



CONTACT:

Matthew Morrissey
mmorrissey@susandavis.com
202-414-0781

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Spotlights Connecticut During Nationwide Marines Across America Program

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

TRIANGLE, Va. February 12, 2025 – The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) today celebrates the Marines of Connecticut, as part of the organization's year-long *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 Connecticut have made to our nation. It's an opportunity for all residents of Connecticut 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 Connecticut ties include:

- [Senator Richard Blumenthal](#), Stamford, Connecticut: Retired Marine Corps Reserve Sergeant and current U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal continues to champion the U.S. military through his work on the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees.
- [Harvey Barnum Jr.](#), Cheshire, Connecticut: Retired Marine officer and Medal of Honor recipient Harvey Barnum Jr. applied the skills he honed in the Marine Corps in his subsequent positions as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Reserve Affairs and Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy, with the USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. named in his honor.
- [Joseph Luca](#), Meriden, Connecticut: Decorated, Italian born, Marine Vietnam War veteran Joe Luca continues to serve his community today through volunteering with numerous civic organizations and serving as an active member of veteran groups like the Marine Corps League, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.



- [William Ford Law Rodgers](#), Newtown, Connecticut: Retired Marine Corps Colonel William F.L. Rodgers, a 30-year veteran including service as an Appellate Military Judge, now applies his military and legal expertise to serve Connecticut through leadership roles in local governance and veteran advocacy, including chairing Newtown's Legislative Council and founding the Sandy Hook Community Foundation after the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School.
- [Michael Gozzo](#), Hamden, Connecticut: Michael “Mike” Gozzo enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1979 and served with multiple commendations, eventually retiring as a Gunnery Sergeant. Today, he uses his skills to support the community through helping local youths as an educator, volunteer coach, and co-founder of the Bella Vita Foundation.
- [Lorenzo Anthony Santamaria](#), Guilford, Connecticut: Lorenzo "Larry" Santamaria enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1968, serving 13 months in combat in Vietnam with the 1st Marine Division and earning a Purple Heart. He has since dedicated his life to service, leading veterans as Commander of VFW Post #7666 and supporting his community as a chef for Meals on Wheels and local fundraising events.

“The list of notable Marines from Connecticut 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 in their professional lives. Submissions may be made through the [Marine250.com website](http://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.