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MARINES TAKE TIMES SQUARE AT FLEET WEEK



Marines took center stage in Times Square May 26, displaying weapons, equipment and culture during Marine Day as part of Fleet Week New York 2012. "We're here to show the public what we're all about," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Larry DeYott, senior enlisted advisor at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory. "The people want to know what the Marine Corps is doing to fight wars and save lives." A highlight for many visitors was the weapons display-- giving hands-on access to the M16 assault

rifle, MK-19 automatic grenade launcher and M249 squad automatic weapon. "People are really interested in all our high-tech equipment," said Cpl. Aaron Martinez, logistics chief with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory. "A lot of this stuff most people never get the chance to see."

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NEWS

AFGHAN-LED PATROL CRACKS DOWN ON INSURGENCY

During a time in which Marines are continually withdrawing from Afghanistan, Marines and the Afghan National Army (ANA) put continued pressure on the insurgency during Operation Sangin United Horizons May 17-20. Marines from Dog Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and ANA soldiers were inserted by helicopter in the dead of night in two key population centers, Western Wushtan and Zard Ragay, which serve as passageways through the mountains between Sangin and Kandahar.



"The ANA was the main effort and the assault force as the Marines provided a lot of cordons and security for them," said 2nd Lt. Kenneth Conover, 1st platoon commander for Dog Company. "The ANA went in and did a lot of compound searches, a lot of local national engagements. They were able to identify some key leaders and sit down and talk with those key leaders in the villages."

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Watch: "Behind the Scenes of Operation Jaws"

MARINES IMPLEMENT RECYCLING PROGRAM TO SAVE BATTALION THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS



A new recycling system aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, is saving Combat Logistics Battalion 4 (CLB-4) thousands of dollars by reusing dead tactical-vehicle batteries. Lance Cpl. Matthew S. Belk, a motor vehicle mechanic with CLB-4, came up with the idea to recycle batteries, and so far his efforts have saved the battalion more than \$120,000. "The value of the program is that it saves money



for the battalion," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Troy C. Havard, maintenance officer with CLB-4. "It is also friendly to the environment since it keeps us from having to dispose of the batteries." Prior to the implementation of the recycling program, all dead batteries were delivered to the Camp Leatherneck Hazardous Waste Accumulation Point Office for disposal.

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RECON MARINE EARNS PRESTIGIOUS JOHN BASILONE AWARD



Gunnery Sgt. John S. Mosser with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion received the Gunnery Sgt. John A. Basilone Award for Courage and Commitment May 3 during a ceremony aboard Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan. "It means an enormous amount to me to win this award," he said. "My whole existence as a Marine is to be that Marine that saves lives and helps the next generation of Marines with their careers." His battalion nominated him for his outstanding leadership, work ethic,

unselfish attitude and embodiment of the Marine Corps' values, said Sgt. Maj. Stacey J. Holcomb, Mosser's battalion sergeant major. The award is presented annually to one noncommissioned officer throughout the Corps, and it honors Basilone, a Medal of Honor and Navy Cross recipient during World War II. Mosser also received the Navy Cross, the Corps' second highest award, for his service in Afghanistan in 2008.

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F-35B MAKES FIRST FLIGHT AT EGLIN



The F-35B Lightning II, the Marine Corps' fifth-generation joint strike fighter, made its first flight at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., May 22. It is the Marine Corps' Short Take Off Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant that enables forces to operate in harsh



conditions and remote locations where few airfields are available for conventional aircraft. The STOVL variant also enables the fighter to operate from amphibious ships -- a capability that no other aircraft possesses. The F-35B will replace three legacy aircraft, the F/A18 Hornet, the EA-6B Prowler and the AV-8B Harrier, as part of the

Marine Corps' ongoing effort to modernize its aging fleet of aircraft and to take advantage of technology that will greatly enhance its ability to meet the Marines' expeditionary operating requirements at sea and ashore.

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LAST CH-46 PILOT GRADUATES

First Lt. Zerbin Singleton qualified as the last CH-46 Sea Knight pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Training Squadron 164 May 23. The CH-46 has been used in military missions for nearly 50 years but is passing the torch to the MV-22 Osprey; no more pilots will be trained to fly the CH-46. "It's just an amazing feeling," Singleton said. "I was in the right place at the right time and I was ready for the moment." The three remaining CH-46 squadrons are with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and will eventually transition to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadrons. Now living his lifelong dream as a Marine Corps aviator, Singleton can also claim a piece of history.



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[Also Read: Last CH-46 Helicopter Pilot Overcame Massive Hurdles](#)

MARINE CORPS VETERAN SETS SIGHTS ON WHEELCHAIR GAMES



Veteran Marine Troy Conquest is going for the gold at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Richmond, Va., June



20-25. After serving in the Marine Corps nearly two decades ago, Conquest was paralyzed below the waist as a result of Lupus, an autoimmune disease, and Transverse Myelitis, a neurological disorder. Although doctors told him that he

would never walk again, he beat the odds. "I just want to show that despite all that's pressing on your mind for that one moment, just do what you gotta do and do the best you can," he said. Now, 17 years later, the cyclist hopes to take home top honors in honor of his father, who is currently battling cancer. "I told [my dad], if I win a gold medal, I'm gonna give it to him." he said "So like I said, I'm gonna win a gold medal. Trust me."

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HEROES

MARINES AT HELMAND POST HONOR FALLEN WARRIORS ON MEMORIAL DAY



Marines and Sailors, along with British troops and Afghan National Army soldiers, observed Memorial Day aboard the Task Force Leatherneck (TFL) compound in Helmand province, Afghanistan May 28. Maj. Gen. David H. Berger, commanding general of 1st Marine Division (Forward) and TFL, remarked that Memorial Day should remind everyone of the sacrifice U.S. service members have made in Afghanistan, especially those who gave their lives. "The sacrifice of those whose plain white

markers stand proudly in those cemeteries in long rows, all perfectly aligned is a solemn reminder that the cost of freedom is high and the greatest strength of our nation is her people," he said. Berger also noted the sacrifices of wounded warriors and military families not just in the current conflict but throughout American history. In the past decade of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. has lost more than 6,400 service members.

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TRANSITION

WOUNDED MARINE TO GET "SMART HOME"



A 22-year-old Marine Corps veteran who lost both his legs and an arm in Afghanistan will receive a specially modified home thanks to the Stephen Siler Tunnels to Towers Foundation. J.B. Kerns currently lives with his family but is limited to the first floor of the house due to his wheelchair. The new "smart" home will be custom designed to meet his needs with automated features to help him handle everyday tasks independently. "I won't have to worry about letting everyone know where I'm going. I won't have to worry about it when I come in late waking everybody up," he said. "I'm excited, ready to have my own place." The Foundation hopes to break ground early this fall, around the same time that Kerns hopes to start college at Patrick Henry Community College.

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THANK YOU

COUNTRY STAR DONATES 25 HOMES TO INJURED VETS



Country music star Tim McGraw will give away 25 mortgage-free houses to wounded or needy service members during his summer tour. McGraw kicked off the campaign with a Memorial Day concert for military members as part of Fleet Week in New York City. "I've known people my whole life who are in service to America.



And I think in my position to be able to do something like that is probably the ultimate thing," McGraw said. "So to be able to go on tour and provide sort of a stable foundation for a veteran and their family is something I really look forward to." McGraw is partnering with Operation Homefront and Chase Bank with contributions from the Academy of Country Music's ACM Lifting Lives program and The Premier Group on behalf of the North Carolina Furniture Manufacturers. The "Brothers of the Sun" tour with McGraw and Kenny Chesney continues through August and includes stops in many of the nation's largest cities.

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