

TIP OF THE SPEAR

DUNFORD ASSUMES COMMAND IN AFGHANISTAN



Gen. John R. Allen passed NATO Security Assistance Command to Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. Feb. 11, praising him as the strategic leader needed for the next phase of the command. During the ceremony, Allen handed Dunford the flags of the NATO command and of U.S. Forces Afghanistan. There are 66,000 American service members in the country. Dunford is perfect to follow Allen as the new commander, said Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, calling him a leader who can draw on more than 35 years of excellence displayed at every level in the military. "Today is not about change,

it's about continuity," Dunford said. Allen has been nominated to be the next supreme allied commander for Europe. [Read more](#)

Also Read: Camp Pendleton General Says Afghans Taking Lead In Taliban Fight



VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Bailey Leonard, a U.S Marine, surprises his brother, Meyers Leonard, by showing up to his basketball

practice. Meyers plays for the Portland Trailblazers and shows how much he truly cares for his brother. Having a close relationship his entire life, Meyers is shocked when he see's his brother after years of being on duty.



IN THE NEWS

EXERCISE COBRA GOLD 2013 KICKS OFF IN THAILAND



Exercise Cobra Gold, the longest-running U.S. military exercise in the Pacific, kicked off in Thailand Feb. 11. Cobra Gold 2013, which runs through Feb. 21, began as a bilateral U.S.-Thai exercise, expanding more than a decade ago to include other regional partners to advance common goals and security commitments in the Asia-Pacific region. This year's exercise will be demanding as it prepares participants "for a broad spectrum of challenges we are going to face together," according to U.S. Pacific commander, Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III. [Read more](#)

Also Read: [Marine Connects with Past During Visit with Thai Children](#)

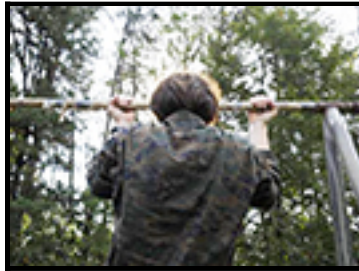
NEPAL, III MEF CONDUCT RELIEF EXERCISE



Approximately 40 Marines and Sailors with III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) began a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) tabletop exercise Feb. 2 in Katmandu, Nepal. The purpose of the exercise was to improve III MEF's readiness and ability to respond to any HADR scenario in Nepal. The exercise will require extensive coordination and planning between the government of Nepal, U.S. Embassy Katmandu, III MEF, U.S. Army Pacific, Pacific Air Forces, multinational contributing

nations and non-governmental and international organizations. A field training exercise is scheduled for fall 2013 to test the practical application of operations and procedures discussed during the table-top exercise. [Read more](#)

TWO FEMALES VOLUNTEER FOR INFANTRY OFFICER COURSE



Two women have volunteered for the next class of the Marine Corps' Infantry Officers Course (IOC) after Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced in January the end of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, which excluded women from assignment to units and positions whose primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat. If successful, they would be the first women to graduate from the 13-week training. Two women attempted the course last fall and were unable to complete the first week of training. "We're not going to drop any standards. No standards are going to be lowered," said Marine

spokeswoman Maj. Shawn Haney. [Read more](#)

ORIGINAL IWO JIMA MONUMENT TO BE AUCTIONED

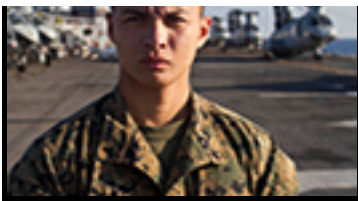


The original smaller statue of the iconic raising of the U.S. flag at Iwo Jima in 1945 is expected to fetch up to \$1.8 million later this month at a New York auction dedicated to vending World War II artifacts. "It's an incredibly iconic image of bravery," said Marci Reaven, vice president of historic exhibits at the New York Historical Society. "It immediately captured Americans' imaginations, their hopes for victory and their fears at a difficult time." The successful bidder will also receive the tools used to build the statue, in addition to the sculptor's drawings, sketches and photos of the monument. [Read more](#)

FROM THE JUNGLE TO COMPTON TO THE CORPS



Born in Vietnam and raised in Compton, Calif., Pfc. Loc C. Huynh began his American journey as a non-English speaking immigrant and



weathered a dangerous childhood to become a Marine. A rifleman with 1st Battalion, Huynh was determined to get out of his notoriously dangerous Compton neighborhood, starting boot camp in September 2011. As a member of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Huynh is presently stationed in Okinawa, Japan. "I left Asia as a member of a poor Vietnamese family trying to make it, and now I'm returning as a member of the greatest war-fighting organization in the world trying to help others," he

said. [Read more](#)

MARYLAND MARINE HONORED BY HOMETOWN WITH NAMESAKE DAY



Maryland native Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Rodgers, a rifleman with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, has a day that bears his name after being honored by his hometown of Gaithersburg for his service in Afghanistan. On Nov. 19, 2011, Rodgers returned home to a parade of fire trucks, police vehicles, his former high school marching band, and family and friends. Gaithersburg's City Mayor, Sidney A. Kats, was also present to issue an official proclamation in honor of the Marine's sacrifices in Afghanistan. From that day forward, Gaithersburg will forever celebrate Nov. 19 as Matthew Rodgers Day. [Read more](#)

WOUNDED WARRIOR BACK ON MOTORCYCLE



Retired Marine Sgt. Maj. Raymond H. Mackey rode motorcycles for more than 35 years before he lost both his legs to an improvised explosive device in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2009. "I wanted to get back to as normal as I would ever get back to," said Mackey. "I was determined to find a way to ride again." On Dec. 23, 2012, the third anniversary of his accident, Mackey received a brand new Harley Davidson motorcycle, customized precisely for use without legs. He is now back to his avid riding ways. [Read more](#)

[Also Read: Triple Amputee Vet Takes on Skydiving, Alligator Wrestling](#)



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

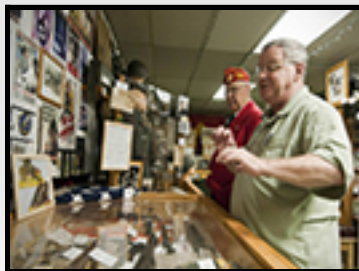
FEBRUARY 16, 1953

Marine Capt. Ted Williams, Boston Red Sox baseball legend, crash landed his F9F Panther jet after his aircraft was shot up during a bombing raid on North Korea. Williams walked away from the wheels-up landing.



SEMPER PARATI

KOREA VETS IN BALTIMORE CONTINUE TO SERVE



Korean War veterans of the Marine Corps League Baltimore Detachment, "Baltimore's Own," are continuing to serve their community by helping out neighbors, wounded warriors, local kids and charities. "We are all Marines and we stick together," said member Donald Rollete, an 82-year-old Baltimore native. "You gotta be true to the country first, to Marines second, and family. It'll all fall in place from there." The group participates in parades and memorials to honor fallen comrades, working toward an ultimate goal of raising awareness and gaining support for their community programs. [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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