

# FLIGHT JACKET

Vol. 14 Issue 11

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

May 30, 2012



## VMM-365 breaks into drug battle

**Ospreys extract Marines  
from counternarcotics  
operations**



## Test cell looks for engine perfection

Test cell Marines with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 run diagnostic testing on each engine that has been serviced, repaired or rebuilt, to ensure

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## 'Sweathogs' construct new helo pad for isolated outpost

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## MCAS Miramar turns old waste to new energy

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar is currently preparing to be powered 50 percent by renewable energy generated at the Miramar Landfill.

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Maj. Gen. Andrew O'Donnell Jr.  
Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



Col. Frank A. Richie  
Commanding Officer  
MCAS Miramar

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The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office. Comments or questions should be directed to 858-577-6000.

# COMMARFORPAC takes first Osprey Flight

Photos by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller

(Right) Lt. Gen. Duane Thiessen, commanding general of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, stands with his son Capt. David Thiessen, an air officer with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 165, after Lt. Gen. Thiessen's first flight in a MV22B Osprey aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 14. Lt. Gen. Thiessen flew with VMM-165 to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms to tour the Combat Center and talk with Marines.

Lt. Gen. Duane Thiessen, commanding general of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, flew with Marines of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 165 for his first flight in an MV-22B Osprey May 14. Thiessen flew with VMM-165 to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms to tour the Combat Center and talk with Marines.



# H&HS heats up for chili cook-off



Marines with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron receive samples of chili during the first H&HS chili cook-off aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 11. H&HS hosted the cook-off providing lunch and prizes for H&HS Marines. Twenty-two contestants cooked chili competing against one another in four categories for best, most unique, hottest and vegetarian. Sgt. Christopher Folsom, a combat photographer with H&HS, won best overall for his pot of chili. (Photo by Michelle Piehl.)

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## ON THE COVER:

**NIMROZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan** - Marines from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and members of the Afghan National Security Forces' National Interdiction Unit board an MV-22B Osprey after completing a counternarcotics operation in Nimroz province, Afghanistan, May 14. Ospreys from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365 transported the Marines and NIU to and from the northern part of Nimroz to perform the interdiction.

# Marines sharpen MCMAP skills

Photos by Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl

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(Right) Pfc. Alexia J. Bartholomew, a logistics clerk with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3 and a Sacramento, Calif., native, places her opponent into a choke during Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 10. Approximately seven Marines participate in the MCMAP training weekday mornings. Instructed by Sgt. Charles J. Patlan, a black belt Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor and a San Antonio native, Marines enhance their MCMAP training in order to reach the next belt.

(Inset) Sgt. Charles J. Patlan, a black belt Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor and a San Antonio native, instructs a group of Marines in the proper execution of a leg sweep during MCMAP training aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 10.

(Below) Sgt. Charles J. Patlan, a black belt Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor and a San Antonio native, oversees Marines during MCMAP training, May 10. Patlan trains Marines weekday mornings in grey and green belt techniques aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. In order to test for each belt, Marines must demonstrate competence in new techniques, as well as retention of previous training.



## Commandant of the Marine Corps visits MCAS Miramar

Photo by Sgt. Deanne Hagstram

Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos, and Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, are greeted after landing on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 21.

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## Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales first to trample down Gonsalves Ave

Photos by Sgt. Deanne Hagstram



Anheuser-Busch team members and Clydesdales wait before a short parade and photo opportunity aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 24. The Clydesdale parade coincided with the opening of Gonsalves Avenue next to the Main Exchange.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)

## Safety stand down kicks off the summer aboard MCAS Miramar

Photos by Sgt. Lauren Henson



Gunnery Sgt. Jonell Johnson, an aviation operations specialist and a Republic, Wash., native, receives information on the different classes and programs offered by the Semper Fit Center during the 101 days of Summer safety stand down aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 24. The Semper Fit Center had fitness coordinators on site to answer any questions for Marines and sailors.

Marines and sailors gather at the Bob Hope Theater for the annual 101 Days of Summer safety brief and health fair aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 24. More than 20 vendors came out to support the service members and treat them to free food and prizes.



# Last CH-46 pilot graduates

Story by Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl

1st Lt. Zerbin Singleton qualified as the Marine Corps' last CH-46 Sea Knight pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Training Squadron 164 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 23.

The MV-22B Osprey is replacing the Sea Knight, making the accomplishment of Singleton particularly noteworthy. Several local news stations came out to record the event.

"[The CH-46 has] been the backbone of the Marine Corps assault support program since about 1966," said 1st Lt. Brian Heeter, a CH-46 pilot with HMMT-164. "That proves that it's a workhorse, and that it has done great things for the Marine Corps and the United States as a whole."

The CH-46 has been used in military missions for nearly 50 years, and now is passing the torch to the Osprey. The versatility of the tiltrotor

aircraft to serve as both a traditional helicopter and a propeller plane has deemed its worth in replacing its historical counterpart.

"I think it's an honor to carry on the legacy of those before us whom have flown [the Sea Knight] into combat," said Heeter. "All the hard work it's done for the Marine Corps makes it an honor to fly."

The 3rd Marine Aircraft wing is home to three remaining CH-46 squadrons. With only a handful of squadrons left, all Sea Knight squadrons will eventually transition to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadrons.

Earning the title pilot was no small feat for Singleton. He dutifully worked to keep his dream alive amongst the struggle of a drug-addicted mother's arrest and the untimely death of his father.

Singleton would not be defeated. Despite un-

fortunate circumstances, the Decatur, Ga., native was a star athlete and valedictorian in high school. He continued his courageous journey while attending the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Now he holds another honor, CH-46 pilot.

"It's just an amazing feeling," said Singleton, the Marine Corps' newest and last CH-46 pilot. "I was in the right place at the right time and I was ready for the moment. But really I'm standing on the shoulders of so many before me. I know there are a lot of men and women who gave their life to make this the platform they did today."

Living his lifelong dream, Singleton can proudly claim a piece of history as the last CH-46 pilot.



(Top) Lea Sutton, a reporter with NBC 7 San Diego, records a CH-46 Sea Knight in flight while traveling in a formation over Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 23. During the flight, 1st Lt. Zerbin Singleton, a Decatur, Ga., native, qualified as the last Sea Knight pilot for the Marine Corps.

(Left) Maj. Gen. Andrew W. O'Donnell Jr., left, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, congratulates 1st Lt. Zerbin Singleton, right, as the last CH-46 Sea Knight pilot upon the completion of his final check flight aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, May 23. The CH-46 is slowly phasing out, to be replaced by the versatile tiltrotor MV-22B Osprey.



(Above) 1st Lt. Zerbin Singleton, A Decatur, Ga., native, responds to local media outlets after his final qualification flight with Marine Medium Helicopter Training Squadron 164 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 23. Singleton was designated the last CH-46 Sea Knight pilot in the Marine Corps.

# MCAS Miramar wins Natural Resources Conservation Award

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl

[Click HERE for more photos](#)

Members of the Natural Resources Division of the Environmental Maintenance Department aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., were recognized for superior work in conservation efforts in winning the Natural Resources Conservation Award March 20.

The Secretary of the Navy Fiscal Year 2011 Environmental award winning team, comprised of JoEllen Kassebaum, a botanist; Dr. Charles H. Black, a wildlife biologist; and David A. Boyer, the director of the Natural Resources Division; will receive the award during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., June 5.

"Our mission is to support the station and the need to train Marines," said Boyer. "If we don't demonstrate good stewardship over our land, someone else will take the responsibility and do it for us."

While an outside entity would solely be focused on conservation efforts, the station's environmental department tries to create preservation efforts that do not interfere with military training operations. Miramar environmentalists work to maintain the function of the land to promote mission success, while working to go above and beyond the mandated conservation requirements.

"We comply with the national, state and local environmental laws and regulations," said Boyer. "Many of the environmental regulations do not have exceptions for the military. We have some of the same responsibilities as the national forests, park services or the fish and wildlife service when it comes to land stewardship."

Many other organizations sharing the mandates of environmental conservation differ greatly in their mission, explains Kassebaum. Unlike their conservation-based counterparts, the task of providing adequate training environments, while maintaining wildlife conservation efforts proves to be a challenging task for the department.

"We have to facilitate the training as much as possible without negatively impacting the resources," said Black.

Not only does this team work to facilitate training, but also to foster education and training through the placement of kiosks and signs, said

Kassebaum. One of these kiosks, near the parade deck and physical fitness test course, is dedicated to an endangered species native to the region, the San Diego fairy shrimp.

Property owned by the air station is among the least developed regions within the county, explains Black. The station has prevented urbanization of the land, thus creating a habitat conducive to harboring endangered plants and animals.

East Miramar also houses a nationally recognized natural landmark, the Miramar Mounds. The mounds provide habitat for some of the endangered species in the area, mainly the vernal pools that harbor fairy shrimp.

"It contributes back to the region in that we are a wildlife corridor," said Kassebaum. "Some of these endangered species wouldn't be here without the [conservation aboard the air station]. We manage in such a way that we aren't impacting training, but we're still giving back."

This award was no small task for the tiny team of workers. It was given for the culmination of two years of intense conservation efforts and station planning.

Efforts recognized in the award include: training facility development, threatened and endangered species management, vernal pool conservation, native plant/water conservation demonstration garden, erosion control/re-vegetation, long-term ecosystem monitoring and invasive species control.

Future plans for the environmental crew include more educational programs through a public accessible interpretive trail. The trail will feature educational stops to read about local and endangered species located aboard the air station.

"We're trying to make [conservation] applicable to people's lives, not just compliance," said Kassebaum.

Winning this award not only boosts the credibility of their work, but encourages the team to continue their preservation and conservation efforts.



Members of the Natural Resources Division, Dr. Charles H. Black, left, a wildlife biologist, David A. Boyer, center, director and JoEllen Kassebaum, right, a botanist, stand in an educational garden outside the environmental building aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 22.

Dr. Charles H. Black, a wildlife biologist with the Natural Resources Division of the Environmental Maintenance Department aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., looks at a fairy shrimp specimen through a microscope, May 22. Black and his fellow environmental colleagues are scheduled to receive the Secretary of the Navy Fiscal Year 2011 Natural Resources Conservation Award in Washington, D.C., June 5.

# Test cell looks for engine perfection

Story and photos by Pfc. Melissa Eschenbrenner

Working in a dimly lit room, Marines carefully secure an F/A-18 engine to a rack to properly inspect every inch of the engine by eye for leaks and loose wires.

Test cell Marines with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 run diagnostic testing on each engine that has been serviced, repaired or rebuilt, to ensure each engine runs without a problem before it is put back into an F/A-18 Hornet. When the Marines at Test Cell receive an engine, they must first determine the problem and then run the proper diagnostic tests.

Test Cell completes diagnostic testing to check the performance abilities of the engine and ensure it is working properly.

Each engine may have a performance test or a full build test. A performance test is meant to ensure a replaced part is working properly. A full build test is to check every component of the engine. However, every time an engine is ready to be tested, the Marines do not start the engine until it has been checked multiple times for discrepancies.

Every engine is tested for quality by the Jet Engine Test Instrument, a computer used to check the engines 'vitals.' The JETI shows the Marines many readings such as temperatures inside the engine, the amount of vibrations in the engine and oil pressure. If something is not performing up to par, the Marines must manually check the part or change it and continue the test from there.

To test one engine it may take anywhere from 45 minutes to a few days

depending on the test performed and if there are any discrepancies.

Safety is important to the Test Cell, both for the Test Cell operators and for the pilots who may be flying an F/A-18 with a newly repaired engine.

"Working with engines in an enclosed area can be very dangerous," said Staff Sgt. George E. Gallegos, a work center supervisor with MALS-11 Test Cell and a San Antonio, native. "When the engine is running and a Marine must go in to check something, we make sure the Marine at the JETI has eyes on him at all times and that the Marine gets out of the cell quickly."

If an engine fails inspection, it is sent back to an aviation mechanics shop to be repaired and brought back to be tested again.

Marines can never be too safe or check an engine too many times. The engine needs to pass every test, explained William Swank, a collateral duty inspector with MALS-11.

Without Test Cell, the engine could possibly be left unfixed. Test Cell Marines must be perfectionists and observant to ensure the safety of Marines who work with F/A-18 Hornets.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



(Top) Staff Sgt. George E. Gallegos, a work center supervisor with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and a San Antonio, native, operates the Jet Engine Test Instrument aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 3. The JETI is a computer used to run diagnostic tests on F/A-18 engines.

(Right) Cpl. Sergio Alvarado, a test cell operator with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and a Los Angeles, native, checks the rig to ensure an F/A-18 engine is secure before testing aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 3. To ensure safety, Test Cell Marines check and double check the engine for leaks, loose wires and that it is properly attached to the rig.



## Legal assistance is the name: keeping Marines on point is their game

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

Marines of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., have various missions they are tasked to accomplish, everything from making sure their fellow service member's pay is correct, to flying missions over the heads of the enemy in countries all over the globe. However, when these Marines have issues with a greedy car dealer or landlord accomplishing these missions can become a strained process when a Marine has to worry about his legal affairs.

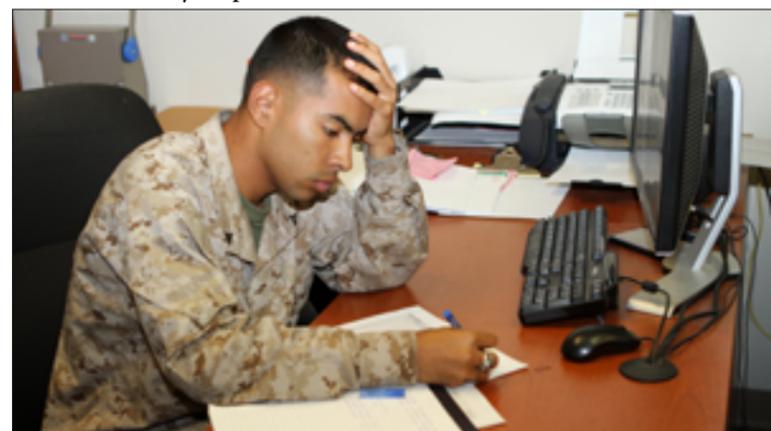
That is where Legal Assistance Marines can intervene giving service members and families the tools necessary to solve these problems in the best way possible, ensuring the fight goes on for MCAS Miramar.

"[We] offer Marines, dependants and retirees free legal assistance," said Harris Brumer, the director for legal assistance with the Joint Law Center and a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native.

These free legal services include family law landlord-tenant issues, consumer law dealing with contracts and debts and almost any other legal issue outside of criminal matters.

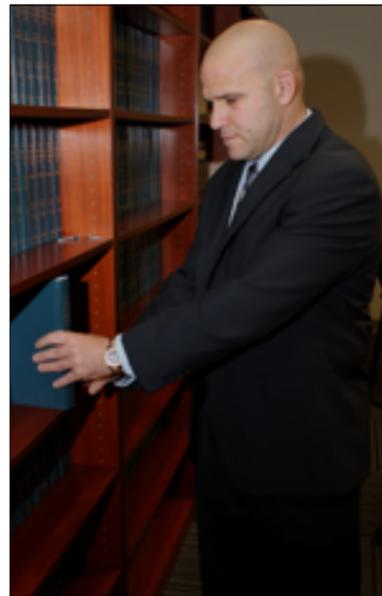
Legal Assistance is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"Initially [clients] have to come to a walk-in and establish an attorney-client relationship, after that, they can set up an appointment one-on-one with the attorney," explained Brumer.



Lance Cpl. Carlos Salazar, a legal clerk with the Joint Law Center and a Miami native, takes notes at the Legal Assistance office aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 8. An attorney at the Legal Assistance sees an average of 25 to 30 clients a week.

Harris Brumer, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native, is the director for legal assistance with the Joint Law Center and removes a book from a bookshelf at Legal Assistance aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. The Legal Assistance office has four attorneys who are licensed in their home state, have gone through Officer Candidate School and successfully graduated the Naval Justice School.



The Legal Assistance office has four attorneys who are licensed in their home state, have gone through Officer Candidate School and successfully graduated the Naval Justice School.

"I would say [the attorneys] have anywhere from two to three years of experience practicing," said Brumer. "We can take a case from its very beginning and give the Marine, or family member all the tools to represent himself. We can do everything except physically represent them in court."

Each attorney has one focus in mind when helping a client with legal issues.

"Our focus is to help mission readiness by making sure each Marine has [his] civilian affairs in order," said Capt. Charles Maloney, the assistant director with Legal Assistance and a Leesburg, Va., native. "The problem is, Marines don't come to us when they think a problem might arise and wait until it gets a lot worse."

On average Maloney sees 25 to 30 Marines a week, to include new Marines taking part in walk-in services, explained Maloney.

"We want to take any stress or anxiety about a legal issue a Marine might be feeling and try to solve it so he can go back to being a Marine again, and know that it's being taken care of," said Brumer.

Five days a week, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Legal Assistance is ready and willing to take on the problems of any Marine, retiree or family member who might need their assistance. For more information please contact 858-577-1656.

Cpl. Anthony Nguyen, left, a San Jose, Calif., native, and Lance Cpl. Robert Hutter, right, a Carlsbad, Calif., native, both avionic technicians with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163, installing an AN/AAR-47 Missile Approach Warning System in an MV-22B Osprey aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 8. Junior Marines, like Hutter, work with different team members for hands on experiences.



# Avionics' mission to 'fix and fly'

Story and photos by Pfc. Raquel Barraza

Aircraft would not complete a mission without radar, navigation, communication and missile systems. To make sure all these systems are ready for flight is an avionic technician's mission.

Technician Marines with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 are crucial to an MV-22B Osprey's flight and maintenance.

The aircraft runs on a fly-by-wire system, meaning everything is run electronically through wires, requiring more aviation electrical attention, explained Cpl. Anthony Nguyen, an avionic technician with VMM-163 and a San Jose, Calif., native.

"We have a higher workload with an MV-22B because avionics deals with all electrical parts of an aircraft," said Nguyen. "We continuously trouble shoot to find any problems that the aircraft may have. On this aircraft, it could be many different possibilities that could make any of the power components fail."

Given that technicians deal with trouble shooting, they have to work long days around a flight schedule to make sure all the components are functional for an MV-22B to take off.

"Fix and fly aircraft is our objective," said Staff Sgt. James Wood, the staff non-commission officer in charge with VMM-163.

Another part of being an avionic technician is performing various inspections on an aircraft. These include 182-day and 360-day inspections where they change the batteries of the radios and GPS, added Lance Cpl. Robert Hutter, an avionic technician with VMM-163 and Carlsbad, Calif., native.

In addition, Marines perform high time inspections, replacing certain components of the aircraft after a set amount of flight hours have been met, explained Hutter.

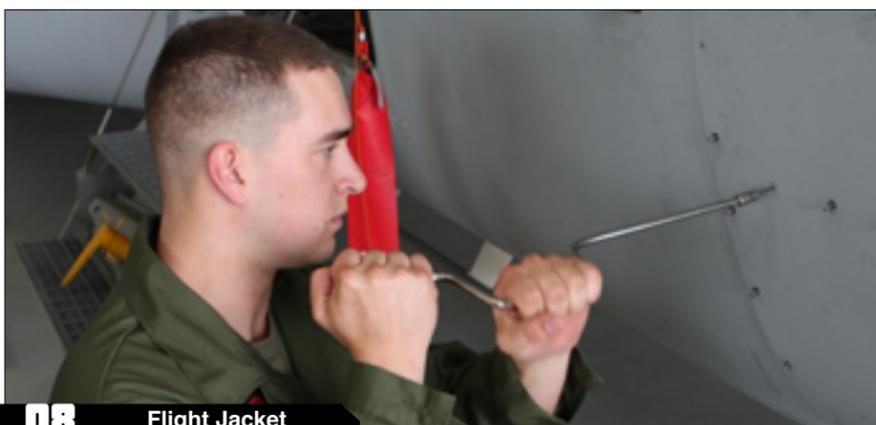
The Marines who work with VMM-163 avionics not only have to stay up to date with annual training, but also need on the job training in order to work on an aircraft.

"Although it is time consuming, it is rewarding," said Wood.

Avionic technicians are the reason an Osprey can accomplish its mission every time. Even though it takes a lot of work to keep an MV-22B running its best, it pays off in the end.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)

Lance Cpl. Robert Hutter, an avionic technician with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 and Carlsbad, Calif., native, unscrews a panel on an MV-22B Osprey to work on a component aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 8. Avionic technicians work with all the power components on MV-22B Ospreys to make sure all of the components are working properly.



(Top) Pilots with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, fly a KC-130J Hercules during a tactical navigation training exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 15. Tactical navigation training helps pilots become proficient at flying around rough terrain and in low altitudes.



(Left) Crew members with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, prepare a KC-130J Hercules for a training flight aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 17. One training exercise conducted is tactical navigation training in which a pilot flies at a low altitude.

## *Raiding the sky; VMGR-352 trains for tactical navigation*

Story and photos by Pfc. Melissa Eschenbrenner

The "Raiders" of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 conducted tactical navigation exercises aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 15.

Pilots trained in a KC-130J Hercules to practice maneuvering in low altitudes and around rough terrain. The purpose of tactical navigation is to be able to evade radar and enemy fire when flying in combat.

"We use tactical navigation to train for operating in a low level environment and to avoid threats like small arms, surface to air threats and radar," said Capt. Glenn O. Ryberg, a pilot with VMGR-352 and an Ocean-side, Calif., native.

Flying at low altitudes is not preferable for pilots; however, they must train and become proficient to ensure crew and cargo safety. Pilots use tactical navigation most when setting up an aerial delivery. Low altitude

flying is necessary to drop bundles of supplies to civilians and forward operating bases when the unit is deployed because packages must be as close to the ground as possible before they are dropped.

Although pilots benefit most by conducting training exercises, the crew benefits by gaining situational awareness on flights and maintaining proficiently in job skills, explained Cpl. Christopher Perez, a loadmaster with VMGR-352 and a Chicago native.

"It's good training for us as well, especially to develop good scanning habits," said Perez.

If a skill goes unused it is likely to be forgotten, added Perez.

The Raiders of VMGR-352 are consistently training to keep skills sharp. It is important to ensure readiness for any mission even on short notice.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)

# 'Sweathogs' construct new helo pad for isolated outpost

Story and photos by Cpl. Lisa Tourtelot

SOUTHERN HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The Marines and Sailors of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, live minimally - to say the least - at their tiny outpost in southwestern Afghanistan.

With only a dirt square outside their compound for a helicopter pad, swirling dust clouds made by helicopters landing and taking off, known as "brownouts," make the delivery of necessary supplies, as well as troop movements in and out of the compound, dangerous for both the aircrews and ground personnel.

That is where the Marines and Sailors of Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 come in. The MWSS-273 "Sweathogs" traveled to the desolate post on May 4th, to construct a safer helicopter landing zone (HLZ) with approximately 15,000 cubic meters of gravel and rock, a handful of combat engineers and only about twelve hours to complete the project.

"By having a constructed [landing zone], the gravel will mitigate a lot of the dust problems and will enable us to get into and out of the LZ quicker and safer," said Capt. Steven Kosnik, the Echo Company commander, with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, and La Porte, Ind., native.

Kosnik explained that the company relies heavily on air support, in the forms of close-air-support for missions, troop insertions and extractions and supply deliveries.

"It's a lot easier to get out here [by helicopter] than by convoy," said Sgt. Joshua Wentzel, a heavy equipment operator with MWSS-273 and Grove City, Ohio, native. Wentzel spent

the day directing the drivers of two Tractor, Rubber-tired, Articulated Steering, Multipurpose vehicles (TRAMs) as they laid out thousands of pounds of rock needed to form the new HLZ.

In soaring temperatures, the engineers worked diligently and efficiently to lay out the rock, while ensuring the landing pad remained level and sloped appropriately, explained Lance Cpl. Jordan Deraitus, a technical engineer specialist with MWSS-273 and Cornell, Wisc., native.

The brownouts that make helicopter landings and takeoffs dangerous also plagued the TRAM drivers, added Wentzel, making the work ever more difficult.

In approximately six hours - half the original time estimate - the Sweathogs finished their work and prepared to return to Camp Leatherneck. They transformed a patch of dirt into a neat square of gravel ready to safely receive and launch helicopters.

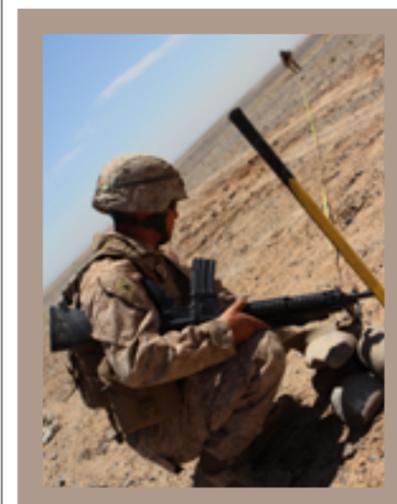
"From an aviation perspective, what you do on the LZ's is a big deal," said Brig. Gen. Gregg A. Sturdevant, the Commanding General of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), in an address to the convoy members. "It allows us to get the Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, the Afghans and the [special operations personnel] in and out safely."

After the mission was complete, the Sweathogs returned to Camp Leatherneck and left the outpost personnel with a new tool to increase their combat effectiveness.

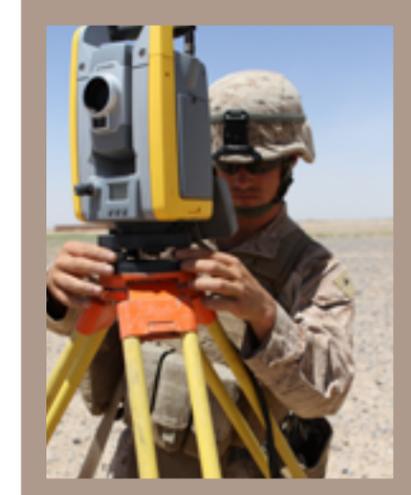
SOUTHERN HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan - A convoy with Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 pauses in the desert of southwest Afghanistan May 4. MWSS-273 Marines and sailors traveled to southwestern Afghanistan to build a safe helicopter landing zone for the personnel of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.



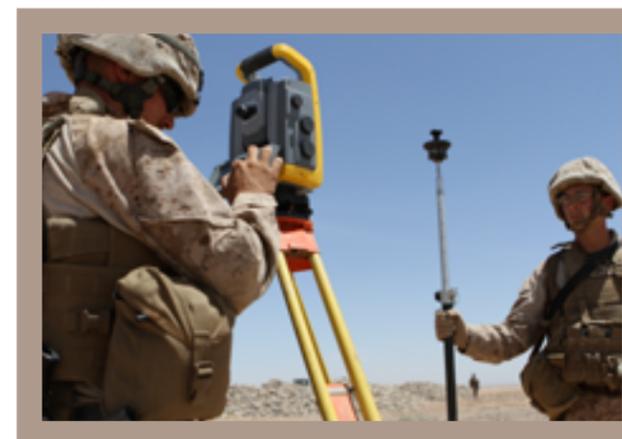
(Above) Lance Cpl. Jordan Deraitus, a technical engineer specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 and Cornell, Wis., native, measures the slope of a helicopter landing zone near Combat Outpost Paserlay, Afghanistan, May 4. Working in searing temperatures, the engineers of MWSS-273 laid out approximately 15,000 cubic meters of rock and gravel to complete the new landing zone in a matter of hours.



(Right) Lance Cpl. Jordan Deraitus, a technical engineer specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 and Cornell, Wis., native, and 2nd Lt. Anthony Rybicki, the engineering company executive officer with MWSS-273 and Aiken, Ohio, native, measure the new helicopter landing zone site near Combat Outpost Paserlay, Afghanistan, May 4. MWSS-273 engineers built the site to support combat operations for Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.



(Left) Lance Cpl. Jordan Deraitus, a technical engineer specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 273 and Cornell, Wis., native, and 2nd Lt. Anthony Rybicki, the engineering company executive officer with MWSS-273 and Aiken, Ohio, native, measure the new helicopter landing zone site near Combat Outpost Paserlay, Afghanistan, May 4. MWSS-273 engineers built the site to support combat operations for Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.



RETURN TO TOP

# MCAS Miramar turns old waste to new energy

Story and photos by Pfc. Melissa Eschenbrenner

New technology is being used to generate power, make buildings more energy-efficient and conserve water and fossil fuels aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

MCAS Miramar is working to become self-sufficient and environmentally friendly through the use of green energy.

The air station is currently surpassing federal mandates on use of renewable energy, and workin to obtain an energy grid independent from San Diego General Electric. This will ensure operations can still run aboard the installation in the case of a black-out.

“It is extremely important for the military and the Marine Corps to meet federal mandates that were set upon us,” said Mick Wasco, an engineer with the Public Works Center. “One of the biggest challenges was powering our installation with 45 percent renewable energy.”

Solar energy is one of the biggest ways used to cut back on fossil fuel consumption. This renewable energy is now being used to cool buildings, heat the Combat Training Tank and generate energy for streetlights. Solar panels have also been installed above parking lots, on roofs of buildings and connected to street signs to maximize the electrical output installation-wide.

Some buildings aboard the air station currently use a chill water plant system that cools water at night and stores it for use during the day to run the air conditioning. New technology will also be implemented to electronically tint windows using sunlight to keep solar heat out and cut back on the amount of electricity used to cool buildings.

A reclaimed water system is currently in place as well to provide water for plumbing and irrigation. Reclaimed water systems collect water and clean it to standards that are safe to use in irrigation and plumbing.

“Water conservation is also a federal mandate,” said Wasco. “Since we began to use the reclaimed water system we have cut back by 30 percent on potable water used on the air station.”

Many efforts have been made to conserve energy and water to make MCAS Miramar a more efficient and environmentally friendly place. The power generated at the landfill will be on-line June 14 and will power up to 45 percent of the installation.

Approximately four miles of 12-kilovolt line runs above and below ground between the Miramar Landfill and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.



# MCAS MIRAMAR GETS ONE STEP CLOSER TO ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Story and photos by Pfc. Melissa Eschenbrenner

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar is currently preparing to be powered 45 percent by renewable energy generated at the Miramar Landfill.

Powering the air station with renewable energy will benefit both the installation and San Diego by cutting back on the consumption of fossil fuels. It will also bring MCAS Miramar closer to reaching the goal of having a self-sufficient installation that runs separately from the city’s energy grid.

“The energy benefit from the landfill really takes a step in the right direction toward the use of clean energy,” said Mick Wasco, an engineer with the Public Works Center.

The air station plans on being completely energy self-sufficient by 2017. Miramar will also work as an emergency response center in the

case of a black-out. Removing MCAS Miramar’s energy consumption will also make the San Diego grid more reliable. Energy generated by the landfill is an effective way to make use of something that is looked at as an environmental problem.

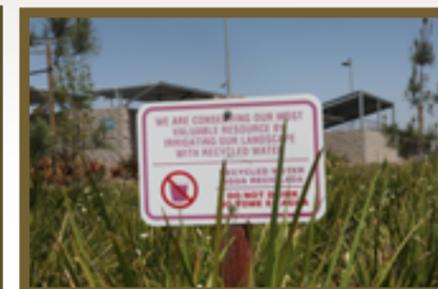
“Using the landfill gas powered generation is taking something useless and essentially an environmental problem, and turning it into a resource that can generate power,” said Wasco.

Power generated by methane gas given off inside the landfill will power up to 45 percent of the installation through newly laid pipes and wires.

This renewable energy used to power the installation is set to be on-line on June 14.



Solar panels are used to power street lights aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 8. Solar panels are also used to supplement power for cooling buildings.



Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., uses reclaimed water to irrigate gardens and fields. MCAS Miramar has cut water consumption by 30 percent since it began using reclaimed water systems.



Engines powered by methane gas used to generate electricity are currently under construction at the Miramar Landfill.



Chill water systems are being used in buildings aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 8. Chill water systems collect water at night and use it to cool buildings during the day.



# Blue Knights assist narcotics fight

Story and photos by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth

NIMROZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Crews from two MV-22B Ospreys with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365 await a call to extract Marines who have been conducting a counternarcotics operation in western Nimroz province to return them to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, May 14.

Once the call arrives, the pilots and crew chiefs don their gear, prep their aircraft for takeoff and ready their weapons. Rolling down the runway at Camp Bastion, the two aircraft quickly gain speed and lift off, heading directly to the Khash Rod district in northern Nimroz province.

Waiting for them are Marines from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and members of the National Interdiction Unit, a specialized Afghan counternarcotics team. The ground units are depending on the Osprey crews to arrive in a timely manner before a dangerous situation arises.

Capt. Jason Laird, a pilot and flight leader for the mission, explained that the squadron was assisting ground units in disrupting the supply routes of insurgents who have been smuggling weapons and narcotics.

“It’s important to do these types of missions because it helps reduce the amount of funding that can be used against our guys on the ground,” said Laird, of Corpus Christi, Texas.

In the past, insurgents have sold narcotics to buy weapons and use them

against coalition forces. The operation reinforces the idea to local residents that the country is clamping down on illegal drugs and weapons smuggling.

Several minutes into the flight, the Ospreys begin their descent. Dropping to just above treetop level, the aircraft move in a blur of motion with speed and purpose, rapidly closing the gap between themselves and the Marines on the ground.

“When we go, we need to get in and out,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Allen, a crew chief with the squadron. “These guys depend on us to get there quickly.”

Landing in a cloud of dust and vegetation, the Marines of 1st Recon Bn. and the National Interdiction Unit hurriedly make their way to the Ospreys. Jumping onto the ramps of the aircraft, they quickly ready themselves for the ride back. Within seconds, two platoon-sized elements have boarded.

Once everyone and everything is properly secured, the pilots turn the engines up to full power and lift off.

Allen, a native of Eureka, Kan., said the operation was a success. The Marines stopped several individuals for questioning and found a cache of weapons.

Making several hard turns on the way back to Camp Leatherneck, the aircrews unload their passengers and arrive back at the flight line, ready to complete the next task at hand.

NIMROZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Sgt. Thomas DeBaker, a team leader with Bravo Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, counts Marines and members of the National Interdiction Unit, a specialized Afghan counternarcotics team, as they rush to board an MV-22B Osprey, with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365, in Nimroz province, Afghanistan, May 14. The coalition force conducted counternarcotics operations in the Khash Rod district.



Staff Sgt. Michael Allen, a crew chief with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365, watches the propellers turn on an MV-22B Osprey to ensure the aircraft is ready for takeoff aboard Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, May 14. Two Ospreys from the squadron transported Marines from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion as they conducted counternarcotics operations along with Afghan National Security Forces in northern Nimroz province.



Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, sprint to an MV-22B Osprey, with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365 during an extraction in Nimroz province, Afghanistan, May 14. The Marines, along with Afghan National Security Forces' National Interdiction Unit, conducted counternarcotics operations in the Khash Rod district to help curb narcotic sales in the region. In the past, insurgents have sold narcotics to buy weapons used against coalition forces.



Sgt. Thomas DeBaker, a team leader with Bravo Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, counts Marines and members of the Afghan National Security Forces' National Interdiction Unit, a specialized counternarcotics team, as they board an MV-22B Osprey from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365, in Nimroz province, Afghanistan, May 14.



NIMROZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Staff Sgt. Michael Allen, a crew chief with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365, scans the surrounding area for activity while manning a M240 machine gun during an operation in northern Nimroz province, Afghanistan, May 14.

# Inspection ready: airframe mechanics eliminate corrosion

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl

Amid the roar of engines resounding in Hangar 6, a group of Marines prevent and eliminate corrosion on MV-22B Ospreys aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

Airframe mechanics with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 “Sea Elks” work to ensure all Ospreys within the unit are well-maintained and prepared for flight. In addition to mechanical work, these Marines focus on preventing and treating the formation of corrosion.

“Our mission is to prevent as much corrosion as possible,” said Lance Cpl. Ryan P. Duritsch, an airframe mechanic with VMM-166 and a Brookville, Ind., native. “Every part of the aircraft is essential to flight. If a panel or a component corrodes, it will not be able to do its job as effectively.”

Diligent study and wisdom gained from five volumes of corrosion control publications helps prepare the airframe crew to handle any number of situations. Even after several months of schooling, airframe mechanics constantly gain new understanding through real-life scenarios.

“Even if you’ve done a job before, you can learn something new,” said Duritsch. “You are always learning.”

Sgt. Luke D. Pederson, an airframe mechanic with VMM-166 and a Portland, N.D., native, explained the various aspects of corrosion control. Parts of the aircraft are painted, sealed or coated with a protective compound used to prevent the formation of corrosion. In order to treat a corroded section, the airframe mechanics will sand or scrub away the affected area. After it is removed, the treated area is coated with a protective sealant, compound or paint to prevent future damage.

“If [corrosion] gets bad enough, or isn’t caught in time, it can cause component failure,” said Pederson. “Especially if it’s on structural components under high stress or high heat. [Corrosion control] prevents an aircraft from being down for an extended period of time, or from having a component failure.”

Pederson stressed the importance of rigorous pre-flight inspections completed by collateral duty inspectors. CDI’s ensure all components of an aircraft are in prime condition for flight. Because each Osprey is inspected prior to every flight, corrosion control is maintained and managed to prevent any major concerns.

“Because everything plays an essential role, if something should become ineffective, it could harm or put other Marines in danger,” said Duritsch. “It is essential to prevent as much as possible.”

Airframe mechanics working with corrosion control also have a unique opportunity within their squadron. Tasked with painting the Ospreys, these Marines get to show their creativity through painting their squadron’s insignia on the tail of the commanding officer’s aircraft.

In each unit, one aircraft is designated to be a motivational aircraft, displaying a colorful version of the unit emblem. Each of the other unit Ospreys displays a tactical version of the emblem.

While the job of rust and decay prevention is never complete, corrosion control will always be essential to ensuring safety and mission accomplishment.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



(Above) Lance Cpl. Peter I. Bradstreet, an airframe mechanic with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 “Sea Elks” and a Bath, N.Y., native, checks for corrosion on an MV-22B Osprey, May 23. In order to keep Ospreys flying, airframe mechanics serve to repair, treat and prevent corrosion, as well as perform maintenance aboard the aircraft.



(Above) Lance Cpl. Ryan P. Duritsch, an airframe mechanic with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 and a Brookville, Ind., native, works on an MV-22B Osprey, May 23.

(Left) Lance Cpl. Aston G. Dacosta III, an airframe mechanics with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 “Sea Elks,” and a Jacksonville, N.C., native, loosens a bolt on a MV-22B Osprey, May 23. Airframe mechanics of VMM-166 ensure all Ospreys are mission ready through routine maintenance and corrosion control.



## Inspection after inspection ‘Vikings’ ensure flight not fright

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

High above the clouds moving at speeds up to 1,190 mph flies the famed F/A-18D “Hornet.” Even moving at mach 1.7, these aircraft can come back to the ground with bumps and bruises, in need of maintenance before the next mission.

Whether two hours or a full month of maintenance is required to see a Hornet in the sky again, Marines with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (All-Weather) 225 “Vikings” are here for just such occasions.

“For an F/A-18D with nothing wrong with it, I would say it takes about two hours to get it back in the sky,” said Cpl. Misael Morales Jr., a power line technician with VMFA(AW)-225 and a Miami native. “For some aircraft it could take up to a month to get it back into the air, it just depends on what parts we have available. For some parts of the aircraft it takes even longer because you need permits and special permission to work on them.”

Each aircraft goes through several inspections before it can be flown, the first of which is a daily inspection.

“For a daily [inspection] you have an hour

to basically look over the entire aircraft,” said Morales. “After the daily inspection, another Marine does an inspection called a turnaround inspection.”

For the turnaround, a Marine looks at a large area rather than a specific area.

After the turnaround, the plane captain looks over the aircraft for any final problems that could arise. While maintenance is an important portion of keeping the Hornet in the sky, there are many other factors with parts as well.

Maintenance is a huge part of the life of an aircraft, explained Morales. Without airframes mechanics ensuring the aircraft is structurally fit to fly, and communications and navigation Marines ensuring the radar and communications systems work, maintenance is useless.

“We make sure the job is done right and the plane gets back up in a timely manner, but quickest isn’t safest so we do everything possible,” said Morales.

Safety for the pilot is the main goal of every power line technician with the Vikings.

“We follow publications, maintenance pro-

cedures and guide lines to the letter,” said Sgt. Martin Aldrete, noncommissioned officer in charge of the power line section with the Vikings and a Chandler, Ariz., native. “Everything we do to the aircraft is backed up by paperwork, so once the aircraft goes on a mission, all the work, inspections and tests done with the aircraft are documented.”

Every time Aldrete watches an aircraft take off from the flight line, he sees hours of hard work, he explained.

“We work upward of 60 to 80 hours a week, especially for deployments, everything we do here we do on deployment,” said Aldrete. “It’s just a change of scenery and pace. Our night crew easily works 13 or 14 hours a day.”

Keeping Viking pilots flying proves to be a daily routine, but maintenance Marines with VMFA(AW)-225 spend hours each day ensuring 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing has the Hornet soaring through the skies.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



(Left) Cpl. Xavier Figueroa, a power line technician with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (All-Weather) 225 and Baldwin Park, Calif., native, checks the after burners of an F/A-18D “Hornet” aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 22. Figueroa performed a turnaround inspection, which is a detailed search for anything that might be wrong with the aircraft.

(Right) Cpl. Xavier Figueroa, a power line technician with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (All-Weather) 225 and Baldwin Park, Calif., native, checks a panel on an F/A-18D “Hornet” during a turnaround inspection aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 22. Each aircraft goes through several inspections before it can be flown, the first of which is a daily inspection, then a turnaround inspection.



# The Miramar Minute

## Miramar Land Fill Creates Energy

Video by Cpl. Sarah Fiocco



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