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HAPPY 235TH BIRTHDAY, MARINES!



"Sixty years ago, the United States Marine Corps – as it has throughout our history – demonstrated its vital role as America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness. Just weeks after North Korean Communist forces crossed the 38th Parallel, the First Marine Provisional Brigade landed in South Korea, forming the backbone of the perimeter around the city of Pusan. The efforts of the "Fire Brigade" at Pusan allowed for the daring amphibious landing

at Inchon and set the stage for one of the most savage campaigns in our Corps History – the Chosin Reservoir. As we pause to celebrate our 235th Birthday, we pay special tribute to the Marines of the Korean War and recognize their contributions to our legacy." -- Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps

[Read the rest of the Commandant's Birthday Message >>](#)

[Watch the 235th Marine Corps Birthday video >>](#)

NEWS

MARINES TO PROVIDE AFGHANISTAN'S PROOF OF CONCEPT



The Washington Post reported Tuesday that the U.S. Marines have begun handing over some of their small bases to the Afghan



Army in the Nawa district of Helmand Province, a transition that top military commanders intend to cite as proof that the troop escalation and counterinsurgency strategy are succeeding. Marine Maj. Gen. Richard P. Mills, the top U.S. and NATO commander in southwestern Afghanistan, said he is planning a "thinning out, as

opposed to an exit," to maintain the ability "to respond to prevent catastrophic failure."

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AFGHAN VILLAGERS STRONGER AGAINST TALIBAN

Marine Maj. Gen. Richard Mills, who commands 30,000 service members in and around Helmand Province, told USA Today that offensives by coalition and Afghan forces have helped disrupt the drug trafficking that the Taliban relies on to fund weapons and payments to fighters. Mills sees signs that ordinary Afghans in Helmand Province are unhappy with the Taliban, which opens an opportunity for the coalition. "We are beginning to see numerous accounts of neighborhoods where locals are pushing back really hard on the insurgents when they come in to town in the evenings to collect their taxes and conduct their murder and intimidation campaigns."

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TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Since 1947, Toys For Tots has helped underprivileged children throughout the United States by collecting new, unwrapped toys and distributing them as Christmas gifts. This initiative began when Maj. Bill Hendricks and a group of Marine reservists in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children, an effort that resulted in a nationwide campaign a year later. Those wishing to contribute can donate a toy valued at \$15 or less in a Toys For Tots bin from now through December. To find the nearest collection site located near you, please visit www.toysfortots.org.

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ANYTHING TO GET ME OUT OF THIS HOSPITAL

Stars and Stripes reports that Veteran Marine Sgt. Jeremy Soles made history on Sunday when he set a Guinness World Record for running the entire 26.2-mile Marine Corps marathon while wearing a gas mask in an unofficial time of 4 hours, 29 minutes and 2

seconds. Soles, founder of the nonprofit group Team X-T.R.E.M.E., dedicated his achievement to Marine Cpl. John Michael Peck, who suffered traumatic brain injury in Iraq in 2007 but insisted on returning to combat, only to lose both arms and legs in a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan in May. The gas mask restricts his breathing by about 25 percent, and all the gear associated with the mask weighs 15 pounds. "A lot of times, people ask why we run in a gas mask," Soles said. "Well, we use the gas mask to symbolize what we do. People often ask how difficult it is, and our first thing to tell them is it's not nearly as difficult as overcoming traumatic brain injury, which he did, not nearly as difficult as overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder, learning how to walk again with prosthetic limbs - and people see the parallel." Soles met Peck about a month ago during a visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, "I asked him, 'Corporal, would you allow us to honor you and dedicate this run to you,' and he said, 'Anything to get me out of this hospital.'"

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THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS FAMILY

Bad things happen. How it's dealt with shows true character. Petty Officer 2nd Class Shannon Riley, a corpsman with 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) was scheduled to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005. On the morning of his departure, Riley said goodbye to his pregnant wife and two kids. But before he was on his way, she told him she was having pregnancy pains. "Everyone was loading up their bags," Riley recalled. "I talked to my first sergeant; he said the most important thing is family. He told me to take care of her, so I took her to the hospital." So Riley said goodbye to his Marines and goodbye to the twins he would never meet. He stayed home with his wife for a little over a month as her body healed from the miscarriage and then rejoined his brothers-in-arms in Iraq. Three months after he returned from Fallujah, Riley and his wife relocated to Chicago, where she successfully gave birth to their third child. When asked how he got through it all, he said "I just go with it. You gotta cry and get over it. You just can't get hung up on the bad stuff."

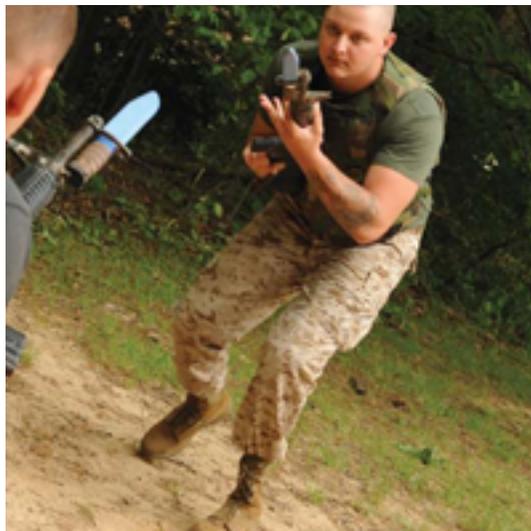
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HERO OF THE WEEK

WOUNDED WARRIOR TEACHES FELLOW MARINES MARTIAL ARTS



[Sergeant Courtney Rauch](#) deployed as an



infantryman to Garmsir, Afghanistan, in 2008. While conducting mounted patrols, Rauch was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. Rauch's left leg was amputated and he suffered shrapnel injuries to his right leg. After a daunting recovery process, Rauch is now a black belt [Marine Corps Martial Arts Program](#) instructor and hopes to return to an infantry unit in the future. He enjoys motivating and inspiring other service members and spends a couple of days a week working out with injured Soldiers and Marines at Walter Reed. "If you want to do something; don't let others tell you that you can't – stand up and prove them wrong – you make the decisions for your life," Rauch says.

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EVENTS

WASHINGTON D.C. MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Gen. Amos will lay a wreath at the [Marine Corps War Memorial](#) Nov. 10 at 10 a.m. in honor of the Corps' birthday. The event is open to the public, but parking is limited. A shuttle bus will be available from the Pentagon's South Parking Lot starting at 8:30 a.m..

The Chaplain of the Marine Corps, Rear Adm. Margaret Kibben, will host a Marine Corps Worship Service Nov. 10 at 4 p.m. at the [Washington National Cemetery](#). For more information, call 703-614-1457.

NAVY COMMISSIONS USS JASON DUNHAM IN FLORIDA



The Navy's newest guided missile destroyer, the [USS Jason Dunham](#), will be commissioned Nov. 13 in Port Everglades, Fla. The new vessel was named after [Corporal Jason L. Dunham](#), a Marine and posthumous Medal of Honor recipient who sacrificed his life during combat in Iraq so his comrades could live. Dunham, from upstate New York, threw his helmet and his body on top of a live grenade during a firefight in Karabilah in April 2004. His action saved the lives of two



fellow Marines. Dunham died eight days later at age 22. A piece of his helmet is enshrined in the mast of the warship.

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