



----- October 7, 2014 -----

NEWS

Commandant, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps visit Marines, sailors in Helmand for final time

Story by Staff Sgt. John Jackson



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – General James F. Amos, the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sgt. Maj. Micheal Barrett, the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited Marines and sailors aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Sept. 6. The commandant visited the troops currently serving with Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan for his final time before relinquishing his command to Gen. Joseph Dunford later this year. “This is my last opportunity to see you,” said Gen. Amos. “I’ve been the commandant for four years and a Marine for 44 (years). I wanted to come look you in the eye and say thanks. Thank you for making me proud every day when I wake up and put on this uniform.”

During the visit, Gen. Amos and Sgt. Maj. Barrett spent the day traveling to various command headquarters and speaking to the Marines and sailors currently deployed to Helmand province. ([Read the STORY](#))

Never Forget: RC(SW) holds remembrance ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan

Story by Staff Sgt. John Jackson

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Marines, sailors and coalition partners gathered at the Regional Command (Southwest) headquarters aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Several hundred service members gathered for a small ceremony during the morning hours, Sept. 11. During the ceremony, a brief script was read aloud reminding all in attendance the timeline of events on that fateful day. Following the reading, the national anthem was sung while the American flag was raised and then lowered to half-staff. The service members then observed a moment of silence. Brigadier Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, commander, RC(SW) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan, concluded the ceremony by speaking to the service members about the significance of the day. “For Americans, 9/11 evokes a very special meaning,” Brig. Gen. Yoo said. “It’s a memory of the world as we knew it on that day changing forever. ([Read the STORY](#))



Bravo Company Marines, sailors, ANA disrupt insurgent lethal aid in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — During the early morning hours, in almost pure darkness, a company of infantry Marines mounted in Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and convoyed approximately three hours south from Camp Leatherneck for a security operation. Marines and sailors with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, alongside elements of the Afghan National Army's 215th Corps conducted an operation to continue to show a military presence in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 3. The operation was designed to deter enemy insurgents from operating in the southern area of Helmand province.

"This mission was just one piece of a larger operation conducted over several days to disrupt enemy activity," said 1st Sgt. Brian Moody, Bravo Co. first sergeant. ([Read the STORY](#))

New base completed for ANA's 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, in Helmand province

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

NEW CAMP GARM SER, Afghanistan — Helmand Provincial Governor Naeem Baloch, Afghan National Army's 215th Corps Commander Maj. Gen. Sayed Malouk, and Regional Command (Southwest) Commander Brig. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo gathered in Garm Ser district for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of a new ANA base, Sept. 1. New Camp Garm Ser is an ANA base in southern Helmand province and will be used to support the requirements of 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, for operating in the region. The base was contracted through the United States Army Corps of Engineers and funded through Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan. "New Camp Garm Ser is a brigade-sized base capable of supporting more than 5,000 ANA troops," said Col. Christopher Dowling, the senior advisor to the 215th Corps. ([Read the STORY](#))



Navy corpsman receives valor award for actions in Helmand province

Story by Staff Sgt. John Jackson



CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Van Horn was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, Sept. 17, during a small ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. Van Horn is currently on his second deployment in Helmand province. The 28-year-old Akron, Ohio, native wanted to join the Navy to serve his country and do something to help support his family. During 2010 while on his first deployment in southwestern Afghanistan, the Navy corpsman worked on an isolated forward operating base on the outskirts of Musa Qal'ah, a district that at the time was known for a significant enemy presence. Van

Horn was a part of the Navy's Shock Trauma Platoon and Forward Resuscitative Surgical System, a small group of Navy doctors, nurses, anesthesiologists and corpsmen who work in tents that can be set up anywhere and who are trained to treat and stabilize critically wounded casualties prior to transporting them to larger, more sophisticated hospitals. ([Read the STORY](#))

Bravo Company Marines, sailors, ANA deter insurgent operations in Helmand

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Marines and sailors with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, alongside Afghan National Army counterparts, disrupted insurgent activity during a security operation in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 9-11. During the 72-hour operation, two sections of Marines and ANA soldiers conducted dismounted patrols on foot at alternate times in the area. A dismounted patrol is when a small team of Marines leaves their vehicles to get a clear picture of the situation by sweeping the immediate area on foot with mine detectors. When one group of Marines and ANA were patrolling and searching nearby compounds for weapons and lethal aid, the other group held security inside a fortress of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. “Our main mission is to provide security and disrupt enemy activity in the area,” said Cpl. Aaron Fitzgerald, a team leader with Bravo Co., and native of Kingston, New York. ([Read the STORY](#))



Charley Company Marine recognized with meritorious promotion aboard Camp Leatherneck

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas



CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan — For those who have earned the title of “The Few and the Proud,” being a Marine is a way of life. For one Marine, Sgt. Dominic Sharpsteensurina, being an infantryman was a calling. “I joined the Marine Corps when I was 25 years old,” said Sharpsteensurina, a native of Apple Valley, California. “Life is a journey, and the Marine Corps was one thing I wanted to experience. I feel it is very important to serve others and my country.” Upon graduation at Infantry Training Battalion-West aboard Camp Pendleton, California, during 2011, Sharpsteensurina began his career in the infantry with “Suicide” Charley Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, stationed at Marine Corps

Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California. “I am proud to be in a company that has such a historic past full of pride and tradition such as Suicide Charley,” Sharpsteensurina said. ([Read the STORY](#))

215th Corps soldiers conduct first Afghan-operated leave flight for rest, relaxation

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan — More than 100 Afghan National Army soldiers with the 215th Corps as well as Afghan civilians awaited the landing of a civilian-operated aircraft aboard Camp Bastion, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 27, 2014. The flight was significant because this was the first time an incoming civilian flight landed aboard Camp Bastion with nearly all instruction given from the ANA, with only minimal direction from Marines. “I am really just giving a little guidance when needed by the ANA at this point,” said Capt. James Smith, the garrison support unit advisor for the 215th Corps, ANA. “The ANA fire department has conducted eight Saturday morning training evolutions with Marines from the Marine Wing Support Squadron 274 crash, fire and rescue team to learn how to operate the fire trucks and equipment.” ([Read the STORY](#))



1/7 transfers authority, ends operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Staff Sgt. John Jackson



TACTICAL BASE DWYER, Afghanistan – First battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, cased their unit battle colors during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Tactical Base Dwyer, Oct. 1. The ceremony signified the battalion's transfer of authority of the base and their area of responsibility to 3rd Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, a U.S. Army command based out of Fort Hood, Texas. The ceremony also meant the end of combat operations for 7th Marines – a regiment which has been actively supporting Operation Enduring Freedom for several years. “Today is a very special day,” said Brig. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, commander, Regional Command (Southwest) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan. “We say goodbye to a very good team, led by Lt. Col. (Seth) Yost, and the members of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, who are known as the ‘First Team.’ We also say hello to a new team, led by Lt. Col. (Brian) Harthorn, and the members of 3rd Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, also known as the ‘Thunder Squadron.’” ([Read the STORY](#))

Bravo Company, Weapons Company conclude missions in Helmand province, Afghanistan

Story by Sgt. Joseph Scanlan

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – After six months of continuous combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, the Marines of Bravo and Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, concluded their deployment and returned to the United States. The battalion arrived in Afghanistan during the beginning of March and immediately began preparing to relieve 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, of their control of the battlespace. “Throughout the deployment, the Marines and sailors conducted more than 25 air assault and helicopter-borne vehicle interdictions, making this a very dynamic mission set,” said Maj. Peter Ankney, the operations officer for 1st Bn., 7th Marines. “The (Regional Operations Company) concept has been around for a few years now, but it was 1st Bn., 7th Marines, that took it the furthest and made a difference in the battlespace.” ([Read the STORY](#))



215th Corps soldiers complete Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator course aboard Camp Shorabak

Story by Cpl. Cody Haas



CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan — Afghan National Army soldiers with the 215th Corps completed the Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator course aboard Camp Shorabak, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 2. The course was designed to familiarize the soldiers with map reading and coordinating with airborne pilots on friendly and enemy troop positions on the battlefield. “Today we graduated eight students,” said Capt. John Graas, an operations advisor with the Consolidated Corps Advisor Team. “They learned how to talk to pilots in the air, how to integrate air support into the ground scheme of maneuver on the battlefield and how to call for casualty evacuations. The course consists of map reading, commander's intent, and the correct procedures for situation reports and providing an attack or casualty brief to the pilots.” ([Read the STORY](#))

PHOTOS

U.K. Prime Minister visits troops in Helmand

Photos by Cpl. Darien Bjorndal



U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron meets with Maj. Gen. Sayed Malouk, commander, 215th Corps, Afghan National Army, and U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, right, commander, Regional Command (Southwest), aboard Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 3, 2014. Cameron spoke with British troops and met with International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army leaders in charge of the region. ([See the PHOTOS](#))

1/2 promotions on Bastion-Leatherneck complex

Photos by Cpl. John Martinez

U.S. Marine Sgt. Gerardo Rodriguez, a truck master with Motor Transport Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, stands at attention as he is promoted to the rank of staff sergeant aboard Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 2014. Promotion ceremonies are held to acknowledge the advancement in a Marine's career. ([See the PHOTOS](#))



2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, conducts security patrol

Photos by Cpl. John Martinez



U.S. Marine Sgt. Andrew Hodgkins, a section leader with 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, communicates with higher command during a security patrol in Washir District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Sept. 29, 2014. Patrols are conducted to disrupt enemy operations in the vicinity of Camps Bastion and Leatherneck. ([See the PHOTOS](#))

RC(SW) commander, ANA leaders discuss construction projects aboard Delaram

Photos by Cpl. Cody Haas

Brigadier Gen. Daniel D. Yoo, right, commander, Regional Command (Southwest) and Marine Expeditionary Brigade – Afghanistan, discusses a construction project aboard Delaram I, Nimroz province, Afghanistan, Sept. 23, 2014. ([See the PHOTOS](#))



VIDEOS

Charley's Legacy

Video by Cpl. Cody Haas



Marines with Charley Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, describe what it means to be an infantryman with Charley Co., and the legacy of "Suicide" Charley.

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

ANA's Newest Trauma Center

Video by Sgt. Christopher Tobey

Navy Capt. James Cole, the Regional Command (Southwest) command surgeon, explains the purpose of the new trauma center at Camp Shorabak, Helmand province, Afghanistan, and describes the new capabilities the trauma center brings. This is the first such facility in the region, and it enables the Afghan National Army's 215th Corps to better support its soldiers.

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



9/11 Memorial Ceremony

Video by Sgt. James Pauly



U.S. Marines with Regional Command (Southwest) hold a memorial ceremony aboard Camp Leatherneck in remembrance of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The ceremony was to honor those whose lives were lost during the attacks and those who gave their lives defending their country during the Global War on Terror.

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

1/2 Charlie Company Denies Enemy Operations

Video by Cpl. John Martinez



U.S. Marines and sailors with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, conduct multiple security patrols in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 9-13, 2014. Patrols are conducted to disrupt enemy operations against Camps Bastion and Leatherneck. ([Watch the VIDEO](#))

1st Bn., 2nd Marine Regiment, Disruption Operations

Video by Sgt. James Pauly

U.S. Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, and Afghan National Army soldiers with 4th Tolay conduct disruption operations during Operation Enduring Freedom in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 3, 2014. The purpose of disruption operations is to deny the enemy the ability to stage an attack against Camps Bastion and Leatherneck.

([Watch the VIDEO](#))



Last U.S. Marine FARP

Video by CWO3 Benjamin Barr



U.S. Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 274 operate a forward arming and refueling point aboard Camp Bastion, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sept. 3, 2014. The FARP aboard Camp Bastion airfield is the last remaining Marine-controlled FARP in Afghanistan and is a key part in ensuring that Marine air support has fuel for the Regional Command (Southwest) mission. ([Watch the VIDEO](#))

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