

THE PROSPECTOR

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Serving the Corps since 1943
Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow

July 30, 2026



Upgrades Around Base
MCLBB Historic Ties to Route 66
When the Winds Pick Up, Safety Matters

COVER

Cover photo by: Sgt. Davin Tenbusch

The U.S. Marine Corps Mounted Color Guard presents the American Flag and Marine Corps Standard during the Rooftop Rodeo Parade, at Estes Park, Colorado, July 6. As the last remaining mounted color guard in the Marine Corps, the unit's participation in the Rooftop Rodeo showcased Marine Corps tradition, professionalism and horsemanship.



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Social Links and Website

OUR OFFICIAL BASE SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
CAN BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

Website: <http://www.mclbbarstow.marines.mil>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MCLBBarstow>

Instagram: mclb barstow official

X:MCLB *Barstow*

LinkedIn: <http://mclbbarstow.marines.mil>

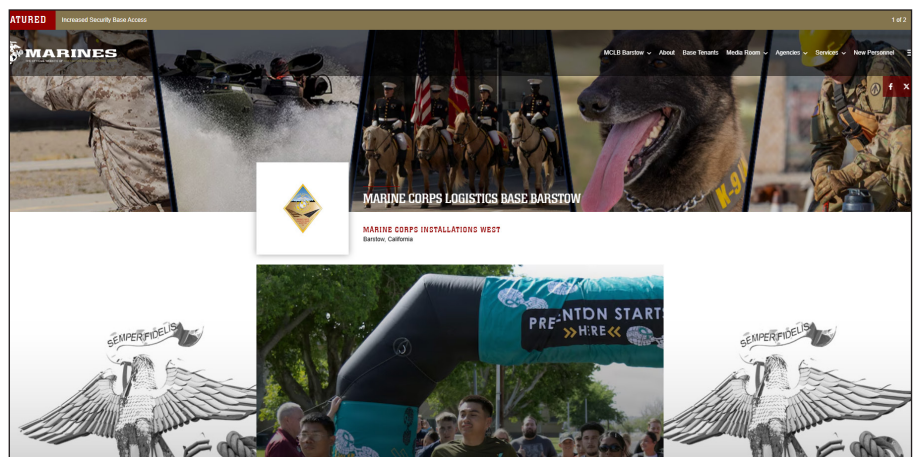




Photo by: Leo Ritualo

Personnel with the Base Maintenance and Engineering Department work to repair a washed-out section of Range Road aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 14. The road, which was severely damaged by heavy rains in September 2025, is being reconstructed with a Type II aggregate base, reinforced retaining walls,

and 3-foot concrete Sonotubes designed to divert runoff and prevent future washouts. The reconstruction project is slated for completion in mid-August 2026, restoring safe and reliable vehicular access to the base training ranges for Marines and civilian personnel.

CONTENTS



Sergeant Major Corner

4



Upgrades Around Base

5



Marine Depot Maintenance
Command Visits

7



MCLBB Historic Ties to
Route 66

8



Back to School Brigade
2026

9



High Winds Advisory

11

Sergeant Major Corner-The Mother Road to Freedom: A Reflection on Our Ongoing Journey of Independence

Written by: Sgt. Maj. Mario Virto

Base Sergeant Major

America is more than a location on a map; it is an idea. From the moment our Founders signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776, this nation was built on a revolutionary promise, the self-evident truth that all people are created equal, endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These foundational ideals, much like our Marine Corps' Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, serve as our guide. Over my two decades of service in the Marine Corps, leading and serving alongside Marines across the globe, I have learned that while we may be imperfect, our Core Values always give us our "true north." I believe the exact same is true for our country. Running straight through the heart of Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow is a stretch of historic asphalt known as Route 66. We call it the "Mother Road," and to me, it stands as a physical reminder of our nation's constant drive to push forward. As the fireworks fade and I reflect on our recent Independence Day celebrations, I am reminded that our independence is a continuous journey. It is not merely a static victory achieved in 1776, but a road paved by the courage of everyday citizens, expanded by those who fought fiercely to hold the nation to its own standards, and defended today by the military and civilian workforce who keep our shared mission moving forward.

The Backbone of the Mission

Keeping that mission moving forward does not happen by accident; living up to a profound set of ideals takes enduring effort, time, and personal investment. When I look back at the founding of our nation, I recognize that while the history books usually focus on the towering, famous figures, the American idea was truly secured by ordinary, unheralded people doing what needed to be done. In my two and a half decades in the Corps, I have seen this truth firsthand: leaders may point the way, but it is the backbone, grit, and sacrifices of those on the ground that move the rock and seize the objective.

I often think about unsung architects like Gouverneur Morris. While household names like Jefferson and Hamilton argued the grand theories of statecraft in the public square, it was Morris who sat down with the messy, debated drafts and did the heavy lifting of writing the Constitution. As the head of the Committee of Style and Arrangement, he took disjointed resolutions and polished them into the elegant, seven-article document we have today. Most notably, it was Morris who penned the Preamble to our Constitution. With a single, brilliant stroke of his pen, he crossed out a draft that divided us by individual states and chose the unifying words, "We the People." Morris explained his reasoning simply: "I wish to see the whole people united as one family." His monumental work was not done on a grand stage, but in the quiet, meticulous details of drafting our national identity and striving to make the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence a physical reality.

I have seen that exact same spirit translated into physical action across the Marine Corps, and I see it every day aboard MCLB Barstow. The mechanics, supply clerks, technicians, maintainers, operators, emergency service personnel, and Marines operating in this desert are our modern unsung heroes. Each group operates as one family, one team, and one fight, ensuring the ideals Morris drafted, and our nation declared, are protected today.

An Incomplete Promise, A Shared Legacy

We continue to strive for that unity today, but I believe a mature nation, much like a mature leader, must be willing to reflect on the past, to prepare for the way ahead. Even Morris recognized the cracks in our early foundation. As one of the most outspoken abolitionists at the Constitutional Convention, he fiercely condemned the institution of slavery, warning that it flatly contradicted the very liberty they were fighting to establish. His vision of "one family" was a beautiful goal, yet the road to getting there has not always been smooth, nor was it immediately open to everyone. Just as I have seen individual Marines sometimes fall short and must course-correct to realign with our Core Values, I recognize that our nation has had to course-correct in much the same way to align with its founding ideals.

In his powerful 1852 address, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", Frederick Douglass delivered a profound critique of American hypocrisy. He vividly contrasted the joyous celebrations of independence with the ongoing, brutal reality of those still



enslaved, challenging the nation to recognize that the freedom celebrated on July 4th was an incomplete promise.

Yet, what often gets lost in history is that Douglass did not condemn the Declaration of Independence itself; in fact, he deeply admired it. He called the principles of the Declaration "saving principles" and urged the nation to stand by them as a "sheet anchor" in a storm. He argued that the problem was not the ideals of 1776, but the nation's failure to live up to them. He held America accountable to its own blueprint. It wasn't until June 1865, commemorated just a few weeks ago as Juneteenth, that the promise of those unalienable rights finally reached the last enslaved Americans in Texas. To my mind, Juneteenth and Independence Day are inextricably linked; the Fourth of July established our guiding ideals, and Juneteenth represents the relentless, necessary grit required to fulfill them. Freedom is not simply an inheritance; it is an imperfect legacy we must actively earn, protect, and perfect.

Our Watch Continues

For me, that momentum is what connects our past to our present. Over the past 12 months serving aboard MCLB Barstow, I have had the profound privilege of witnessing that momentum firsthand on the deckplates. Throughout this past year, I have watched this team tackle the blistering, triple-digit Mojave heat, overcome complex supply chain challenges, exercise critical emergency response and security threat scenarios, and push critical gear out to the fleet without missing a beat. Whether you are managing inventory in the Nebo warehouses, turning wrenches at Yermo, or supporting our base operations, you have shown me every single day what it means to be the true backbone of the mission. The Declaration of Independence gave us our azimuth, our moral true north, and the struggles leading to Juneteenth proved our resilience in following it. Today, the men and women of MCLB Barstow provide the critical logistics to ensure our military remains ready to defend those foundational ideals of life, liberty, and equality. I am immensely proud of my service as a United States Marine, and I am proud to serve alongside a family united by a shared duty along this historic crossroads.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the mission, to each other, and to the defense of the American idea. The holiday may be over, but our watch continues.

Stay safe, look out for one another, and Semper Fidelis.



Upgrades Around Base

Photos submitted by : SF Facilities Department

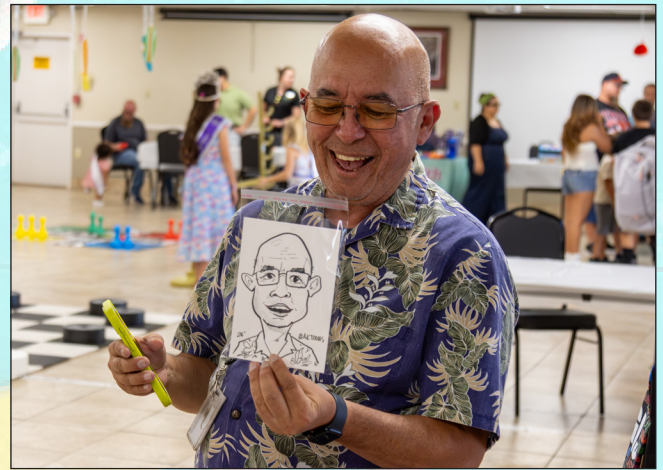
Contractors replace security fencing during the Child Development Center and Youth Activity Center Fence and Gate Repair Project at the Nebo Annex aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 13. The project, contracted to Barkley Andross Corp as the prime contractor and Ellis Fence Co. as the subcontractor, replaces approximately 1,100 linear feet of perimeter fencing, three access gates at the CDC, and five single-motion push bars across both facilities. The upgrades address identified physical security deficiencies to enhance the safety and security of the installation's youth facilities.



Summer Bash 2026

Photos by: Leo Ritualo & Katherine Cortez

MCCS Barstow hosted the 2026 Summer Bash to enjoy the official beginning of summer at the James L. Day Conference Center aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 10. The event included a range of water activities designed to help attendees cool off, as well as indoor games, face painting, a caricaturist, and additional entertainment options for both military and civilian personnel and their families.



Marine Corps Martial Arts Program

Photos by: Katherine Cortez & Leo Ritualo



U.S. Marines and a U.S. Navy Sailor participate in a log run and practice martial arts techniques during a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program Gray Belt Advancement Course at Sorenson Field aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow California, July 10. The early-morning training, which integrated students and staff from the Lance Corporal Seminar, focused on combat conditioning, knife techniques, and weapons of opportunity to build physical discipline and fulfill belt progression requirements.

Marine Depot Maintenance Command Visits

Photos by: Leo Ritualo & Katherine Cortez



General officers with Marine Corps Logistics Command and Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command conduct key site visits to Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 2026. Major General Mark Clingan, commanding general, MAGTF Training Command/Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, toured the Yermo Annex on July 15 to observe PPB's traditional and advanced fabrication, prototyping, and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) support capabilities. On July 28, Brigadier General Kevin Collins, commanding general, Marine Corps Logistics Command, toured PPB and met with civilian-Marines as part of his West Coast subordinate command tour, which also included 1st Force Storage Battalion and I Marine Expeditionary Force, to assess depot-level maintenance execution and total warfighting readiness.



MCLB Barstow highlights historic ties to Route 66 during Centennial Year

Story by: Kristyn Galvan
Public Affairs Chief

As Route 66 marks its 100th anniversary in 2026, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow is highlighting its unique and enduring connection to one of America's most iconic highways.

Established in 1926, Route 66—often referred to as the “Mother Road”—became a symbol of American mobility, opportunity and resilience, stretching more than 2,400 miles from Chicago to Santa Monica and connecting communities across the nation.

For MCLB Barstow, that history is more than symbolic. The installation was established in 1942 alongside Route 66, leveraging its strategic location to support the rapid movement of troops, equipment and supplies during World War II.

“A century is a huge milestone, and for MCLB Barstow, it really highlights our shared history with the local community,” Sgt. Maj. Mario Virto, base sergeant major, said. “The base was stood up 28 December 1942, right alongside the highway, and the city of Barstow has been an incredible partner to us ever since. In my opinion, this centennial isn't just about celebrating an iconic road; it's about recognizing the people, the equipment, and the massive logistical effort that traveled this route to defend the country. Our relationship with the city and its citizens provides us with a great opportunity to share this legacy with the High Desert community.”

Route 66 played a critical role in the nation's wartime mobilization efforts, serving as a key transportation corridor that enabled the movement of military resources across the country. The base's proximity to the highway helped position it as a vital logistics hub supporting operations in the Pacific theater.

Today, MCLB Barstow remains the only military installation with an original segment of Route 66 running directly through it. A 1.7-mile portion of the historic roadway, known on base as Joseph L. Boll Avenue, serves as a visible reminder of the installation's connection to American and Marine Corps history.

Elizabeth Barron, former cultural resources specialist, said that connection continues to resonate more than a century after the highway's creation.

“The story of Route 66 is interwoven with the history of the Marine Corps and the pivotal role MCLB Barstow played in major historical events like World War II,” Barron said. “Acknowledging this history fosters a deep sense of heritage and pride in the base's legacy and its contributions to national defense. It serves as a tangible connection for current Marines to the dedication and sacrifices of those who served before them.”

Beyond its military relevance, Route 66 has long represented the spirit of exploration and perseverance, carrying families west during the Great Depression, fueling economic growth and shaping American culture through decades of travel and innovation.

“It sends a very clear message: you can have the best personnel and gear in the world, but if you can't get them where they need to go, it doesn't do you much good,” Sgt. Maj. Virto said. “Route 66 was the original lifeline out west and proved how critical a solid road network is to national defense. Today, we build on that legacy as the largest railhead in the military. Whether we're relying on those modern rail lines or the interstates, the concept remains the same: strong infrastructure is the absolute backbone of our ability to deploy and sustain our forces.”

In recognition of this legacy, MCLB Barstow has taken steps to preserve and honor its portion of the historic route, including signage, roadway markings and monuments that highlight the connection between the Marine Corps and Route 66.

“The Marine Corps base did not emerge in isolation. It developed because Barstow already functioned as a transportation and logistics hub tied directly to Route 66 and the Santa Fe rail system,” Brendan O'Brien, Route 66 Museum coordinator said. “In many ways, Route 66 brought America to Barstow, and the base turned Barstow into a permanent strategic logistics city. Classic Route 66 businesses in Barstow (motels, diners, gas stations, repair shops) historically served both tourists and military traffic simultaneously. That overlap is one reason Barstow's Route 66 culture feels more authentic and utilitarian than purely nostalgic.”

As communities across the country celebrate the Route 66 centennial, MCLB Barstow's role serves as a reminder of the highway's dual legacy—both as a cultural icon and as a critical asset in supporting national defense.

“As a registered National Historic Highway, Route 66 is a cultural resource that embodies America's heritage of exploration and the pursuit of a better life,” Barron explained. “The preservation of the segment within MCLB Barstow is a tribute to the base's significant contributions during World War II. The base's Cultural Resources Program is tasked with managing and maintaining this historic landmark, a responsibility that also serves to highlight the installation's environmental history.”

The installation's continued mission as a logistics hub reflects the same principles that defined Route 66 at its peak: connection, movement and readiness in support of a larger purpose.



Back to School Brigade 2026

Photos by: Katherine Cortez & Leo Ritualo



Military families receive free school supplies and meet with local education officials during the annual Back to School Brigade at the James L. Day Conference Center aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 29. "The annual Back to School Brigade serves as a school supply distribution event for military families and resource fair for all authorized base patrons," said Adam Diaz, MCLB Barstow School Liaison. "The school supplies are provided for free thanks to Operation Homefront, Dollar Tree, and our own local community. Through the month of July, Dollar Tree collects donations from their customers to help support a military connected child's education. Locations from here to Hesperia have signed on to support our community."





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Join us for a transformative retreat designed for a journey of self-discovery, connection, and renewal.



*For Married Marines and Sailors and their spouses

- Attendees provide their own transportation
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When the Wind Picks Up, Safety Matters

Story by: Katherine Cortez
Public Affairs Specialist

High winds in the Mojave Desert can create hazardous driving conditions, knock out power, topple trees and scatter debris across Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, making preparation essential for Marines, civilian employees and families.

A hazard to be cautious about includes day-to-day activities that are inevitable, like driving. A windy day can turn a normal drive to work into a more dangerous one. It is important to be vigilant of fallen trees, objects on the road, potholes, and animals. Winds can be unpredictable and dangerous, and it is vital to always keep an emergency kit in the vehicle and replace it every so often to maintain the working condition of the product according to Brian Korves, base safety specialist and traffic safety manager. Korves suggests the following items be part of your emergency kit:

- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Tool kit
- Multipurpose utility tool
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit with gauze, tape, bandages, antibiotic ointment, aspirin, blanket, nonlatex gloves, scissors, hydrocortisone, thermometer, tweezers, and instant cold compresses.
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods, such as unsalted nuts, dried fruits and hard candy.
- Drinking water
- Phone charger
- List of emergency contacts

Crosswinds can make driving more difficult or unsafe, and when driving through a crosswind, or gusts of over 20 mph, there are certain cautionary measures that can help the experience become more manageable.

“Keep both hands firmly on the steering wheel, reduce your speed by 10-15 mph, and be prepared to steer slightly into the wind to maintain your lane position,” Korves said. “Make small, gradual corrections, rather than sudden steering movements. Increase following distance to 4-5 seconds to allow reaction time for wind-induced vehicle movements.”

Springtime is usually the time of year when the high winds are a cause for concern, so fall is the perfect time to prepare for strong winds.

“Know your vehicle's limitations in wind conditions,” he said. “Practice handling techniques in safe and controlled environments and identify safe stopping points along regular routes. Always keep emergency supplies in your vehicle.”

According to Korves and the national safety council, if you see reports of wind gusts of 35 mph or higher, it is advised to stay home. Avoid driving when: Wind speeds exceed 35 mph sustained and gusts are forecast over 50 mph. However, if an emergency should arise, there are a few things to consider:

- Monitor weather conditions continuously
- Have backup transportation plans
- Delay travel
- Use different routes
- Communicate your travel plans with family or colleagues
- Trust your instincts; if conditions feel unsafe, they probably are



Photo courtesy: West Development Inc.

West Development Inc. served as the contractor for the three-phase utility restoration project in June 2026, which was awarded in August 2023, enhancing grid resilience and minimizing power outages throughout the Nebo Annex South Loop aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California.

Public Works completed a three-phase utility restoration project in June 2026, replacing aging sulfur hexafluoride gas-insulated switchgear at the Nebo Annex South Loop, according to Christopher Yip, Project Management Engineering Branch Head. He further explained that the upgraded electrical distribution system restores dual-source power capability, significantly enhancing grid resilience and minimizing potential downtime during power outages for housing complexes, the Child Development Center, the RV area, and southwest critical infrastructure.

Older infrastructure may pose a higher risk of damage and shortages during windstorms. The base facilities team has procedures in place if the power goes out or any essential duties are affected.

There are procedures in place if a power outage does occur and these can help maintain services operating safely and securely.

“To keep essential services running smoothly, buildings supporting essential services are equipped with backup generators that automatically kick on during an outage,” said Alicia Florez, SF Facilities director. “For other key locations, we maintain a number of smaller, mobile generators that our teams can rapidly deploy to provide temporary power until power is restored.”

For more information on how to mitigate strong wind-induced disasters or for resources on safety protocols during high winds, please contact the Base Safety Office at (760) 577-6266 or the SF Facilities Public Works Help Desk at (760) 577-6220. If there is a downed power line or immediate danger, please contact 911. If you do call 911, please remember that they are located off-base. Therefore, you may need to give them very specific location details.



National Wellness Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
National Back to School Month
Family Fun Month

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						10AM - 2PM: Thrift Store Open 8AM-5PM: Auto Skills - Open
10AM-6PM: Auto Skills - Open	National Watermelon Day	1-3 PM: LifeSkills: Conflict Management, Bldg. 126 9 - 10AM: Take It, Make It Activities @ Desert Housing Community Center	9-10 AM: Child Abuse Awareness Info Table @ MCX 3-4 PM: Kid's Class-Create Space @ Bldg. 218 1-3 PM: 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work @ Bldg. 218	10 AM- 12PM: Homeschool Hub 9-10AM: Smooth, Move Workshop @ Bldg. 126 10-11AM: Playground @Desert Housing Community Center 9:30-10 AM: Library Storytime @ Bldg 218	1-3 PM: Volunteer Orientation, Bldg. 126 5-7PM: Screen & Strikes @ Leathernecks Lanes	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10AM: Worship Service @ Base Chapel	National Thrift Shop Day	10-11AM: Playgroup @ BLDG. 363	2:30-3 PM: Library Storytime @ Bldg 218 3-4 PM: Kid's Class-Create Space @ Bldg. 218 1-3PM: Welcome Aboard Brief @ Bldg. 218 1-3 PM: 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work @ Bldg 218			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		9AM-4PM: Baby Boot Camp @ Bldg. 363	1-3 PM: 7 Principles for Making Marriage Work @ Bldg 218	Just Because Day 9:30-10 AM: Library Storytime @ Bldg 218 2-3 PM: L.I.N.K.S.-The Places You'll Go @ Bldg. 126	8:30 AM-4 PM: L.I.N.K.S.-Full Day Training @ Bldg. 126	International Overdose Awareness Informational Display @ MCX
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
International Overdose Awareness Informational Display @ MCX	International Overdose Awareness Informational Display @ MCX					
30	31					

For more details, visit MCLB Bartstow's community events page at:
<https://bartstow.usmc-mccs.org/calendar-of-events>