The Knox County Joint Veterans Council
are looking for volunteers!!!

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. Contact Carol Riley @ 740-504-3264 if you are interested in volunteering. Thank you!

They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. And they do this without thought of payment. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased soldier, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

Marine Corps officially opens Guam base, with an eye toward China

The Marine Corps on Thursday held an activation ceremony for its base on Guam, which ultimately will be home to about 5,000 Marines and will serve as a "strategic hub" in the Indo-Pacific, a Corps news release said. The activation of Camp Blaz comes as part of the Marine Corps' long-standing plans to move approximately 9,000 Marines from Okinawa, Japan — now home to more than 18,000 Marines — to outside of Japan beginning in 2024. That plan arose from a 2012 bilateral decision between the United States and Japan, which has faced pressure from Okinawa residents to reduce the U.S. military presence on the island. About $3 billion of the $8 billion construction project will come from Japan, Japanese news outlet Kyodo News reported.

Top Marine officials, including Commandant Gen. David Berger, and leaders from Guam and Japan attended Thursday's ceremony on the island's Asan Beach, the release stated. "The future of Guam is inseparable from the future of the broader Indo-Pacific and the success of the Marines is inseparable from the success of Guam's people," Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said, according to the release.

The Marine Corps has in recent years shifted its attention toward threats from China. One aspect of Force Design 2030, the sweeping overhaul of the service developed amid the heightened focus on the Indo-Pacific, is constantly positioning Marines within the region to deter the Chinese military. "Forward, persistent presence is key to the regional security and stability in the Indo-Pacific," Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger said, according to the Marine Corps release. "Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz is a critical part of that. More than that, it shows our undivided relationship with the Government of Japan."

Previously known as Marine Barracks Guam, the installation was deactivated in 1992, according to the release. The newly reactivated base is still under construction, so Marines won't relocate there until beginning in the mid-2020s. Some construction on the base temporarily was halted in 2019 after an archaeologist unearthed prehistoric and 19th-century artifacts, including rock tools and pottery fragments, at the site.

The base was administratively activated in October 2020, when it reached initial operational capability. It is located in the village of Dededo, on the northwestern part of the island. Camp Blaz is named for Brig. Gen. Vicente Tomas "Ben" Garrido Blaz, the first Chamorro, or person indigenous to the Mariana Islands, to become a general officer in the Marine Corps.

Guam fell under U.S. control in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, and it officially became an unincorporated territory in 1950. The U.S. Air Force and Navy already have significant bases on the island.

For his 108th birthday, an original member of the Montford Point Marines — the group of the first Black troops to enlist in the Marine Corps — was recognized for his years of dedicated service across three military conflicts.

For his 108th birthday, an original member of the Montford Point Marines — the group of the first Black troops to enlist in the Marine Corps — was recognized for his years of dedicated service across three military conflicts.

Cosmas D. Eaglin Sr. of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was presented earlier in January with a certificate of appreciation and a challenge coin from the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, according to a statement from the department. "When I learned of Mr. Eaglin and his service to our country, I found it truly admirable and an inspiration," retired Lt. General Walter E. Gaskin, the secretary of the state military department, said in the news release.

"As an original Montford Point Marine, he endured unimaginable obstacles in the segregated Marine Corps," he said. "Because he was a Marine, I am able to be a Marine. His contributions to the nation and the Marine Corps will be remembered and his legacy will live on for generations to come."

Eaglin was one of the first Black Marine recruits to train at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina — nearby Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina — after President Franklin Roosevelt issued a 1941 executive order that took a step toward ending racial segregation in the military.

During the 1940s, approximately 20,000 Black Marines trained at Montford Point, now named Camp Gilbert H. Johnson after one of the first Black recruits there.

In 2022, for the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the initial Black recruits at Montford Point, many of the surviving veterans met back at their old training base for a ceremony celebrating the historic legacy of the Black service members who helped pave the way for integration in the Marine Corps and throughout the services.

Born in 1915 in Opelousas, Louisiana, Eaglin worked in agriculture after high school until he earned his teaching certificate in 1939, according to a bio shared with Marine Corps Times from the North Carolina DMVA Director of Communications Tammy Martin.

In 1942, Eaglin joined the Marine Corps at 27 years old, the statement said. He served two years in the Solomon Islands campaign during World War II, but left the service after the war. Following a brief stint in Oakland, California, with his family, Eaglin decided to join the Army, which took him on assignments back east in Georgia, Kentucky and Maryland for training. In the midst of the Korean War, the soldier earned his paratrooper wings and was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1951. He later served a three-year assignment in Germany from 1956–1959 with Operation Gyroscope and did two tours in Vietnam, the bio said.

Now, at the North Carolina State Veterans Home in Fayetteville, Eaglin focuses on his faith and family, including his six children, seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, the news release said.

Navy conservation efforts help take 5 species off endangered list

Five species of plants and animals were taken off the endangered species list following conservation efforts between the Department of Defense and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Navy-owned San Clemente Island off the coast of California, the Pentagon announced on Tuesday. Four plants, the San Clemente Island paintbrush, lotus, larkspur and bush-mallow, and one bird, the San Clemente Bell's sparrow, no longer require protection under the Endangered Species Act, Pentagon officials noted.

"The Navy is proud to have shared more than 40 years of collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve the habitat and recover these species," Karnig Ohannessian, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Environment and Mission Readiness, said in a statement. "The Navy remains committed to our conservation efforts on San Clemente Island, and to be good stewards of the natural resources we manage as part of our national security mission."

San Clemente Island is the primary training area for the Navy Pacific Fleet and Sea, Air and Land Forces, according to the statement. Before the Navy acquired the island in the 1930s, it had been decimated by non-native herbivores, specifically feral goats, that grazed over the habitat.

When conservation efforts began, the Navy put an emphasis on removing goats from that island, which allowed the habitat to recover. By 1991, the island was goat-free.

The San Clemente Bell's Sparrow, once nearly extinct, reported only 34 adult birds in 1984. As of 2018, the population now ranges between more than 4,000 to nearly 8,000 birds, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. San Clemente is one of eight islands that comprise the Channel Islands off the coast of southern California. Besides the five species removed from the list this week, other species have been aided by joint clean-up efforts. The island night lizard and island fox, along with plants like the Santa Cruz Island dudleya and island bedstraw, have recovered across the islands, according to the statement.

Bald eagles and peregrine falcon populations have also begun breeding on the island.

The announcement comes as the Endangered Species Act is set to turn 50 years old. Since President Richard Nixon signed the ESA into law in 1973, more than 100 species of plants and animals have had their conservation status changed from "endangered" to the less severe "threatened." The Endangered Species Act has been credited with saving 99% of listed species from extinction, according to the statement.

U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Zachery Johnson in a UH-1Y Venom above San Clemente Island, where conservation efforts are ongoing. (Sgt. Jamean Berry/Marine Corps)

Pictures of the Month

Army cadets snowshoe to a bivouac site during a cold weather operations course near Fort McCoy, Wis., Jan. 13, 2022. (Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood/Army)

Service members with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, and 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, embark an MV-22 Osprey during a joint training exercise on Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, Hawaii, Nov. 30, 2021. (Cpl. Patrick King/Marine Corps