



## MONTFORD POINT MARINES RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL



The first African Americans to join the Corps during World War II, the Montford Point Marines, received the Congressional Gold Medal during a ceremony at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., June 27. Nearly 400 surviving Montford Point Marines attended the medal presentation, and Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, hosted a parade in their honor at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., June 28. "They answered our nation's call despite our society being deeply divided along racial lines," said Amos. "To me, they were heroic for two reasons: they fought against the enemy during World War II while they also fought for their civil rights and the respect of

their fellow Americans." Named after the segregated training facility in Jacksonville N.C., the Marines who served at Montford Point are a part of the rich legacy of the Corps. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor that can be bestowed by Congress.

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## NEWS

### 11TH MEU RETURNS AFTER SEVEN MONTHS AT SEA



More than 2,200 Marines and Sailors from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) returned to Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 21 after their seven-month deployment to the Western Pacific, Middle East and Horn of Africa regions. During their time at sea, the 11th MEU Marines participated in 14 exercises with regional host nations. "We were able to sharpen our skills while strengthening partnerships with our hosts," said Col. Michael R. Hudson, 11th MEU commanding officer. Hudson also noted that the deployment employed all the capabilities of the MEU's air-ground-logistics team. "The performance of our Marines and Sailors was outstanding. Our team showed their expertise across the spectrum of expeditionary operations," he said. "Now comes one of the best parts: reuniting with family. These men and women have earned some time with their loved ones and can rest easy knowing they made a difference."

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### 2ND MAW SHOWS ITS MAILED FIST



Exercise Mailed Fist, one of the largest 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) exercises in recent history, ensured that 2nd MAW remains prepared to serve as the II Marine Expeditionary Force's rapid-deployment aviation force-in-readiness. Squadrons from Marine Corps Air Stations Cherry Point, New River and Beaufort, as well as a



battalion of Marines from Camp Lejeune, participated in the exercise, which took place June 18-21. "It's not very often that we have an opportunity to have this many forces coordinated into one week's worth of

exercises," said Capt. Jeff Pullinger, an AH-1W Cobra helicopter pilot. "We can all come together and work together just as we would if we were forward deployed." The exercise trained 2nd MAW Marines in casualty evacuation, aerial and rapid ground refueling, rescue missions, air assaults, heavy-lift maneuvers and field carrier landings.

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## 31ST MEU PLAYS OPPOSITION FORCE DOWN UNDER

Marines and Sailors from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) are participating in Exercise Hamel 2012 June 21-July 18 at Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Rockhampton, Australia. Playing the role of an opposition force, the Marines will defend the training area against the Australian Army's 1st Brigade. Unmanned aerial vehicles, snipers and mortars will force the Australians to react to a highly skilled enemy. In turn, the exercise will help the Marines hone their defensive skills. "Participating in Exercise Hamel is a great opportunity to get us back into the field skills, including long-range patrolling fundamentals, and sustaining ourselves in the field without resupply for up to four days at a time," said Capt. John Zaal, commanding officer of Gulf Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. The 31st MEU is the only continuously forward-deployed MEU and is the nation's force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

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## JUNGLE CLASSROOM: MARINES TRAIN WITH MALAYSIAN ARMY



Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment landed in Malaysia June 17 for a



week of jungle warfare training as part of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT). Malaysian soldiers taught Marines how to track footsteps and troop movement, as well as how to make rope, medicine and insect repellent from local plants. "While training here, I thought about Vietnam and World War II and the way the Marine Corps adapted to the jungles back then," said Lance Cpl. Mitchell Arrezola, a team leader with 2nd Platoon, Fox Company. "Our

counterparts really helped us get back to that and taught us as much as they could in this week." In return, the Marines instructed the Malaysian Army on military operations in urban warfare. CARAT is a series of bilateral military exercises between the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy and the armed forces of Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

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## WWR WELCOMES NEW COMMANDER



Hundreds gathered at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, in Triangle, Va., as Col. John L. Mayer relinquished his command to Col. Willard A. Buhl June 14 during a change of command ceremony for the Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR). "I will give my very best everyday for this regiment, the Marines and their families who are a part of it, and the great charitable and veterans organizations that support us every day," said Buhl. After two years with the WWR, Mayer, the outgoing commander, will

serve as the chief of staff for the amphibious operations for the 1st Division Royal Australian Army. Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, said that Mayer was instrumental in developing many of the WWR's programs, including its family support, athletic and educational components. "Our motto, Semper Fidelis, always faithful, there's no place in the Corps it's more personified, more visual than the care of our wounded," said Gen. Amos.

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## CHANGE OF COMMAND AT 8TH AND I



Col. Christen G. Cabaniss assumed command of the Marine Corps Barracks Washington, D.C., June 21 during a daytime ceremony at the barracks attended by senior leaders, including Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos, and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Micheal P. Barrett. The new commander of the historic "8th & I Barracks" is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and most recently served as the Deputy Undersecretary of the Navy for plans, policy, oversight and

integration. Col. Paul D. Montaus, the outgoing commander, will take up post at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., as the senior Marine and head of the academy's Humanities and Social Sciences Division.

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## NAVY CROSS RECIPIENT GETS FATHER'S DAY SURPRISE AT DODGER STADIUM

For the first time in more than a decade, Navy Cross recipient Cpl. Christopher Farias was able to spend Father's Day with his father. As Farias threw out the first pitch at the Los Angeles Dodgers game June 17, he was surprised to see his father behind the catcher's mask. Farias said he could tell it was his dad as soon as he caught the ball and started walking towards him. Farias, now a 11th Marine Field Artillery School Instructor at Camp Pendleton, Calif., was awarded the Navy Cross last month, the nation's second-highest award for combat valor, for heroic actions during an ambush that occurred in Helmand province, Afghanistan in October 2010. Farias suffered a



concussion and was wounded by shrapnel but kept fighting so casualties could be evacuated.

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## MARINE CORPS MUSEUM GETS \$12M GIFT

The National Museum of the Marine Corps, in Triangle, Va., received a \$12 million donation to expand their exhibits featuring Marines who served in Vietnam. The new Vietnam exhibits, which are scheduled to open in 2017, are part of a larger undertaking by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation to highlight the Corps' history since 1975, including Beirut, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Somalia, and more than a decade of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. The expansion, as well as an overlook in memorial park, will be made possible thanks to the generosity of Timothy T. Day, the chairman and CEO of meat producer Bar-S Foods Company.



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## HEROES

### MEB-AFGHANISTAN TO RECEIVE VALOR AWARD



Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has approved the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) for all personnel who served as part of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan (MEB-Afghanistan) from 2009-2010. MEB-Afghanistan is credited with launching a broad offensive against Taliban insurgents in Helmand, Farah and Nimroz provinces. According to the citation, the unit "conducted



the most holistic counterinsurgency campaign since the coalition presence in Afghanistan began in 2001." The MEB-

Afghanistan, led by then Brig. Gen. Larry Nicholson and overseen by 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., included Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 3, RCT-7, Marine Aircraft Group 40, Combat Logistics Regiment 2 and the brigade's headquarters group, among other units. This is the first time that a Marine-led unit has been awarded the PUC for service in Afghanistan.

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## TRANSITION

### TROOPS TO TEACHERS

Troops to Teachers, a federal program designed to assist eligible military personnel in becoming teachers after their career in the armed forces, led a seminar for service members aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. Former service members often become educators due to the similar interpersonal skills needed in both teaching and military service. "People who have served have an honest care for the success of their students," said Bill Leitheiser, director of the Mountain Pacific branch of Troops to Teachers. "They already want to serve the community, give back and make a difference." Troops to Teachers offers stipends and scholarships for teaching in a low-income school of up to \$10,000 on top of the post-9/11 G.I. Bill and financial aid service members can receive. The program offers assistance across the country with the necessary credentials needed to become a certified teacher.

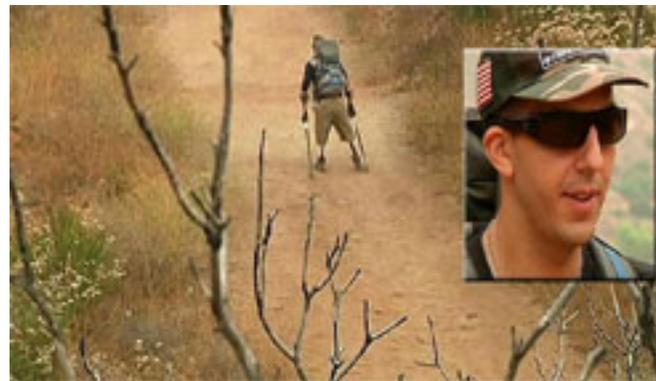
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[Troops to Teachers Website](#)



### DOUBLE AMPUTEE CLIMBING MOUNT KILIMANJARO

Staff Sgt. Mark Zambon is making his way to Tanzania, where he plans to hike Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest point in Africa. The Marine, who lost both his legs while serving in Afghanistan in 2011, now walks with prosthetic "legs with no knees" and has been preparing for this journey for nearly 18 months. As part of his extensive recovery and rehabilitation, he's spent hours each day climbing mountains around San Diego. Yet for Zambon, hiking Mount Kilimanjaro is not just about the physical feat but serves as an opportunity to honor his Marine brothers Sgt. Mike Tayatao and Staff Sgt. Josh Cullins, who were killed in action. "I'm going up Killy for Josh and for Mike, and I'm burying their dog tags on the top of the mountain," he said.



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## PANETTA HONORS WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETES

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta honored 50 Warrior Game athletes who competed in Paralympic sports during the 2012 Warrior Games at a Pentagon ceremony June 25. "I cannot tell you how much you inspire us with your courage, with your determination, with athletic prowess, [and] with your physical strength," Panetta said. Marine representatives included Cpl. Dylan Kelly, Lance Cpl. Ronald Sullivan and Pfc. Kirk A. Salmon, who helped lead the Corps' team to victory to bring home their third-



consecutive Chairman's Cup last month. This year's Warrior Games brought together more than 200 ill, injured and wounded athletes from across the military.

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