



2nd Marine Division (Forward) Task Force Leatherneck

Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

November 13, 2011

Weekly News Round-Up

The following content includes the weekly news coverage of 2nd Marine Division (Forward). The division, also known as Task Force Leatherneck, is the ground combat element of Regional Command (Southwest) and is responsible for Helmand and Nimroz provinces, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The content was created by Marine Corps Combat Correspondents and Combat Camera. Feel free to forward our stories to friends, family and those who support our deployed service members.

Second Marine Division (Forward) Celebrates Corps' 236th Birthday

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Helmand province, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors with 2nd Marine Division (Forward) came together to celebrate the Marine Corps' 236th birthday.

The sound of trumpets pierced the silence and drum beats set the pace as the flag detail marched past the gathered service members. Crisp salutes cut through the air as the colors passed and all present stood at attention for the playing of the National Anthem.

The division's commanding officer, Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Craparotta cut a piece of cake for the oldest Marine, Staff Sgt. Eddie Ragland, who took a bite and passed it to the youngest Marine present, Pfc. Nancy Pearl, to symbolize the passage of knowledge and tradition from one generation to the next.

The ceremony drew to a close as the Marines retired the colors for the evening and the last few notes of the Marines Hymn drifted into the air. The service members enjoyed cake and refreshments and wished each other happy birthday.





Victory in Nawa: building a better tomorrow

By Cpl. Jeff Drew

Editor's note: This is the second installment in a four-part series chronicling a trek across Nawa district called the Nawa Victory Walk, a four-day, 30-mile patrol by U.S. Marines and Afghan National Army soldiers.

NAWA DISTRICT, Helmand province, Afghanistan – Sunlight crept silently through the windows lining the walls of the Loy Kolay precinct, an Afghan National Army

security outpost, as the Marines and sailors awoke, each nudging the soundly sleeping service member next to him. Their legs sore from the previous day's hike more than 14 kilometers, their shoulders strained from the weight of their body armor, the service members of 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, prepared for another day of patrolling across the district with their Afghan counterparts.

The patrol joined Afghan Lt. Col. Gul Ahmad, commanding officer of 1st

Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, and U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Tyler Zagurski, commanding officer of 1/9, recently in a four-day expedition across the district called the Nawa Victory Walk. The patrol demonstrated the safety and security achieved in the area and allowed the leaders to speak with local residents and key leaders, assessing problems and celebrating successes along the way. The second day of the Nawa Victory Walk would be a proposed 12 kilometers.

The day began with a groundbreaking ceremony for the Hayanak Health Clinic, outside the gates of the precinct. Prominent members of the Nawa community arrived to cut the ribbon and lay the ceremonial foundation bricks, including district governor Haji Abdul Manaf and Haji Hayatullah, an Afghan Local Police commander and local council member. The Marines and Afghan soldiers joined together to provide security during the ceremony.

“The building of the health clinic is one of the many reasons Nawa is ready for transition,” said Zagurski, a Mercer Island, Wash., native.

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A memorial of sacrifice in Garmsir

By Cpl. Colby Brown

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELHI, Helmand province, Afghanistan — The memorial for British service members here has been reconstructed to recognize members of Afghan and Marine forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Garmsir district.

On Nov. 11, a ceremony christening the Forward Operating Base Delhi Memorial will be held in observance of Remembrance Day, a holiday honoring those who have died serving in the British armed forces, and Veterans Day.

The new construction includes refurbishments, improving the concrete foundation and two additional flagpoles to represent all three nations. The memorial originally recognized British soldiers who fought and died in Garmsir from 2006 to 2008.

The idea to refurbish the memorial came from British Army



Maj. Andrew Green. He is in Garmsir with a platoon of engineers making improvements to canals throughout the district.

With the help of more than 40 Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Green was able to reconstruct the memorial to ensure his brothers-in-arms from Afghanistan and the United States were equally represented. [\(Read Story\)](#)

Precious moments of a golden hour: Alaska Marine directs air ambulances

By Staff Sgt. Ryan Smith

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELARAM, Helmand province, Afghanistan - Marines in Afghanistan are not strangers to the danger they face when patrolling the streets and fields of Northern Helmand province. The threat from insurgent activity surrounds them as they move, ever cautiously, from position to position.

“BOOM!”

The loud, almost deafening, sound of an improvised explosive device is enough to send shivers through the patrol ... then come the cries of pain.

Injuries or illness to Marines and



sailors is a serious occurrence and can sometimes threaten life, limb or eyesight. Quick evaluations at the scene generate the need to get them to a higher level of care as soon as possible and with a call over the radio, one Marine jumps to action at the Combat Operations Center for Regimental Combat Team 8.

Tick ... tick ... tick ... the golden hour begins.

With only a few key strokes to his computer, a medical evacuation mission is underway.

Staff Sgt. Scott Webb, an air support operations coordinator with Marine Air Support Squadron 1, attached to RCT-8, is a crucial part of the communication process for medevacs and air strikes in the regiment's area of operations.

“For the Marine Corps I'm somewhat of a 911 operator,” said Webb, who calls Soldotna, Alaska home, approximately 60 miles southwest of Anchorage, Alaska. [\(Read Story\)](#)



friends from Oct. 27 through Nov. 1, carrying these memories on their deployment to southern Helmand.

In the coming weeks 3/3 will take control of operations in Garmsir District, relieving fellow Hawaii-based 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. The “Lava Dogs” of 1/3 are nearing the end of their seven-month deployment, which began in April.

Staff Sgt. Joe Salinas, an operations watch chief with 3/3, said the Marines and sailors will have a challenging task in Garmsir. Here, they'll partner with the Afghan National Security Forces to maintain the progress made by 1/3 to secure the district and legitimize its government in the eyes of the people.

‘America’s Battalion’ arrives

By Cpl. Reece Lodder

CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan — Over seven months of training, the Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, have become hardened for war.

They've prepared for the enemy from their home base in Hawaii and endured endless hours baking in the sun of the California desert.

The approximately 1,000 men of “America’s Battalion” bid bittersweet goodbyes to family and

“Our deployment to Garmsir is as important as the first because we could be the last Marines here,” said Salinas, a 40-year-old native of San Antonio. “We have a lot to accomplish to make sure the Afghans are ready to take over when we leave.

Partnering with the Afghan National Army and Police, “America’s Battalion” will assist the local Afghan leadership in providing security for reconstruction projects aimed at developing critical infrastructure in the district. Lieutenant Col. Matthew J. Palma, 3/3 commanding officer, sees these development projects as essential to the Afghan government taking root in southern Helmand.

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