

## TIP OF THE SPEAR

### MARINES PREP FOR DISASTER RELIEF ON HOME FRONT



Marines with the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) gathered at Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 26-27 with local, state and federal agencies to plan for disaster response in the region before it's needed. "A crisis is going to hit us pretty hard in California," said Lt. Gen. John Toolan Jr., commanding general of I MEF. "We need to be effective. It's a matter of when, not if." The second annual two-day event attracted upward of 200 participants, including military leaders and a planner for U.S. Northern Command -- the combatant command overseeing homeland defense and civil support in North America. The

event culminated with a planning exercise for a 7.9 earthquake along the San Andreas Fault, which could leave an estimated half a million people needing medical care and shelter, and 2.5 million people needing food and water. [Read more](#)



## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



A Marine Special Operations Team member fires a M240B machine gun during night fire sustainment training in Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 28. Marine Special Operations Team members are deployed in Helmand province to train and mentor Afghan National Security Forces. *(Photo by Sgt. Pete Thibodeau)*



## IN THE NEWS

### AMOS PUSHES FOR MORE DIVERSITY IN OFFICER CORPS



Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, released a 'white letter' March 26, outlining an aggressive campaign to diversify the senior officers' ranks in race and gender. Amos called for the creation of four task force groups: two focused on attracting and retaining minority and female officers; one on leadership, accountability and mentoring; and one on culture and leading change. The letter marks the most recent initiative in a series of efforts to diversify the Marine officer corps. [Read more](#)

### F-35 CRITICAL TO MARINE CORPS MISSION



As the Marine Corps shifts focus to the Asia-Pacific region, the F-35B will be essential to the brand of amphibious and expeditionary warfare the Corps hopes to deliver, said Maj. Gen. Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, the Corps' representative for the congressionally-mandated Quadrennial Defense Review. Unique throughout the services, the F-35 is the only aircraft that combines the vertical utility of a helicopter with the ability to survive in airspace. The Corps expects to have operational capability for the F-35 in the Pacific by 2017, aligning with President Barack Obama's strategic focus on the region. [Read more](#)

### AVIATION MARINES WHO REPELLED ATTACK IN AFGHANISTAN HONORED



Maj. Robert Weingart and Cpl. Benjamin Hebert, two Marines from a



Camp Pendleton, Calif., helicopter squadron who battled insurgents during the attack on Camp Bastion in Afghanistan last fall, were honored April 1 with 2012 Marine Corps Aviation Awards. Weingart won the Alfred A. Cunningham aviator of the year award and Hebert won the Danny L. Radish enlisted aircrewman of the year award. Awardees will be honored at the 42nd annual Marine Corps Aviation Association symposium and dinner, May 15-18 in Reno, Nev. [Read more](#)

[Complete List of Awardees](#)

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## JAPANESE TEENAGERS TRAVEL TO SAN DIEGO TO THANK MARINE RESCUERS



Eight teenage ambassadors traveled from Kesennuma, Japan to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., March 25 to thank the Marines and Sailors who helped their country after it was devastated by a tsunami in 2011. They exchanged gifts, had lunch, and shared photos, while Master Sgt. Howard Tait revealed the ribbons he saved as they departed Japan. The ribbons are used like confetti during traditional goodbyes in the Japanese culture. "They would hold them on one side and they would string across the ocean to show that this is a bond that no ocean can separate us, that our friendship will be forever," he said. [Read more](#)

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## VIETNAM WAR PRISONERS PASS ON HOPE TO WOUNDED WARRIORS



Retired Navy Captains Gerald Coffee and Jim Hickerson visited Wounded Warrior Battalion West, Detachment Hawaii on March 27 -- the 40th anniversary of their release as prisoners of war. Coffee and Hickerson, who both served in the Vietnam War, were among more than 500 service members captured and held prisoner -- Coffee was held for seven years, Hickerson for five. They took turns sharing personal experiences, and passed on words of encouragement to the wounded warriors. "We are not dealt the deck of cards that we like all the time," Hickerson said. "But if you

have a foundation [you can achieve your goals]." [Read more](#)

## STATISTICAL MODEL MAY AID VETERANS AT HIGHEST RISK



At the Naval Postgraduate School, Maj. David Coté studied factors predicting whether a homeless veteran will fail or succeed in drug or alcohol rehabilitation, creating a model that may shine light on the best course of treatment. Coté discovered if the veteran is impacted by a long-term physical illness (e.g. diabetes) or strenuous environmental factors (e.g. homelessness), there's a better chance he or she will complete rehab. Also, education level doesn't guarantee success. "If an organization knows which clients have a higher risk, or if their needs are different, an organization can allocate resources to best serve those people," said

Coté . [Read More](#)



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### MARCH 31, 1801

Lt. Col. William W. Burrows, the second Commandant of the Marine Corps, rode with President Thomas Jefferson to look for "a proper place to fix the Marine Barracks on." President Jefferson was a personal friend of the Burrows and interested in the welfare of the Corps. They chose a square in Southeast Washington, D.C., at 8th and I streets, because it lay near the Navy Yard and was within easy marching distance of the Capitol.



## SEMPER FI

### FAMILY OF MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT VISITS THE BASIC SCHOOL



Family members of Medal of Honor recipient 1st Lt. Baldomero Lopez visited The Basic School in Quantico, Va., on March 28 for a tour and a small taste of what the Korean War hero gave his life for. "I can see why he loved the Corps like he did," said his nephew, Mike Lopez. The Lopezes also visited the site of the future Lopez Mess Hall, currently under construction, which is to be dedicated in his honor later this year. Lopez was awarded the Medal of Honor for cradling a grenade under him to save the lives of fellow Marines at Inchon, Korea on Sept. 15, 1950. [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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