

TIP OF THE SPEAR

AMOS SPENDS CHRISTMAS WITH MARINES IN AFGHANISTAN



Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, along with wife, Mrs. Bonnie Amos, traveled to Helmand province, Afghanistan to spend Christmas with deployed service members. The couple was accompanied by Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett and several Marine generals during the four-day trip. The group visited forward operating bases and combat outposts throughout Regional Command Southwest's area of operations. The Commandant told the Marines as troops prepare to drawdown he applauds all the progress they have made in the area. "I

have been in and out of here for four years," said Amos to Marines outside Marjah. "[You] have been in and out of here for quite some time and it's changing for the better. This has been your neighborhood. You can see the improvements this place has made." Amos concluded his trip by serving Christmas dinner to Marines stationed at Camp Leatherneck. [Read more](#)

Also Read: Top Marine Officials Spend Christmas with Service Members



VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Inside the White House: A look at the Marines that stand sentry outside the West Wing. *(Video by the White House)*



IN THE NEWS

FIRST SERGEANT AWARDED FOR HEROISM IN AFGHANISTAN



1st Sgt. Reginald Daniels received the Bronze Star Dec. 14, 2012 for his actions while deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan. Daniels served as the company gunnery sergeant for 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment from July through December 2011. Following a "catastrophic improvised explosive device attack" on Aug. 5 that severely wounded his company commander, a Navy corpsman and two Marines, Daniels freed two service members trapped in the vehicle, secured the site, and ensured the wounded were safely evacuated, all while maintaining accountability of their gear. Daniels is now the company first sergeant for Company A,

Marine Wing Communications Squadron 28 headquarters, and the squadron commanding officer, Lt. Col. Matthew E. Limbert, presented Daniels with the award. [Read more](#)

TEXAS MARINE RECEIVES CALL FROM PRESIDENT



Sgt. Rosa M. Quintero, an administrative specialist with I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group (Forward), received an unexpected Christmas gift while deployed at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan: a phone call from President Barack Obama. The Mexican-born Marine was brought to Texas at age 7 and immersed in the American lifestyle knowing very little English. Since then, she has worked hard her entire life, overcoming obstacles to excel beyond her peers. Quintero was meritoriously promoted to nearly all of her ranks, starting as a private first class in 2009 and reaching the rank of lance corporal, even before hitting

the operational forces. Obama called to express his appreciation for her hard work and dedication, sending best wishes from him and the first lady. [Read more](#)

Also Read: Obama Visits Marines on Christmas

NEW LEADER, NEW MISSION AT TWENTYNINE PALMS



Brig. Gen. George W. Smith, Jr., will relinquish command Jan. 11 to Maj. Gen. David H. Berger as head of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center and training command at Twentynine Palms, Calif. As Berger takes the helm of one of the Corps' premiere training facilities, the combat center will be home to a new pre-deployment exercise for the post-



Afghanistan era. The exercise, known as Integrated Training Exercise, scales back counterinsurgency operations in favor of more conventional warfare maneuvers, such as tank battles and artillery attacks. Berger just finished his tour as commanding general of 1st Marine Division (Forward)

headquartered at Camp Leatherneck; Smith is deploying to Afghanistan to serve as deputy commander of the incoming 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force in Helmand province. [Read more](#)

MARINES DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO ASIA-PACIFIC



In 2012, III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and Marine Corps Installations Pacific (MCIPAC) spearheaded the military's reorientation to the Asia-Pacific region. From one humanitarian and disaster relief operation and more than 60 theater security cooperation exercises held throughout the region, III MEF and MCIPAC strengthened bilateral relationships, increased interoperability of forces and exchanged critical skill sets with partner nations. Breaking new ground in the Asia-Pacific, III MEF and MCIPAC sent a message to the world that the U.S. is present and committed to ensuring regional peace and stability. [Read more](#)

CMC VISITS 15TH MEU AT SEA



Following a holiday trip to Afghanistan, Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, visited the Marines and Sailors of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Dec. 28. The MEU is currently deployed at sea as part of the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group. Amos and accompanying Marine officials were greeted by an all-hands call. The Commandant awarded a bronze star to Sgt. Royce R. Hughie, a 15th MEU team leader with Scout Sniper Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 3/5. Amos then spoke to senior officials on the current role of the Corps. "The CMC's visit was inspirational," said Maj. Stephen H. Mount. "His being here

showed us that what we're doing as a MEU is important. He spoke of the importance of our presence in the region." [Read more](#)

"VOICES OF VALOR" SING AT NEW JERSEY COLLEGE



Veterans are now healing their psychological and emotional wounds by turning their experiences into musical lyrics through a pilot program called Voices of Valor. Guided by musicians and a psychology mentor, veterans write and record a song, and then hold a CD release party. The program is founded by a husband and wife team, Rena Fruchter and Brian Dallow, both who previously worked with child victims of domestic abuse. They learned that while young people may be too traumatized to discuss their past experiences, they were usually willing to express themselves musically, either through vocals or instrumentals. This often led to

communication breakthroughs among the children. Voices of Valor is currently underway at Montclair State University in Montclair, N.J., and open to veterans of any age and background. [Read more](#)

MARINE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION NOW OPEN



The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation is currently accepting applications for 2013-14. The Scholarship Foundation provides need-based scholarships to the children of Marines and Navy Corpsmen who attend an accredited undergraduate college, or vocational or technical institution. It began in 1962 when Medal of Honor recipient Brig. Gen. Martin F. Rockmore was financially unable to send his child to college and aspired to create an organization that honored Marines by empowering their children through education. Special scholarships are available for the children of those wounded or fallen in combat. Applications will be

accepted through March 1.

[Submit an Application](#)



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

JANUARY 3, 1944

Col. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, World War II ace and leader of Marine Fighter Squadron 214, the infamous "Black Sheep," downed three Japanese aircraft during his final combat mission of WWII. This feat brought his total number of downed enemy planes to 26, tying the mark in aviation history set by Army Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, who downed 26 planes in World War I.



SEMPER PARATI

VIETNAM-ERA MARINE INSPIRES WAVES OF HELP FOR TODAY'S VETS



Retired Marine Ric Ryan is making a difference in the life of wounded warriors, one hand wave at a time. Ryan takes a daily walk along Highway 4 between Murphys and Angels Camp, Calif. Each time he reciprocates a wave from a passerby, Ryan donates 25 cents to Operation Mend, a charity aimed at surgically rebuilding the disfigured faces of service members wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. With word of his efforts vastly known, people often stop him during his walk to donate money to the cause; his donations now total \$16,000. Ryan served in Vietnam, retaining a few invisible wounds of his own. "We have to do as much as we can for

the young men and women coming back from these wars," Ryan said. The charity was founded by the UCLA Medical Center. [Read more](#)

OUR MISSION

*In the words of Lt. Gen. Victor H. "Brute" Krulak, "The United States does not need a Marine Corps... the United States wants a Marine Corps." As America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness, the Marine Corps is deployed across the globe, standing ready to respond to any crisis. The Marine Corps Connection is your one-stop source for the latest Marine Corps news and is published weekly by the Division of Public Affairs at Headquarters Marine Corps. **Stay connected to your Marines!***



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