



## TRIBE'S DEAL WITH AFGHAN GOVERNMENT OFFERS CHANCE OF PEACE IN SOUTHWEST DISTRICT



In Wednesday's page 1 of the *Washington Post*, Rajiv Chandrasekaran reported on a chance at peace in southern Afghanistan that has emerged. On New Year's Day, leaders of a tribe that has been responsible for numerous attacks in Sangin struck a deal with the Afghan government to cease offensive acts and evict foreign fighters in the area in exchange for the release of a prisoner, the promise of development assistance and the

prospect of establishing their own security force. If the agreement with the Alikozai tribe holds, it opens up a key road in the direction of the Kajaki Dam, where the U.S. government is trying to repair a hydropower plant to provide much-needed electricity to Kandahar, the country's second-largest city. We've reassured them that we're going to be here for them, that we're not going to abandon them," said Marine Maj. Gen. Richard P. Mills, the top U.S. commander in Helmand. "In years gone by, you had to take our word that if you came over to our side, things would get better. Now we have something we can point to. Locals can see what's happening elsewhere . . . and they can see the inability of the Taliban to come back in any meaningful way."

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## 26TH MEU DEPLOYS TO AFGHANISTAN



At the request of the U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Commander and in conjunction with the government of Afghanistan, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander, Gen. James Mattis is committing elements of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to Afghanistan during their winter campaign. The purpose of the deployment is to exploit gains already achieved against insurgents and more rapidly complete construction of critical infrastructure. More than 1,000 personnel will be used to provide additional capabilities to increase security and progress in Afghanistan, and will operate in the Regional Command-Southwest (RC-SW) area. Upon completion of their mission, 26th MEU

personnel will return to the KEARSARGE ARG/26th MEU.

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## NEWS

### CMC STATEMENT ON THE REPEAL OF DADT

"Fidelity is the essence of the United States Marine Corps. Above all else, we are loyal to the Constitution, our Commander in Chief, Congress, our chain of command, and the American people. The House of Representatives and the Senate have voted to repeal Title 10, US Code 654 "Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the United States Armed Forces." As stated during my testimony before Congress in September and again during hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this month, the Marine Corps will step out smartly to faithfully implement this new policy. I, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, will personally lead this effort, thus ensuring the respect and dignity due all Marines. On this matter, we look forward to further demonstrating to the American people the discipline and loyalty that have been the hallmark of the United States Marine Corps for over 235 years."

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## CMC STATEMENT ON EFV CANCELLATION

"Today, the Secretary of Defense announced the termination of the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) program. I support his decision. After a thorough review of the program within the context of a broader Marine Corps Force Structure Review, I personally recommended to both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy that the EFV be cancelled and that the Marine Corps pursue a more affordable amphibious tracked fighting vehicle. Despite the critical amphibious and warfighting capability the EFV represents, the program is simply not affordable given likely Marine Corps procurement budgets. The procurement and operations/maintenance costs of this vehicle are onerous. After examining multiple options to preserve the EFV, I concluded that none of the options meets what we consider reasonable affordability criteria. As a result, I decided to pursue a more affordable vehicle."

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## DEVELOPING A MORE AFFORDABLE AMTRAC

"There is no guarantee we will learn from the bloody combat lessons of the last century. The current penchant by some for questioning the Marine Corps' need for an amphibious tracked vehicle suggests an ignorance of history and a lack of understanding of the future; it is unsupported by hard lessons learned, world trends, and a security environment characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. Our Nation will most certainly require continued global access from the sea, and just as certainly there are forces at work that are actively and aggressively attempting to deny us that much needed access. The Secretary of Defense clearly stated that his decision to cut the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle program does not call into question the amphibious assault mission of the Marine Corps. Moreover, he stated the requirement of developing a more affordable and sustainable amphibious tractor to provide the Marines a ship-to-shore capability into the future."

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## SEMPER FI FUND FOUNDER NOMINATED FOR AWARD

The Military Spouse of the Year Award nominations are in, and one nomination stands out among the rest. Karen Guenther, founder and president of the Semper Fi Fund, was

nominated for the 2011 Military Spouse of the Year award by Joshua Bliell, a Marine injured in Fallujah in 2006. When Guenther got wind of the young Marine returning to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md., she bought tickets through the Semper Fi Fund for his family to meet him at the airport and arranged transportation and lodging for his family for the duration of his hospital stay. The Semper Fi Fund also purchased a special handicap-accessible car for Bliell and \$50,000 for home modifications. Guenther, a Marine wife, founded the Semper Fi Fund in 2004, which has raised and distributed more the \$42 million to service members and their families.

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## RESTORING A NATIONAL ICON



The Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation is planning the restoration and preservation of the Corps' beloved Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va. The memorial, officially dedicated Nov. 10, 1954, honors Marines who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. While the statue depicts one of the most iconic moments of World War II, the monument is dedicated to all Marines who have died in battle since the Marine Corps' inception in 1775. James Donovan, the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation's executive director, began the initiative to restore and preserve the memorial when he found the flag at the memorial tattered and frayed, among other discrepancies, during a visit in 2007.

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## MARINE SHOOTER EARNS SPOT ON TEAM USA



A Marine who barely qualified on the rifle range in boot camp will compete in an international shooting competition next year. Sgt. Emily Windmassinger of the Marine Corps Rifle Team earned a spot with the USA Young Eagle Rifle Team. In October she'll travel to Brisbane, Australia, to compete in the 2011 Palma World Long Range Championship matches. "I think it's such an awesome opportunity not only for me but for the Marine Corps," she said. "For a long time we've had the

tradition of being the best marksmen on and off the battlefield. Now I get to carry on that tradition at an international level ... and show the world what a well-disciplined Marine looks like."

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## U.S. MARINES ORDER ALL-ELECTRIC TRUCK

Smith Electric Vehicles announced the purchase of two all-electric Smith Newton trucks by the United States Marine Corps, the first military organization to do so. The trucks will be delivered to Camp Pendleton, Calif. A September report by the Center for a New American Security recommended in the interest of financial and security concerns that America's armed forces set a goal of operating all of its systems on non-petroleum fuels by 2040. The Marine Corps has already set out to reduce its energy use 30 percent by 2015 and increase its reliance on renewable electrical energy to 25 percent by 2025.



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## MARINE RUMMY: CARD GAME BEATBOXING

Marine Corps Times has a 'Bored Marine Video feature' and recently they featured a video of deployed Marines beatboxing and Marines playing cards. It was posted on YouTube last month.

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## HEROES OF THE WEEK

### FORMER SAW GUNNER AWARDED SILVER STAR



Sgt. William W. Rollins was on a routine reconnaissance patrol June 19, 2008, in Farah province, Afghanistan, when his unit came under fire from suspected insurgents. With Marines pinned down in an ambush from a squad-sized force of Taliban fighters. Rollins dashed several times into the line of fire, often exposing himself to draw away the enemy from his men. Rollins crept within 30 meters of two machine gun nests, blasting them with his M249 squad automatic weapon, and continued to

dodge rounds and lay suppressive cover so his Marines could evacuate several wounded men and get to safety.

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## 35TH COMMANDANT HONORS 1/8 MARINES



Gen. James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, pins Cpl. Kevin B. Walker of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, with the Purple Heart medal during an award ceremony in Musa Qal'eh, Dec. 25.

Walker was awarded the Purple Heart after receiving shrapnel and a concussion from an improvised explosive device blast while on patrol. During the ceremony, Amos awarded seven Marines with the Purple Heart and told each of them to be proud to wear such a

distinguished award. Amos explained that the Purple Heart is a medal awarded in the name of the President and is the oldest award given. Following the ceremony, Amos spoke to the battalion saying he came to see the Marines on Christmas Day, because there is no place he'd rather be than with the Marines of 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.

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## A GRATEFUL NATION

### WOUNDED PETALUMA MARINE GIVEN NEW HOME

Steven Kiernan, a Petaluma Marine who lost both his legs in 2008 to a roadside bomb in Iraq, has a new home for the holidays. Kiernan, 23, was given a custom-built home by an organization called 'Homes for Troops' that builds specialized housing for injured veterans. The home is one of 60 given to veterans free of charge from an organization. The wheelchair accessible home — with wider doorways and lower countertops — is in Fairfax County, Virginia, where Kiernan now lives. Now, Kiernan is a focused college student with plans to continue service to the country.

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