Op’ Pause

53 Years of Dedicated Service

Richard M. Johnson, who served the Department of Defense for 53 years, laughs after a coworker makes a joke during his retirement ceremony Dec. 9, aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C. Johnson, a Savannah, Ga., native, started his service to the DoD by serving in the Marine Corps. He enlisted in 1953 and retired 22 years later. He was then hired by the Department of Defense Civil Service - Camp Lejeune and worked at base maintenance, the commissary and the Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital. In 1993, he was hired to work at the ASP.

“Your 53 years of combined military and civilian service has shown true dedication and commitment to the U.S. Marine Corps,” a letter from Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton, II Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, read.

Johnson sat next to his family while more speeches and letters from Marines and coworkers were given and read.

“Mr. Johnson, I would like to sincerely thank and congratulate you on 53 years of dedicated service to our country and the United States Marine Corps,” read a letter from Brig. Gen. Michael G. Dana, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) commanding general, who is currently deployed to Afghanistan. “Your unwavering dedication and contributions to the success of the Ammunition Supply Point were remarkable and will have lasting effects for years to come.”

Before the ceremony ended, Johnson was presented with the Civilian Meritorious Service Medal among many other gifts from coworkers to show the thankfulness of his 53 years of service.

Johnson retires after career that spans five decades of work with Marine Corps, DoD

Sgt. Rachael K. A. Moore
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – Saying goodbye isn’t an easy task, especially after more than 50 years.

Richard M. Johnson, the general foreman assistant officer in charge at the Camp Lejeune Ammunition Supply Point, gave his farewell speech during a retirement ceremony Dec. 9, aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C.

“The time has come for me to fade away, but I will never forget,” said Johnson. “Every time I pass by the ASP, dream about the ASP, or just think about it, I will remember all the time spent there and the memories I made there.”

Johnson, a Savannah, Ga., native, started his service when he entered the Marine Corps. He enlisted in 1953 and retired 22 years later. He was then hired by the Department of Defense Civil Service Camp Lejeune and worked at base maintenance, the commissary and the Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital. In 1993, he was hired to work at the ASP.

“Your 53 years of combined military and civilian service has shown true dedication and commitment to the U.S. Marine Corps,” a letter from Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton, II Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, read.

Johnson sat next to his family while more speeches and letters from Marines and coworkers were given and read.

“Mr. Johnson, I would like to sincerely thank and congratulate you on 53 years of dedicated service to our country and the United States Marine Corps,” read a letter from Brig. Gen. Michael G. Dana, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) commanding general, who is currently deployed to Afghanistan. “Your unwavering dedication and contributions to the success of the Ammunition Supply Point were remarkable and will have lasting effects for years to come.”

Before the ceremony ended, Johnson was presented with the Civilian Meritorious Service Medal among many other gifts from coworkers to show the thankfulness of his 53 years of service.

“The time has come for me to fade away, but I will never forget.”

- Richard M. Johnson
Dallas Marine has passion for job, training fellow troops

Cpl. Katherine M. Solano
2nd MLG (FWD) Public Affairs


In fact, Estrada has such passion for her job, she refers to the tactical vehicles as her “babies.”

“It is pretty hands on, I really love that part about it,” the Dallas native stated. “I love the fact that whatever you put into them work-wise - taking care of them - that is pretty much how they are going to work for you.”

She says the hard work-ethic and diligent, hands-on attitude she has is due to her upbringing. The Estrada family spent most of the last 15 years moving between California and Mexico for seasonal employment, before settling in Texas.

“I like working,” Estrada began. “It is what I have done since I was five. First, I had to help my mom out around the house. Whenever we came to the states, I was the translator and [filled out] all the paper work.”

She went on to describe how she learned a lot from her dad. He instilled in her a work ethic as well as taught her mechanical skills.

“I would go with my dad to work sometimes,” Estrada explained. “I was dad’s little helper. He was a self-taught mechanic and I would help him take things apart and figure out how to put them back together.”

As a noncommissioned officer in the Marine Corps, Estrada said it is her goal to impart her passion for motor-t onto her Marines. She explained that by trying to learn as much as possible in her job, she would be better-equipped to teach and mentor her Marines first-hand.

“One way to teach people is by doing the work with them so they can see how you do it,” she said.

Even more important than passing on job skills, according to Estrada, is the family mentality.

“You have to look out for each other,” she concluded. “Your platoon is supposed to be like your family, and family is the most important thing to me, hands down.”
Cpl. Katherine M. Solano  
2nd MLG (FWD) Public Affairs

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The Marines with the Embedded Partnering Team, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), held a farewell dinner for their Afghan National Army counterparts aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Dec. 9.

According to Capt. Patrick Ross, the officer-in-charge of the EPT, the team “was partnered with the 215 Corps Logistics Battalion, Afghan National Army, to provide [mentors], staff development and technical training, in order to accelerate the maturation of the battalion. Through daily, direct advising and partnering our Marines and Sailors attempted to prepare these Afghan soldiers to operate independent of coalition forces.”

The time has come for the ANA to begin training with a larger-scale operation, more specifically the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission - Afghanistan. It was with this upcoming transition in mind that the Marines and ANA soldiers came together for a “hail and farewell” between the outgoing EPT and the incoming NTM-A EPT.

“It is important for the Marines, Sailors, linguists and Afghan soldiers to have closure to this part of their military lives,” Ross explained. “We have travelled, trained and toiled together for nine months, through some amusing and frustrating situations. Even rough and tough Marines and Sailors become sentimental when it is time to say goodbye to good friends and fellow soldiers.”

Per ANA and EPT tradition, a highlight of the festivities was the volleyball game.

“Since we started playing with the Afghan soldiers in April, we have lost every game each Thursday,” Ross said good-naturedly. “Even when they threw the game on the 4th of July in honor of our holiday, we still could not pull of a legitimate victory.”

Joking aside, Ross and his Marines say they learned much from the soldiers in the training and logistical operations, as well as cultural aspects, and they hope that they taught the ANA an equal amount.

“I would like to think the Afghan leadership we worked with learned that despite gender, age or rank, a strong, knowledgeable soldier can do great things and lead his or her subordinates in a firm and effective manner,” Ross began. “We spent countless memorable hours with them in the dirt turning wrenches, behind the steering wheels in trucks and driving on the roads of Afghanistan. If nothing else, I think they learned some of the more technical aspects of soldiering.”

Both the Marines and ANA soldiers spoke of their hope for bright and safe futures of their counterparts, and a hope that they could once again come “shoulder-to-shoulder” to work together in the future. This has been their common theme throughout their training together.

“Despite the vast cultural, lingual and behavioral differences of the Afghan soldiers and the United States Marines and Sailors, we found commonality through soldierly virtue, military lifestyle and our respective patriotism,” Ross said.

Capt. Brian Pugh, the logistics mentor with the EPT, said it was a “wonderful, but bittersweet celebration. It was sad to see our friends go. We built strong bonds over the last several months, but it was good to see the awesome progress they have made.”

Staff Sgt. Jason Browning, a mentor with the EPT, agreed that the farewell represented “a step in the right direction for the ANA, and for the Marine Corps. Turning over this mission to NTM-A on a successful note means great things.”
The Warrior’s Log

Commanding General
Brig. Gen. Michael G. Dana

Sergeant Major
Sgt. Maj. William T. Stables

Command Master Chief
CMDCM Russell W. Folley

Public Affairs Officers
1st Lt. Joshua Smith
2nd Lt. James F. Stenger (FWD)

Combat Correspondents
Sgt. Rachael K. Moore
Cpl. Bruno J. Bego
Cpl. Katherine M. Solano (FWD)
Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

Public Affairs Chief
Staff Sgt. Theresa E. Seng

Press Chief
Sgt. Justin J. Shehanski

Sgt. Maj. Scott Theakston, the School of Infantry sergeant major, receives a token of appreciation from a Jordanian senior enlisted leader during a tour of the School of Infantry East aboard Camp Geiger, N.C., Dec. 5. During the tour, Jordan’s top enlisted leaders from its different branches were walked through classes and demonstrations throughout Infantry Training Battalion, SOI East.

Photo by Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

Jordan’s senior enlisted learn from Marine Corps counterparts

Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado
2nd MLG Public Affairs

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. - For decades the Marine Corps has opened its doors and welcomed foreign countries’ military personnel to train alongside Marines.

One major benefit is the bonds the Corps has built throughout the years.

Another relationship was recently strengthened as Sgt. Maj. Carl R. Green, II Marine Expeditionary Force sergeant major, hosted senior enlisted service members from the Jordanian armed forces during a tour of the School of Infantry East aboard Camp Geiger, N.C., Dec. 6.

During the tour, Jordan’s senior enlisted leaders were walked through classes and demonstrations regularly given as part of Infantry Training Battalion, SOI East’s curriculum. They were shown the assembly and disassembly of weapons, a demonstration of a mortarman’s job and were given a slideshow describing the wide range of courses available at the school house.

The top enlisted officials also visited Camp Johnson, N.C., had lunch at the Officers’ Club aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., and observed 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, in training.

The overall purpose of the visit was to help the Jordanians with noncommissioned officers’ development initiatives, which included education, mentoring, training and development, said Green.

Though a slight language barrier was evident, the foreign leaders showed great enthusiasm during the visit, something Green said made the visit a success from the start.

“Lots of great questions were asked and they were very tentative to what was being said or presented,” he said. “From what I observed, they interacted very well and show lots of interest. They were very much involved from start to finish.”

As the tour moved to its later stages, the foreign service members began to interact with instructors from the several courses they observed.

Sgt. Anthony Cosentino, an instructor with ITB, was one of the many Marines to give the visitors a brief description of a course.

“Sgt. Maj. Scott Theakston, the School of Infantry sergeant major, receives a token of appreciation from a Jordanian senior enlisted leader during a tour of the School of Infantry East aboard Camp Geiger, N.C., Dec. 5. During the tour, Jordan’s top enlisted leaders from its different branches were walked through classes and demonstrations throughout Infantry Training Battalion, SOI East.”

Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado

“...and they were very tentative to what was being said or presented,” he said. “From what I observed, they interacted very well and show lots of interest. They were very much involved from start to finish.”

As the tour moved to its later stages, the foreign service members began to interact with instructors from the several courses they observed.

Sgt. Anthony Cosentino, an instructor with ITB, was one of the many Marines to give the visitors a brief description of a course.

“They seemed to be genuinely interested in the things I was teaching my Marines,” he said. “The fact that they come here and actually want to soak up all this knowledge is incredible, and it shows how highly we are thought of around the world. It makes me proud.”

“Sgt. Maj. Scott Theakston, the School of Infantry sergeant major, receives a token of appreciation from a Jordanian senior enlisted leader during a tour of the School of Infantry East aboard Camp Geiger, N.C., Dec. 5. During the tour, Jordan’s top enlisted leaders from its different branches were walked through classes and demonstrations throughout Infantry Training Battalion, SOI East.”

Photo by Pfc. Franklin E. Mercado