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## NEWS

### Nawa police solidify presence with new headquarters

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Johnny Merkley



COMBAT OUTPOST JAKER, Afghanistan – Before a crowd of anxious and excited local Afghan elders, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the opening of the recently completed Nawa District Police Headquarters, March 26. Participating in the ceremony was the Helmand Provincial Chief of Police Col. Essian Elham, Nawa District Governor Haji Abdul Manaf and U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Matthew T. Morrissey, the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment commanding officer. “The ribbon cutting ceremony signified an additional step for the Afghans providing security in Nawa District,” said Morrissey. “This precinct will provide the local police a facility to coordinate and conduct their operations.” emergencies.

[\(Read the STORY\)](#)

### Mass casualty drill becomes reality for sailors, Marines

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. John Jackson

FORWARD OPERATING BASE EDINBURGH, Afghanistan – Doctors, surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses and corpsmen began April 10 like every other Tuesday – by conducting medical drills to prepare for the worst. The sailors and Marines of the Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgery System, Surgical Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion (-) Reinforced, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) conduct different medical scenarios every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to ensure the medical personnel are prepared for any patient who arrives at their facility. The morning of April 10, the 32 sailors and four security Marines were conducting a mass casualty drill. The medical personnel and Marines walked through what would need to happen if multiple wounded patients arrived at the facility at the same time. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Afghan soldiers learn advanced explosive disposal techniques

Story and photos by Marine Staff Sgt. Brian Buckwalter



FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELARAM II, Afghanistan - There's little protection and even less room for error when disabling improvised explosive devices by hand, but for Afghan National Army soldiers, it's necessary work. IEDs are the insurgent weapon of choice in Afghanistan, and up to now, coalition force explosive ordnance disposal technicians have borne the responsibility of clearing them. But, increasingly that responsibility is falling on Afghan forces. This is part of the coalition force effort to transition security responsibility in the country to Afghan National Security Forces. The key to a successful transition is training and mentorship. Several members of Combined Joint Task Force Paladin, an organization responsible for the counter-IED

mission in Afghanistan, are training select groups of Afghan National Army EOD soldiers everything they know about bomb disposal. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Combat Logistics Battalion 1 finishes tour in Afghanistan, transfers authority

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) stood in formation eagerly awaiting the official end of their tour in Afghanistan, April 17. CLB-1 relinquished responsibility to CLB-5, 1st MLG (Fwd) during a transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan. The ceremony is a Marine Corps tradition that formally symbolizes the continuity of command authority. As CLB-5 prepared to take over, CLB-1 worked alongside them, offering their experience to the incoming group. During their deployment, CLB-1 conducted 270 combat logistics patrols in southern Helmand province. They provided direct support to infantry units primarily at Forward Operating Bases Payne, Geronimo and Hanson. The Marines and sailors provided food, water and gear via combat logistics patrols to the aforementioned FOBs as well as to units in other isolated areas. CLB-1 traveled nearly 400,000 miles during their resupply and retrograde operations. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## RAF Tornados in seven-hour mission to defend ISAF troops in Afghanistan

*U.K. Defence News*



RAF Tornado GR4 aircraft from 617 'The Dambusters' Squadron have helped to defend US and Afghan forces from an insurgent attack as part of a marathon mission lasting over seven hours. Earlier, two of the RAF Lossiemouth-based aircraft had already spent three hours providing armed overwatch for British and American troops in Helmand province when the emergency call came in. Officer Commanding 617 Squadron, Wing Commander Keith Taylor, said: "Whilst carrying out this task we received an urgent call to fly 300 nautical miles [556km] north west to an area near the Turkmenistan border to provide support to a joint United States and Afghan National Security Forces patrol that was coming under repeated small arms fire." As the 617 Squadron aircraft were on-task for three hours prior to the call for assistance and had to refuel a number of times over the entire on-task period, this added to the length of the mission. Wing Commander Taylor said: "It was a marathon

seven-hour, 45-minute flight [mission] and flying for that long requires a lot of fuel. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Marines continue infrastructure growth in Afghanistan

*Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson*

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Marines with Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) worked tirelessly toward the completion of a 12 kilometer stretch of road. A road was already in place, but during several severe rainstorms the route was damaged and in desperate need of repair. "After receiving approval to reconstruct the road, we had to figure out the amount of fuel, equipment and manpower needed to accomplish the mission," said Gunnery Sergeant Joel Williams, heavy equipment chief, Heavy Equipment Platoon, Support Co., 9th ESB, 1st MLG (Fwd). To construct a road that can withstand heavy rains, heavy equipment operators used heavy equipment for a multi-step system. The process created a smooth path similar to roads in America. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Postal Marines provide morale boost in Afghanistan

*Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson*



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan –Whether it is Girl Scout cookies sent by patriotic Americans or photographs of your child's first day at school, mail is the number one source of morale for Marines in a combat zone. The postal office at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, sorts an average of 300,000 pounds of incoming mail per month. Each piece of mail is scanned via tracking number through the Automated Military Postal System before postal Marines sort it by unit. Once the mail is placed in its respective unit's tri-wall container, the mail is available for pick-up by Combat Logistics Battalion 1. CLB-1 will then deliver the mail to its respective unit via combat logistics patrol. Cpl. Alberto Garcia, a postal clerk with 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) said he knows firsthand how much the mail can improve a service member's day. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## IN PICTURES: Royal Anglians' final training stage in Afghanistan

*U.K. Defence News*

Royal Anglian soldiers have completed RSOI (reception, staging, onward movement and integration) training after arriving in Afghanistan. RSOI training is provided by the Operational Training and Advisory Group and is the final stage of a six-month-long training package that is completed in the theatre of operations to ensure that the soldiers have the most up-to-date tactics, techniques and procedures and intelligence at their disposal. RSOI training also provides a time for initial acclimatisation to allow the body to adapt to the harsh climate of Afghanistan, reducing the impact of heat on the body's performance. Soldiers from A Company, 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, have recently arrived in Afghanistan for Operation HERRICK 16. They are part of 12 Mechanized Brigade who took command of Task Force Helmand in Afghanistan last week and will be in theatre for six months. **(Read the STORY)**



## Customs inspectors make the flight home safer

*Story and photos by Army Sgt. Laura Bonano*



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — Service-members heading home from deployments face a long trip ahead of them, but military police, with the 463rd MP Company, out of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., make the trip a little smoother and safer with a new customs process. Fifteen soldiers are the customs inspectors for personnel leaving base, headed to a transit center at Manas International Airport. The inspectors must check baggage and cargo before service members go on any aircraft. There were no scanners used at the flight line to scan bags for prohibited items when the team first arrived for the mission during December. Initially, the requirement was 100 percent bag dump, meaning every service member heading out had to take all items out of their baggage for the team to inspect individually. “We’ve had the scanners for about three months now, so the first month was a challenge,” said Staff Sgt. Keleen Wilson, a customs inspector and squad leader with the unit. Every single service member had to empty two or three duffel bags or rucksacks for the inspectors to go through. Wilson, a native of Malden, Mo., said her team built the facility from the ground up, adding tables at the scanners and wooden stations for the 10 percent of service-members who must complete a bag dump. **(Read the STORY)**

## Combat Logistics Battalions conduct 'left seat, right seat' operations in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PAYNE, Afghanistan – The war in Afghanistan is continuous, and while units may come and go, the mission never pauses. With only a few days left in Afghanistan, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) has spent the past few weeks working side-by-side with CLB-5, 1st MLG (Fwd) as they prepare to take over the logistic support responsibilities in southern Afghanistan. To ensure the smoothest transition possible, the two battalions have conducted “left seat, right seat” operations. “Left seat, right seat” operations occur when a few members of an incoming unit observe an outgoing unit while they conduct a mission. “Left seat” is the term used to describe the unit that is conducting the mission while the “right seat” describes the observers. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Navy surgeon general visits frontline

Story and photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Monique LaRouche



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Vice Adm. Matthew Nathan, the 37th Surgeon General of the Navy and chief of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, visited Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, April 17, as part of a tour with other surgeon generals from the joint services to include the Army, Air Force and United Kingdom. The trip was to meet with deployed medical facilities, listen and learn from those executing the mission, address the military mission and how military medicine can contribute to success on the battlefield. They meet those who execute the mission, soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who are getting the job done, said Cmdr. Patrick Paul, medical planner for Regional Command

(Southwest). The surgeon generals were able to get an honest representation of the area of operations and how the joint services work together. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## HEROES

### Marines remember, honor fallen brother in southern Helmand

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Alfred V. Lopez

COMBAT OUTPOST TAGHAZ, Afghanistan – He came from Saipan in his freshman year of high school, graduated, and joined the Marine Corps to serve his country. He would run through a wall, if that was what it took to accomplish the mission. He would go out on a limb to protect a fellow Marine. He was a Marine you knew you could count on. He was firm but fair, and he was the only Marine that can put a smile across the whole platoon's face. “He” was Lance Cpl. Ramon T. Kaipat, an infantryman who served with Charlie Company, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and 22-year-old native of Tacoma, Wash., and these were a few of the words his fellow Marines used to describe his character for those who didn't know him, during a memorial ceremony here, April 16, 2012. While leading a dismounted patrol in Khan Neshin District, Kaipat sustained mortal wounds from an improvised explosive device. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Marines say goodbye to fallen brother

Story and photos by Marine Lance Cpl. Mark Garcia



COMBAT OUTPOST SHIR GHAZAY, Afghanistan -- On a hot Friday morning, more than 100 Marines gathered to honor Cpl. Alex Martinez, a fallen comrade, during a memorial ceremony, April 13. Martinez, from Elgin, Ill., was a combat engineer with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward) deployed in support of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. He was killed April 5 while conducting combat operations in the Now Zad District. This was Martinez's second deployment to Afghanistan with 1st CEB. Marines honored Martinez with a traditional field memorial that the Corps has practiced for years. A rifle stands inverted, signifying a time of somber prayer and respite. A

pair of boots placed in front symbolizes the young hero's last march. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## VIGNETTES

### Small town to Afghanistan, sailor has no regrets

Story and photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Monique LaRouche

FORWARD OPERATING BASE EDINBURGH, Afghanistan – The call for help comes over the radio and the team prepares for possibly another long day or night. Hospitalman Grant Reeder stays calm as he dresses the tables. He enjoys the next few seconds of quiet before the commotion of the crew urgently move in the casualties. Reeder, a native of Montoursville, Pa., originally wanted to be a master-at-arms, responsible for security and law enforcement. He was studying criminal justice at college before he decided to join the military, but that was not available. After some persuasion from another corpsman, Reeder thought field medic corpsman sounded like something he would like to pursue. Training for the medical field is a long process, and it takes months to prepare for a deployment. After recruit training, Reeder moved across the street to study at corps school, and then from there he headed to Camp Pendleton, Calif., to study at field medical school. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



### From high school to Afghanistan, these Marines stick together

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Marines describe their relationships with fellow Marines with words like brotherhood and sisterhood. Many view the Corps as a family, with brothers and sisters, mother and father figures. The way Marines take care of each other, look after each other and even bicker with each other is reminiscent of many families in America today. For Cpl. Francis Collado, Lance Cpls. Kiara Herrera and Ana Nunez, sisterhood is the only way to describe their bond. Collado, a warehouse clerk with Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), met the sisters, Herrera and Nunez, in high school, 2007. After

enlisting in the Marine Corps, they found themselves heading to the same geographical location. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## New Father learns how to be a parent thousands of miles away

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Timothy Lenzo

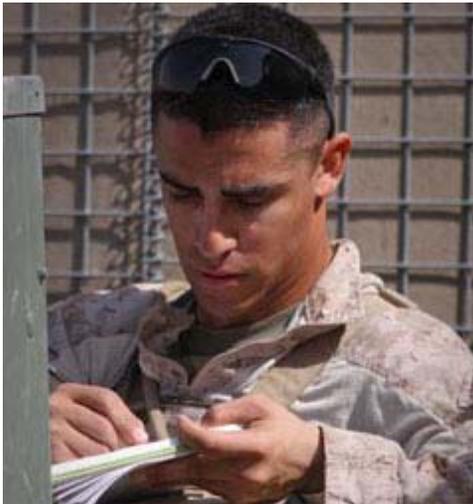
CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Deployment means different things to different Marines, but for one lance corporal, it meant leaving his pregnant wife, to help support Marines in a country thousands of miles away. He knew he would miss the birth of his first child and he knew the challenge before him, to be a loving father and a caring husband, from the other side of the world. Lance Cpl. Juston Dickerson, supply administrator, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Forward), deployed to Afghanistan worried about leaving his pregnant wife, Adriana, but said he prepared her as best he could. “It was hard and very stressful at times,” said Dickerson, a native of Stockton, Calif. “I was really worried about the delivery without me, not seeing my daughter while I was here, and how she would be able to cope without me being there.”

[\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Marine electrician keeps the power on in southern Helmand

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michael Cifuentes



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – Sometimes little luxuries like air conditioning, heat and power go unnoticed... just not in Afghanistan. Marines living on the forward edge of the battlefield in Helmand province know what life is like without the comforts of climate control or electricity. That's why Marines here say it's important to take care of the resources that they have. Corporal Ricardo J. Figueroa, an electrician and non-commissioned officer in charge of the Marine Corps Integrated Maintenance Management System serving with Utilities Platoon, Regimental Combat Team 5, said he is not one to slack off when it comes to making sure generators and AC units are in tiptop shape. He knows first hand what sleeping in a tent with no AC or electricity is like in the hot Afghan weather. One of his most important responsibilities is maintaining all generators used at the many combat outposts and patrol bases in the RCT-5 area of operations. He said proper upkeep entails keeping track of the work put into each generator, ordering new parts, ordering replacement AC

units, keeping track of shipping dates, acquiring parts from adjacent units, traveling to Marine positions for hands-on inspections – and the list goes on. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Ugly Angels assist 3/3 in narcotics, weapons search operation

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Isaac Lamberth

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Afghanistan - As the sun rises over Afghanistan, two CH-53D Sea Stallions from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362, the “Ugly Angels,” roll down the runway at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, to await their turn for takeoff. Today, they will pick up Marines from Forward Operating Base Delhi and perform vehicle interdiction operations. Their mission will require them to fly to the southernmost end of Helmand province to assist Marines while they search for narcotics and weapons. Upon arrival at FOB Delhi, the two helicopters pick up more than 20 Marines and members of the National Interdiction Unit (NIU), a specialized Afghan counter-narcotics team. The personnel board the Sea Stallions through a cloud of dust with grim determination on their faces, ready for the day's events. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Long Day-Page 3

Story and photos by 1st Lt. David Morgenstern



MAIN OPERATING BASE LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan - Last time it was a boom that shook the walls and had me diving for my body armor. This time I never heard a thing. Not a hundred yards from where I was sitting this morning, safe inside the Joint Operations Center (JOC) in Lashkar Gah, an Afghan soldier killed two British soldiers before being shot himself. Thanks to the bravery of those soldiers and their fellow guards, however, he failed to breach our perimeter and continue his killing spree. Point of pride: one of my Marines was also among the first to respond and secure the gate. Within an instant the entire base was notified. I can't describe in detail our procedures in an event like this but I'm sure you can figure it out. Inside the JOC, every bone in my body burned to escape and help respond, but while Marines may be famous for running to the sound of the gunfire, we're also not known for abandoning our posts, wherever they may be. I stayed put. Just as I strapped on my flak and kevlar and sat back down, a unit miles away which had been in and out of contact all morning declared a TIC – troops in contact. This is the highest level of immediate air support request. The unit was now in sustained heavy contact and taking

casualties. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Warehouse clerks band together at CLB-4

Story and photos by Marine Cpl. Mark Stroud

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan —“Pretty much everything anyone has out here came through supply at one point,” said Lance Cpl. Lud G. Romain, assistant warehouse chief, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward). “We have three lance corporals in the warehouse taking care of the entire battalion.” Once the supply warehouse meets the battalion's needs, CLB-4 in turn provides direct, combat logistics support to Regimental Combat Team 6. The other supply warehouse clerks, Lance Cpl. Brian A. Yanez, and Romain, began their journey together at the birthplace of many Marine Corps friendships – military occupational school. Lance Cpl. Lagrima C. Urista, another supply warehouse clerk, joined the duo shortly afterward at their first duty station, Camp Foster, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Toledo Marine drives across hundreds of miles in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Michele Watson



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – In America, all branches of the military are voluntary, and for those who choose to join, a certain level of respect is earned. There are some who believe that the highest honor comes from serving one's country. Lance Cpl. Ron Loehrke, a motor transport operator with Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), enlisted in 2010 with that belief. As a child, Loehrke was taught to embody many of the values that the Marine Corps teaches – honor, courage, commitment, and respect. "My grandfather was the one who first taught me about respect," said Loehrke. Loehrke's grandfather served in the Marine Corps and was a drill instructor during World War II. The bond Loehrke shared with his grandfather helped shape who he wanted to become. We were very close," said Loehrke, 21, a native of Toledo, Ohio. "When he passed away I didn't have the chance to say goodbye, and that has always stayed with me." **(Read the STORY)**

### VIDEOS

## Immigrant Marine Enjoys American Citizenship

Video by Marine Cpl. Ed Galo

Most people in the military have a sense of patriotism when they wear the uniform. Cpl. Ed Galo reports on one patriotic Marine who wore the uniform before becoming a United States citizen. **(Watch the VIDEO)**



## Mass Casualty Drill Becomes Reality for Sailors, Marines

Video by Marine Sgt. John Jackson



A mass casualty drill turns into reality for Sailors and Marines with the Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgery System at Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, Afghanistan, April 10. The medical personnel and security Marines were rehearsing roles in case the facility received multiple casualties at once when they received notification their drill was soon to be a reality. **(Watch the VIDEO)**

## **Custom Inspectors**

*Video by Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Symonds*

Customs inspectors at Camp Leatherneck conduct pre inspections of personnel to ensure U.S. military and civilians leaving Afghanistan are not taking prohibited items back to the United States. Members of 463 Military Police Co. conducted the inspections for departing military members.

**(Watch the VIDEO)**



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**Marines: Willpower = Wallpower Time's Battleand blog featured photo by Cpl. Reece Lodder**

**WAR DOGS - Gizmodo (Featured photo by Cpl. Reece Lodder)**

**A Marine Named Fancy - Unknown Soldiers Blog Article based on story by Cpl. Reece Lodder,Dogs of War: Friends and Saviors of Marines in Afghanistan)**

**Fallen Camp Pendleton Marine Was One Month From Leaving Service - KPBS San Diego Story and video on Lance Cpl. Kaipat, 1st LAR**

**Marine TV YouTube - Cpl. Roberto Cazarez Multimedia presentation by Sgt. Michael Cifuentes)**

**Lance Cpl. Edward Cotton, from Bucks County, Pa., talks to a WTKF-FM N.C.**

**Obituary: Family recalls serious, fun sides of Marine Ramon Kaipat Seattle Times, article on Lance Cpl. Ramon Kaipat, 1st LAR)**

**Lance Cpl. Christopher Empsall, talks to talks to a WTKF-FM reporter in Morehead City, N.C.**

**1st. Lt. Benjamin Van Horrick talks to a WTKF-FM reporter in Morehead City, N.C.**

**Lance Cpl. Edward J. Keiser , talks to a Radio Lia reporter, in Seattle, Wash Audio by 2nd Lt. Morrison**

**Jewish press Tampa Jewish chaplain touches lives of troops in Afghanistan from Sgt Samples story: The Traveling Rabbi**

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