

## MCICOM Commanding General's Thanksgiving Message

Commanders, Staff--

The year 1621 was one of extreme adversity and hardship for the brave men and women who had sailed to this country on the Mayflower seeking a better life. Half of the original Pilgrims perished from injury, disease and starvation. Through their work ethic, strong resolve, establishment of good relations with their neighbors, and a successful harvest, they, along with Chief Massasoit and his fellow Wampanoag tribesmen, shared camaraderie and together gave thanks for their fortunes by celebrating the first Thanksgiving. For this tradition, I am thankful.

During my career, I have seen the same traits I describe above in every unit I have served in from our Marines, Sailors and civilian Marines. I am personally thankful to be part of an organization such as ours, where a solid work ethic, strong resolve, taking care of each other and camaraderie are the norm, not the exception. For these traditions, I am thankful.

Last Thursday, I was fortunate enough to have attended the Memorial Service for our four Explosive Ordnance Marines whose life was recently cut short during a training event at Camp Pendleton. While the event was heart-wrenching, I was again struck by the way that we as a Corps wrapped our arms around the grieving families. From the Commandant of the Marine Corps to the youngest Marines in attendance, I had the sense that I was at an extended family reunion where numerous generations had come together to grieve their immense loss. However, the units' speakers also gave thanks for the lives these four warriors had lived, the families they had formed, the friendships they had forged and the service they had given to their Corps and Nation. Memorials such as these are not the exception in our Corps, they are the norm. For this, all of us should be very thankful.

I know all of us have countless people in our lives that we are thankful for. This Thanksgiving, let's take time to thank these people, whether they be family, colleagues, supervisors, subordinates or friends-- these are the people who share the daily trials and joys of our lives. I also ask that you continue to engage your Marines, Sailors and Civilian Marines at every opportunity; continue to reinforce that we are an organization that looks out for each other and closes ranks during tough times. For being part of this type organization, I am thankful.

Finally, please remember to travel and celebrate safely this Thanksgiving. Every one of you is a valued member of Marine Corps Installations Command and I want to see all of you return after the Holiday. I am honored to be amongst your ranks. For this privilege, I am immensely thankful.

Semper Fidelis

Juan

MajGen Juan G. Ayala  
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