

Regional Command Southwest

Round-up

Weekly PAO Report

----- December 9, 2013 -----



NEWS

Last watch: Marines reflect on Thanksgiving from mountain outpost

Story and Photos by Cpl. Paul Peterson



OBSERVATION POST ATHENS, Afghanistan - Memory of the massacre at the foot of the mountains still circulates amongst the Marines watching over the village of Kajaki.

Mujahedeen fighters swept over the area during the Soviet withdrawal more than 30 years ago. They surrounded a group of Russian soldiers, who made their last stand in the city below Observation Post Athens. The soldiers fought until their ammunition ran dry. None survived. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

3/7 Marines bond during Thanksgiving

Story by Cpl. Corey Dabney

DELARAM, Afghanistan - Marine Cpl. Alex Martinez is thankful for a lot of things this Thanksgiving—but mostly for the people he celebrated it with.

Like most Marines in Afghanistan, Martinez spent Thanksgiving at work, standing security and supervising his fellow Marines. But Martinez, an infantryman serving with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, didn't want to let work overshadow the holiday for him and his fellow Marines. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



One team, one objective: ANSF, Marines seeks stability in Sangin

Story and Photos by Cpl. Austin Long



SANGIN, Afghanistan - Since the beginning of the war, Sangin has built a reputation for heavy fighting. In 2008, the Marine Corps deployed to the district in an effort to curb insurgency. Over the years, the Marines fought some of the war's bloodiest battles within the district and sustained a large amount of casualties.

Over the last year, the landscape of the district has changed dramatically. The Afghan National Army's 215 Corps and Afghan Local Police have taken over the lead security role and jointly have conducted several large-scale operations against insurgency within the district's Green Zone, a small stretch of fertile ground known for concealing insurgents' movements. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

VINETTES

Dinner is Served: Marine is awarded “Cook of the Year” for Marine Corps Reserves

Story by Cpl. Austin Long

SANGIN, Afghanistan - Standing over a large pot, Cpl. Daniel Russo dropped lobster tails one by one into boiling water. A small cloud of steam poured over the rim of the pot and quickly filled the kitchen. He checked his watch: almost 3:30 p.m.

The job is exhausting. Most of Russo's days are started early and ended late. He cooks two hot meals a day, usually breakfast and dinner, for the more than 40 Marines and sailors with the Security Forces Assistance Advisor Team at Forward Operating Base Nelay. Although taxing, Russo says he enjoys his job. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)



Marine leaves ‘no rock unturned’ creating deployment art

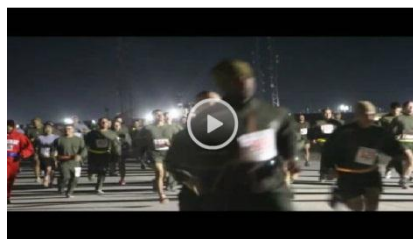
Story and Photos by Cpl. Paul Peterson



CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan - He tends his peculiar garden every day – the Starship Enterprise, a pterodactyl, President Abraham Lincoln, even a scaled-down model of Stonehenge.

The fields of gravel around Camp Bastion are a ripe, rocky orchard ready for the picking. Gunnery Sgt. Gregory Miller, a maintenance controller with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 165, Regional Command (Southwest), scours the fields along the base's roads and living areas daily. [\(Read the STORY\)](#)

VIDEO



Thanksgiving Fun Run

Video by Cpl. Austin Long

B-Roll footage of service members participating in a 5k Thanksgiving day run at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Nov. 28. Footage includes three interviews from participants who placed in the top three of their gender bracket. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

Here is Your War: Dinner is Served

Video by Cpl. Austin Long

Cpl. Daniel Russo, a food service specialists with the 2-215 Security Forces Assistance Advisor Team from Watertown, Mass., won Marine Corps Cook of the Year from previous performances before deploying to Afghanistan. Russo is now in charge of providing two hot meals for about 40 Marines daily; one in the morning and one in the evening.

[\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



Here Is Your War: Guardian Angel

Video by Cpl. Paul Peterson



Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines maintain an outpost at Observation Post Athens, Helmand province, Afghanistan. The Marines spent their Thanksgiving watching over miles of territory stretching out around the village of Kajaki and used their unique vantage point on an isolated mountain to protect the Marines living in a nearby forward operating base. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)

Home Away From Home For The Holidays

Video by Cpl. Joshua Defour

Marines reflected on what they're thankful for this holiday season as General John Paxton, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, toured Afghanistan to celebrate Thanksgiving with his Marines. [\(Watch the VIDEO\)](#)



Marketed

HMLA-369 Marines talk with San Diego Tribune Reporter Gretel Kovach about their job and being deployed during Thanksgiving.

CLR-2 Marines with Surgical Platoon give shout outs for the Army-Navy game.

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['Golden Hour': Flight medics speed trauma patients off battlefield: Elk Grove News Nevada National Guard](#)

[5k Thanksgiving Run: San Diego Tribune](#)

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