

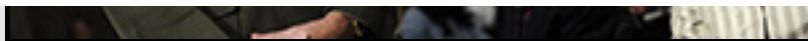


TIP OF THE SPEAR

DUNFORD CONFIRMED AS TOP U.S., NATO COMMANDER IN AFGHANISTAN



Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (ACMC), will take charge in Kabul, Afghanistan as the fifth commander of U.S. and NATO forces early next year, Pentagon officials announced Dec. 4. Dunford brings extensive combat experience to a position he is assuming at a critical time. "He's not flashy, but he's the fighter -- one I could always count on when the going got difficult," said Gen. James Mattis, head of U.S. Central Command and Dunford's commander in Iraq. Eyes will be on



Dunford as Obama and the military decide the pace of drawing down the 66,000 U.S. combat troops in Afghanistan during the

coming weeks. Dunford succeeds fellow Marine Gen. John R. Allen. U.S., NATO and Afghan officials are finalizing a change-of-command ceremony in Kabul, but expect Allen to remain in the job several more weeks. Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton will succeed Dunford as ACMC following his promotion ceremony Dec. 15. [Read more](#)

Also Read: New Commander Faces Challenge of Winding Down Afghanistan War



PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Cpl. Tasia Wise reads a book with a child at the pediatric center in Guam Memorial Hospital Dec. 6 during Exercise Forager Fury 2012. Wise and 10 other service members volunteered their time to help clean windows at the hospital and had the pleasure of meeting children in the pediatric center. Wise is an Aviation Maintenance Administration Clerk with Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 224 which is under Unit Deployment Program with Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force. *(Photo by Sgt. Justin M. Pack)*



IN THE NEWS

MARINES SUPPORT PHILIPPINES TYPHOON RELIEF



Marines in the Philippines were called upon to support humanitarian relief efforts in the wake of Typhoon Bopha, which made landfall Dec. 4, killing approximately 600 people and leaving nearly 1,000 missing. The III Marine Expeditionary Force has been delivering equipment and supplies to the area since impact. To date, they have transported approximately 165 tons of relief supplies. Marines of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines are coordinating the distribution of these supplies and sent an aircraft to search for victims and conduct damage assessments. Support will continue in the coming days as Marines and Philippine Government

officials work jointly to reach communities isolated by infrastructure damage. [Read more](#)

Also Read: Corps Continues Disaster Efforts

OSPREYS MAKE LANDMARK DEPLOYMENT TO GUAM



Marine Corps aviation hit its latest landmark Dec. 8, completing the first exercise using MV-22 Ospreys since their replacement of CH-46 helicopters in Okinawa, Japan. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) successfully deployed three Ospreys across 1500 nautical miles (Okinawa to Guam) in just over five hours. The flight enabled the 1st MAW to simulate flight passage through safe territory free of enemy threats, as well as through hostile territory, with four F/A-18s simulating enemy aircraft. The training exercises will enable the Corps to refine the tactical application of MV-22s in support of current and future operations in the

Asia-Pacific area. The flight was in participation with the Marine Aircraft Group -- 12 Exercise Forager Fury 2012. [Read more](#)

CMC: PACIFIC IS IN "OUR INSTITUTIONAL DNA"



Gen. James F. Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, addressed the shift of the Corps to the Asia-Pacific region, calling it the perfect location for the Marines as it defines "our institutional DNA." Gearing up for the shift, and the drawdown from primarily ground warfare, Amos said the Corps is in the process of restructuring their force with capabilities for forward-presence, engagement and rapid crisis response. "As America's expeditionary crisis response force [we] have always responded to our Nation's call to arms," he said. "No two fights are ever the same, so we've historically maintained a service culture of mental flexibility, adaptability

and operational agility." And while the CMC is concerned over impending budget cuts, he's confident the Corps will maintain their capabilities. [Read more](#)

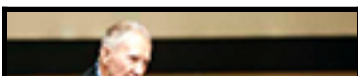
24TH MEU WILL BE HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS



More than 4,000 Marines and Sailors of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will be home before the holidays, officials announced Dec. 10, after an extended deployment. Embarked on the three-ship Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, the 24th MEU was ordered to remain in the Mediterranean last month due to ongoing unrest in the Middle East, just weeks before it was expected to arrive home from its eight-month deployment. While an official date of the MEU's return has not been announced, it is in route toward North Carolina - having passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, between Morocco and Spain, late last week. [Read](#)

[more](#)

VIETNAM-ERA MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS VISIT N.C. MARINES



Two Medal of Honor recipients, retired Maj. Gen. James Livingston and retired Army Maj. Drew Dix, visited Marines at Camp Lejeune and Marine



Corps Air Station New River, Dec. 11. Livingston and Dix, who both received the Medal of Honor in 1968 for valiant actions in Vietnam, spoke to Marines in hopes of reducing the stigma associated with seeking help after combat. Livingston urged the Marines to find support in one another. "The strength of the Marine Corps is in the camaraderie of the Corps," Livingston said. "We are the most unique brotherhood in the world; there's no bigger brotherhood -- no bigger fraternity -- than the U.S. Marine Corps."

They are also scheduled to meet with families of Marines and Sailors from the installations Dec. 19 to discuss the important roles spouses play to their military counterparts. [Read more](#)

HAWAII MARINES, SAILORS REMEMBER DAY OF INFAMY



Marines and Sailors stationed in Hawaii gathered Dec. 7 to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the Japanese attacks at Naval Air Station Kaneohe Bay. The ceremony honored the 18 Sailors and two civilian contractors who died at Hangar 101, which was severely damaged during the first wave of the attacks, approximately eight minutes before enemy planes reached Pearl Harbor. President Obama issued a presidential proclamation the night prior, calling for flags to fly at half-staff. "Today, we pay solemn tribute to America's sons and daughters who made the ultimate sacrifice," Obama said in a statement. "As we do, let us also

reaffirm that their legacy will always burn bright." [Read more](#)

FALLEN CORPORAL'S CITIZENSHIP DREAM FULFILLED

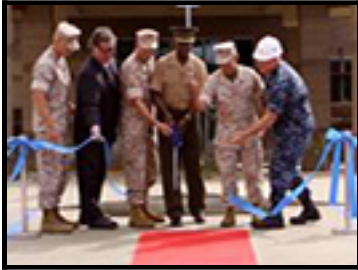


Cpl. Roberto Cazarez was posthumously awarded U.S. citizenship Dec. 6 in a ceremony that honored the 24-year-old Marine, who was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in March. "He was one of the most motivated Marines I've ever known," said Cpl. Bryant Nobles, who served with Cazarez. "If there was hard duty or heavy lifting to be done, he volunteered and never complained." Cazarez applied for U.S. citizenship shortly before he deployed, and is the 144th military service member to be posthumously awarded citizenship since the 9/11 terrorist attacks -- more than any other period of U.S. combat. The expedited process allows

enlistees who are permanent legal residents, like Cazarez, to receive citizenship. The ceremony was

also an opportunity for officials to note the historic role of immigrants in the armed forces -- 35,000 noncitizens are on active duty and 12,000 serve in the Guard or Reserves. [Read more](#)

WARRIOR HOPE AND CARE CENTER OPENS AT LEJEUNE



The Warrior Hope and Care Center in Camp Lejeune, N.C., opened Dec. 7, featuring state-of-the-art physical training equipment for wounded warriors. The 37,000-square-foot building includes a 25-yard pool, an underwater treadmill and other adaptive training equipment designed specifically for injured Marines and Sailors. This is the third major construction project for the Wounded Warrior complex on Camp Lejeune, which also features Wounded Warrior Battalion East Bachelor Enlisted Quarters and the Wounded Warrior Battalion East Headquarters. The center is currently constructing a covered, 9,000-square-foot

multifunctional basketball and tennis court, which is expected to be completed by mid-December.

[Read more](#)

Also Read: Marines Expanding Use of Meditation Training

VA SEEKS TO EXPAND LIST OF SERVICE-CONNECTED TBI EFFECTS



The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) is looking to add Parkinsonism, unprovoked seizures, dementia, depression and diseases of hormone deficiency to its list of diagnosable illnesses that are secondary to service-connected traumatic brain injury (TBI). Diagnosis of the secondary illnesses is partly contingent on the severity of the veteran's service-connected TBI, as well as the period of time between injury and onset of the secondary illness. The proposal follows a report issued by the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, connecting moderate or severe levels of TBI with each of these illnesses. Comments on the

proposed rule will be accepted until Feb. 8, and a final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments. [Read more](#)

[Read the Proposed Rule](#)



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

DECEMBER 10, 1995

In Bosnia, 22 Marines from Marine Corps Security Force Company, Naples, Italy were among the first American troops to arrive. They provided the security for Allied Forces Southern Europe headquartered at Sarajevo. About 2,500 NATO troops would be in place by Dec. 19 taking on the task of peace enforcement in former Yugoslavia from the U.N.

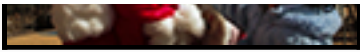


SEMPER FI

MARINES BRING HOLIDAY SPIRIT TO ISOLATED VILLAGE IN GRAND CANYON



Children of the small Havasupai tribe, nestled in the Grand Canyon, had a unique visitor arrive by CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter Dec. 4 -- the one and only Santa Claus. Children exchanged hugs with Santa, as Marines of Marine Medium Squadron 764 and volunteers handed out presents. "This annual operation is a fantastic community effort to assist those who are less fortunate and who have little or no access to the real world," said



Christine McGee, the one responsible for arranging the operation as part of Toys for Tots. "It could not otherwise be accomplished, but for the Marines." The operation also allows for a unique training experience, as pilots maneuver between narrow canyons and land in a confined area that is generally only accessible via an eight hour hike down a steep, narrow path. Toys were distributed to more than 175 Havasupai children this year. [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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