

WARFIGHTING VETERANS NEEDED AT MARINE EXPO

by: Sergeant Major James Dalgarn, USMC—Sergeant Major, Marine Corps Systems Command |

I am calling on all Marines and civilian Marines to join me here at Marine Corps Base Quantico, along with the Marine Corps League and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC), who co-sponsor the Modern Day Marine Expo, the world's largest military exposition focusing on enhanced capabilities for expeditionary forces.

The expo showcases products and services of more than 500 companies that support Marine Corps land, air and sea operations. There is definitely equipment being used today by Marines confronting enemies in Afghanistan

and around the world that made its debut at previous editions of this expo.

Over the past few years, I have come to look forward and appreciate what Modern Day Marine has brought together under their massive tents year after year. These industry professionals want to provide the best product available to our warfighters. We all are seeing technology change at a cyclic rate, these science and technology professionals try and stay out front through their research and development departments. It's really cool when you can walk right up, and touch and feel what they bring to the table.

Marine Corps Systems Command is our Corps' principal agency for acquisition and sustainment of systems and equipment for the Marines' warfighting mission. Except for air assets, our 2,000-plus team members acquire just about everything else Marines wear, use, shoot or drive. Many of our acquisition professionals will visit the exhibit halls to discuss missions, capabilities and

requirements with defense industry professionals. But we also need our active duty Marines to visit Modern Day Marine. Industry professionals need to hear from experienced warfighting veterans like us who have been in harm's way.

I challenge each of you to try and look at all the exhibits being offered. If you're like me, it will take you more than one day. Talk with these industry professionals, ask them if you can pick up their weapons and try out the various systems they have designed. Examine the items closely

and tell those company officials what you like and what you don't like, and why. Explain to them what you think will or won't work well in theater. Let them know what your fellow Marines currently in the fight really need and if their product has value. I cannot fathom all the changes that have been made over the years. I don't think there's a single piece of gear that hasn't changed over the past 10 years we have been fighting these wars in OIF and OEF.

While you are there, I ask that you drop by our MCSC tent as well and check out the newest Marine Corps gear we are currently fielding or soon to be fielded. We need your valuable input and feedback just as much as industry does, if not more so. You have those special insights and experience that will help us acquire the best equipment possible so that we can maintain our edge on the battlefield.

In addition to the exhibits, MCSC is also helping with the "Warfighters Corner," a venue in which Marines recently back from service in combat zones will describe what

equipment and systems worked best for them, and also provide suggestions and recommendations for how improvements, modifications or replacements might be made to better help warfighters survive and win on the battlefield. Subjects, this year, will include Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, Marine Corps Energy, the Navy/Marine Corps Medical Team, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Combat Equipment.

I also ask that you bring your loved ones with you to the expo's "Family Day" today, a day on which Marine Corps family members can tour the exhibits and learn more about today's military equipment, systems and technology. Just like you, they, too, will want to see what new items may soon be arriving in the inventories of the United States Marine Corps.

Lastly, just for showing up you can come away with some nice gear that the vendors hand out as giveaways. You provide the knowledge and they provide the gifts is the way I look at it. Therefore, make time on your calendars and challenge those Marines with whom you work and get out by attending and touring this year's Expo. See you there and Semper Fi.



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