



## I MEF TAKES THE REINS IN AFGHANISTAN

Maj. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) (I MEF (Fwd)) commanding general, assumed command of Regional Command-Southwest (RC-SW) from Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) (II MEF (Fwd)) commanding general, during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan on March 12. Gurganus commended the combined Marine and Afghan forces that have worked together to improve security and discourage



insurgent activity in the surrounding areas. "The strength of RC-Southwest, it's obvious to me, has always and will continue to be the combined efforts," he said. "For everyone here, just understand that we intend to try and maintain those relationships." He emphasized that the Afghan people were the most important force in the Marines' efforts in Helmand and Nimruz provinces, for which he is now responsible. Previously, under Toolan's direction, II MEF (Fwd) focused on the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Now I MEF (Fwd) will continue that transformation process so the ANSF is able to be a professional force and provide legitimacy to the Afghan government. "They're taking charge of their own country, and they're learning as their going...I'm convinced that as the

professionalization of the Afghan National Security Forces goes up, the insurgency is going to go down," said Toolan.

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## HEROES

### MARINE SAVES MAN FROM BEING STABBED

Lance Cpl. Joshua Escandon's Marine instincts came into play when he intervened on the assault of a California man on Feb. 26. Escandon and his wife were headed to lunch when they heard a commotion. Upon hearing a woman yelling, "They are going to kill him! Help him!" Escandon pushed his way through the crowd that had gathered and witnessed two men attacking a third man. He disarmed one aggressor, who was carrying a cane-sword, while the victim fought off the second attacker. "Like Marines look out for each other in combat, we have to protect our fellow man too and stop letting stuff like this happen, or it will just happen more," Escandon said. Though the two attackers ran off, they were arrested shortly after. Neither Escandon nor the victim suffered serious injuries.

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### DOG HANDLER RECEIVES PURPLE HEART



Cpl. Christian W. L. Carthen of Marine Police (MP) Support Company, III Marine Headquarters Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, received a Purple Heart on March 1 for wounds received from shrapnel as the result of an improvised explosive device (IED) detonation in



Gereshk province, Afghanistan. On June 28, 2011, the specialized search dog handler was out on a 15-day mission when his dog alerted him to an IED in a creek bed that his squad needed to cross. Carthen

immediately signaled his team to move away from the threat, but just then, the IED detonated. Carthen was wounded, but that didn't stop him from getting back on his feet as soon as he could. "Cpl. Carthen deployed into harm's way, took an injury and kept going," said Maj. F. Scott Newton, commanding officer of MP Support Company. "Immediately after going back to triage, he wanted to go back out. One week after being hit, he was back fighting."

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## MARINE RECOGNIZED FOR COURAGEOUS EFFORTS TO RESCUE PASSENGERS OF A BURNING VEHICLE



Sgt. Diego Zuluaga was driving to his reserve drill company in Amityville, N.Y., when he saw the aftermath of an accident and rushed to the rescue of passengers in a vehicle that had exploded into flames. Although he could see three occupants in the car, he made the difficult decision to focus his efforts on the passenger in the back. "I heard, 'God, someone help me!'" said Zuluaga. "I was close to him, but because of the intense heat I couldn't get too close. All I kept thinking was get this guy out of there." With the assistance of a New York State Trooper, Zuluaga was able to pull the man from the vehicle and then drag

him a safe distance away from the car. Paramedics rushed the injured man to the hospital, where he later died as a result of his injuries. Zuluaga's actions did not go unnoticed, however. Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton, commanding general, II Marine Expeditionary Force, presented Zuluaga with the Navy and Marine Corps Medal on March 7. "Sgt. Zuluaga went above and beyond the call of duty by performing such a selfless act, reflecting great credit upon him and upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps," Paxton said.

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## NEWS

### MARINE CORPS CUTS WON'T AFFECT CURRENT ENLISTMENTS, DEPUTY COMMANDANT SAYS

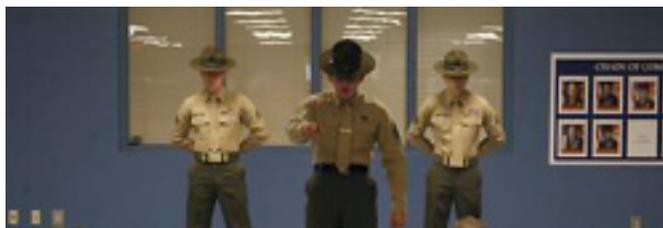
The Marine Corps will reduce its end strength by 20,000 over the course of the next five years. Lt. Gen. Richard Mills, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, assured Marines that no one will be forced out of the service early and those who are serving with units that will be deactivated will be transferred to active ones. In light of the cuts, Mills added that Marines who wish to stay in the Corps will face some challenges

- including stiffer competition for re-enlistment. "Marines will need to be top performers to find a slot in the career force. There are some Marines serving very well now and doing the best they can who won't stay in," he said. While the Corps plans to cut air and ground troops, headquarters elements and explosive ordnance disposal and support units, it will add more than 1,000 personnel to cyber warfare and special operations units. Marines seeking work outside of the Corps will have access to transition assistance programs that will help with resume-writing, job networking and finding educational opportunities.

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### 5 THINGS TEACHERS COULD LEARN FROM THE MARINES



TIME blogger Andrew J. Rotherham published an article on March 15 advocating five qualities of the Marine Corps that can be translated to other professions. The first is to give people autonomy, but training too. Marines have the youngest force of all the



armed services, but their training allows them to operate alone within the constraints of a mission. Rotherham drives home his second point, if it really matters, do it, with the Corps' motto, "Every Marine a rifleman." He said it "reflects a deep commitment to

mission-critical skills as well as a philosophy that if a group of Marines needs an extra hand, any other member of the Corps is prepared to jump in and help." Third on the list is taking pride in what you do. Rotherham then commended young Marines for their ability to handle themselves in stressful situations, crediting the Corps with teaching character. "Marines don't pick this up through happenstance; they learn it in 13 weeks of core training. Schools get 12 years and still fail to teach kids to be basic citizens," Rotherham said. Finally, he said, the Marines' encouragement of competition allows its members to continually improve. "In other words, the Marines understand that a focus on excellence and accountability improves quality rather than undermining it and effective teams don't shy from acknowledging strengths and weaknesses," he said.

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## AFGHAN SOLDIERS CONDUCT CONVOYS WITH HELP FROM MARINE ADVISOR TEAM



Independent of their Marine counterparts, more than 100 Afghan National Army soldiers conducted their first cross-boundary combat logistics patrol on March 15 at Camp Shorabak, Helmand province, Afghanistan. "Watching a unit go from where it was to being a representation of what Afghanistan can do has been an incredibly humbling experience," said Lt. Col. Luke Kratky, partnering office-in-charge of Regional Logistics Support Command-Southwest (RLSC-SW) Advisor Team. "This

mission is letting the world know that great things are happening out here." The patrol is just one of the many ways the Marines of the RLSC-SW Advisor Team are paving the way for handing over logistical responsibilities to the ANA, as the two forces have worked together for months to make progress in developing the ANA as a professional force. Advisor teams give classes to ANA senior non-commissioned officers, so they can teach their junior soldiers the lessons they're learning from the Marines.

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## MARINES TRAIN UGANDAN FORCES TO FIGHT TERRORISM IN EAST AFRICA COAST

Marines are providing valuable assistance training Ugandan forces as the hunt continues for Joseph Kony, commander of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Since the beginning of February, 30 Marines from Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force 12 (SPMAGTF-12) have worked with soldiers from the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) in preparation for potential battles against terrorism in East Africa. So far, the Marines have taught the use of combat weaponry, marksmanship, field medicine and other soldiering skills that the UPDF can use to fight the LRA and al-Shabaab, insurgents who recently joined al-Qaeda's terrorist network. The Marines also trained the UPDF on tactics for fighting in urban spaces with dangers, such as sniper fire and uncovering improvised explosive devices. "The soldiers on training will use the acquired knowledge in war-torn Somalia and in the hunt down of fugitive LRA commander Joseph Kony wherever he is," said UPDF Lt. Col. Richard C. Wakayinja, a senior officer in the field engineering unit training with the Marines. Throughout the course of their six-month deployment, SPMAGTF-12 will dispatch groups of up to 50 Marines to partner with and train soldiers in other African nations. Missions similar to that of SPMAGTF-12 could become more common as troop levels in Afghanistan decrease with the approaching 2014 mission end date.



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## MARINES, JAPANESE GROUND SELF-DEFENSE FORCE LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER AT EXERCISE FOREST LIGHT

Marines with Combat Logistics Regiments (CLR) 35 and 37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force



participated in Exercise Forest Light with soldiers from 4th Infantry Regiment, 5th Brigade, Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF). The cold-weather field training exercise took place in mainland Japan March 2-12. "This training is an important opportunity for our Marines and the JGSDF soldiers to learn from one another and build relationships," said Col. John E. Kasperski,



commanding officer of CLR-37. In addition to learning about snowshoeing and skiing, the Marines and soldiers practiced their combat lifesaving skills and first aid skills specific to cold-weather situations. "The ski training was a great event because the Marines and JGSDF soldiers shared many laughs while learning a valuable skill for cold-weather conditions," said 1st Lt. Yujirou Yauchi, a JGSDF ski instructor and interpreter. During the field training exercise, Marines and JGSDF soldiers maneuvered through the training area and reacted to different scenarios conducted by role-playing controllers. Forest Light further deepened the connection between the Marines and the JGSDF.

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## MARINE CORPS, ARMY AUTHORIZES PRODUCTION OF NEW HELMETS

The Marine Corps and the Army have authorized initial production of 4,000 Enhanced Combat Helmets (ECH) to be increased to 8,600 in May when the production decision is finalized. The new and improved helmets are composed of a ballistic protective shell, pad suspension system and four-point strap system. The lightweight, Ultra-High Molecular Weight Polyethylene material technology in the ECH provides Marines and Soldiers with increased small arms protection, while the composition and construction of the ECH also protects more fully against ballistics and fragments than the current Marine Corps Lightweight Helmet and Army Advanced Combat Helmet. Once a full rate production/fielding decision is made, the ECH will be sent to Marines and Soldiers deployed to



Afghanistan and Iraq. Throughout the course of the multi-year contract, the Corps will receive 38,500 helmets and the Army will receive 200,000 helmets.

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## MARINE CONVOY VISITS CHARLESTON HARBOR



While conducting a long-range convoy training operation, Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 8 (CLB 8), 2nd Marine Logistics Group took some time to interact with the residents of Patriot's Point, S.C., on March 16. The Marines, all veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, set up their logistics vehicles in a static display outside the Patriot's Point Naval and Maritime Museum at Charleston Harbor. Those in the community or visiting the nearby USS

Yorktown had the opportunity to learn more about the Corps. "The families love going through the trucks talking to the Marines and learning a little bit about what they do," said Lt. Col. Mike Williams of CLB 8. Throughout the day, the Marines showcased their capabilities, shared their experiences and heard stories about visitors' military connections. "I had a great time listening to their stories from Afghanistan," said Cynthia L. Phillips, a visitor from Concord, N.H. "This really took me back to when I was young and used to hear my grandfather and uncle tell their war stories." The CLB 8 Marines stopped in South Carolina as part of a first-of-its-kind, multi-state, long-range convoy that took place March 12-17.

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[Watch video of the Marines' Display](#)

[Also Read: CLB Makes History with Long-Range Convoy](#)

## RETIRED MILITARY WORKING DOG TO BE REUNITED WITH MARINE TRAINER

Megan Leavey will adopt Sgt Rex, the German Shepard she was injured with during a bomb blast in Iraq in 2006 when she served as a corporal. "We anticipate



that as early as next week that Megan and the military working dog that goes by the name of Rex will be reunited," said Capt. Barry Edwards, spokesman at the Marine base at Camp Pendleton, Calif. "We wish Rex all the best in his coming years of relaxation with Megan." Leavey served with Rex during two combat deployments and had a special connection with the dog. She



began her campaign to adopt Rex after officials at Camp Pendleton, Calif., determined that the 10-year-old canine should be retired. Military officials in the Air Force's Military Working Dog Program then conducted an investigation to ensure that the dog did not display aggressive tendencies and would be suitable for adoption.

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## TRANSITION

### SPAWAR AND NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER HOST WOUNDED WARRIOR NETWORKING EVENT

# SPAWAR



Wounded warriors and transitioning service members took advantage of a senior leadership panel discussion and networking forum hosted by the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) and Naval Medical Center San Diego on March 15. The panel discussion with SPAWAR and industry senior leadership discussed veteran hiring programs, internships and employment opportunities, and it was followed by a full range of networking sessions, including resume preparation and lessons on using social networking tools for finding work. The

event was part of a SPAWAR initiative to ensure that seven percent of all new hires in 2012 are wounded warriors. "Most of our wounded, ill and injured population in the region are the 19-25 years old's who haven't gone to college...We help them find other paths to their next

career through myriad programs, internships, training and mentoring opportunities," said Cmdr. George Byrd, SPAWAR's wounded warrior program manager.

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## THANK YOU

### MARINE'S FATHER TO BEGIN TREK ACROSS COUNTRY TO RAISE MONEY FOR MILITARY FOUNDATIONS

With twin sons serving in the Marine Corps and the Army, Mike Mobley decided to take his desire to support troops across the country one step further - literally. Beginning on Saturday, March 24, he will begin "Operation Hero Trek," a 2,000-mile walk from Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, Colo., to Camp Lejeune, N.C. After starting the journey this weekend, he plans to arrive at Lejeune in late June in time for his son's homecoming with 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. "The first response I get from most people is, 'You're crazy!'" the father said. "But once they start thinking about it and realize how much I've been planning and what it's for, they start asking me what they can do to help." Already, supporters and organizations have donated money and volunteered to walk with Mobley along his trip. The proceeds from the walk will benefit several veterans' organizations, including Adaptive Adventures, the Fisher House Foundation, the Greatest Generations Foundation and the Wounded Warrior Project.

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