

[Subscribe to the Marine Corps Connection](#)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN AFGHANISTAN



On Thanksgiving, Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps and Sgt. Maj. Michael P. Barrett, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited nine Forward Operating Bases and Combat Outposts spread across all of Helmand province, Afghanistan. Amos and Barrett addressed the Marines for Thanksgiving and talked about the missions accomplished since their last visit in

September. "You're making a difference," said Amos. "We are going to walk out of here under a victory flag because of the progress you are making. The focus of the world has been on this area for so long, and we are starting to see the progress we had hoped for

when we began our mission in these areas." At each stop, Amos and Barrett answered questions and presented awards for valor to several Marines and Sailors. At the end of the day, they helped serve Thanksgiving dinner to Marines at Forward Operation Base Dwyer, the headquarters for Regimental Combat Team 5 in charge of Southern Helmand province, Afghanistan.

[Read More](#)

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

AMBUSHED IN AFGHANISTAN, MARINE 'MUSCLE MEMORY' HELPS 50-YEAR-OLD STATE DEPARTMENT WORKER REPEL ATTACK



After five rocket-propelled grenades exploded in quick succession, Dale Kramer, a 50-year-old State Department employee and Marine Veteran, took control of a machine gun mounted on his truck and commenced firing in Afghanistan. In reaction to his response, the insurgents concentrated on his vehicle, raking it with bullets. By the end of the 19-minute engagement, Kramer had expended more than 1,000 rounds. U.S. military witnesses credit his withering fire with suppressing enemy gunners and forcing them to take cover. Kramer, a Grand Rapids, Mich. native, spent most of his years in the Marine Corps with the Grand Rapids-based 1st

Battalion, 24th Marines training as a machine gunner. "It's what we call in the military muscle memory. When you practice something so many times, it was like riding a bike, Kramer said. "I knew what to do." On October 2011, in recognition for his bravery during the March 2010 attack, Kramer, was awarded the "State Department's award for heroism."

[Read More](#)

HEROES

MARINE RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE TO COMMUNITY



On Nov. 22, the city of Jacksonville, N.C. awarded Staff Sgt. Daniel G. Stoy the Outstanding Veteran's Award in recognition for his service to the city. When a tornado hit the area this past summer, families were devastated, homes were destroyed and businesses were leveled. Stoy quickly gathered up a group of Marines, headed to town and helped in any way they could. He and his team spent countless hours servicing the community in the wake of the event. "If there is any time that we need help, Staff Sgt. Stoy always gets his troops for us," said Verl H. Matthews, senior vice commander of the Purple Heart Chapter. "He asks for volunteers and him and his guys always come and help. These guys are some of the hardest workers. He has just done so much for us and the

community." Stoy has three Purple Hearts from wounds he received in Iraq and serves as the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Beirut Memorial Chapter 642. Stoy said that he plans on doing community service for the rest of his life and was very humbled to receive the award. He attributes his love for service to his father and wanted everyone to know how appreciative he was to be recognized.

[Read More](#)

NEWS

THE MARINES GO RENEWABLE



The December edition of Outside Magazine has a lengthy article on Marine Corps initiatives to reduce dependence on fossil fuels at the tactical edge. David Roberts writes, "India 3/5 had another source of power: the sun. Specifically, they had a ground-renewable expeditionary energy system (Greens): four portable



modules that fold out into two large solar panels each, all connected to a power cell to store the energy

overnight. During field operations away from the patrol base, each Marine also carried a solar portable alternative communications energy system (Spaces), an eight-square-inch flexible solar panel lightweight enough (about 2.5 pounds) to be rolled up and stowed in a pack. Normally, a patrol carries enough batteries to last three or four days—20 to 35 pounds for each grunt—and is dependent on frequent and dangerous resupplies. But with the packable solar panels, says Patterson, his patrol of 35 soldiers shed 700 pounds. ‘We stayed out for three weeks and didn’t need a battery resupply once,’ he says.”

[Read More](#)

CMC ISSUES SAFETY MESSAGE TO ALL MARINES



In the 2011 holiday message, Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, reminds all Marines that the holiday season is not only a time to gather with friends and family, but it’s also a time in which efforts must be re-doubled to take care of all Marines. “Last year during the holiday season, we lost five Marines to alcohol and fatigue-related motor vehicle accidents. Each of these was a tragedy and all were preventable,” Amos said. “To safeguard our Marines, leaders

must ensure the hazards of holiday travel are realistically evaluated and that travelers proactively take steps to mitigate the hazard’s effects.” Amos asked all Marines to drink responsibly and to make arrangements to prevent drinking and driving. “Remember, I need every Marine ‘in the fight!’ I can’t afford to lose you!” Amos said. While holiday celebrations typically include time with family, many Marines are deployed around the world and will not have the opportunity to share time with friends and loved ones, which is why Amos asked Marine leaders pay attention to and care for the mental, emotional and physical wellness of deployed Marines.

[Read More](#)

MARINES HIKE 1,000 MILES FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS



The Fortunate Sons, a group of Marines from North Carolina, hiked across the state's 1,000-mile Mountains-to-Sea trail to raise awareness and support for Marines wounded in support of their freedom. The group began their 42-day journey on Oct. 2 at the Great Smokey mountains National Park along the Tennessee border. On Nov. 13, they concluded their hike at Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where family, friends and supporters greeted them. The Marines completed the task in pairs, hiking an average of 150 miles a week. The pairs "switched out"

every Sunday of mission accomplishment. "It's because of the personal experience we have that we decided to raise money for these hikes and donate to the Semper Fi Fund. We've all been affected by someone being injured," said Capt. Mark A. Greenlief, commanding officer, Echo Company, Weapons Training Battalion East.

[Read More](#)

MARINE CORPS MUSEUM SEEKS CHILDREN'S ARTWORK



The National Museum of the Marine Corps is seeking original children's artwork for wounded Marines. The art will be displayed in the Wounded Warrior wing of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. The Storybook Shoppe in Bluffton, S.C. is providing special paper to children interested in drawing, coloring or painting a picture for the

museum. For more information, contact 843-757-2600.

[Read More](#)

MILCONNECT IS NEW ONLINE PORTAL FOR DOD BENEFICIARIES



A range of information about Defense Department benefits information and eligibility is now available online. Two online efforts - milConnect and eCorrespondence - give beneficiaries 24/7 access to personnel information; the ability to update information related to health, education and other benefits; and e-mail notifications about changes in benefits. MilConnect information comes from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility System called DEERS. Eligible users are active duty, National Guard, Reserve members, military retirees, spouses and eligible family members age 18 and older. Related to milConnect, eCorrespondence will use e-mail notifications of changes in benefits rather

than postal service letters for active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve service members on periods of active duty. MilConnect is also available through a mobile application for the Android smart phone.

[Read More](#)

DID YOU KNOW

MARINE CORPS SUPPORTERS SEEK MUSEUM FOR CAROLINAS



Marine Corps supporters launched a national effort to build a \$12 million museum documenting the Marine Corps' history in North and South Carolina. "The history here is very rich, very important, and it needs to be told," said retired Marine Col. Bill Ayers, the interim executive director for the effort. In contrast to other military-centered collections, organizers say they want to pay special attention to the role civilian communities played in supporting the Marine Corps during

the crucial years of their development.

Organizers hope to include as many recorded first-person accounts as they can gather, as well as high-tech recreation of Marine deployments, battles and memorabilia to tell their story. Ayers told the San Francisco Chronicle that the Department of Navy is leasing the group a 27-acre site for the museum. The land is outside of the Marine Corps base and next to the Lejeune Memorial Gardens. Scott Lahr, the primary architect on the project for the architectural firm CMJW, said the building is designed on the Marine theme "of riding ashore on the crest of a wave." Its garden-like setting includes water and roughened materials that merge into smoother forms. The museum will be privately funded, but the city of Jacksonville, N.C., has pledged \$1 million in taxpayer funds for the construction of the building, said city manager Richard Woodruff. "We are very proud of the fact that we are considered the home of the Marines," Woodruff said.

[Read More](#)

