

Secretary of the Navy Visits Camp Lejeune

II Marine Expeditionary Force Public Affairs

Story by Pfc. Walter Marino

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MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. - The Honorable Mr. Raymond Mabus, 75th Secretary of the Navy, sworn in May 19, spent the day visiting Marines and Sailors here, June 24.

Lt. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, commanding general, II Marine Expeditionary Force, escorted Mabus on his first visit to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Among other events, Mabus' tour included an overflight of Camp Lejeune aboard an MV-22 Osprey, a visit to Wounded Warrior Battalion-East, an airstrike demonstration and a static display of the Corps' new Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle.

Specifically suited for maneuver operations from the sea and sustained operations ashore, the EFV will replace the aging Assault Amphibious Vehicle, which has been in service since 1972.

Staff Sgt. Niceforo Mendoza, human factors and operations specialist for the EFV Program Office in Woodbridge, Va., gave Mabus a brief overview and a tour of the vehicle, while explaining its purpose, enhanced capabilities and improvements over the AAV.

"We have adopted essentially the same fire control software that we use in the M1A1 [Abrams tank]," Mendoza said as Mabus traversed the stabilized turret. "Notice how smooth and easy it is to operate; it is a vast improvement over the AAV."

Following the tour of the EFV, Mabus visited warfighters of the Wounded Warrior Battalion-East, Wounded Warrior Regiment.

Speaking to Mabus, 1st Sgt. Anthony Goss, senior enlisted member of the battalion, had much to say about what the unit does for Marines.

"It gives Marines the opportunity to get the medical care they need and get back to the fight, or move on into the civilian community," Goss said. "This lets the Marines here know they haven't been forgotten."

Thanking the Marines for their service to the country, Mabus left for one of Lejeune's impact range observation posts to observe indirect fire called in by Marines from 1st battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Pilots from the 2nd Marine Air Wing dropped MK-76 practice bombs while Marines from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines delivered white phosphorous rounds for screening.

At the end of the event-packed day during which Mabus witnessed just a fraction of the training carried out aboard Camp Lejeune each day, the Secretary of the Navy departed the base with a greater knowledge and appreciation of the warfighters here and a clear parting message: "Thank you for what you've done for this country," he said.