Leatherbacks, the largest living turtles, outlived the dinosaurs and travel the world’s oceans. Marines also travel globally, and began their journeys in 1775. Back then, the leather sheath around their necks helped fend off sword attacks, earning them the name “leatherneck.” Leatherback sea turtles earned their name from the leathery skin that covers their shell.

In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service, the Marines at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC, survey the waters for marine mammals and sea turtles, including leatherbacks, before range operations begin.

Leathernecks stick their necks out for their amphibious relatives, the leatherbacks. That’s what happens when your best friends are Marines.