



----- October 17, 2012 -----



## NEWS

### Marines aid Afghan soldiers, help secure area

*Story and photos by Cpl. Anthony Ward Jr.*

TREK NAWA, Afghanistan - Entering the Trek Nawa District of Helmand province, Afghanistan, Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, made a bold military presence that has been absent to the region for nearly a year. Arriving Sept. 26, the Marines helped occupy Patrol Base Lambadand for four days and patrolled alongside the Afghan National Army soldiers living at the small patrol base. "We recently expanded our battle space and picked up that position (PB Lambadand)," said Capt. Glen Taylor, Weapons Co. commander. "So it was kind of an introduction to that battle space and to those ANA soldiers up there. We had to evaluate where they were at in their proficiency level and see what the enemy was doing in that area." Each day, the Marines pushed out patrols with the ANA to get a better feel for their newly inherited area of responsibility and to learn the capabilities of their Afghan counterparts. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



### ANA continuing operations: RSOI course hits ground running

*Story and photos by Cpl. Timothy Lenzo*



CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army soldiers walk slowly as they scan the horizon. They are careful not to step out of line on the loose sand. In an instant, the patrol changes as the simulated sound of gunfire interrupts the quiet afternoon. The patrol jumps to the ground. The soldiers ignore the dirt and rocks in their way as they find cover behind berms and in ditches. Many Marines can relate to the scenario, a patrol walking through the sparse landscape of Afghanistan and being ambushed by enemies with automatic weapons. Today is only training, but this is the same scene many of the ANA soldiers may face in a couple weeks when they report to their units.

The Afghan soldiers joined Afghan officers during their reception, staging, onward movement and integration course. This is the first RSOI course conducted by the ANA 215th Corps. A total of 164 Afghan soldiers and officers with the 4th Brigade, attended the first rotation of training. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## 1/7 Marines help ANSF, Sangin Government stand tall

Story and photos by Cpl. Timothy Lenzo

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SABIT QADAM, Afghanistan – It has been seven long months for the Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 6, but they will soon return home to family and friends from Sangin, Afghanistan. The Marines faced a difficult task at a difficult time for both the Marine Corps and Afghanistan. They watched as temperatures rose to more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit and tensions in the region became more intense with each passing day. “Our primary mission was to develop the capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces,” said Lt. Col. David Bradney, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. “The second part of the mission was to defeat the insurgency in Sangin, Afghanistan.” For seven months, the Marines worked with Afghan Forces, training the Afghan Local Police, Afghan National Civil Order Police and Afghan National Army soldiers. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Sailors, Marines celebrate Navy birthday in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Cpl. Anthony Ward Jr.



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - Sailors and Marines from throughout Regional Command Southwest flooded into a packed Town Hall to celebrate the 237th Birthday of the United States Navy aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Oct. 13. Those in attendance joined countless servicemembers and people around the world in celebrating the birthday of the world’s finest Navy, while simultaneously honoring the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. “It’s a lot of pride because it reinforces that you’re a part of something that’s bigger than you,” said Navy Capt. Theron C. Toole, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) Surgeon and 23-year veteran of the Navy. “You’re a part of something that’s special, that’s larger than you, another family. This is an experience and an organization that is something special.” Toole was the guest of honor for the event and spoke about Naval traditions and history as well as the War of 1812. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Camp Leatherneck welcomes new base operations commander

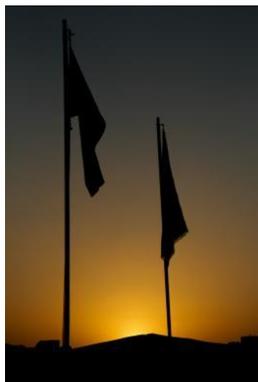
Story and photos by Cpl. Mark Garcia

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – After a year of ensuring the quality of life for servicemembers and civilians aboard Camp Leatherneck, Col. Bruce E. Pollard, outgoing commander of Installation Management Command (Forward), relinquished his command to Col. Kevin Entwistle, during a change of command and responsibility ceremony, Oct. 8. During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Reuben D. Jones, deputy commanding general of operations for IMCOM, spoke of the job done by Pollard and the pride it brought him to help the other branches. “Col. Pollard and Command Sgt. Maj. Owens are great leaders who have done everything and more than what we have asked,” said Maj. Gen. Jones. “It makes us so proud to be supporting our partners who go out on missions every day in the largest forward deployed contingent of Marines anywhere in the world. I often say our U.S. military gets it right, we never fail and today is another example of us never failing. Today I have the privilege of welcoming a new garrison command team.” [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Marines continue time-honored tradition in Sangin

Story and photos by Cpl. Timothy Lenzo



FORWARD OPERATING BASE JACKSON, Afghanistan – It is a military tradition carried out on U.S. bases throughout the world. The raising and lowering of the American flag is not just another duty for Marines, especially while deployed. In fact, morning and evening colors is so meaningful any military members outside stop what they are doing, face the flag, snap to attention and salute. Servicemembers who are driving pull their cars over for the duration of the ceremony, until the color guard calls carry on, announcing it's okay to continue on with their business. "I am honored to be part of the flag detail," said Lance Cpl. Henry Cervantes, an administrative clerk with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6. "Not everyone gets the chance to do it. It's a time-honored tradition, so I don't take it lightly." Cervantes works with Lance Cpl. Lamarr Johnson, another administrative specialist with the battalion, and the other part of their two-man flag detail. "Morning and evening colors is more than tradition," said Johnson, who is from Chicago. "For me it's about those who gave everything for their country." A part of Johnson's daily responsibilities include the morning and evening color guard. Twice a day he marches out to the flagpole and calls "colors" to signify the start of the ceremony. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## Sukkot Holiday on Camp Leatherneck Brings Joy to Jewish Service Members

Story and photos by Sgt. James Mercure

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan - The Jewish holiday of Sukkot is celebrated by Jews around the world and when Lt. Cmdr. Neal Kreisler, the Marine Aircraft Group 11 command chaplain and Rabbi arrived here he brought a piece of the holiday with him. Traveling from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar with his chaplain's assistant Sgt. Steven Hurt, they brought a kosher Sukkah, or a small dwelling used outside the home during the holiday, that those practicing Judaism believe represents the Clouds of Glory by which the Israelites were protected after their exodus from Egypt. "The Sukkah represents God's protection of the Jewish people who wandered in the desert on their way to Israel," Kreisler explained. "We still feel protected in this temporary dwelling, because we know that it is God who provides protection. The Sukkah also symbolizes the temporary sojourn we all make on this earth. By contemplating the transience of human life, Jews are able to focus during the festival of Sukkot on the eternal principles and truths that connect us with eternity." [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## Miami Dolphin cheerleaders visit Marines at Camp Leatherneck

Story and photos by Cpl. Ed Galo



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Cheerleaders and former players from the Miami Dolphins visited Marines aboard Camp Leatherneck Afghanistan, October 1-3. The four cheerleaders and two Dolphin alumni came as part of a USO tour geared toward boosting morale for deployed service members. For some of the visitors, this was their first time working with service members. For others, it was something they'd done many times before. "This is my first time in Afghanistan, but this is my fourth military tour," said Samantha Ruiz, a fourth year Miami Dolphins cheerleader. "I've been to Curacao, I've been to Honduras, I've been to Cuba." During their trip, they toured Camp Leatherneck and spoke with different service members around the base. "The trip has been amazing so far," she said. "It's definitely impacted my life. It's made me grateful for what I have at home. It's made me realize you guys are the bravest people we've ever met. You guys are our heroes." Ruiz said her favorite part of the trip was shooting sniper rifles and flying in a helicopter. The cheerleaders also performed on stage for the service members. During a break in the performances, Troy Drayton and O.J. McDuffie jumped up to the stage and asked those in attendance a few Miami Dolphins trivia. Those who answered correctly were given Dolphin paraphernalia. "It's just the right thing to do," said Drayton who played tight end for the Dolphins from 1996-2000. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## VIGNETTES

### Landing support specialist turned security team leader: North Tonawanda native gains new experience during third combat deployment

Story and photos by Sgt. John Jackson

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – After becoming a Marine less than five years ago, Sgt. Bryan Hall has spent much of his time in Afghanistan. He is currently serving on his third deployment in Helmand province. While being deployed is something Hall has become accustomed to, this deployment has been a whole new experience. Hall, a 24-year-old from North Tonawanda, N.Y., spent time exploring his options before deciding to join the Marine Corps. After graduating high school, he tried the college lifestyle for a year. Then he found a job working in a factory. However, he still wanted more. “Not to sound cliché, but I honestly wanted to serve my country,” Hall said. “A (Marine) buddy of mine was on leave back home and heard I was interested in joining. He took me to the recruiter’s office, and I signed up.” Upon graduating from Recruit Training and Marine Combat Training, Hall started his military occupational specialty school to learn to become a landing support specialist. During Hall’s first two deployments to Afghanistan, he was assigned to Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Groups. There he was responsible for getting personnel and gear on to helicopters and ensuring they made it to the outlying forward operating bases in the area of operations. Additionally, he was a part of helicopter support teams, which load gear and attach it to helicopters to be transported via sling load. While his first two deployments were a success and Hall enjoyed being a landing support specialist in a combat zone, his third and current deployment he is holding a billet he knew very little about. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



### Transitioning to training: infantryman mentors ANA on 2nd combat deployment

Story and photos by Cpl. Mark Garcia



COMBAT OUTPOST FIDDLERS GREEN, Afghanistan – Growing up, Cpl. Micah Howard knew he wanted to do something to serve his country. Howard, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 20. Five and half years later, he is serving on his second combat deployment with 3rd Bn., 8th Marines. Howard decided to join the Marine Corps in an effort to better his life while also serving his country. “I just wanted a piece of the action. I wanted to do something more for myself, rather than just stay in the United States. Basically I wanted to give back to the country what it had given to me in terms of the freedoms I have,” said Howard, from Columbia, S.C. Howard also credited his drive to join the Marine Corps and to become an infantryman to his godfather who is a retired Marine. “My godfather was a Marine, and he told me stories about what he did. I always had this image in my head that Marines were the biggest and the best,” Howard said. “They were gun fighters. If the U.S. needed something done, they’d send the Marines in first. I didn’t want to sit behind a desk or anything like that, I wanted to be in the action with whatever the Marine Corps got involved in, so that’s why I became a grunt.” Howard noted the differences between his last and current deployments. “Every day last deployment it was constant attacks. You couldn’t go 50 meters outside the compound we were staying in without getting ambushed,” Howard said. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

## One man's passion to cook pushes him to serve country

Story and photos by Cpl. Mark Garcia

COMBAT OUTPOST FIDDLERS GREEN, Afghanistan – When Staff Sgt. Juan Contreras first joined the Marine Corps he had no idea where that journey would lead him. Contreras, a senior advisor with the food service contact team, I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group (Forward), originally came into the Marine Corps as an administration clerk. “I decided to join the Marine Corps as an administration clerk during my first enlistment,” said Contreras, from Santa Ana, Calif. “Sixty days prior to getting out of the Marine Corps, I was sent to go do mess duty. During that time, the chief mess cook got me to start helping out with cooking, and I picked it up quick. Then two weeks before I was supposed to get out, I submitted a package to switch jobs, and I got approved to be an actual food service guy. I don’t regret that decision at all either. I’ve really enjoyed my time in food service.” Contreras enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 18. Nineteen years later he’s serving on his fifth combat deployment. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



## VIDEOS

### ANA, Weapons Company Defend Patrol Base Lambadand

Video by Cpl. Anthony Ward Jr.



Afghan soldiers along with Marines from Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, engage the enemy near Patrol Base Lambadand in the Trek Nawa region of Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 27, 2012. The Marines defended the base as they returned from a 4-hour patrol. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

### Helmand Celebrates Peace and Unity Week

Video by Sgt. John Jackson

Mardel Farahi, a public representative for Peace and Unity Week and a member of the Ulema Council, speaks about Peace and Unity Week in Afghanistan and the gains the Afghan National Security Forces have made the past several years. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



### CRUAS Lands at Camp Bastion

Video by Sgt. Keonaona Paulo



A U.S. Marine Corps Cargo Resupply Unmanned Aircraft System (CRUAS) with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 2, Marine Air Control Group 28, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), lands at Camp Bastion, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 13, 2012. VMU-2 tested the capabilities of the CRUAS. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

## The Sounds of Freedom: Capt. Johannah Thyden

Video by Sgt. Ed Galo

Marines deployed to Afghanistan find many ways to unwind from a day's work. Capt. Johannah Thyden enjoys volunteering her free time by singing and playing the piano for the chapel worship team. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



## We Are Logistics: Supplying Marines on the Frontlines

Video by Sgt. John Jackson



This is part one of a series highlighting the Logistics Command Element while deployed to Helmand province, Afghanistan. This video features Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, supplying Marines and Coalition Forces on the frontlines in Afghanistan with much needed supplies and equipment. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

## Press Conference with Maj. Gen. Charles Gurganus (Part One)

Video by Sgt. John Jackson

Maj. Gen. Gurganus, the commanding general of Regional Command Southwest, speaks to reporters about the situation in Helmand and Nimroz provinces, partnering operations, Green on Blue attacks and the insurgent attack on Camp Bastion. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



## Press Conference with Maj. Gen. Charles Gurganus (Part Two)

Video by Sgt. John Jackson



Maj. Gen. Gurganus, the commanding general of Regional Command Southwest, speaks to reporters about the situation in Helmand and Nimroz provinces, partnering operations, Green on Blue attacks and the insurgent attack on Camp Bastion. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

## The Sounds of Freedom: Cpl. Tyrel Treat

Video by Sgt. Ed Galo

Marines sacrifice a lot once they join the Marine Corps. Many Marines will quit their hobbies in order to serve their country. Some Marines will find ways to continue their hobbies. Cpl. Ed Galo has more. Soundbites include Tyrel Treat - Ammunition Technician, Retrograde and Redeployment in support of Rest and Reconstruction Operational Group, Regional Command Southwest. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



## **Marketed/Republished Combat Correspondent Product**

**Marine Sgt. Travis Wilson, from Mobile, Ala., talks to a WTKF-FM reporter about his duties as a communications platoon sergeant and a radio technician deployed to Afghanistan.**

**Marine Cpl. Robert A. Nelson talks to a WTKF-FM reporter about his duties as a data systems specialist deployed to Afghanistan.**

**Lt. Wilson Bautista talks to a WTKF-FM reporter about his job as the information management officer and his original work as a bandsman in the Marine Corps.**

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