



TIP OF THE SPEAR

MARINE CORPS, NAVY INCREASING FORWARD PRESENCE



As the U.S. shifts its efforts to the Asia-Pacific region, the Marine Corps and Navy are examining and improving their expeditionary strategy. Currently, they are preparing to take final delivery of the first of several new sea-basing platforms designed to increase forward presence and allow the services to operate without needing a pier, port or land-staging area. The Navy plans to build four new sea-basing ships to include two Mobile Landing Platforms (MLPs), and two modified MLPs configured into what the Navy calls Afloat Forward Staging Bases.

director, expeditionary warfare division. "The effort is infused with a mind to how we can use platforms in new ways and increase the mission possibilities for these new ships." [Read more](#)

"We're looking at this as being adaptive and creative," said Maj. Gen. Robert Walsh,



PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Lance Cpl. Michael Mayberry gives high-fives to students Dec. 13 at Tinian Christian Academy, Northern Mariana Islands, during Exercise Forager Fury II. The service members visited the school in effort to improve existing relationships with the local community. *(Photo by Lance Cpl. Antonio Rubio)*



IN THE NEWS

CORPS BUILDING ON MCMAP, EMPHASIZING ETHICS



In an effort to reshape how Marines think and act amid combat, leaders are looking to revitalize the curriculum of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP). "We're going through an analysis of the program right now to look at how to reinvigorate it for the future and make sure that is the focus," said Maj. Gen. Tom Murray, the commanding general of Training and Education Command in Quantico, Va. "It's not just the physical combat piece of it, but it's the moral, mental and character-building pieces that go with it." Each belt level in MCMAP comes with a physical and ethical challenge. This balance is the ideal training to better prepare Marines for

the way ahead. [Read more](#)

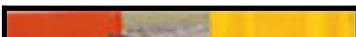
RECOGNIZED SERVICE-CONNECTED ILLNESSES EXPANDS



The Veterans Affairs Department (VA) added five medical conditions to a list of presumed service-connected illnesses, if diagnosed in a patient with a service-connected brain injury. The new regulation will take effect Jan. 15, 2014, and adds Parkinson's disease, certain types of dementia, depression, unprovoked seizures or some diseases of the hypothalamus and pituitary glands. The change will make it easier for afflicted veterans to receive disability compensation from VA for the second condition. "As scientific knowledge advances, VA will expand its programs to ensure veterans receive the care and benefits they've earned and deserve," said

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. [Read more](#)

SMOKE ON THE WATER 2013 SUCCESSFUL



Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island, Fla., proved its ability to



coordinate forces and respond to threats during Smoke on the Water 2013. The exercise plays out a terrorist attack and hostage scenario in an effort to evaluate the installation's ability to activate, recall and fully staff emergency response personnel during a time of crisis. The team of fire and rescue, and police personnel, along with a shock trauma unit and Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians, successfully secured the area, transported casualties and disarmed the terrorists. [Read more](#)

SERVICES ALIGN IN 3-DAY SURGE



Units from the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force, came together to exercise their ability to conduct combat operations across the Pacific during a nonstop operations surge Dec. 10 to 13 on Guam and the nearby island of Tinian. The surge was part of Exercise Forager Fury II, a Marine Corps contingency exercise focusing on training units for combat situations in the Pacific theater. The exercise involved 1,200 Marines and was supported by approximately 400 Airmen and Sailors. "The most important thing here is the inter-service training," said Marine Capt. Roy Agila. "Each service has its own capabilities and the exercise gives us the ability to practice, without kinks or friction." [Read more](#)

MENS CAP TO BECOME UNIVERSAL FOR ALL MARINES



In the latest move toward a universal cap, the Marine Corps has authorized female Marines to wear the current male dress and service caps. Though females may wear the male caps now, they are not required to own them until May 1, 2017. Marine Corps Systems Command is currently working to improve the quality, fit and comfort of the existing male frame cap, to allow for it to be the universal cap. The universal cap is projected to be issued to recruits and available at military clothing sales starting May 1, 2015. [Read more](#)



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

DECEMBER 15, 1948

The Secretary of the Navy signed a "Memorandum of Agreement" with the State Department which laid the basis for the modern Marine Security Guard program at U.S. embassies throughout the world.



SEMPER FI

WOUNDED WARRIOR HELPS STRANDED MOTORISTS



Veteran Larry Draughn, who lost both his legs in Afghanistan, was again hailed as a hero in Dayton, Ohio, after helping three vehicles that ran off the road during an ice storm Dec. 8. Draughn saw the slide-offs from his backyard, climbed into the ditch to hook up their cars to his pickup truck and pulled them out. "I mean, there that boy is with no legs, and he's out there helping people still yet," said Mildred Ledbetter, 77, one of the motorists. "He was a hero in Afghanistan and he continues to be one here." [Read more](#)



THE CORPS REPORT

The Corps Report Ep. 30 -- 2014 Pay Raise and Reduced Funds for Tuition Assistance

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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