

[Subscribe to the Marine Corps Connection](#)



## MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE TO AUSTRALIA



Starting next year, U.S. Marines will begin rotational deployments to Darwin and northern Australia, where they will conduct exercises and training with the Australian Defense Force. The implementation of these deployments is envisioned as a gradual, phased process that initially expands on existing bilateral training with the eventual goal of a capability of up to a 2,500-person rotational Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). A Marine Corps liaison element is expected to be in place within the first quarter of 2012 to work with their Australian counterparts on planning for the larger force presence. This contingent will also look to initially focus on enabling company-level training within Australia.

[Read More](#)

## HEROES

## MISSOURI MARINE RECEIVES BRONZE STAR



On Nov. 7, Marine Gunnery Sgt. Quentin K. Black, a Willard, Mo., native, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroic actions while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. According to the citation, Black's team manually rendered safe several Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) while exposed to enemy machine gun and small-arms fire. Under his leadership, his team completed 545 missions and rendered safe 141 IEDs. "Black reflected great credit upon himself and

upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service," the citation read.

[Read More](#)

## WOUNDED WARRIOR REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING NAMED FOR FALLEN NEW MEXICO MARINE



The Wounded Warrior regimental headquarters in Quantico, Va., has been named after Lance Cpl. Christopher Adlesperger, of Albuquerque, N.M. In 2004, while serving in Afghanistan, Adlesperger was wounded by an enemy grenade but still managed to destroy an insurgent stronghold and save the lives of fellow Marines who were wounded and pinned down. A month later he was involved in another firefight that took his life. For his actions in Afghanistan, he was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

[Click here to watch video](#)

## NEWS

## CORPS LOOKS TO PACIFIC, DRAWDOWN IN AFGHANISTAN

All branches of the military are looking for ways to cut spending, and with the downsizing of service members from Afghanistan, there is concern about the future troop placement. At a conference last week in Arlington, Va., Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps said the Corps is getting back to its amphibious roots. The Corps' amphibious force mission includes maintaining freedom of movement for sea trade, providing operational reach and increased agility. We possess the finesse, the training and tools to knock at the front door diplomatically, pick the lock skillfully or kick it in violently, Amos said. Even with the drawbacks in finances and manpower, Amos said the Corps will continue to do what America wants by being the expeditionary force in readiness; self-sufficient and ready for everything.



[Read More](#)

[See Also: Regional Command Southwest weekly news round-up](#)

## MARINE COMMANDANT DISCUSSES F-35B PROGRESS



Former Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, put the F-35B vertical landing version of the Joint Strike Fighter on probation because of testing, structure and propulsion problems. After 10 months of weekly meetings on the subjects with senior Defense Department and Navy officials, Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, hopes Defense Secretary Leon Panetta will soon take the F-35B off probation. Amos says

Lockheed Martin and the program office under Vice Adm. David Venlet have resolved two of Gates' larger concerns entirely and found fixes for five engineering problems that are ready for testing in December and January. Amos, a fighter pilot and the first aviator ever to serve as Marine Corps commandant, is confident those fixes will work. As of Nov. 1, the F-35B had completed 291 of 293 test flights planned for calendar 2011, putting it 13% ahead of its new schedule. By the same date, two B variants completed more than two weeks of sea trials on the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp, during which they completed 72 short takeoffs and vertical landings, all but flawlessly. One pilot said his biggest concern was putting the nose wheel down in a one-foot square target on the ship's pitching deck. "The decision on probation is all Panetta's to make," Amos said.

[Read More](#)

### III MEF CONTINUES THAILAND ASSISTANCE



The III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) flood-relief command element was sent to the Kingdom of Thailand on Nov. 14 to support relief efforts in recently flooded areas of the country. The command element, consisting of service members from several military branches, will ensure the U.S. military works in coordination with the Royal Government of Thailand to provide aid and recovery. With the flood-relief command element set up in Thailand, we will have boots on the deck, which will

speed the reaction time if Thailand and U.S. officials decide to send additional III MEF service members, said Sgt. Maj. Lawrence P. Fineran, sergeant major, III MEF flood-relief command element and 3rd MLG sergeant major. III MEF's actions are part of a larger U.S. initiative to support Thailand as U.S. forces are committed to working and assisting their Thai allies and partners."

[Read More](#)

### PERSONNEL CUTS: HOW DEEP WILL THEY GO?

During a Nov. 18 interview with the



*National Defense*, Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, said the Marine Corps will have to reduce its numbers well below the cuts that were already proposed because of the impending federal budget crunch. The Corps grew from 176,000 Marines in 2006 to 202,000 Marines because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Last year, a force structure review

recommended an end-state of 186,800 Marines. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates gave his approval to the 186,800 number, but that was before everything began to unravel financially, Amos said. "My sense is that were probably going to go lower than that. I can't tell you how much lower because that decision has not been made yet," he said.

[Read More](#)

## FALLEN MARINE'S FIANCEE TO JOIN MARINE CORPS



Twenty-one year-old Madeline Cates' fiancée Lance Cpl. Travis Nelson was killed in 2004 in Afghanistan just two weeks after his 19th birthday and five weeks after being deployed. Cates is now honoring his memory by starting the job he loved. Cates enlisted in the Marine Corps at the end of October to finish what he started. Cates will begin training in March, the same month Nelson was supposed to return. I have to do something with my life, and I couldn't think of a better way to honor him than to follow in his footsteps, Cates said. She is due to report to boot camp in Paris Island, South Carolina on March 5, 2012.

[Read More](#)

## DESIGNER DRUG SPICE NEGATIVELY IMPACTS HEALTH AND MILITARY CAREER



The Navy developed a YouTube video to warn service members about the negative impacts of synthetic marijuana known as spice. All military



services have banned the use of spice, which is comprised of organic leaves coated with synthetic chemicals. Although spice is marketed as a safe way to get high while avoiding detection during drug tests, officials emphasized in the video that both spice selling points are false. The Drug Enforcement Administration issued a decision in

March making spice illegal nationwide for at least a year. According to the DEAs website, the agency took the action as an emergency measure in light of the alarming number of reports about spice-type substances it received from poison control centers, hospitals and law enforcement agencies. Like other synthetic drugs including K2 and Blaze, spice is developed using chemicals not intended for human consumption, the video notes. The Food and Drug Administration doesnt regulate these substances, which means they arent subject to oversight during the manufacturing process.

**Read More**

**[Click here to watch video](#)**

## **EMARINE PROVIDES A SAFER WAY TO NETWORK AND SHARE INFORMATION ON THE WEB**



Per Marine Corps Administrative Message 499/11, units, individual Marines and their families are to employ the use of eMarine to discuss or provide information about Corps specific topics.

Launched on Sept. 1, eMarine provides Marines, family members and commands a safer way to share information on the web. At any given time, we can find multiple [operational security] violations on Marines or their spouses online profiles, said Lisa Gleason, the project manager for the creation and implementation of eMarine. A lot of information can be gathered and used adversely, which is why were providing a more secure alternative to traditional social media outlets not open to the public. Even in its infant stage, eMarine currently has nearly 50,000 users at the present time with many more to follow as word of its implementation reaches all Marine Corps units worldwide. Full utilization of eMarine by all Marine Corps units is expected by February 2012.

**Read More**

## MILA KUNIS ENJOYS MARINE CORPS BALL; SGT. MOORE THANKS WINGMEN



On Nov. 19, actress Mila Kunis kept her promise and attended the Marine Corps Ball with Sgt. Scott Moore in Greenville, N.C. Moore, who recently returned from Afghanistan, started this year's wave of celebrity invites to the Marine Corps Ball, but he didn't do it alone. According to the *Los Angeles Times* blog, he credited wingmen Justin Timberlake and Dan Lamothe, *Military Times* reporter, for their help getting his invitation to Kunis. Despite the presence of Hollywood

hotties shining a spotlight on this year's celebrations, the Marines and sailors know what the night is about," spokesman Capt. Scott Sasser told the Greenville Daily Reflector. That's been the focus the whole time.

[Read More](#)

## THANK YOU

### OPERATION HOMEFRONT HELPS MARINE FAMILIES FOR THANKSGIVING

Operation Homefront Thanks-For-Giving program provides Thanksgiving assistance to military families who are currently on active duty. Each family will receive a minimum of \$50 to purchase food items or a Thanksgiving dinner in a



bag. Military wife Randi Burkewill spend Thanksgiving without her Marine husband, but she wont be alone. Shell have her son and neighborhood friends. Theyre kind of



like our family away from family, Burke said. Thanks to the Operation Homefront Thanks-For-Giving program, she will be getting a turkey, stuffing, potatoes, yams and all kinds of other things. Im very appreciative for any help we can get, Burke said.

[Read More](#)

