

250 YEARS OF THE MARINE CORPS



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

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

TRIANGLE, Va. – The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) today celebrates Kentucky Marines, as part of the organization's yearlong *Marines Across America* program to mark 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.

"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 Kentucky have made to our nation. It's an opportunity for all residents of Kentucky 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 Kentucky ties include:

- **[Al Botts](#) (Mount Sterling, Kentucky):** After serving 20 years in the Marine Corps, including participating in the first Gulf War, Botts turned to serving his community, first as a councilmember and now in his current position as mayor of Mount Sterling. He is passionate about empowering both his local and military communities through honest reflections on his service and is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of leaders.
- **[Christel Blocker](#) (Louisville, Kentucky):** Following her service in the Marine Corps, Blocker made education a priority and earned a Bachelor of Science in organizational leadership from the University of Louisville, where she currently serves as the assistant director of Student Services. Outside of her professional role, she advocates for underrepresented communities, with a focus on supporting individuals with autism. Blocker is passionate about empowering others and creating positive change.
- **[Sam Deeds](#) (Louisville, Kentucky):** After a combat injury concluded his 14 years of service in the Marine Corps, Deeds became an advocate for various nonprofits to raise awareness for PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and veteran suicide. He is a ground safety specialist for Team Fastrax, a professional skydive team that performs designed stunts for television, festivals, and veteran support events. Deeds is also a staff

member at Kentucky Wounded Heroes Inc. and was twice inducted into the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame for his community work.

- **Michael Lathon (Louisville, Kentucky):** Lathon gained extensive construction management experience during his 22 years of service in the Marine Corps, which enabled him to purchase and grow AACON General Contractors, a premier construction firm. Since becoming an owner, AACON has completed over 150 projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as projects for the Army, Air Force, and other government entities. and grow AACON General Contractors, a premier construction firm. Since becoming an owner, AACON has completed over 150 projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as projects for the Army, Air Force, and other government entities.

“The list of notable Marines from Kentucky is impressive and showcases how they used the values and skills they learned in the Marine Corps to become leaders in their communities,” said MajGen 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 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.



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