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FIRST LADY KICKS OFF 2012 WARRIOR GAMES



First Lady Michelle Obama kicked off the 2012 Warrior Games May 1 at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. More than 200 wounded, ill or injured service members from the Marine Corps, Navy, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard and Special Operations Command will compete in the Paralympics-style competition this week. "I get to see your strength and your determination up close, as you tell me that you're not just going to walk again -- you're going to run marathons," Obama said. In

total, 33 active duty and 17 veteran Marines comprise the All-Marine team competing to bring home the Warrior Games Chairman's Cup for the third year in a row. The team's members include cancer survivors, amputees and those recovering from traumatic brain injuries and post traumatic stress.

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NEWS

LIBYA RESCUE PILOT NAMED AVIATOR OF THE YEAR

Harrier pilot Maj. J. Eric Grunke was named the Marine Corps Aviation Association's Marine Corps Aviator of the Year for his heroic actions during Operation Odyssey Dawn. On March 22, 2011, Grunke was aboard the USS Kearsarge when he heard that an Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle had gone down near the city of Benghazi, Libya. As he flew towards the pilot's last known location, through his night vision goggles, Grunke caught sight of the lights of two vehicles chasing the pilot through the desert. Grunke contacted the pilot to ask if he needed air support. "...He comes on the radio and, crying, says, 'Tell my wife I love her,'" Grunke said. He told the pilot, Air Force Maj. Kenneth Harney, not to worry because one of his laser-guided, 500-pound bombs would be on deck in a minute. Shortly after he located the pilot, two MV-22 Ospreys brought Harney to safety. Grunke, 33, is serving as an aircraft maintenance officer with Marine Attack Squadron 542 out of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and will be honored in May in Washington, D.C.



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U.S. TO MOVE 9,000 MARINES FROM OKINAWA



About 9,000 Marines stationed on Okinawa, Japan, will be relocated to Guam and other locations in the Asia-Pacific region under a U.S.-Japan agreement announced April 26. The move is part of a broader arrangement designed to decrease tensions between the U.S. and Japan and to spread forces across the Asia-Pacific region. "Japan is not just a close ally, but also a close friend," said Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta in a statement. "And I look forward to deepening



that friendship and strengthening our partnership as, together, we address security challenges in the region." Under

the agreement, about 10,000 Marines are expected to remain on Okinawa. The remaining Marines will relocate to Guam, Hawaii or become part of a rotation in Australia.

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MARINES HONE TACTICS, TECHNIQUES IN OUTBACK



Marines reinforced their knowledge of basic infantry tactics, techniques and procedures during a field-training exercise at Kangaroo Flats, Victoria, Australia, April 16-20. The week-long field exercise tested the Marines with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment on combat marksmanship, foot patrols and ambushes, while becoming accustomed to operating in the Australian outback. "The purpose of the patrols our Marines were conducting at Kangaroo Flats was really to get back to the basics as far as patrolling is concerned," said 2nd Lt. Gregory Jurschak, platoon commander with the company. "Most of my Marines have experience patrolling in Afghanistan and in combat environments, but the environment here in Australia is so different from a terrain and vegetation standpoint, it is forcing us to get back to the basics." During the exercise, Australian pilots flew with the patrols to provide simulated air support and reconnaissance.

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LIGHTEN THE MARINE CORPS LOAD

At a conference this week, Brig. Gen. Frank L. Kelley, commander of Marine Corps Systems Command, told the defense industry that the Corps' future equipment must be lighter and more efficient and not sacrifice a Marine's ability to bring the enemy to their knee anywhere at any time. After 10 years of war and as the Marine Corps sets to reorient for small-scale operations, innovative tools are necessary for the Corps to remain an



expeditionary force. Senior officials also stressed the need for more innovation to conserve fuel and energy to cut down on the need for convoys and lighten the load that Marines carry on patrol. Such efforts are already underway with the development of equipment like Solar Portable Alternative Communications Energy Systems (SPACES), a mobile, foldable solar panels used to charge batteries or power electronic devices.

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ON THE RECORD: MARINE CORPS CHILD OF THE YEAR



After five moves, six schools, eight houses and 10 Marine deployments, 17-year-old Erika Booth manages to remain strong and resilient. She's also the 2012 Operation Homefront Marine Corps Child of the Year. "I've actually really enjoyed being a military child just because I can say my dad fights for our country every day and that's his job and not everyone can say that," she said. Diagnosed with lupus, an auto-immune disorder, Booth doesn't let the disease stop her from going on with her life. She is involved in a variety of leadership positions and helps care for her younger brother, who has autism. "What keeps me going is my love and enjoyment of helping everyone," she said. "I enjoy being on committees and planning things, and volunteering and seeing that I am making difference in my community."

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MARINES SURPRISED BY UNEXPECTED REUNION

It was quite a surprise for Sgt. Maj. Brian Taylor to see Sgt. Maurice Bease at a recruiting event last month in Beaufort, S.C. Taylor was told that Bease was killed in the Pentagon attacks on 9/11. Bease had, in



fact, been at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, but he hadn't been injured in the day's events. At the recruiting event, Taylor was greeting a line of Marines when he recognized Bease, and was shocked that he was alive. "I hugged him and I squeezed him and I just kept saying, 'I thought you got killed!'" said Taylor. Bease agrees: "We as Marines see each other as brothers, so to see a brother I hadn't seen in years, it was pretty emotional for the both of us." Bease and Taylor were able to catch up and plan not to lose contact again.



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TRANSITION

INTERN PROGRAM PAVES WAY FOR WOUNDED MARINES



A Hiring Heroes career seminar was held at Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 24, to provide wounded warriors with employment opportunities and job-searching skills. The seminar discussed interviewing techniques, resume building and federal job search information. "Its programs such as this one that really make us feel appreciated," said Sgt. Ramond Rivera, a wounded warrior at Camp Pendleton. "Not only are they showing us career paths to choose from, but they are also providing the

tools necessary to land the job and keep it." The event was hosted by the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalion Internship Program, which aids wounded warriors transitioning from the military lifestyle to the civilian workforce. Hiring events are hosted quarterly by Manpower & Reserve Affairs with the assistance of the Wounded Warrior Regiment. Those interested should contact their transition coordinator to obtain information about the internship program.

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HEROES

MARINES AND SAILORS HONOR FALLEN COMRADE

Having made the ultimate sacrifice, Lance Cpl. Abraham Tarwoe, a dog handler and mortarman with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, was honored during memorial ceremony April 22. Tarwoe was killed in action on April 12 after stepping on an improvised explosive device (IED) during a dismounted patrol. His fellow Marines remember Tarwoe as a friend, brother, father and an ideal Marine with a constant smile and unfaltering courage. "He knew the risks involved in service...there was no disillusionment in him," said Capt. Charles E. Anklam III, the commanding officer of Weapons Company. "Tarwoe's work ethic, loyalty, and devotion to something larger than himself, transcended national lines and were what drove him to be here, and to ultimately give his life for his fellow Marines." This was Tarwoe's second deployment with Weapons Company; the Marine joined the Corps in 2009 and previously deployed with the unit in 2010.

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MARSOC OPERATOR AWARDED SILVER STAR

Sgt. William J. Woitowicz was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for his life-saving heroism while serving in Badghis province, Afghanistan, in June 2011. His family accepted the medal in his honor in a ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., April 28. Woitowicz, a combat advisor to Afghan police, was serving on a mission to secure the Taliban-controlled village of Panerak, when his patrol came under heavy fire. The Marine



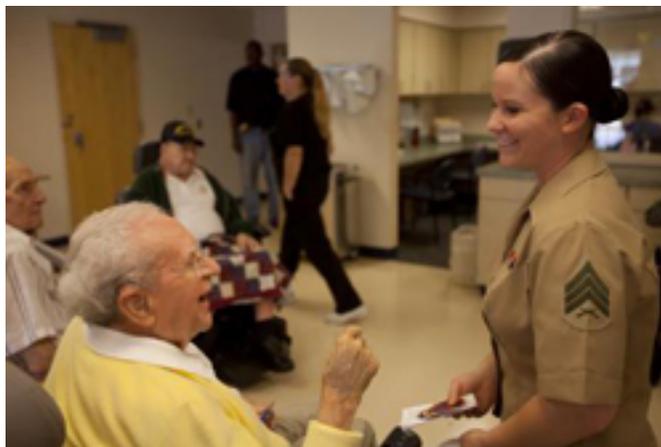
exposed himself to the enemy to return fire, giving his team time to cross a dried riverbed. Woitowicz was mortally wounded while climbing over a rock wall where the rest of his team waited. Woitowicz served with 2nd Marines Special Operations Battalion out of Camp Lejeune, N.C.

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THANK YOU

26TH MEU VISITS VETERANS' HOME



Marines with 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) visited veterans at the Alexander Ninger State Veterans' Nursing Home near Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., April 27, as part of Fleet Week Port Everglades. The facility is home to 120 veterans of conflicts ranging from World War II to Vietnam, and provides services for veterans living in the surrounding area. The visit was an opportunity for 26th MEU Marines to interact with veterans, to listen to them, talk to them and feel the bond that reaches across the

years. "It's a good chance to interact with those who came before us," said Capt. C. Faith Zimmerman, assistant logistics officer with the 26th MEU. "You hear about these places in boot camp, and now you get to hear their stories from when they were there."

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NEW HOME FOR WOUNDED MASSACHUSETTS MARINE

More than 200 Marine, Army and Air Force veterans and volunteer contractors participated in the construction of a new



home for Sgt. Joshua Bouchard April 27 in Gransby, Mass. Homes For Our Troops, a national non-profit organization dedicated to housing severely injured veterans, provided the Marine with a specially-designed home at no cost to the wounded warrior. "We hope the home will provide Sgt. Bouchard with maximum freedom of movement and the ability to live more independently," said Doreen Lewis, community outreach coordinator for Homes For Our Troops. Bouchard lost a leg and suffered severe back injuries when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated under his Humvee during his second deployment to Afghanistan in 2009. He is currently a day patient at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.



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