

# Modern Day Marine 2023

## The Premier Showcase for Future Warfighting Technology

In collaboration with the Marine Corps League, the Marine Corps Association proudly co-hosts the annual Modern Day Marine expo.

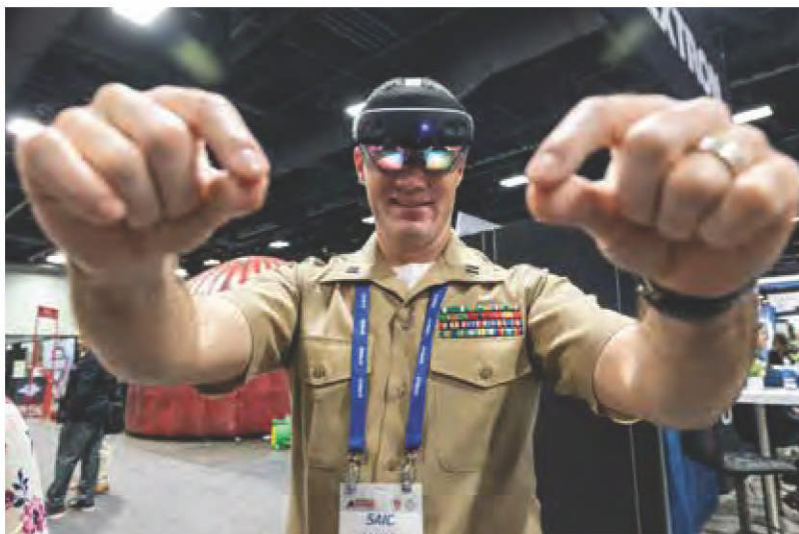
By Sam Lichtman

Where can you go to see the latest and greatest in military technology, meet famous Marines, and learn about the future of the Corps, all under one roof? Look no further than the annual Modern Day Marine expo. Held from June 27-29, Modern Day Marine 2023 was the largest expo of its kind yet, attracting more than 8,000 attendees to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Guests were treated to a three-day, all-you-can-eat buffet of professional development seminars, briefings from top generals, special presentations, and the all-new wargaming convention—and that’s in addition to the whopping 345 exhibitors on the show floor.

“The impact of Modern Day Marine has for the Marine Corps cannot be overstated,” said Marine Corps Association President and CEO, Lieutenant General Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret). “We bring together the critical elements, vision, concept and capabilities required by our Marines.”

LtGen Chiarotti, along with Marta Sullivan, MCA’s director of engagement and outreach integration, joined the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David H. Berger, to officially open Modern Day Marine 2023 with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

“Modern Day Marine is an awesome



Above: A Marine tries out an augmented reality (AR) headset. This technology overlays virtual images onto the wearer’s field of view of the real world. AR is being investigated both in the military and civilian sectors as an aid for technical training.



Above: (From right to left) MCA President and CEO LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret); MCA Director of Engagement and Outreach Integration, Marta Sullivan; Gen David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps; and SgtMaj Johnny Baker, USMC (Ret), Marine Corps League National Commandant, officially open Modern Day Marine 2023.



MCA President and CEO LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti spoke to the crowd assembled for the Modern Day Marine 2023 opening ceremony at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.



COURTESY OF EMERALD X

Left: Modern Day Marine 2023 was the biggest iteration of the expo, bringing together hundreds of exhibitors and thousands of visitors, including representatives from several foreign militaries.



COURTESY OF EMERALD X

Gen David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was on hand at the official opening of Modern Day Marine 2023, which attracted more than 8,000 attendees in June 2023.

Below: Two Marines pose behind the wheel of the Ultra Light Tactical Vehicle (ULTV) at the Marine Corps Systems Command booth. Derived from the Utility Tactical Vehicle and marketed as the Polaris MRZR Alpha, the ULTV is a rugged and modular vehicle for providing flexible off-road logistical support. (Photo courtesy of Emerald X)

**“We bring together the critical elements, vision, concept and capabilities required by our Marines.”**

**—LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret)  
MCA President and CEO**





NANCY S. LIGHTMAN

MCA Scuttlebutt Podcast hosts William Treuting and Vic Ruble interview Building Momentum CEO Brad Halsey from their vantage point on the show floor. The Scuttlebutt team produced 12 podcast episodes during the show.



Above: An attendee tries out Street Smarts VR, a virtual reality training platform marketed to military and law enforcement. Many of the exhibitors at Modern Day Marine have interactive demonstrations of their products and encourage guests to participate. (Photo courtesy of Emerald X)



COURTESY OF EMERALD X

Left: This year Modern Day Marine included a panel discussion that focused on employment opportunities and resources for military spouses.

opportunity for Marines and civilians to gain exposure to modern technology and equipment and to take advantage of professional development, training, and networking opportunities. It's also a great forum for collaboration between senior DOD leadership and the defense industry," said Sullivan.

Modern Day Marine moved to the spacious convention center in Washington, D.C., last year. "It is not by chance that we have transitioned to this venue," said Chiarotti. "Guided by the intent of our 38th Commandant, the aim of MDM as the premiere annual event

which serves to communicate the Marine Corps' future warfighting capabilities to members and staff of government, industry partners, Department of Defense leadership and sister services."

Marines who missed the expo this year still have the opportunity to hear reporting from the show floor. As a proud co-host of the event, the Marine Corps Association dispatched representatives from *Leatherneck* and the Scuttlebutt podcast to cover Modern Day Marine 2023. From their pulpit between the Marine Zone stage and the Wargaming Convention area, Scuttlebutt hosts Vic

Ruble and William Treuting spent the three days interviewing a star-studded lineup of prominent guests.

A dozen episodes of Scuttlebutt featuring exclusive interviews with notable Marines such as Medal of Honor recipient Kyle Carpenter; Sergeant Major Troy Black, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; international conflict researcher Miles Vining, and many more are already live on the MCA website and on most major podcast platforms. Fans of the program also stopped by to show their support.

"This year's Modern Day Marine was



COURTESY OF EMERALD X

**Recipients of Marine Corps League Awards met with SgtMaj Troy E. Black, 19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; Gen David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps; and SgtMaj Johnny Baker, USMC (Ret), Marine Corps League National Commandant, at the Marines Luncheon and Awards Ceremony held during Modern Day Marine 2023.**



SAM LICHTMAN

**New at Modern Day Marine this year was the Objective 1 Wargaming Convention, displaying the latest advances in both tabletop and electronic strategic simulations used at Marine Corps University and other Command and Staff Colleges.**

the first time we went live on location at an event, and it was a great venue for the podcast. We got tremendous support from both the MCA and the Walter E. Washington Convention Center which made recording Scuttlebutt easy,” said Ruble. “And being on site at the event, we were able to not only capitalize on the buzz from the convention, but were able

to interview guests that we may never have been able to sit down with, such as the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Black; Medal of Honor recipient, Kyle Carpenter; or Becky Calder, the first female pilot to graduate from Top Gun. It was quite a whirlwind. But it was a great experience and we are really looking forward to doing it again next year.”

For in-person attendees, the list of speakers was no less impressive. Over the course of the three days, presenters at the Main Briefing Center and Marine Zone stages covered a slew of important topics ranging from training and education to the state of new technologies currently in development. The docket of speakers included several Deputy Commandants as well as the leadership of Training & Education Command, Marine Corps University, the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, MARCORSYSCOM, and more. It is exceptionally rare to see this many general officers under one roof outside the Pentagon, but Modern Day Marine is an exceptional event. From Tuesday to Thursday, presentations were delivered nearly constantly at two separate briefing areas, providing an excellent opportunity for professional military education in the most convenient way possible.

While stage presentations are a valuable resource, the exhibitor booths are the main attraction for which many attendees flock to Modern Day Marine. This year was the show’s second year at its new fully indoor venue in Washington, D.C., where guests freely explored acres of high-tech gear and gadgets in air-conditioned comfort. *Leatherneck* writers spoke to representatives from some of the exhibitors to learn about some of the futuristic equipment they had on display.



NANCY S. LIGHTMAN

Weighing less than a golf ball but boasting up to 30 minutes of flight time, the Black Hornet PRS is ideal for scouting rugged terrain and dense urban environments. It was just one example of the many near-future military technologies that were on display at Modern Day Marine.

### Teledyne FLIR Black Hornet Personal Reconnaissance System

Teledyne FLIR brought examples of small unmanned aerial systems (UAS) designed for use at the squad level. Their Black Hornet Personal Reconnaissance System, as the name suggests, is a pocket-size helicopter built to gather intelligence for a single person or small unit in the field. At 2.9 lb. for the complete system and just 1.2 oz. for the vehicle itself, the Black Hornet is the smallest UAS on offer for military customers; Teledyne FLIR also advertises it as ideal for search-and-rescue operations in confined spaces. Despite its diminutive size, the Black Hornet can fly in light rain, moderate wind, and extreme temperatures; an optional night camera allows it to operate in dark environments.



CPL GABINO PEREZ, USMC



SGT KEVIN RIVAS, USMC

### Heckler & Koch HK121

Part of what makes Modern Day Marine so interesting is that many of the exhibitors bring equipment that is rarely seen in the United States. Famed German small arms manufacturer Heckler & Koch, producers of the M27 IAR and M320 grenade launcher, showed examples of many of their weapons used by foreign military and law enforcement units. The HK121, in service with the Bundeswehr (German Army) as the MG5, is an air-cooled, gas-piston-operated, belt-fed, general-purpose machine gun. Much like our M240, it can be fired from an integral bipod, tripod, or vehicle mount; U.S. servicemembers might encounter the MG5 while participating in joint training operations with German troops.



COURTESY OF EMERALD X

### Nammo Polymer-Cased Ammunition

It's been said that no one ever complained about having too much ammunition, but helicopters and other aircraft can only carry so much of it. Nammo has a solution to the weight problem in the form of hybrid polymer-cased ammunition. By using polymer to replace most of the brass in each 12.7×99 (.50 BMG) casing and the steel links connecting them, Nammo cuts the weight of each 100-round can from 36 pounds to 27.5 pounds. The nearly 25 percent weight reduction allows a UH-1Y Venom, for example, to carry 30 percent more ammunition for the same weight, or carry the same number of rounds but more fuel to give it more time on station. Elements of the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command have been using Nammo's hybrid polymer-cased 12.7 mm ammunition since 2019, and the company expected to make its third delivery this September. They are also testing the same technology in 7.62×51 for the M240.



COURTESY OF BUILDING MOMENTUM

Building Momentum's display at Modern Day Marine (right) featured a demonstration model for a drone jamming apparatus. Building Momentum aims to make every Marine a problem solver through their Marine Maker classes (left).



SAV LIGHTMAN



COURTESY OF BUILDING MOMENTUM

Building Momentum's Innovation Boot Camp program teaches Marines how to solve problems using emerging technologies. The company has already trained more than 8,500 servicemembers from every branch of the Department of Defense as well as FBI agents and DTRA employees.



COURTESY OF BUILDING MOMENTUM

### Building Momentum/Marine Maker

Of course, not every exhibitor manufactures military products. Building Momentum is a company that runs instructional courses on how to use emerging technologies, such as CAD (computer-aided design) and additive manufacturing. Building Momentum has partnered with the Marine Corps to establish Marine Maker, a pilot program of one-week classes at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton. There, they teach Marines to think flexibly and solve real-world problems; for example, instead of waiting weeks for a tool or replacement part, a properly trained Marine can use a computer and a 3D printer to design and create whatever is needed in a matter of hours. Building Momentum aims to make "every Marine a problem-solver," arming each one with knowledge on how to use a soldering iron, multimeter, and 3D printer in addition to his or her service weapon.

The Marine Corps Association and co-hosts the Marine Corps League are already planning for Modern Day Marine 2024, which will run from April 30 through May 2.

"More than just a trade show, Modern Day Marine is an experience or journey which allows a peek into the future war-fighting capabilities and what is possible when we build strong partnership based on clear and articulated service vision, concepts and requirements," said Chiarotti.

The annual expo is an opportunity for everyone in the Marine Corps, all the way from newly minted Privates to the Commandant himself, to learn about emerging technologies that may soon be ready for units in the fleet. With content on offer for every area of interest, Modern Day Marine truly is the ultimate Marine Corps expo. 🤖

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