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## PERSON OF THE YEAR: THE U.S. MARINE



On Jan. 1, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* (U-T) selected the U.S. Marine as its 2011 Person of the Year. This is the first year the paper has honored an individual or category of individuals with a connection to San Diego. The U-T's editorial board writes, "Since Sept. 11, 2001, America has relied on the Marine to keep us safe from terror at home and to take the fight to our enemies abroad, a task our Marines have handled with immense courage, professionalism and honor." San Diego, Calif., is home to 56,000 Marines, some of whom have served multiple tours of

duty in Afghanistan or Iraq. "In recognition of all the Marine has done for San Diego, for the United States and for the cause of freedom," the editorial board concludes, "the U-T salutes the Marine, our 2011 Person of the Year. Semper parati!"

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# HEROES

## MARINE AWARDED PURPLE HEART



Lance Cpl. Adam Jacquet was awarded the Purple Heart by Gen. James F. Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett from his bed at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., The 20 year-old Marine from Chestertown, Md. was injured Oct. 8 after a bomb exploded under the vehicle he was driving in the Helmand province, Afghanistan. Jacquet's injuries were so severe that doctors originally did not expect him to live. After multiple hours-long surgeries, he is now recovering in

what his family calls "a miracle." "I'm doing well," he said. "There are a few things to work on, odds and ends to clean up... getting my balance back." Jacquet's family gathered in his hospital room during the pinning ceremony to hear Amos read the history of the Purple Heart while Jacquet came to attention as best as he could from his hospital bed, proving, his mother said, "Once a Marine, always a Marine."

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## MARINE RECEIVES BRONZE STAR



During a ceremony aboard 29 Palms, Calif., Master Gunnery Sgt. Victor J. Purvis was awarded the Bronze Star for his actions while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. From October 2010 to May 2011, Purvis was instrumental in leading several of the 104 recovery missions that retrieved 119 disabled vehicles. He was injured when an explosive charge detonated, but he continued to focus on the mission before receiving medical



attention. As a battalion maintenance chief for the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Purvis provided maintenance and vehicle recovery support to

his battalion and other units operating in the Division Security Area in Helmand River Valley, Afghanistan. In addition, his engineering efforts supported the construction of several patrol bases that allowed partnership operations with the Afghan Border Police to increase protection of the local population.

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## UNCOMMON VALOR, UNCOMMON AWARD

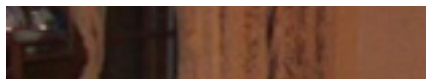


Four members from the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 264 (VMM-264) were awarded the Individual Action Air Medals with combat distinguishing device on Dec. 16, 2011 for heroic actions while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Capt. Thomas M. Keech, the mission pilot; Capt. Matthew A. Cave, co-pilot; Sgt. Justin K. Bartfield-Smith, aerial gunner and observer; and Cpl. John M. Cederholm, crew chief, were a part of a priority re-supply mission in the Sangin River Valley, Afghanistan when

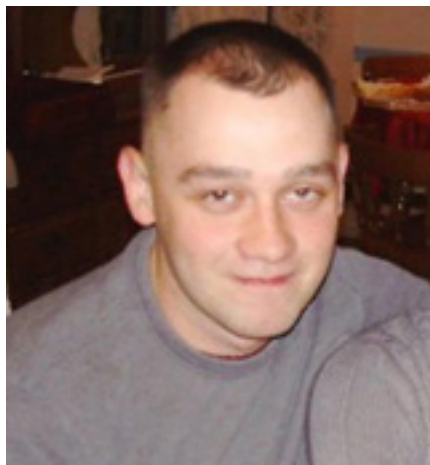
improvised explosive devices in the area prohibited ground assets from providing necessary supplies. The four Marines unloaded supplies while under fire from insurgents near the landing zone. Ground forces and overhead aircraft repelled the attack. "I feel honored to receive this award, but any Marine in our unit would have done the same thing — we just happened to be on duty that day," Bartfield-Smith said. "Everything we do is to support the ground troops."

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## MARINE HONORED AFTER SAVING LIFE



While on a family summer vacation in 2010, Lance Cpl. Matthew Adkins used his Marine Corps training to help



rescue a man. Adkins was visiting Huntington Island State Park and beach in Beaufort, S.C., with his wife and children when he overheard a passing park ranger say a man had been caught in a rip tide and a helicopter had been called to help save them. Using his Marine Corps Water Survival Qualification training, Adkins swam toward the man and assisted him back to the shore. "It's what we expect of our Marines, but when we have a guy who actually does what he's been trained, we are pretty proud," said Capt. Michael Costa, Adkins' commanding officer. "There were quite a few people just standing there looking at what was going on. He took the initiative to do something when others had said there was already help on the way. He had the ability and the confidence needed." Adkins is expected to be honored in the near future.

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## NEWS

### 2ND MLG (FWD) CONTINUES OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP



Marines and Sailors of the 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) (2nd MLG (FWD)) have spent the last three months accounting for, sorting through, cleaning up and processing millions of dollars worth of gear and equipment as part of Operation Clean Sweep aboard Camp Leatherneck and Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan. The operation is part of Regional Command Southwest's (RC SW) plan for redeployment and retrograde in support of reset and reconstitution (R4). The plan facilitates the process of leaving

Afghanistan, saving the Marine Corps money by identifying the excess gear and sending it to other deployed units. According to statistics from Maj. Ken Karcher, the future operations officer for 2nd MLG (FWD) and officer in charge of redeployment and retrograde (R2) operations, the units involved have recovered about \$30 million worth of excess supplies as

of Jan. 1.  
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## PENDLETON BREAKS GROUND ON WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Signifying the culmination of almost eight years of Marine Corps planning to upgrade existing waste water treatment systems, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southwest and members of the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., held a groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 15 for the Northern Region Tertiary Plant. "Commencement of construction for the new treatment facility will bring to the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton added capacity, flexibility -- and reflects positively on their commitment to the environment," said Joe Riojas, NAVFAC Southwest supervisory general engineer. Expected to be completed in December 2013, the plant will be able to treat up to five million gallons of waste water per day. Although waste water plants are not normally LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certifiable, the facility's control building will meet LEED Silver standards.

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## FACE OF DEFENSE: MARINE AND MARTIAL ARTIST



Marine Corps Cpl. Justin Stewart, a professional martial artist, spent much of his childhood in the fighting world of taekwondo. But even being a certified martial arts instructor having studied in South Korea couldn't keep him from the calling to be a Marine. After 13 years of martial arts, the third-degree black belt decided to fight for his country as a U.S. Marine. Currently in Afghanistan, on his second deployment, Stewart serves as an infantry noncommissioned officer for the civil affairs team (CAT) attached to 1st

Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. "His role is to provide the team a subject-matter expert on all things related to infantry, and this is invaluable due to our constant dismounted patrolling operations," said Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Andrew McGann, assistant team leader with the CAT. "He is always the first to volunteer for a patrol and convoy operations." Stewart was first deployed with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit as a professional instructor gunman with the Scout Sniper Platoon attached to Battalion Landing Team 1/1. Although he hopes to continue his taekwondo career in the future, for now Cpl. Stewart is focusing on his Marine Corps profession.

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## SPECIAL HOMECOMING FOR MARINE CORPS MOM



For the past two years, Lance Cpl. Gerald Morales missed Christmas as he has been overseas fighting in the war on terror, making the holidays tough for his mother. "We talk all the time," said Morales. "But the last couple weeks she's been pretty down, we're not all there. It pays a heavy price on her." After getting seven days of leave from the Marine Corps, Morales coordinated with Seattle's Group Health, where his mother works, to set up a Christmas surprise for her. Managers at Group Health scheduled a fake meeting with Morales's mother, and

as she waited for it to start he walked in wearing his dress blues. In between tears, she called it "the best gift ever."

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## THANK YOU

## MARINE VETERAN AND HIS FAMILY GET A NEW HOME



On Jan. 2, Kevin Shear, a U.S. Marine veteran, received the keys to a three-



bedroom ranch home in Marengo, Ill., thanks to dozens of volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and the Marine Corps League. Shear served in the Marines from 1997 through 2002 but was injured during a training exercising and developed reflex sympathetic dystrophy, a chronic pain condition. For the last year, the Shear family has been living with a family member after being evicted from their apartment. The home is the 20th

Habitat home built in McHenry County. "Today has been very joyous," said Shear, who teared up and paused to catch his breath. "It's here, you know. It's very overwhelming."

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## FANTASY WEDDING SET FOR INJURED MARINE AND HIS BRIDE



Injured Marine Cpl. Josue Barron and his bride, Debbie Salazar, will have the wedding of their dreams, valued at \$50,000, on Jan. 15 thanks to Los Willows Private Wedding and Event Estate and several local vendors in California. Fifteen months ago, Barron was assisting a fellow Marine on foot patrol when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated. He lost his leg and an eye and the Marine he saved lost both legs. Upon hearing Barron's story, the owners of Los Willows, retired Marine Col. Al Ransom and his wife, Cathie, and several vendors decided to provide the couple a dream wedding. Though Barron and Salazar had married in a quick ceremony before he deployed, they promised their family and friends a traditional wedding when he returned. "I wasn't expecting this at all," Salazar said. "It's even more special, because for a while we didn't know if he would be able to overcome his depression, which he has, and if we would live a normal life again."

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## TEXAS TOWN RECOGNIZES HOMETOWN MARINE

## GRAVELY WOUNDED BY ROADSIDE BOMB

On Jan. 3, the Edinburg, Texas, City Council recognized Sgt. Jacob De la Garza with a proclamation in his honor for his service in Afghanistan. The Marine was injured by a roadside bomb in May 2011 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, which resulted in his left leg being amputated. He is still undergoing rehabilitation at Camp Pendleton, Calif., while on active duty. Although his first preference is to stay in the Marine Corps when his service commitment ends, De la Garza also has hopes to join the Edinburg police force. He does not wish to allow his injuries to change the quality of his life. "Each day should be lived to its fullest," he said. "My injuries may have changed my life but failed to change the way I lived." De la Garza had previously been awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy and Marine Corps' Commendation Medal for saving the lives of his fellow Marines in Iraq. De la Garza is an Edinburg High School graduate and has served four tours overseas.

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