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BREAKING: RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKE

OKINAWA, Japan - In response to today's earthquake in Japan and subsequent tsunami warning, Marine Corps Bases Japan has activated its Base Emergency Operations Center to monitor the situation and coordinate Marine Corps actions. MCBJ has evacuated residents living in low-lying areas on Camp Foster, lower Camp Lester, and Camp Kinser to an elevation of at least 30 feet/10 meters as a precautionary measure. At this time III MEF Marines and sailors have not been directed to provide assistance in response to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The U.S. State Department is the lead agency for the U.S. government that is coordinating any requests for assistance by the government of Japan. We will continue to monitor the tsunami, coordinate with other U.S. forces on Okinawa, and take action to ensure the safety of military personnel, family members, civilian employees and contractors. Media queries can be directed to Marine Corps Bases Japan Consolidated Public Affairs Office at okinawapao@usmc.mil.

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MARINE CORPS UNVEILS ALL COMMUNITY APPROACH

As the Marine Corps remains focused on finding highly qualified young men and women from diverse backgrounds to become one of the few and proud, Marine Corps Recruiting Command has begun an All Community Approach (ACA). The ACA is a new initiative that focuses on increasing awareness of the many career opportunities the Corps offers. The ACA, created by Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Bailey, commanding general, MCRC, is designed to build relationships between the Corps and diverse communities. This goal will be accomplished by reaching out to civic and business leaders and young men and women who may not know what scholarship and career opportunities are available to them through the Marine Corps. "This approach of engaging diversity recruiting venues and events seeks

to broaden the opportunity for the Marine Corps to engage the local community beyond just the transactional discussions of recruiting," said Maj. Gen. Bailey. "The All Community Approach seeks to improve the opportunities for Recruiting Station commanders and officer selection officers to have access to community influencers and leaders who are best positioned to assist them in their recruiting efforts." By using this approach, the desire is to increase the overall diversity of the Marine Corps.

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"We will make concerted efforts at attracting, mentoring and retaining the most talented men and women who bring a diversity of background, culture and skill in service to our Nation ..." -- 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos

PANEL RECOMMENDS WAYS TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY



A commission created to improve diversity among military leaders has issued 20 recommendations its members say will make the military better reflect the composition of the United States in its ranks. On Monday, The Military Leadership Diversity Commission, created as part of the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, issued the findings of its 18-month research with recommendations on how the Defense Department can improve the promotion of women and minorities at a time when the nation is expected to become increasingly diverse.

According to the report, "The armed forces have not yet succeeded in developing a continuing stream of leaders who are as demographically diverse as the nation they serve."

The disparity between the numbers of racial and ethnic minorities in the military and their leaders "will become starkly obvious without the successful recruitment, promotion, and retention of racial/ethnic minorities among the enlisted force," the report states. "Without sustained attention, this problem will only become more acute as the makeup of the United States continues to change."

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Pictured above, Col. Terry V. Williams, commanding officer, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany. Williams was recently awarded the 2011 Stars and Stripes Engineer Award by the Black Engineers of the Year awards committee. Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, presented Williams with the award.

NEWS

MARINE CORPS SERGEANT MAJOR RETIRES JUNE 9



The Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, recently confirmed to the Marine Corps Times that he will retire. "Nine June, I will be finishing up. As I finish up, though, I can tell you, Marines, if I had to do it all over again, I would not do anything different," Kent said. Sgt. Maj. Kent assumed his current post as the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on 25 April 2007. He completed recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., in March 1976.

Throughout Sgt. Maj. Kent's career, he has guarded American Embassies around the world, served as a Drill Instructor to both enlisted recruits and officer candidates, as well as the Sgt. Maj. for I MEF, that included combat tours in Iraq. The Commandant will announce who he selects to be the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps at an appropriate time in the future.

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THE LEGEND OF SANGIN

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates visited with Marines fighting in Afghanistan on Tuesday. Gates flew to Sangin district in eastern Helmand province and told the Marines, "Before you arrived here, the Taliban were dug in deep. And as the British before you can attest, this district was one of the most dangerous not just in Afghanistan but maybe in the whole world. In the five months since you've arrived here, you've killed, captured, or driven away most of the Taliban that called this place home. ... Your



success obviously has come at an extraordinary price. Our nation owes you an incredible debt for the sacrifices you have made. Since October, [3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment] has suffered the heaviest losses of any battalion in this 10-year-long war. ... Alongside your Afghan brothers, you've written a new chapter in the Marine Corps' roll of honor with your sweat and with your blood. Against the toughest odds and the most difficult terrain, alongside the legends of Guadalcanal, the Chosin Reservoir and Belleau Wood will forever be added in Marine Corps history the legend of Sangin."

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AMERICA'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN READINESS THROUGH TRAINING



Marines and Sailors maintain a reputation as the expeditionary force in readiness through exercises like Pacific Horizon 11, a crisis response and maritime prepositioning force exercise in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 1-14. Sixteen maritime prepositioning ships, which are deployed in the Western Pacific, Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea, are configured to carry nearly



everything the Marine Corps would need to initiate a wide range of military

operations. These ships can conduct offload and at-sea transfer of personnel and equipment from the ships to aircraft or amphibious vehicles capable of ship-to-shore movement. During a recent teleconference with reporters, Maj. Gen. Melvin G. Spiese, deputy commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force and commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Brigade, said, "Sailors and Marines link up with these assets at sea to respond with speed and effectiveness in supporting our nation's strategic interests."

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FISHER HOUSE, WOUNDED WARRIOR BARRACKS OPEN

Two new buildings erected at Camp Lejeune, N.C., will provide a central location for wounded troops to live and a place for military families to stay while their Marines and Sailors recuperate. On Thursday, Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos and other officials turned out to dedicate a three-story, 100-suite wounded warriors barracks complex and the Camp Lejeune [Fisher House](#). The barracks, which will begin housing troops in April, replaces two older structures that served as a common living space



for the more than 100 troops in Wounded Warrior Battalion East. Camp Lejeune Fisher House, which has served 85 families since it began operating in September, is one of over 50 houses nationwide dedicated to providing free temporary lodging to families of recovering troops. Fisher House CEO and President [Ken Fisher](#), a newly minted [Honorary Marine](#), said the house – the first of its kind on a Marine Corps installation – is a tribute to wounded troops and their loved ones.

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Picture above provided by the Jacksonville Daily News.

FAMILIES OF FALLEN COME TOGETHER



More than 150 Camp Pendleton



base residents attended the fifth annual Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) seminar on March 5. The program aims to put those who have lost a loved one in touch with others who have gone through a similar experience. "TAPS is an organization designed to help families of fallen heroes cope with their loss," said Tina Saari, regional director, TAPS. The event was open to family members of any service. Mentors of the TAPS

program, comprised mostly of Camp Pendleton Marines and Sailors, often have previously dealt with a loss in their life and often find inspiration in those they mentor. "A lot of people might not know others who have lost someone," Saari said. "TAPS helps connect them so they can relate to each other and talk about what they're going through." For more information about TAPS, visit www.taps.org or call 800-959-8277.

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CORPS BRINGS BACK WINGS FOR AIRBORNE MARINES



According to a recent Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) released on Feb. 8, the Marine Corps is bringing back the Naval Aviation Observer (NAO) insignia after a 15-year hiatus. Although wearing the wings does not rate extra pay or perks, it is a rare distinction for non-pilots working aboard aircraft in close-air support operations. "Many of these Marines have contributed significantly to the Corps' efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, although combat experience is not a prerequisite for the device," said Capt. Brian Block, Marine spokesman at the Pentagon. To qualify for the device, Marines must meet certain criteria, but commanding generals of the

Corps' aircraft wings are authorized to waive these requirements for Marines who have supported combat missions. Created in 1921, the NAO device is the second oldest set of wings in the Navy, after those worn by naval aviators. The device evolved over time, undergoing several changes before taking on its current form in the late 1960s. Today, the insignia features a full set of wings with an encircled plain anchor at its center.

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HEROES OF THE WEEK

SILVER STARS FOR MARINE, CORPSMAN

A Marine corporal and a Navy corpsman were awarded the military's third-highest honor for valor, the Silver Star, during an emotional ceremony Friday on the parade grounds at Camp Horno on Camp Pendleton, Calif. Cpl. Larry D. Harris Jr.'s family accepted his medal posthumously, while Petty Officer 3rd Class Peter A. Gould was in attendance, the scars on his neck and face visible. While crossing an open field in the Helmand province of southern Afghanistan, the two and their 17-man squad were attacked by close to 40 Taliban insurgents. "We were taking fire from three sides," Gould said in an interview before the medal ceremony. "We were split up and trying to regroup." As Gould, 24, and Harris, 25, attempted to evacuate another wounded Marine from the area, Harris incidentally stepped on an improvised explosive device. Harris' injuries were fatal, and Gould's were highly severe; however, the two managed to save the life of the first wounded Marine. Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson called both men heroes at the ceremony. "It's an absolute honor to stand before you," he said, speaking to Gould and Harris' family just a few feet away.



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Photo by Charlie Neuman- Pictured above, Navy petty Officer 3rd. Class Peter A. Gould has a Silver Star Medal pinned on him by Marine Lt. Col. Fridrik Fridriksson for heroism in Afghanistan.

BRONZE STAR FOR SAVING MARINE'S LIFE



Hundreds of Marines in digital camouflage utilities filled a field house for Navy Seaman Matthew A. Dishmon, a corpsman with 3rd



Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. On Feb. 25, Dishmon was awarded a Bronze Star with combat distinguishing device for saving the life of a Marine during a patrol in Marjah, Afghanistan. "I couldn't believe all those people were there, and I didn't know [until now] how big of a deal it really was," Dishmon said as he thought about the ceremony. "I felt I was just doing my

job." While on patrol, Dishmon's unit was ambushed and Lance Cpl. Matthew T. Earle, an assault gunner with Company I, 3/6, was shot before he could seek cover. Dishmon exposed himself to machine-gun fire to move Earle out of harms way to treat his wounds. The Bronze Star is awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves by heroic or meritorious achievement or service while engaged in action against an enemy of the U.S. and, when awarded for valor, is the fourth highest award in the United States Armed Forces.

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SIX DECADES LATER, KOREAN WAR MARINE GETS HIS PURPLE HEART

Arthur Welch was wounded while serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. After suffering a shrapnel wound in 1953, Welch was technically awarded a Purple Heart while still in Korea, but the medic who treated Welch was killed not long after, and the paperwork for the award was never processed. However, on Monday his family brought him to a Delaware County Commissioners' meeting in Delaware, Penn., for a surprise ceremony. "I don't know what to say," a surprised Welch told fellow Marine Joe Orick, a Delaware County deputy prosecutor who attended the presentation. "I'm all choked up ... thank you very much. It's really something," Welch said.



Before Welch was presented with his Purple Heart, a recording of The Marines' Hymn was

played. Welch and Orick stood at attention while others at the meeting rose to their feet. At the ceremony's conclusion, the two Marines exchanged the Corps' motto, "Semper Fi."

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EVENTS

PAINTERS NEEDED TO WELCOME CORPORAL JOSH HIMAN HOME



Corporal Josh Himan will return to his parent's home in Woodbridge, Va., on April 2, but his house must be modified and made accessible before Pat and Jerry Himan can bring their son home. The Himan family is asking for volunteers during the week of March 14-18. While on patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Himan, assigned to the Second Battalion, Eight Marines, was injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). The result of the explosion left him paralyzed from the chest down. If you are interested in volunteering, contact

Mr. Robert Lant at 703-221-7065 or via e-mail at robertlangdirect@verizon.net.

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SPRING TRAINING GAMES

On March 20, the Marine Corps will support the Military Day at Surprise Stadium [Spring Training](#) Baseball Game. The Color Guard will raise the Marine Corps Flag and present the Colors for the National Anthem before the game between the Texas Rangers and the San Francisco Giants.

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