



# 2nd Marine Division (Forward)

## Task Force Leatherneck

Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

September 25, 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.*

## Buckeye sailor provides essential support in Helmand

By Cpl. Jeff Drew

**CAMP LEATHERNECK, Helmand province, Afghanistan** - “She’s aggressive and compassionate, she doesn’t take ‘no’ for an answer, and if she runs into a roadblock she finds a way around it,” said Herndon, Va., native Petty Officer 1st Class Richard Martinez, the leading petty officer with 2nd Marine Division (Forward) surgeon’s office. “She takes very good care of her subordinates [and] tries to keep us laughing.”

Lima, Ohio, native Petty Officer 2nd Class Jesse Waterfield, a corpsman with 2nd Marine Division (Forward), knows the seriousness and importance of her job. She is responsible not only for the welfare of the junior sailors within her care, but also for tracking all Marines and sailors in Southwest Afghanistan who are involved in blasts and those who have sustained concussions throughout her year-long deployment.

“If you suffer a concussion, then your brain needs to take a time-out in order to heal itself,” said 33-year-old Martinez. “If we catch a Marine who’s had a concussion early enough and we prevent him from getting further concussions, then we can help him get back to the fight. If we don’t, then that minor traumatic brain injury could turn into a full TBI, and that’s when you see the memory loss, amnesia and anger issues.”

During the summer months, an increase in insurgent activity and improvised explosive device placement leads to a higher rate of concussions. Waterfield tracked several hundred service members involved in blasts in June alone, of which a relatively small percentage had concussions. She is the lone corpsman in charge of tracking concussions within her section and has only 72 hours from the time of the blast to coordinate with the Marine’s or sailor’s unit and report the information to Marine Corps Forces Central



Command. Waterfield said it isn’t the short timelines or the busy workdays, however, that are most challenging, rather it can often be difficult to watch the events unfold through reports on a computer.

“It’s tough to let go of things,” said Waterfield. “I can watch the events happen [through the reports] and there’s not really anything I can do while the Marines are out there. We do our work here so they can go back, but watching and not being able to physically do much is the hardest part.”

The 28-year-old woman has a personal connection to the Marines in the fight as well, as her husband is also a Navy corpsman who returned from a deployment with 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, October 2010.

“Seeing the events take place day-in and day-out and seeing the things my husband went through when he was here with [an infantry battalion] makes me realize just how precious life is,” she explained.

Waterfield’s desire to ensure service members get the care they need begins with the units providing information for her to track the members’ status. The injured count on her to make sure she gets the information she needs to track their cases and she doesn’t disappoint, overcoming all challenges in her way. [\(Read Story\)](#)



## CMC visits RCT-5 Marines and sailors

**CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan** – General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, speaks to Marines and sailors with Regimental Combat Team 5 while Sgt. Maj. Michael P. Barrett, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, looks on during a visit Sept. 22. Amos discussed current operations in Afghanistan, answering questions and urging those assembled to "never lose sight of why (they) joined the Marine Corps." Amos and Barrett visited RCT-5 during their battlefield circulation of forward operating bases in southern Helmand province. (Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Daniel Kujanpaa)

### Dedicated to the future:

## Marines train police of Now Zad to independence

By Lance Cpl. Clayton Vonderahe

**NOW ZAD, Helmand province, Afghanistan** -- In the wild west, a sheriff and his deputies brought justice to an otherwise lawless land. Hollywood has depicted a small group of men with long rifles and badges fighting against gangs of unruly outlaws usually wanting something from the town and taking it by force.

The situation is not entirely different in Afghanistan. Insurgents work in groups, terrorizing and harassing much of the nation's population. Coalition forces are working throughout the country to stop insurgent activity, but the nation has sheriffs and deputies of its own, they just need a little guidance to "rustle the bad guy."

The Marines and sailor with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment's, Police Embedded Training Team are getting the local law enforcement in Now Zad up to par to bring lawlessness to justice.

The PETT is dedicated to ensuring the Afghan Uniformed Police in Now Zad will be a self-sustaining, independent force when the Marines leave the area.

"Police in Now Zad are very close to standing on their own two feet," said Capt. Christopher Timms, the PETT commanding officer. "They are already providing security in Now Zad, but they need help logistically. They need to be able to run their own convoys and supply things for



themselves. Once they are capable of doing that, the AUP can take care of the security in Now Zad."

The police have begun actions to make themselves more independent by budgeting for their own fuel costs instead of being entirely supplied by Marines. They have also weaned themselves off of bottled water, used by Marines, and instead use water from wells located in close proximity to their base.

With their newly found independence, the police are developing a command operations center allowing them to tackle more sophisticated missions.

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## Afghan government, coalition forces build for a better education

By Cpl. Colby Brown

**GARMSIR DISTRICT, Helmand province, Afghanistan** - Pencils, paper and backpacks are piled high in the corner of a school office. Down the hall, local children eagerly wait on the edges of their seats. The district governor, district chief of police and local kandak commander, aided by elders and local farmers, grab fistfuls of pencils, stuff the backpacks full, and walk to the entryway of the classrooms.

Excited shouts erupt from inside. Children lean over the front of their desks, as if to say, “Me first, me first,” and the district leaders begin to pass out the school supplies.

Minutes earlier everyone was outside, watching a pair of scissors slice through a decorative ribbon.



Three months before that, the children were sitting cross-legged on the ground in dusty, hole-ridden tents with notebooks in their laps.

“We are so happy that a school was built,” said Mamor Zarifshah, a native of Garmsir. “It will help our children become doctors, teachers or engineers.”

The ribbon was cut Sept. 13 after more than six months of planning and

construction for the permanent school building. It replaced three tent schools in the Laki area of Garmsir and is part of a focus the Afghan government and 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, have of supporting betterment of the education system in the district.

Families and friends of the Marines and sailors in 1/3 joined the effort, sending care packages full of school supplies for Garmsir children.

The Laki School is proposed to house 100 students. Sergeant Ryan Smith thinks more will come as the school year moves forward.

“I feel that as the school year progresses, more students will attend,” said Smith, a civil affairs non-commissioned officer with Weapons Company.

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## A sandstorm, an IED and the squad that overcame

By Cpl. Colby Brown

**GARMSIR DISTRICT, Helmand province, Afghanistan** - In late May, an explosion changed the lives of a squad of Marines in Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines.

The ordeal they hope to never relive strengthened their relationships. This is their account of six hours that will never leave their memory.

On May 25, 3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, was returning from a routine patrol when a jarring thud obliterated all semblance of normalcy. An improvised explosive device detonated at the front of their patrol, stirring a cloud of debris. The squad was only 500 meters from their patrol base.

“Right before the strike, I had this weird feeling ... and then it happened,” said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Antoine White, a corpsman for 3rd Squad. “I saw the explosion, and I heard ‘Doc! Doc! Doc!’”

“Soon as the blast happened, that switch went on,” continued White, a native of Detroit. “That cool, calm,



collected corpsman went out the building, and that ready-to-save-a-person’s-life corpsman came into effect. I was alert, and I was ready. I heard my name, and I was prepared (for) whatever was in store.”

Lance Cpl. Leonardo Langit ran from the rear of the patrol and was the first to reach Lance Cpls. Ryan McSweeney and Peter Uncapher, the 3rd Squad infantrymen injured by the blast.

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