

250 YEARS OF THE MARINE CORPS



CONTACT:

Matthew Morrissey

MMorrissey@SusanDavis.com

202-414-0789

**The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) Spotlights Tennessee During
Nationwide Marines Across America Program**

MCHF marks the achievement of Tennessee Marines as part of the Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary Celebration

TRIANGLE, Va. (June 6, 2025)– The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) today celebrates the Marines of Tennessee as part of the organization's yearlong *Marines Across America* program to commemorate the Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary. The program highlights Marines who embody the values of honor, courage, and commitment within their communities and showcases the contributions Marines make in their local communities or nationally following their active-duty service.

Tennessee's notable Marines include a police detective who was named "Police Officer of the Year" for his role in stopping the Covenant School shooter, a Purple Heart recipient honored as a CNN Hero in 2022, and a noted country music singer songwriter.

"Marines have always made their mark on the battlefield, but it's important to remember they've also made their mark in their hometowns and communities," said retired Marine Major General James Lukeman, President and CEO of MCHF. "As we celebrate 250 years of the Marine Corps, we honor the significant contributions that Marines from Tennessee have made to our nation. It's an opportunity for all residents of Tennessee to commemorate this historic milestone and show their appreciation for all Marines who stand ready to protect our nation and continue to put Marine values to work in their communities and professional lives."

Notable Marines with Tennessee ties include:

- [Eric W. Barton](#), **Maryville, Tennessee**: Entrepreneur and founder of multiple defense contracting companies in East Tennessee, providing services to the U.S. Armed Forces in the Middle East.
- [Richard Casper](#), **Nashville, Tennessee**: Marine Corps veteran and Purple Heart recipient; co-founder and Executive Director of CreatiVets. Named a CNN Hero in 2022 and one of *TIME* Magazine's Next Generation Leaders in 2017.
- [Stephen Cochran](#), **Nashville, Tennessee**: Country music singer, songwriter and producer. Named spokesman for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Research and Development in 2009.

- [Michael Collazo](#), **Nashville, Tennessee**: Police detective who received “Police Officer of the Year” for his role in stopping an active shooter at The Covenant School in Nashville.
- [Richard Farrer](#), **Murfreesboro, Tennessee**: Purple Heart recipient who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Currently District 5 Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).
- [Edgar Harrell](#), **Clarksville, Tennessee (deceased)**: U.S. Marine and the last surviving member of the USS *Indianapolis* crew. Author of *Out of the Depths*, which documents his experience during WWII and the sinking of the *Indianapolis*.
- [Captain Elizabeth A. Okoreeh-Baah](#), **Nashville, Tennessee**: Marine Corps captain and the first woman to pilot the MV-22 Osprey aircraft. One of the first women to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy with a Marine Corps aviation contract.
- [Andy Wetzel](#), **Elizabethton, Tennessee**: Battalion Chief of the Elizabethton Fire Department. Served two tours in Iraq before transitioning to public service. Also serves as a member of the Veterans War Memorial Committee in Elizabethton.

“The list of notable Marines from Tennessee is impressive and showcases how they used the values and skills they learned in the Marine Corps to become leaders in their communities,” said Maj Gen Lukeman. “Today marks a special opportunity to recognize these extraordinary men and women for their service to our nation as well as their communities.”

The *Marines Across America* program continues throughout 2025, leading to the official 250th birthday of the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, which will be marked nationwide with official cake-cutting ceremonies taking place at all 50 state capitals.

Members of the public are encouraged to join the anniversary celebration and *Marines Across America* by sharing stories of Marines they know, both active and retired, who make a difference in their communities and in their professional lives. Submissions may be made through the [Marine250.com website](https://Marine250.com) or via social media using the hashtag #MarinesAcrossAmerica.

About the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation:

Dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of Marine Corps history, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation was established in 1979 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Foundation supports the historical programs of the Marine Corps in ways not possible through government funds. The Foundation provides grants and scholarships for research and the renovation, restoration and commissioning of historical Marine Corps artifacts and landmarks. The Foundation secured the necessary funding for the construction of the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Heritage Center, located in Triangle, Virginia, and continues to expand programs at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and beyond its walls. For more information, visit MarineHeritage.org.



MARINEHERITAGE.ORG