



# THE WARRIOR'S LOG

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## Op' Pause

Cpl. Ana Maria Estrada Benitez (front), a motor transportation operator with Motor-T Operations Platoon, Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), sits with her Marines during a pause in operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 3. Check out more of Estrada's story on Page 3.

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# 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 DoD Civil Service - Camp Lejeune and worked at base maintenance, the commissary and the Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital.



Photo by  
Sgt. Rachael K. A. Moore

## *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



Click the DVIDS icon to  
view 2nd MLG (FWD)  
greetings from around  
Helmand province





# Hands-On Leader

Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

Cpl. Ana Maria Estrada Benitez, a motor transportation operator with Motor-T Operations Platoon, Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), fixes a tactical vehicle in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 3.

## Dallas Marine has passion for job, training fellow troops

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

**HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan** - Cpl. Ana Maria Estrada Benitez, a motor transportation operator with Motor-T Operations Platoon, Support Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), loves her job. Marines who work with her know her as a "motor-t junkie."

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 much 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. When-

ever 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."

# WARRIOR - OF THE - WEEK



**CORPORAL**  
**ANA MARIA ESTRADA**

**JOB:** Motor Transportation  
**HOMETOWN:** Dallas

**Q:** What is your favorite MRE?

**A:** "If I'm starving, absolutely have nothing else to eat, I will eat a Sloppy Joe, but it has to be really hot with cheese melted in it. Famous Amos cookies all day, everyday."

**Q:** If you could have one job for a day, what would it be?

**A:** "I would love to fly the Osprey."

**Q:** Why did you join the Marine Corps?

**A:** "I wanted to do it, so I just did it."

# 'A Step in the Right Direction'

*Afghan National Army soldiers bid farewell to mentors as they move on to broader, more independent operations*

**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 off 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



Photo by Cpl. Katherine M. Solano

**Marines with the Embedded Partnering Team, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), bid farewell to their Afghan National Army counterparts aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Dec. 9.**

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.”



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*

**CAMPLEJEUNE, 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.

"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."

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