

## Leaders share experience with NCOs from across the division

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Timothy J. Lenzo

Several hundred noncommissioned officers from different 1st Marine Division units gathered for the division's noncommissioned officer summit at the South Mesa Club, Oct. 17.

The summit was designed to give small unit leaders within the division the information and techniques to keep their Marines safe and build an overall understanding of the mission of a noncommissioned officer in a unit.

Classes were given by sergeants major and other NCOs from every unit and ranged from risk management and vehicle safety to ethics and proper leadership techniques.

"The focus of the summit was for us to strengthen our core values and leadership skills, to initiate critical thinking and keep each other ready for the fight," said Sgt. Ronny Pool, from Headquarters Battalion and master of ceremonies for the summit.

Each non-deployed battalion sent five sergeants, five corporals and two Navy petty officers to the



Sergeant Paul Morrison, a machine gun section leader with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, discusses suicide awareness, during the divisions NCO summit Oct. 17. Small unit leaders listened to Morrison and several other speakers during the two-day event, covering several topics including mentoring junior Marines, motorcycle incidents and leadership techniques.

event. They were given the responsibility of spreading this information throughout their units after the close of the summit to build awareness for these important topics.

"I hope the Marines that came will take what they learned back to their units and spread the word like wildfire," said Pool.

The summit provided an opportunity for NCOs from different job fields and different units to come together and share their experiences with each other. Different jobs give Marines different perspectives and knowledge that some Marines do not gain from their daily tasks, making this type of event vital to the spread of information and les-

sons learned across the division.

Having senior staff NCOs teach the classes gives the Marines firsthand knowledge from well-seasoned professionals.

"I believe leaders should gather like this," said Cpl. Kevin McCarthy, a field radio operator with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines. "It better equips new corporals, who get to learn from senior (Marines), so when that (Marine) does get out of the Marine Corps, that junior corporal can step right in."

Pool explained how every NCO could not attend the summit but having a group from each unit will allow the information to be spread to everyone.

This type of information exchange will increase the operational readiness of every Marine, not just the NCOs. This knowledge will be passed on to other junior Marines who will step up and fill their shoes when they move on to different units or depart from the Corps.

"I really think this was great training and think all noncommissioned officers should come to a summit at least once in their career," said McCarthy.

## 3rd AABn. families enjoy Bn.'s first children's book exchange

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Tyler Reiriz

For many children of Marines, books can provide a fun distraction from the stresses that come with having a parent in the military.

The 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion Spouse Club provided the sons and daughters of Marines of the battalion with a wide variety of reading material to release this stress when they hosted their first children's book exchange at Del Mar, Oct. 15.

Spouse Club volunteers handed out canvas book bags to the kids as they checked in. Parents helped decorate the book bags with colorful designs and drawings. Each child was



Marines and their families decorate canvas book bags during a 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion Spouse Club children's book exchange, at Del Mar, Oct. 15. After decorating their bags, the children were allowed to select books to take home and read with their parents.

allowed to select up to four books to load into their bags and take home.

The Spouse Club collected hun-

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## Division sailors celebrate 236 years

Commander Ed Pease, the oldest sailor present, and Seaman Apprentice Patrick Luntley, the youngest sailor present, cut a birthday cake at the 1st Marine Division Navy Birthday Celebration Ceremony, Oct. 13. Division sailors celebrated 236 years of the U.S. Navy with a ceremonial cake cutting and celebration. Sailors from across the Division stood in formation to honor the storied history of the Navy, which was read by multiple sailors during the ceremony. Pease, the division deputy chaplain, is 56; Luntley, a corpsman with 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, is 18.



# Marine spouses find second family close to home

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Timothy J. Lenzo

Marine wives spent a day running through obstacles, riding in 7-ton trucks and firing weapons, all new experiences for some of them that they can now share with their husbands.

1st Combat Engineer Battalion hosted a Jane Wayne Day where Marine spouses used an indoor simulated marksmanship trainer, ran through an obstacle course and followed a simulated patrol here Oct. 22.

"I can't wait to get home and tell my husband all about today," said Alexis DeVille, the wife of Cpl. Dennis DeVille, a combat engineer with 1st CEB.

This was DeVille's first Jane Wayne Day and she could be seen sharing stories with other wives about her husband. This event allows the family of Marines to share experiences and build relationships before their husbands deploy.

"Jane Wayne Day is a great opportunity for all of us wives to understand what our husbands do everyday," said Desiree Green, a family readiness officer's assistant with 1st CEB. "When they



First Sgt. David Rodriguez Jr., Alpha Company 1st Sergeant with 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, watches his wife Christine Rodriguez fire an M9 pistol during the battalion's Jane Wayne Day, Oct. 22. The day focused on giving the spouses a glimpse of what their Marines do and gives them an opportunity to get to know the other wives within the unit.

come home and say they've been at the rifle range or when they are sore from wearing their flak and Kevlar, now we understand that."

For spouses, it can be hard to understand what the Marines go through without ever experiencing it first hand.

"I don't think you can have an appreciation for what it means to breathe in all that dust in the back of a 7-ton (truck) and what it feels like wearing a flak and Kevlar," said Green.

She said Jane Wayne Days give wives a better appreciation for the everyday work their Marines do.

Wives often build their support system around the friends they meet at the event.

"Jane Wayne Day is nice because it breaks the ice," said Green, who is also a Marine wife. "When you're climbing into a 7-ton truck and everyone is literally lending a hand to help you and cheering you on, you get really close really fast."

This camaraderie is the glue that helps keep these wives strong when their Marines deploy.

"When the Marines deploy it's hard and it's complicated when you don't hear from them," said Heather Brown, a family readiness officer's assistant with 1st CEB and a military spouse. "Jane Wayne Days help when the Marines are deployed because then you have that support, you have someone to go to."

The family readiness officer tries to encourage support by partnering the spouses with Marines of the same unit.

"Marines of different companies do different things," said Brown. "You're usually in a group with Marine husbands in the same company, so those wives know what you're going through."

The wives begin to share the same brotherhood their Marine husbands have formed by training, working and deploying together.

Green said she has a better understanding of the Marine Corps from the closeness she shares with the wives.



Tonya Pham, a friend and supporter of 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, lunges for a bar while Cpl. Luis Garcia, a combat engineer with the battalion, spots her during a Jane Wayne Day, Oct. 22. Pham was one of several friends and family members who participated in the event. During the day, Marine spouses and friends ate meals ready to eat and participated in several Marine training exercises.

The Marine Corps prides itself on taking care of its own, and that same mentality is found in these spouses.

"Jane Wayne Day is important because it gives you that friendship and camaraderie," said Brown. "It gives us that second family that we really need,"

While these spouses may never run an obstacle course again or fire an M16 rifle anytime soon, they still share a bond similar to the one found between Marines.

## BOOK (cont. from page 1)

dreds of books in the weeks leading up to the first book exchange, giving the children a wide variety of books to choose from for each age group.

Mary Jean Hall, president of the Spouse Club, said the club has grown from six volunteers in June to 60 volunteers. She said because of the

growth, there are several ways the club can help the battalion.

"Today's event was about bringing the families together to get to know each other," Hall said. "It lets them build a network. In the end, this battalion is stronger for it."

The Spouse Club plans to continue the book exchange program, allowing the families to return their books at later events in exchange for new ones.

While the children received new books and had a fun day with their parents, the families were given another opportunity to get to know each other.

This event was focused mainly on the children of the Marines in the battalion. Watching their mothers and fathers leave for Afghanistan is a hard thing that most children aren't prepared for.

"The children haven't devel-

oped a lot of the coping skills that would help them deal with their dad being on a deployment or in a dangerous place," said Hall, a native of Schuylkill Haven, Penn. "When they're here, they'll come to realize the battalion isn't a scary place. They can have fun here."

At the end of the day, they took home their books with a promise to bring them back at the next book exchange scheduled for Dec. 3.

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# THE FRONTLINES



## Detection team sharpens skills, protects Marines from IED threat

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Alfred Lopez

**CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan** – Maintaining a Marine’s warfighting skills requires rigorous practice and steadfast dedication. Training doesn’t stop, not even in a combat zone.

Putting in the hours of training required to detect improvised explosive device threats are critical for both Lance Cpl. Adam Fox, an infantryman and dog handler with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment and Cpl. Jett, an IED detection dog.

The cost for a missed scent or misinterpreted command is high in their line of work.

“We spend up to 35 hours on drills and exercises every week,” said Fox, a 21-year-old native of Meriden, Conn.

“It keeps his odor and detection skills up to date and also my command techniques.”

Before their partnership began in June, Jett, a chocolate Labrador retriever, had already received extensive training at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejuene, N.C., said Fox.

Jett can be commanded verbally, with a whistle or with hand-and-arm signals. His talents are best utilized by pushing far out in front of Marines patrolling on foot, setting up cordons around vehicles and searching the interior and exterior of buildings.

“Both of us need to work hard,” said Fox. “Otherwise he won’t be able to keep up during patrols or he won’t listen to my commands.”

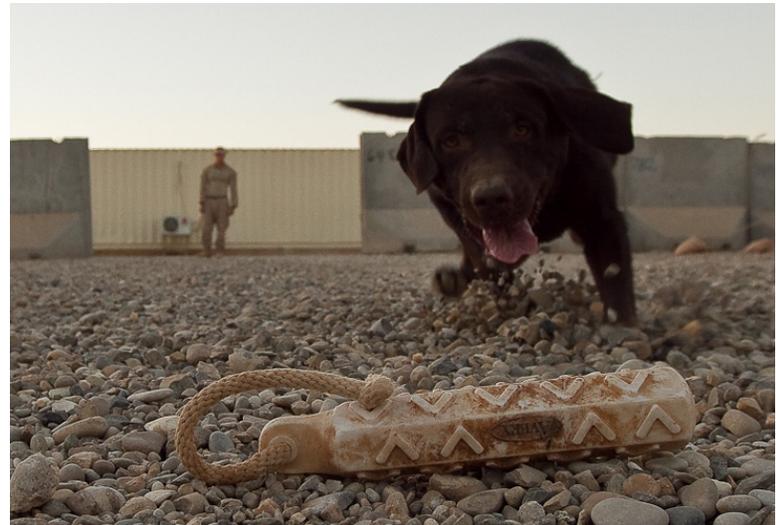
The pair begins each day with a series of drills, designed to keep Jett healthy and his mind fresh. Their morning drills usually involve a form of fetch to get Jett’s blood pumping for work.

Throughout the day they find time to work on odor drills, keeping his nose alert to the various odors of components used to make IEDs. Fox digs a hole and buries a sample of homemade explosive materials, often masking the odor with various items to throw Jett off the scent.

“If we don’t keep up with these drills, he will lose his skills and obedience and become just like a normal pet,” said Fox.

Obedience drills are one of the more critical exercises for this IED detection team because it helps build the communication skills between dog and handler.

One of the drills is called the wagon wheel. Fox first strategically places toys in different directions. Then, with Jett



After a hard day’s work, Lance Cpl. Adam Fox, an infantryman and dog handler with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, plays a game of fetch with Cpl. Jett, an improvised explosive device detection dog, here, Oct. 23.

waiting by his side, Fox uses hand signals to command the Labrador to fetch a toy in one particular direction.

“Getting to know each other is part of the training,” said Fox. “Jett responds to my body language, so it’s important that I’m into the drills, so he’s into it, too.”

But it’s not all work and no play for Jett.

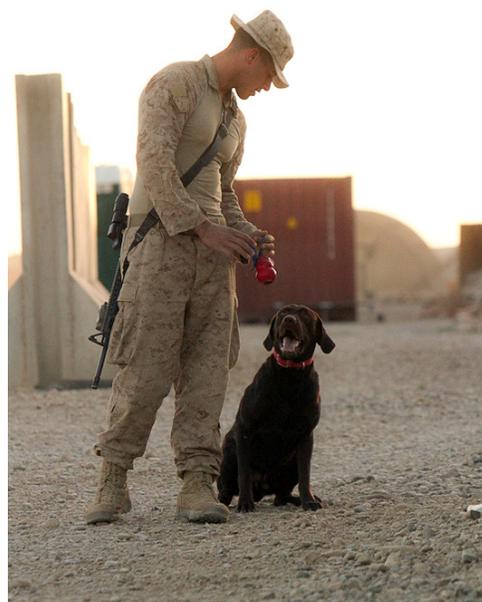
“Labs are naturally social,” said

Fox. “He needs to be praised if he’s working. If he isn’t, he loses the drive to hunt and he won’t be able to function like a well-oiled machine.”

With Fox at the reigns and Jett’s sharp nose for explosives, Marines patrolling the rugged southern Helmand landscape have extra peace of mind when this capable IED detection team is at their side.



Lance Cpl. Adam Fox, an infantryman and dog handler with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, supervises Cpl. Jett, an improvised explosive device detection dog, as he snatches a toy during a wagon wheel drill here, Oct. 23. This drill, which builds communication skills between dog and handler, trains Jett to respond correctly to the hand-and-arm signals given by Fox.



Lance Cpl. Adam Fox, an infantryman and dog handler with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, rewards Cpl. Jett, an improvised explosive device detection dog, with a toy during a break from training here, Oct. 23. Fox, a 21-year-old native of Meriden, Conn., and Jett, a chocolate Labrador retriever, work together to protect Marines at their post from IED threats. The IED detection team spends up to 35 hours a week on various drills,