, mortally wounding McDonald's squadron's commanding officer, he took charge. McDonald risked his life to lead several groups of Marines away from an aluminum maintenance building that could have become a death trap. He later shot and killed one of the



and eight Air Medals. [Read more](#)

attackers, and directed two helicopter strikes that killed several others, his citation says. McDonald also has two Bronze Stars with "V" device, a Purple Heart



PHOTO OF THE WEEK



A CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter flies in to pick up a generator during a helicopter support team mission at Observation Post (OP) Athens, Kajaki district, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 3. The HST mission was conducted as part of the retrograde of OP Athens. *(Photo by Lance Cpl. Sean Searfus)*



IN THE NEWS

SP-MAGTF AFRICA 13 MARINES TRAIN SENEGALESE



Marines and Sailors of Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SP-MAGTF) Africa 13 reviewed the basics of marksmanship in the first week of their engagement with the *Companie de Fusilier Marine Commandos* in Senegal. This is the fourth iteration of maritime assistance force engagements this year, covering infantry tactics, small-boat operations and maritime security operations. Each day, the training progressed in technique and skill, and by the end, the Senegalese were able to complete a live-fire exercise. For the remainder of the four-week training engagement, the Marines will focus on infantry tactics while also

adding in maritime and riverine tactics training. [Read more](#)

MARINES AWARDED FOR LIFE-SAVING ACTIONS



Staff Sgt. Gordon L. Llewellyn and Sgt. David B. Schmidt were awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and certificate of commendation, respectively, Dec. 1 for their response after a car crash left a girl injured in Okinawa, Japan. The Marines were driving when they noticed an overturned vehicle and the teenaged girl who was ejected from the vehicle lying on the ground nearby. Llewellyn and Schmidt ran to the girl, noticing she was conscious but had a high heart rate. They kept her still as to avoid any or additional spinal or pelvic injuries, and controlled the crowd that gathered until emergency personnel arrived. "My hope is

that what we did that day made a difference, and that she is doing well and back home with her family," said Llewellyn. [Read more](#)

MARINES PREPARED FOR BOOTS ON THE GROUND DURING SYRIA CRISIS



When the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) embarked on their 8-month deployment around the Mediterranean Sea in March, they anticipated executing rescue missions in and around Syria. "When we left, we thought we'd be involved in Syria in terms of humanitarian assistance," said Navy Capt. Jim Cody. "The refugee crisis was spilling into all the neighboring countries." Cody served as commander of the three-ship Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group, bearing roughly 4,000 Sailors and Marines along with the 26th MEU that deployed to the region in support of the Navy's 5th and 6th fleets. And though they never made landfall, the

26th MEU was prepared for the situation. [Read more](#)

NEW ZEALAND ARMY LEARNS FROM CORPS



Marine Corps recruit training is regarded by some as the toughest entry level training in the world, leading New Zealand Army Maj. Logan J. Vaughan, a company commander, to visit the depot in San Diego, Calif., Nov. 19 to learn some of the methods used in making Marines. "We are trying to align our forces with other militaries in the world and are looking to begin an amphibious task force in the near future," said Vaughan. "We wanted to look at some of the best military aspects of militaries around the world. We wanted to see how the Marine Corps solves and handles problems." Over the course of the day, Vaughan was exposed to

screening, training, logistics and rehabilitation. [Read more](#)

NORTH CAROLINA MARINES LEAD UPCOMING DEPLOYMENTS



North Carolina-based Marines are next in line to conduct rotational deployments in Europe and Africa as the service continues to push forward with expeditionary deployments geared toward crisis response and strengthening military partnerships. Three rotations of these Marines will comprise the Corps' Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force



(SP-MAGTF) Crisis Response based in Spain, SP-MAGTF Africa based in Italy and the Black Sea Rotation Force based in Romania. To ensure the Marines keep their skills honed, the three rotational forces recently teamed with the regional Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team, based at Naval Station Rota, Spain, for a three-day training event. The training aimed to unify the four units under a single command to plan, coordinate and execute a crisis response exercise. [Read more](#)

SURVIVORS RECALL JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR



Over 2,500 people, including 50 survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor gathered on the 72nd anniversary of the Japanese air raid to honor those who served and were killed. Delton Walling, who was assigned to the USS Pennsylvania at the time of the attack, said they're "in the twilight years." The crowd observed a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., the minute the bombing began 72 years ago, overlooking the memorial to the USS Arizona battleship that sank in the attack. Roughly 2,400 sailors, Marines and soldiers were killed at Pearl Harbor and other military installations on the island of Oahu in the attack. [Read more](#)



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

DECEMBER 12, 2001

Task Force 58, commanded by BGen James Mattis, rolled through Kandahar, Afghanistan, and secured the city's airport.



SEMPER FI

SOUTHERN KATIPO 2013 ENDS AT THE GRAVE OF NEW ZEALAND'S MOST DECORATED VETERAN



Marines celebrated the completion of exercise Southern Katipo 2013 with veterans of the New Zealand Defence Force at the tombstone of Capt. Charles Upham, two-time Victoria Cross recipient, and one of the most decorated New Zealand service members. "It was special to be around so many veterans and share our camaraderie with them and their spouses," said Maj. William Allen. "It's really unique to be able to get in touch with the past and have a chance to see the burial site of one of their most decorated veterans. That was a special way for the exercise to come to an end." The exercise is a biennial, multinational exercise that strengthens

interoperability between allied nations and perfects operational performance in preparation for future events. [Read more](#)

OUR MISSION

*In the words of Lt. Gen. Victor H. "Brute" Krulak, "The United States does not need a Marine Corps...the United States wants a Marine Corps." As America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness, the Marine Corps is deployed across the globe, standing ready to respond to any crisis. The Marine Corps Connection is your one-stop source for the latest Marine Corps news and is published weekly by the Division of Public Affairs at Headquarters Marine Corps. **Stay connected to your Marines!***



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