

## TIP OF THE SPEAR

### 1/9 MOURNS LOSS OF OWN FOLLOWING TRAINING MISHAP



Marines, families and citizens nationwide are mourning the loss of seven Marines from 1st Battalion, 9th Marines who were killed March 18 during a training exercise at Hawthorne Army Depot in Nevada. The Marines were conducting a night live-fire when an explosion occurred at the location of a 60mm mortar firing position. The Marines ranged in age from 19 to 26. Some had served overseas; others were training for their first deployment. "Since he was probably 8 years old he wanted to be a Marine," Karen Perry said of her son, Pfc. Josh Martino, a victim of the accident. "That's all he wanted to do." The explosion

caused an immediate suspension of the use of the M224A1 60 millimeter mortar system by the Marine Corps, with an exemption for troops in Afghanistan, until an investigation of the accident is complete. [Read more](#)

**CMC: We'll Find Cause of Fatal Accident**

**Profiles of Those Lost**



## PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Sgt. Chesty XIII, official mascot of the U.S. Marine Corps, right, stares down his successor Recruit Chesty, left, during training at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., March 20. *(Photo by Sgt. Dengrier Baez)*



# IN THE NEWS

## MARINES LOOK BACK AT IRAQ TEN YEARS LATER



Ten years ago on March 20, the I Marine Expedition Force (MEF) carried out the "Opening Gambit" phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, launching the Iraq war with U.S. air strikes on Baghdad. "I can't believe it was 10 years ago," said retired Marine Sgt. Maj. Wayne Bell. "I can't get it out of my mind." Marines trained throughout the nation, playing a key role in the war. The legacy of their involvement, including the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force leading the first conventional ground troops into Iraq during the invasion, helped to rewrite U.S. military doctrine, solidify a new generation of combat veterans and shape future wars. [Read more](#)

## FASTPAC OPERATES ACROSS ASIA-PACIFIC REGION



As the Marine Corps shifts its focus to the Asia-Pacific region, two platoons of Marines continue to deploy on rotations to Japan, spending seven months operating with Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team Company Pacific (FASTPAC). The platoons are specialized units that provide a quick-reaction force to protect U.S. assets ranging from embassies to nuclear weapons and submarines across the globe. The Pacific is a vast training ground for FASTPAC Marines, visiting and training in places such as Guam, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines. [Read more](#)

## FIRST OPERATIONAL F-35B CONDUCTS INITIAL VERTICAL LANDING



The Corps reached another milestone in its F-35 program as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 (VMFA-121) conducted its first Short Take Off, Vertical Landing operations March 21 aboard Marine Corps Air Station in



Yuma, Ariz. "The F-35 program and specifically the F-35B have made significant progress to make this possible," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Scott, VMFA-121 commanding officer. VMFA-121 will continue to set the pace for the F-35 program. The Air Force and Navy can now integrate best practices from VMFA-121 in preparation for the future operational basing of the F-35A and F-35C. [Read more](#)

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## CORPS MAKES CYBER SECURITY A PRIORITY



Cyber security will play a key warfighting role in the Marine Corps' post-Afghanistan mission, said Maj. Gen. Kenneth "Frank" McKenzie, the Corps' representative for the Quadrennial Defense Review, the congressionally-mandated assessment of military threats and objectives due every four years. "Cyber considerations are now fundamental to everything we do," he said. Battling cyber threats falls under Marine Forces Cyber Command, a division of U.S. Cyber Command, established in early 2010. "We're going to fully embrace [cyber security] as we go forward. If you don't embrace it, you're going to be killed by it," said McKenzie. [Read more](#)

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## SGT. MAJ. TELLS MARINES TO STEP UP, STOP SEXUAL ASSAULT



The Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps told Marines in a video message posted March 12 to "step in and do something" when it comes to sexual assault. April, designated 2013's Sexual Assault Awareness Month, is fast approaching, but Sgt. Maj. Michael Barrett advises Marines it's a message to remember at all times. "You are your brothers' and sisters' keeper," he said. "We always, always stand together and protect one another. We always remain faithful." The message reinforces the Corps-wide effort to curb sexual assaults. [Read more](#)

[Watch the video](#)

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## WWR ANNOUNCES 2013 WARRIOR GAMES MARINE TEAM



The Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) recently announced the 50 athletes that will represent the Marine Corps at the 2013 Warrior Games. The Warrior Games is a Paralympic-style competition for wounded, ill and injured service members. The All-Marine Warrior Games Team will go head-to-head against other branches of the Armed Forces May 11-17, at the Olympic Training Center and the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. The All-Marine team will defend its first place title by competing in swimming, shooting, cycling, wheelchair basketball, archery, volleyball, and track and field. [Full List of Selected](#)

**Athletes**

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## VCU STUDENTS LEARN LEADERSHIP SKILLS FROM MARINES



Students from Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) Snead School of Business learned leadership skills from Marine officers March 15 during the Marine Corps Leadership Seminar (MCLS). The MCLS is a one-day program, featuring a series of classes on leadership topics and team building exercises, designed to impart Corps leadership skills onto college students. "There is no question that successful prior military experience is beneficial to a career in the private sector," said Mike Eisenman, former Navy officer and director of career services at Snead School of Business. "Almost everything said today that is relevant to the

Marine Corps is relevant to the corporate world as well." [Read More](#)



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

## MARCH 25, 1804

The Secretary of the Navy, Robert Smith, approved the first formal uniform of the Marine Corps.



## SEMPER PARATUS

### WOUNDED WARRIOR, WIFE TO RECEIVE RHODE ISLAND HOME TO START FAMILY



Cpl. Kevin Dubois and his wife Kayla will receive a new home later this year to help accommodate and grow their family. Dubois lost both his legs to an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan July 2011 and now depends on a wheelchair. The house is sponsored through Homes for Our Troops and will be designed for his specific disability. "It's going to be great to be able to have a little bit of independence again," he said, adding that he and Kayla are going to start a family. "We don't have kids yet, and there's plenty of room in that house to grow." [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*

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