



# More than Scuttlebutt....

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National Museum of the Marine Corps, 18900 Jefferson Davis Highway,  
Triangle, Virginia 22172 [www.usmcmuseum.org](http://www.usmcmuseum.org)

## Jan—March 09 Highlights:

- \* 96,632 people visited the Museum .
- \* Five docents have contributed more than 1,000 volunteer hours each since the Museum opened just over two years ago.
- \* A new Combat Camera photo exhibit was installed along the length of the construction barrier in Legacy Walk ,and a new GWOT art exhibit was installed along the Legacy Walk exit.
- \* A reception was held at the Museum to celebrate the MCB Quantico premier of HBO's *Taking Chance*.

## NMMC Receives Major Awards

Open just over two years and host to more than the 1 million visitors, the National Museum of the Marine Corps has now been recognized for superior performance by both the Themed Entertainment Association (THEA) and the Secretary of the Navy.

Receiving a THEA Award is internationally recognized as the equivalent of an Oscar in the themed and experience-based entertainment industry. The Museum was chosen from a pool of more than 120 nominees, including theme parks, major events, museums, and traveling exhibits to receive this prestigious award. The THEA called the Museum an “excellent and successful example of the evolution of museums into the world of immersive storytelling.” They further credited the Museum with striking a “masterful balance ..between theatrical immersive galleries and the surrounding supporting exhibits.” The award recognizes the achievements of the Museum staff as well as the outstanding contracted design teams, including exhibit fabricators, lighting , and architects.

The THEA award was presented to Museum director Lin Ezell and exhibits manager Chuck Girbovan as well as Chris Chadbourne of Christopher Chadbourne and Associates, the Museum’s planning and exhibit design firm, at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, CA. As a special tribute to the Museum, the 3<sup>d</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing Band performed a surprise opener



NMMC Director, Lin Ezell, proudly displays the THEA award and Secretary of the Navy Award of Merit for Group Achievement.

for the ceremonies, promoting standing ovations from those in attendance.

“I trust no one else brought along their own band,” Ezell joked in her remarks. “It is truly an honor to accept this award on behalf of the Museum, a tribute to the amazing men and women of the Marine Corps.”

Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter also paid tribute to the Museum with the Award of Merit for Group Achievement. The award, presented to the staff by LtGen George J. Flynn, is in recognition of the successful opening and operation of the Museum. Justification for this award is based upon the Museum’s significant benefit to the overall accomplishment of the mission of the Navy, Marine Corps, and/or Department of Defense.

## Director's Log

There are many measures of success. For museums and attractions like ours, one of the metrics most frequently asked about is attendance figures. Our colleagues at the Virginia Tourism Corporation tell us that state-wide these numbers are down 10%, and at recent museum conferences we've heard much worse. At the National Museum of the Marine Corps, our visitor numbers remain strong. When comparing this first calendar year quarter with 2008, we see a 1% decline, but the Easter bunny and school spring breaks came early last year; hence, we had a mega-March 2008. We're having the same kind of big numbers this April, with lots of school groups and out-of-town visitors. With continued strong outreach to our day-trip audience, we should be able to keep our attendance numbers very healthy.

Another measure of success will soon be resting in a new trophy cabinet on the second deck. Earlier this year the Themed Entertainment Association awarded the Museum its trophy for "Best New Museum." THEA looks for quality visitor experience—with an edge! After all, THEA is all about interaction and immersive experiences. We were honored to be recognized by this forward-thinking association and its members. Just wait until they see what we do next spring with our next three galleries. The Secretary of the Navy's group achievement award to the Museum extends to the entire Museum family: our Marine detachment, the civilian Marines, the 200+ docents, and our contractors (Wackenhut, GSI, Jacobs, and LB&B). It takes a large team with constant attention to detail to capture SecNav's attention. The Museum building itself garnered several prestigious awards for its architecture and construction. THEA and the Secretary recognized the quality of what goes on inside that beautiful building. Job well done, everyone!



### A Letter from One of Our Visitors:

*On this past 13 November, 2009 I brought my 83-year-old father to visit the National Museum of the Marine Corps. My dad is a WWII Marine veteran, whose first combat was Tarawa. I must preface the following by stating that my father never really talked about his combat experiences, choosing instead to talk about where he was, what the weather was like etc. Over the years I have witnessed too many times to count the truism, of "Once a Marine Always a Marine." To this day, he always wears his Marine pin proudly, wherever he goes.*

*The first exhibit Dad saw on the 13th was the beachhead exhibit of Tarawa. I cannot relay the emotion that came forth from this visit. My father, who spent 27 years as fire chief in our town, and has witnessed many tragedies while showing little emotion, was left shaking in front of this exhibit. He stood there with tears running down his face, all the while trembling, and shaking his head back and forth. I noticed that people were respectfully giving him his space when a gentleman, wearing a retired USMC hat came up to him and affectionately patted him on the back a couple of times, as if to say it was okay. My Dad doesn't remember that moment, but I will never forget it. I served 25 years as a professional firefighter and am proud to belong to "that" brotherhood, but nothing transcends the bond I have witnessed between Marines of all generations.*

*I believe, now that some time has passed, that this visit helped Dad to relieve himself of some of the baggage he has been carrying for 64 years. To have this happen in a place surrounded by people who understand and know the proud history of the United States Marine Corps made this visit something my family will be ever thankful for. My father served on Tarawa with the 8th Marines in a weapons unit. He also fought on Guam and Okinawa.*

*My sincere thanks for the job you are doing! God Bless the United States and God Bless the United States Marines!!! Semper Fi.*

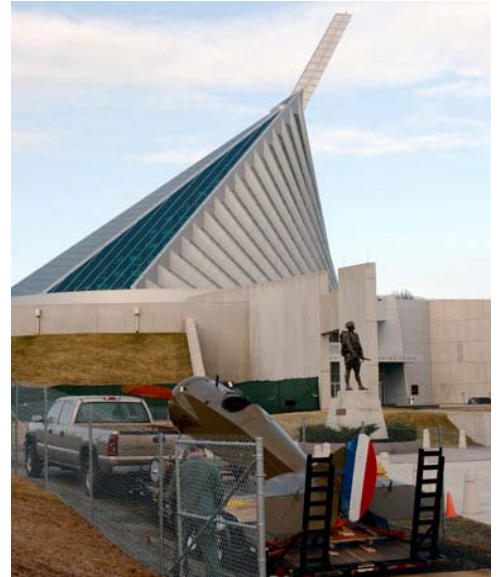
*Respectfully,*

## The Beginning of the Rest of the Story

Work on the National Museum of the Marine Corps' next three galleries is well under way with their anticipated opening just a year away. Not only are walls going up, but large artifacts are in place, and cast figures are being created.

The restoration staff successfully disassembled and transported, the Curtiss Pusher and Thomas-Morse aircraft, the King armored car, and the Model T and Liberty trucks to the Museum. They were loaded onto trucks or trailers and "gently" moved from the restoration workshop on Quantico to the Museum. For most, it isn't a normal occurrence to see WWI era aircraft "driving" down the road.

The aircraft are already suspended and the vehicles staged in the appropriate gallery spaces. These large objects had to be in place before the interior walls could be built. Restoration work continues on the Liberty truck (in place at the Museum) and on the French 75 gun. Work on the Curtiss Hawk will begin soon.



The Thomas Morse was "flown" from base to the Museum on a trailer.



Establishing shots were taken to determine how to pose the models.

Talented exhibit specialists are creating 12 cast figures for the next galleries. Ten Quantico-based Marines covered in blue "goo" and plaster posed for hours so that exhibit fabricators from Taylor Studios, Inc., could accurately mold their bodies.

Many of the Marines chosen as models have a story similar to the one they are portraying in the new galleries. Today's Marine Corps pilots will be sitting in the cockpits of WWI-era aircraft; a combat artist portrays a combat correspondent; and the drum major of the President's Own posed for that cast figure.

Two of the models, members of the NMMC Marine Detachment, are cast in poses eerily close to their experiences while stationed together in Iraq. They are part of a WWI scene in which one Marine, cast on Sgt Mark Wangler, is helping a wounded Marine in the back of a Model T truck. The wounded Marine is being cast from Sgt Richard Tack, who was shot in the leg during an attack in Iraq. Wangler was one of two Marines who pulled Tack to safety and administered first aid until corpsmen arrived.

"One of the hardest parts of the pose was holding an expression while they put all that stuff on my face," said Wangler. "I had to just concentrate on how I felt when Tack was wounded but it was still hard to hold a look of concern when they were covering my face. The only thing not covered was my mouth and nostrils."

All the molds are being completed in Illinois and will be brought back to the Museum for installation in the galleries, immortalizing those Marines for generations to come.



Wangler poses (left) as his legs are cast and as his head is completely covered in the casting materials.



## Navy Crosses Presented Posthumously at NMMC

The Secretary of the Navy, Donald C. Winter, presented Navy Cross medals, posthumously to Lance Cpl Jordan Haerter and Cpl Jonathan T. Yale at a ceremony February 20 at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Haerter and Yale, infantrymen assigned to the 2<sup>d</sup> Marine Division, serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, and 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Marines, respectively, were killed in action on April 22, 2008, while intercepting a truck loaded with explosives at an entry control post in Ramadi, Iraq.

As a result of their actions, the truck stopped a few feet from their positions, and the suicide bomber detonated the approximately 2,000 pounds of explosives in the truck, leveling the entry control point and mortally wounding the two Marines.

“The explosion blew out all of the windows over 150 meters from where the blast hit,” said Lance Cpl Benjamin Tupaj, a rifleman with 3<sup>d</sup> Platoon, Weapons Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Marines. “They saved all of our lives, if it wasn’t for them that gate probably

wouldn’t have held. If that truck had made it into the compound, there would’ve been a lot more casualties. They saved everyone’s life here.”

Marines of Haerter’s and Yale’s platoons flanked Secretary Winter and Gen James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, in Leatherneck Gallery as the awards were presented to the families of the fallen Marines.

More than 1,000 were in attendance for the ceremony, which was followed by a reception in the Museum’s Mess Hall.

## Inside Story Headline

Education continues to play an important role at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Museum educators conducted their second Teachers’ In-Service Workshop, attended by 56 Prince William County teachers. This session’s topic, “Teaching the Cold War and Vietnam,” was taught by guest speakers Dick Camp of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, NMMC curator Beth Crumley, and docents George Schaudel and Barry Colassard. The teachers receive Continuing Education Credits for the workshop.

“The evaluations of the in-service were very positive,” said teacher-in-residence Aaron Book. Teachers left such comments as:

*“Loved the Marines telling their stories, especially when they choked up. It reminded me that I need to emphasize to my class that these were real people who experienced these events.”*

*“It was an outstanding in-service in terms of the quality of the presenters*

*and how we were treated. I have seldom been to a better in-service.”*

Also in keeping with the Museum’s objective of being an important educational resource, NMMC Marine Detachment members Sgt Eduardo Maldonado, Sgt Mark Wangler, and Lance Cpl Drew Daily conducted a briefing entitled “A Grunt’s Eye View of the Iraq War” for 20 members of the Marine Air/Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Integration Division of USMC Doctrine Directorate.

The Marines spoke to their practical experiences during two combat tours in Iraq, during some of the heaviest fighting in 2005-2006 in Al Anbar province. All three Marines served together in 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines, during Operations Iron Fist and Steel Curtain Al Qaim / Sadah / Hussaybah on their first tour and assigned to 131 Marine Transition Team (MTT) near Habbiniyah during their second tour. The audience actively questioned and sought insight into the reality of the ground situation as experienced by

these Marines as it applies to MAGTF doctrine. For their efforts, the Marines received an official Letter of Appreciation from the Director of Doctrine Directorate, Col Len Blaisol, USMC (Ret).

The Museum will continue to offer educational opportunities to educators, students, and the general public. Check at [www.usmcmuseum.org](http://www.usmcmuseum.org) for a full schedule of opportunities.



Educator David Fair is the life, or at least voice, behind the department’s lead puppet, Chesty. The puppet shows have become a very popular educational tool for the pre-school and kindergarten-aged visitors.