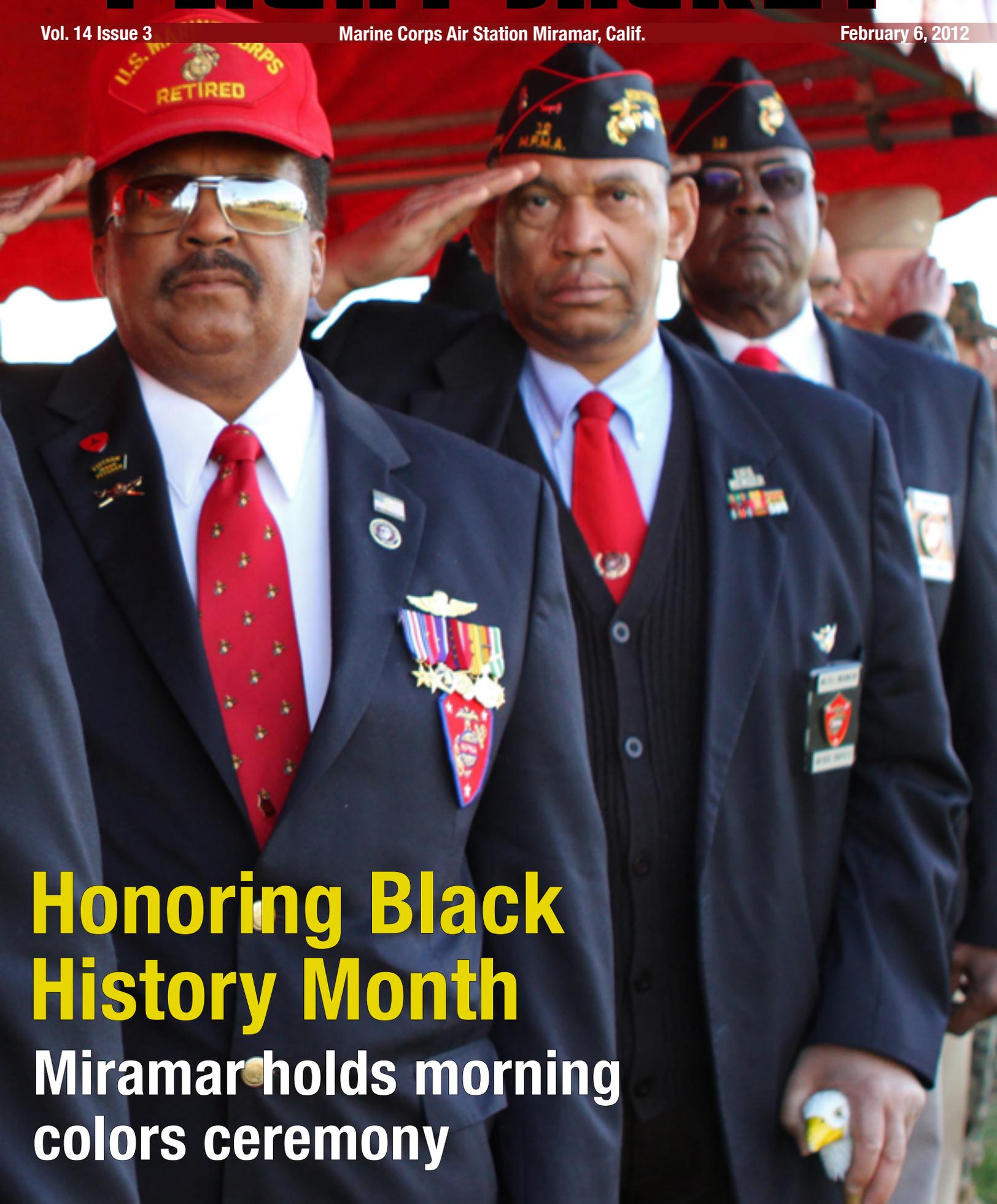


FLIGHT JACKET

Vol. 14 Issue 3

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

February 6, 2012



Honoring Black History Month

Miramar holds morning colors ceremony

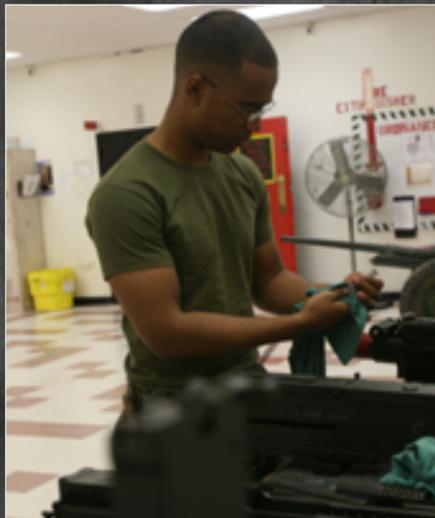


Nearest gas station: 18,000 feet

Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 provided a platform for Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 to conduct night aerial refueling.

For full story, click [Click HERE for more photos](#)

10



Making the flight line go boom

Ordnance Marines help keep the squadrons of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing mission effective when it comes to putting rounds down range.

For full story, click [Click HERE for more photos](#)

18



Bettering themselves through helping others

Select prisoners at the Brig receive an opportunity to raise puppies for Canine Companions for Independence, which provides service dogs for wounded combat veterans.

For full story, click [Click HERE for more photos](#)

24



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.

MCAS Miramar honors history's heroes

Photo by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo



Capt. Gabriel M. Maguire, a ground support officer with Marine Aircraft Group 16, and a Stratford, Wis., native, walks around the Honoring Our History Tour World War I Traveling Gallery exhibit on display in front of the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Officer's Club here Jan. 23. The gallery raises awareness and generates funds for the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Mo., as well as other historic museums across the United States.

ON THE COVER:

Montford Point Marines from the Montford Point Marines Association San Diego Chapter salute the flag as the national anthem plays during a morning colors ceremony at the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters building here, Feb. 3. The ceremony celebrated Black History Month and honored the heritage, accomplishments and contributions made by African Americans to American society. (Photo by Cpl. Sarah Fiocco)



Cryogenic Marines with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 participate in the pre-Super Bowl party with Chargers Girls here Feb. 2. Marine Corps Community Services hosted a barbecue that provided free food, autographs from the cheerleaders and a chance to win prizes from 101.5 KGB-FM.



Sgt. Marcos Peralez, an avionics leadership developer and a Houston native, and Sgt. Anthony Griggs, an avionics technician and a Suffolk, Va., native, both with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, receive autographs from two Charger Girls here Feb. 2.



A Charger Girl with the San Diego Chargers signs an autograph during the pre-Super Bowl barbecue here Feb. 2.



Marines, sailors fill *blood* bags

Petty Officer 3rd Class Analy Ponce, a hospital corpsman with Naval Medical Center San Diego and a Los Angeles native, takes the blood pressure of Lionel Jarrad, a contractor on station, during the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Blood Donor Center Blood Drive Jan. 26. NMCS D corpsmen hold blood drives at various military installations throughout Southern California four times a week. For more information on donation locations, visit <http://www.military-blood.dod.mil/>. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo)

Petty Officer 3rd Class Analy Ponce, a hospital corpsman with Naval Medical Center San Diego and a Los Angeles native, tests a patient's iron level to determine if he is an eligible candidate to donate give blood during the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Blood Donor Center Blood Drive Jan. 26. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo)

Charger Girls, hot dogs and music: pre-Super Bowl party

Photo by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller
[Click HERE for more photos](#)



A Marine grabs a free hot dog during the pre-Super Bowl barbecue aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Feb. 2.

Lance Cpl. Juan Domingo, a cryogenic technician with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and an Indian Town, Fla., native, takes part in the pre-Super Bowl barbecue here Feb. 2.



Put to the test: firefighter academy

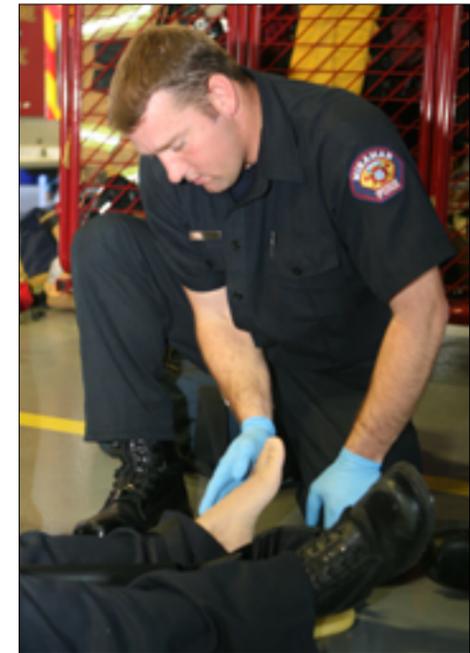
Photos by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller

Probationary firefighters with the Miramar Fire Department perform a vehicle extrication exercise as part of a final evaluation at the Firefighter Academy here Jan. 27. The academy conducted a final evaluation consisting of physical fitness, hazardous materials, emergency medical services and vehicle extrication for two new cadets approaching graduation.

(Right Top) Michael Chambers, a probationary firefighter with the Miramar Fire Department and a Santee, Calif., native, stabilizes an overturned car using a Rescue 42 stabilizer during a mock exercise here Jan. 27.

(Right Center) Michael Chambers, a probationary firefighter with the Miramar Fire Department and a Santee, Calif., native, checks the pulse on a simulated victim during a mock emergency medical services test here Jan. 27.

(Right Bottom) Michael Chambers, a probationary firefighter with the Miramar Fire Department and a Santee, Calif., native, breaks a window during a vehicle extrication exercise here Jan. 27.



MCCS employees awarded for civil service

Photos by Cpl. Alexandra M. Vazquez



(Above) Col. Frank A. Richie (far right), the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, and Francis McComb (far left), the Marine Corps Community Services director, pose for a group photo with 40-year civil service awardees Martha Harris (center right), a sales associate at the Marine Exchange, and Maria Elena Sumague (center left), a dispensing optician at the Marine Exchange, during the 2011 Length of Service Awards ceremony at the Officers' Club aboard the air station Jan. 26.

(Left) Col. Frank A. Richie, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, presents a 40-year civil service award to Martha Harris, a sales associate at the Marine Exchange, during the 2011 Length of Service Awards ceremony at the Officers' Club here Jan. 26.

(Below) Col. Frank A. Richie, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, presents a 40-year civil service award to Maria Elena Sumague, a dispensing optician at the Marine Exchange, during the 2011 Length of Service Awards ceremony at the Officers' Club here Jan. 26.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



VMM-166 welcomes new commander

Compiled by the Flight Jacket staff

Lt. Col. Michael A. Boorstein relinquished command of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 166 to Lt. Col. Michael K. Van Nest in a change of command ceremony held here Feb. 2.

Boorstein attended Cornell University via the Naval ROTC scholarship program, and received his bachelors degree in Applied and Engineering Physics and was commissioned a second lieutenant in May of 1994. Upon completion of The Basic School in March 1995, Boorstein reported to Marine Aviation Training Support Group, Pensacola, Fla., for flight school. He was designated a naval aviator in January 1997 and subsequently reported to Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 204, Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., for training in the CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter.

In August 1997, Boorstein reported to Marine Aircraft Group 16 at MCAS Tustin, Calif. From July through December of 1998, he deployed aboard the USS Essex to the Pacific region and Persian Gulf. Boorstein remained assigned to HMM-163 as the squadron relocated to MCAS Miramar. In the spring of 2000 he completed the Weapons and Tactics Instructor course.

Boorstein deployed with HMM-163 (Reinforced) to the Western Pacific and Southwest Asia aboard the USS Peleliu from August 2001 to March 2002. This deployment included combat operations with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Task Force 58 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In November 2002, Boorstein was selected for the Marine Corps Congressional Fellowship Program, and in December 2002 he reported to Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps, Office of Legislative Affairs, where he served as a legislative fellow in the office of Congressman Norman Dicks, a senior member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In December 2003, he reported to HQMC, Department of Aviation, and assumed the duties of congressional matters officer and writer for the deputy commandant for aviation.

During this time, Boorstein earned a masters in business administration from George Washington University and a certificate in legislative affairs from the Georgetown University Government Affairs Institute. He attended the Marine Corps Command and Staff College from August 2005 to June 2006, and then returned to the Aviation Plans and Policy Branch in the Aviation Department at HQMC, from July through September of 2006.

Boorstein was selected for MV-22B Osprey transition training in 2006, and from October 2006 through December 2007 he served as the future operations officer and an MV-22 Transition Operational Planning Team action officer at Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron 204 in Jacksonville, N.C. In December 2007, Boorstein transferred to VMM-266 where he deployed in September 2008 to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In November 2009, Boorstein transferred to 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing where he served as MV-22 subject matter expert and transition plans officer for the Operations department at 3rd MAW and MAG-16.

Boorstein's personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Van Nest graduated from Norwich University with a bachelors degree in Civil Engineering and was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1993. Upon completion of The Basic School and undergraduate flight training, he was designated a naval aviator in March 1996.

Following replacement aircrew training in the CH-46E, Van Nest was assigned to HMM-261, MCAS New River. During that period, he deployed twice with the 22nd MEU (Special Operations Capable) and supported a Special Marine Air Ground Task Force to Puerto Rico for disaster relief.

In August of 2000, Van Nest attended Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, Va. He then reported to Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, England, as the Marine Corps Exchange Pilot to the Royal Navy, flying MK4 Sea Kings with 846 Naval Air Squadron, Commando Helicopter Force. During this assignment he held the billet of squadron weapons and tactics instructor and D flight commander. He supported operations in Bosnia and completed two deployments to Iraq in support of OIF.

Upon his return from England in the spring of 2004, Van Nest was assigned to the MAGTF Staff Training Program in Quantico, where he was an instructor and exercise design officer. In August of 2006, Van Nest reported to VMMT-204 for conversion training to the MV-22.

In June 2008, Van Nest reported to II Marine Expeditionary Force as the MV-22 transition officer/air officer while continuing to instruct at VMMT-204. In May 2009, he reported to HMM-264 in preparation for the squadron's transition to the MV-22 and served as the executive officer for VMM-264.

In December 2010, Van Nest reported to 2nd

MAW (Forward) and deployed to Afghanistan in support of OEF as the 2nd MAW (FWD) Red Team officer-in-charge until August 2011.

Van Nest's personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, Air Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



Lt. Col. Michael A. Boorstein



Lt. Col. Michael K. Van Nest

[RETURN TO TOP](#)



SAN DIEGO – Jonathon Rasch, a goalie with the United States Military All-Stars and a Stillwater, Minn., native, guards his goal during a game against the San Diego Gulls Alumni at the San Diego Ice Arena, Jan. 28. The funds raised at the game were donated to the Warrior Foundation and San Diego youth hockey.



SAN DIEGO – The United States Military All-Stars pass the puck in an attempt to score a goal against the San Diego Gulls Alumni during a game at the San Diego Ice Arena, Jan. 28. More than 1,000 fans attended the charity game to raise money for San Diego youth hockey and the Warrior Foundation.

Military hockey team back-checks shortness of funds

Story and photos by Pfc. Christopher D. Johns

SAN DIEGO – Almost 1,000 fans came to the San Diego Ice Arena to watch service members with the United States Military All-Stars play hockey against the San Diego Gulls Alumni to raise funds for charities, Jan. 28.

The funds raised at the game were donated to the Warrior Foundation and San Diego youth hockey.

“I enjoy the fact that we get the chance to give back to the community,” said Daniel Raatz, a defenseman for the All-Stars and a West Allis, Wis., native.

Raatz said he also enjoyed getting the chance to help the youth who play the same game he played as a child.

Even though the goal of the game was to raise money for charity, both teams still played competitively to give the fans a good show.

“I mean if you lose, you lose,” said Raatz. “The major thing is the fans enjoy it, they have a good time, and we’re able to raise money for charity.”

The funds were split between youth hockey and the Warrior Foundation, an organization that works with active duty service

members who are injured or suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

“I think it was hugely successful,” said Judy Sexton, a volunteer with the Warrior Foundation and a San Diego native. “The stands looked like they were overflowing, people were standing around the rink, and I think people had a really good time.”

The final score of the game was 15-5, leaving the San Diego Gulls Alumni the victors. Although the United States Military All-Stars lost, both teams contributed to making the charity game a major win.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



SAN DIEGO – San Diego Gulls Alumni defend their goal during a game against the United States Military All-Stars at the San Diego Ice Arena, Jan. 28. The final score of the game was 15-5, leaving the San Diego Gulls Alumni the victors.



A pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 practices aerial refueling in an F/A-18 above the Pacific Ocean Jan. 25. Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 KC-130J pumped 10,000 pounds of fuel into two F/A-18s for aerial refueling training.

Nearest gas station: 18,000 feet

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller

Flying at an airspeed of 230 knots and an altitude of 18,000 feet, a KC-130J pumps 10,000 pounds of fuel for two F/A-18 Hornets off the coast of San Diego, Jan. 25.

Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 provided a platform for Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 to conduct night aerial refueling, allowing squadron personnel practice engaging and disengaging the probe and drogue on the KC-130J.

VMEAT-101 performed initial night aerial refueling evolutions while VMGR-352 trained for proficiency.

“When they come up for gas, we want it to be like second nature,” said Cpl. Joel Denning, a loadmaster with VMGR-352 and a Simi Valley, Calif., native. “It has to go quick; it has to be as fast as possible, so they can get back down there close enough to support the guys on the ground.”

Providing aerial refueling is essential. Aircraft cannot always land to receive fuel and can burn more fuel and time by landing, receiving fuel and taking off again.

“It adds flexibility, especially in the air,” said Cpl. Chris Perez, a loadmaster with VMGR-352 and a Chicago native. “Being an air refueling platform, we’re not tied to any specific geographical area.”

During the training mission, a KC-130J stretched out an 80-foot refueling tube on each side of the aircraft for the F/A-18 jets to receive fuel.

Load masters of a KC-130J look out the side windows to

monitor the aircraft connecting and disconnecting and to communicate refueling progress with the pilot.

“We act as his eyes in the back, so he knows where the aircraft are surrounding his aircraft. Obviously he can’t see behind him,” said Perez. “We just kind of build up his situational awareness, so

he can make decisions and move the aircraft based on what we see and know that everything is safe.”

Even though the aerial refueling mission was just training this time, it allows VMGR-352 and VMEAT-101 to stay ready should a real aerial refueling mission occur.

“When they come up for gas, we want it to be like second nature. It has to go quick; it has to be as fast as possible, so they can get back down there close enough to support the guys on the ground.”

Cpl. Joel Denning

Loadmaster with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352



Cpl. Joel Denning, a loadmaster with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 and a Simi Valley, Calif., native, looks out the side window of a KC-130J above the Pacific Ocean Jan. 25. Loadmasters monitor the aircraft connecting and disconnecting to communicate refueling progress with the pilot.

Morning colors ceremony honors Black History Month

Photos by Cpl. Sarah Fiocco

Montford Point Marines from the Montford Point Marines Association San Diego Chapter wait for the morning colors ceremony to begin at the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters building here, Feb. 3. The ceremony celebrated Black History Month and honored the heritage, accomplishments and contributions made by African Americans to American society. (More photos next page)

(Above) The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Band performs during a morning colors ceremony at the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters building here, Feb. 3. The ceremony celebrated Black History Month and honored the heritage, accomplishments and contributions made by African Americans to American society.

(Right) Maj. Gen. Andrew W. O'Donnell Jr., commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, speaks during a morning colors ceremony at the 3rd MAW headquarters building here, Feb. 3. The ceremony celebrated Black History Month and honored the heritage, accomplishments and contributions made by African Americans to American society.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



(Below) Col. Frank A. Richie, commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, speaks during a morning colors ceremony at the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquarters building here, Feb. 3. The ceremony celebrated Black History Month and honored the heritage, accomplishments and contributions made by African Americans to American society.

A Heart of Bronze: Yuma pilot earns high military award

Story by Lance Cpl. Sean Dennison with Marine Corps Air Station Yuma

YUMA, Ariz. -- Capt. Daniel Fiust, a Marine Attack Squadron 513 AV-8B pilot and a native of San Carlos, Calif., was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his tactical ingenuity while serving as the air officer for 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, in Afghanistan from Jan. 1, 2011, to Sept. 1, 2011.

"I just feel like I was doing my job," said Fiust. "The battalion had a lot of amazing Marines that did a lot more important stuff than I did. They were in a lot more dangerous situations than I was."

A battalion air officer acts as a liaison for aviation squadrons supporting ground Marines, directing and dispersing air assets across the battalion's area of operations. The air officer is the senior forward air controller in a battalion. His responsibilities range anywhere from air strikes to airborne medical evacuations.

Fiust supervised the battalion's forward air controllers and enlisted joint terminal attack controllers, who patrol with their squads and protect them by calling in air strikes. On a daily basis, Fiust heard the pilots of both rotary- and fixed-wing assets, including his own squadron.

"The main close air support we got was from 513 and Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267," said Fiust. "It was great to get fire support from the Nightmares."

Being the single air officer in the Upper Hereshk and Sangin Valleys, areas with notably high enemy activity, Fiust had his hands full throughout the deployment, though that didn't hamper his talent for improvisation.

One key example of Fiust's coordination skills showed when a company of infantrymen expended all machine-gun ammunition attempting to defeat their still-firing adversaries. Fiust made the call of resupplying the company with attack helicopters, which resulted in their victory.

Another example highlighting the importance of an air officer is when Fiust, after processing surveillance information, made a call that resulted in the destruction of an enemy sniper team with a history of aggressing installations and patrols.

Fiust, for his part, regards his responsibilities more crucial than his victories.

"Training the tactical air control party in the battalion is probably the most important thing in preparing battalion joint terminal attack controllers and other forward air controllers for combat," he said of the men who patrol with their squads and protect them by calling in air strikes.

Soon enough, the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter will be fulfilling its role of close air support, but the only thing changing in the game is the platform used.

"We still have Marine pilots," Fiust said. "They're still going to have the same attitude toward supporting the Marines on the ground."

After being on the ground for so long, the bronze star recipient has one thing on his mind.

"Right now I'm just focusing on getting back into flying and getting proficient again at being an attack pilot," Fiust said.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



Capt. Daniel Fiust, a Marine Attack Squadron 513 AV-8B Harrier pilot and a native of San Carlos, Calif., receives the Bronze Star Medal at his squadron's hangar at MCAS Yuma, Jan. 16. Fiust received the award for the tactical ingenuity he displayed while serving as the air officer and a forward air controller for 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. "I just felt like I was doing my job," Fiust said. "It was great to have support from 513." One of Fiust's highlights included ground-air coordination in taking out a sniper team pinning down a group of Marines. A battalion air officer acts as a liaison for aviation squadrons supporting ground Marines, directing and dispersing air assets across the battalion's area of operations. The air officer is the senior forward air controller in a battalion. His responsibilities range anywhere from air strikes to airborne medical evacuations.

Dental Corps celebrates 100 years of service

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo

Dentists set out a variety of dental burs, used to drill teeth, during a cavity removal aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Feb. 1. The MCAS Miramar Dental Clinic provides cleanings, exams, oral surgery and prosthodontics for approximately 9,000 service members and their families. This year the Navy Dental Corps will celebrate its 100th year of service to those serving in the Navy and Marine Corps.



This year, the Navy Dental Corps will celebrate 100 years of service to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Since the Dental Corps' establishment on Aug. 22, 1912, after the 62nd Congress passed an act later signed by President Taft, it has maintained its mission of "providing oral healthcare for war fighters and maintaining operational readiness."

"It is our job to prevent cavities, promote good oral hygiene and to boost morale by preventing oral complications of those in the armed forces," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Sterling G. Perkins, a hospital corpsman with 13th Dental Company, 1st Dental Battalion, and a McGehee, Ark., native. "We are here to make them look and feel better."

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Dental Clinic provides cleanings, exams, oral surgery and prosthodontics for approximately 9,000 service members and their families aboard the air station.

Each day the clinic services more than 200 patients for everything from cleanings to tooth removal and replacement, explained Petty Officer 3rd Class Sam Saleh, a hospital corpsman with 13th Dental Company, 1st Dental Battalion and a San Francisco native.

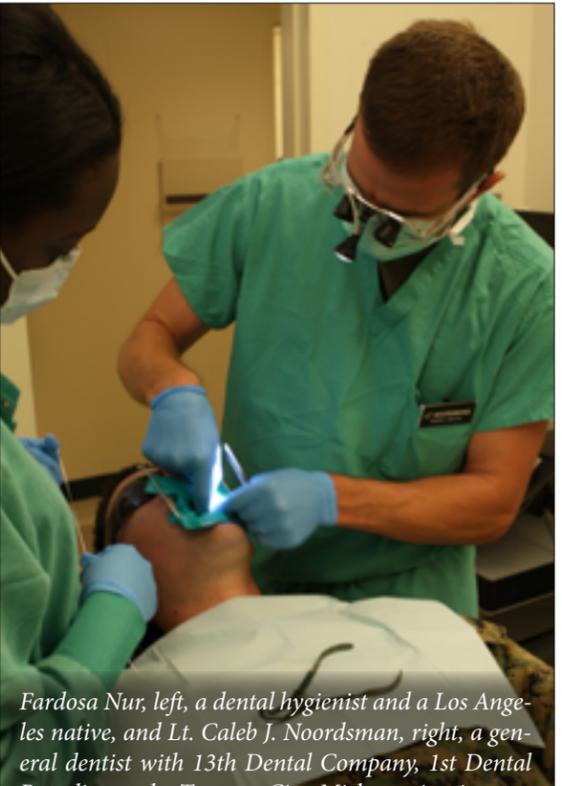
More than 10 dentists and approximately 50 dental technicians from the air station will celebrate the centennial during the annual Birthday Ball scheduled to be held near San Diego's historic waterfront in August.

The event will be hosted by 1st Dental Battalion, based aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and will also include dentists and dental technicians from Naval Medical Center San Diego.

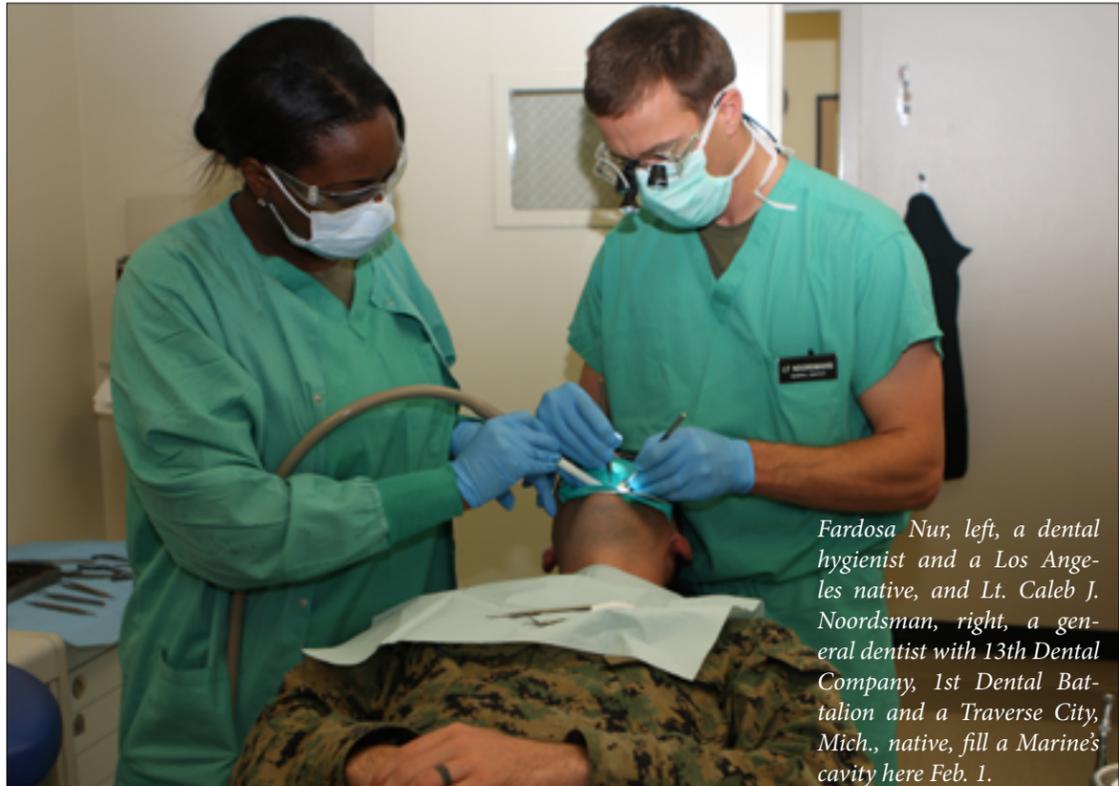
For more information on location, volunteer opportunities or to donate, contact Cmdr. Laura McFarland, the MCB Camp Pendleton Margarita Dental Clinic director with 1st Dental Battalion, at 760-725-3417.



Dentists aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., fill the cavity of a Marine from with Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, during a routine dental appointment Feb. 1. The MCAS Miramar Dental Clinic provides cleanings, exams, oral surgery and prosthodontics for approximately 9,000 service members and their families. This year the Navy Dental Corps will celebrate its 100th year of service to those serving in the Navy and Marine Corps.



Fardosa Nur, left, a dental hygienist and a Los Angeles native, and Lt. Caleb J. Noordsman, right, a general dentist with 13th Dental Company, 1st Dental Battalion and a Traverse City, Mich., native, insert a rubber dam in a Marine's mouth here Feb. 1.



Fardosa Nur, left, a dental hygienist and a Los Angeles native, and Lt. Caleb J. Noordsman, right, a general dentist with 13th Dental Company, 1st Dental Battalion and a Traverse City, Mich., native, fill a Marine's cavity here Feb. 1.

Making the flight line go boom

Story and photos by Pfc. Christopher D. Johns

Sounds of cloths sliding over smooth metal and the clinking of small parts being assembled into larger, more deadly weapons could be heard from a hallway in the armory of Marine Aviation Logistic Squadron 16.

With each clink and scrape of metal on metal, the ordnance Marines help keep the squadrons of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing mission effective when it comes to putting rounds down range.

"Aviation is big in the Marine Corps," said Sgt. Andrew Gendro, the armory chief with the MALS-16 ordnance shop and a Fall City, Wash., native. "Without ordnance though, it would be just a bunch of aircraft flying around."

Ordnance Marines handle all weaponry needs for Marine Aircraft Group 16. They handle orders for weapons, flares, rounds and missiles. If it comes from the muzzle of a weapon on an aircraft from MAG-16, it goes through MALS-16 ordnance.

"Our main mission is to support the flight line," said Cpl. Danny J. Price, the munitions work center supervisor with MALS-16 and Bay Minette, Ala., native. "The squadrons send us orders for munitions, I take their request, I go and personally get what they need, and then I transport it where it needs to go."

The ordnance shop handles about up to 10,000 rounds and 300 flares on a regular order, added Price.

"We have the only aviation armory on base," said Gendro. "The armory has around 400 weapons in it, which we maintain constant physical security of."

When squadron personnel need weapons for a training event or for deployment, they come to Gendro.

"The squadrons send me their requests for weapons," said Gendro. "I go to the armory, pick up the weapons asked for, and then take them where they need to go. Once the squadron is done with their training or mission, they bring them back, and the weapons are put right back in the armory."

Marines in ordnance work closely with weapons and dangerous explosives, so attention to detail and unit cohesion is crucial.

"We work with explosives," said Gendro. "So we have to be able to trust each other and communicate well. The ordnance family is very tightly knit. We watch each other's back."

Though one Marine may work in the armory and the other in another portion of the shop, the brotherhood is clearly visible. The field itself is small but each Marine feels a close bond to the others.



(Above) A Marine with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 reassembles the intricate pieces of a GAU-21 .50-caliber machine gun here Jan. 24. MALS-16 ordnance Marines are directly responsible for the functionality of every weapon in their armory.

(Right) Sgt. Andrew Gendro, the armory chief with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 and a Fall City, Wash., native, reattaches the barrel of a GAU-21 .50-caliber machine gun here Jan. 24. It is imperative that each weapon is inspected before use.

(Top) Marines with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 clean and reassemble weapons here Jan. 24. MALS-16's ordnance Marines provide 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons with the munitions and weapons needed to carry out missions.



Pfc. Sean C. Pate, a combat vehicle mechanic with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 and an Oologah, Okla., native, repairs the oil pan of a Humvee here Jan. 23. Even small maintenance issues such as oil leaks require detailed attention by the maintenance crew to ensure all safety standards are met for each vehicle.

MWSS-373 mechanics wrench through repairs

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Erica DiSalvo
[Click HERE for more photos](#)



STAYING

While Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., is usually known for helicopters and fighter jets, there is a shop on station dedicated to the ground support utility vehicles the Marine Corps often uses.

The motor transportation maintenance crew of Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 can usually be found shimmied under a truck, staring up into the undercarriage, or hunched over between a hood and large engine.

“We fix everything, from small common repairs, like oil pan leaks, to larger problems involving engines,” said Sgt. Cory A. Purl, a motor transportation mechanic with MWSS-373 and a Plano, Texas, native. “Each repair can last anywhere from three or four hours to three or four days depending on the type of issue.”

The mechanics can regularly repair Logistics Vehicle Systems, Humvees and Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement or 7-Ton trucks. While there are approximately eight different vehicle types aboard the air station, the shop is authorized to

repair more than 10 varieties of tactical utility vehicles.

Mechanics ensure every motor vehicle runs smoothly and efficiently to complete any mission through daily maintenance checks.

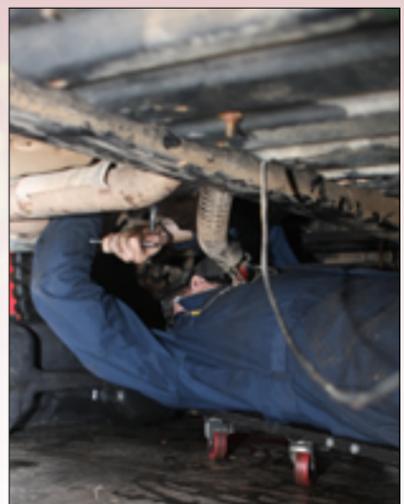
“Our job is essential to the Marine Corps,” said Pfc. Sean C. Pate, a combat vehicle mechanic with MWSS-373 and an Oologah, Okla., native. “If a truck were to break down, Marines would not only not be able to get food, supplies and ammunition, they wouldn’t be able to get home.”

Due to the Marine Corps’ constant use of motor vehicles, even small problems such as oil leaks require detailed attention by the maintenance crew.

“While an oil leak is a small fairly simple repair, if it were ignored it could eventually cause serious motor damage,” said Pate. “Each and every repair has to be fixed as quickly as possible.”

With so much focus upon aircraft and aviation support aboard the air station, many Marines may forget the constant efforts of those supporting ground missions. The motor transportation mechanics of

MWSS-373 work daily to ensure ground support utility vehicles are also ready for action at a moment’s notice.



Pfc. Sean C. Pate, a combat vehicle mechanic with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373 and an Oologah, Okla., native, removes the oil pan of a Humvee, here Jan. 23.



Sgt. Jacob Pridgeon, far right, a range safety officer with Marksmanship Training Unit and a Clearwater, Minn., native, walks the firing line at the Hathcock Range during pistol snap-in here Feb. 2. Pridgeon enjoys helping others by providing knowledge in the skills he is certified to teach. Pridgeon dedicates his time to teaching fellow Marines martial arts, rifle and pistol techniques and scuba diving.

PUNCH, SHOOT, DIVE

MARINE TEACHES WITH PASSION

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller

Hidden underneath his sunglasses are bright blue eyes and a sun-tan line too familiar to range personnel.

Sgt. Jacob Pridgeon is a range safety officer with Marksmanship Training Unit and a Clearwater, Minn., native who dedicates his time to teaching fellow Marines in several ways. Pridgeon is a former Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor, a former rifle and pistol coach and is training to become a scuba diving instructor.

Pridgeon first became a MCMAP instructor in 2010 and continued to train Marines until February 2011. He has been unable to practice MCMAP due to a car accident, but hopes to regain his instructor tab before his upcoming deployment in August.

When Pridgeon was a corporal he taught his first MCMAP class, consisting of his chain of command with the lowest ranking Marine a master sergeant.

“Having to correct Marines’ techniques who have been serving longer than I had been alive was an interesting experience,” said Pridgeon.

Though Pridgeon was the one teaching higher-ranking Marines, they taught him something too. Pridgeon said he learned humility from the Marines he was instructing.

“It was really humbling having my colonel listening and paying close attention to my guidance and corrections,” said Pridgeon.

MCMAP was the beginning of his teaching

career and taught him how to approach different people and different teaching techniques which would later prove to be handy.

“I ENJOY ONE-ON-ONE TALKING WITH PEOPLE AND HELPING THEM BETTER THEIR SKILLS.”

SGT. JACOB PRIDGEON
RANGE SAFETY OFFICER WITH
MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING UNIT

“Pridgeon’s currently responsible for the overall safety of the range,” said Sgt. Brandon Lantrip, a line staff non-commissioned officer at the Hathcock Range and a Louisville, Ky., native. “When he was a coach, he was generally good. He was always calm when helping Marines and made them feel comfortable.”

Pridgeon is a former rifle and pistol coach,

so when needed, he steps in to help instruct Marines on the firing line.

“I coach individual shooters if they’re having difficulties or if they are a possible safety hazard,” said Pridgeon. “Most people feel more at ease when they have personalized attention from an outside influence.”

Pridgeon may spend most of his time in the pistol tower, but misses being on the coaching line because he cannot directly help the Marines.

“I enjoy one-on-one talking with people and helping them better their skills,” said Pridgeon.

Not only does Pridgeon work on the range, but he also spends his free time training to be a scuba diving instructor.

“My first experience in the ocean I loved,” said Pridgeon. “I loved scuba diving, and I want to be able to share that with other people through teaching them to scuba dive.”

Pridgeon is currently a master diver, and is slated to receive his certification as a dive control specialist in August. After completing his dive control specialist certification, Pridgeon will move on to the final certification as a scuba instructor.

Whether it is advice in MCMAP, the firing line or in the water, Pridgeon enjoys helping others by providing knowledge in the skills he is certified to teach or just helping a fellow Marine in need of help with a simple task.

[Click HERE for more photos](#)



Sgt. Jacob Pridgeon, a range safety officer with Marksmanship Training Unit and a Clearwater, Minn., native, instructs Gunnery Sgt. Peter Hernandez, an aviation supply warehouse chief with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and an El Centro, Calif., native, proper speed reloading techniques for the pistol here Feb. 2.

[RETURN TO TOP](#)



Rogahn, a Canine Companion puppy, receives a treat from his handler after completing a task during a play session at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. Prisoners train the puppies enrolled in the program and eventually give them to new owners who need a service dog. (Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)



Poet, a Canine Companion puppy, takes a break while playing in the yard after completing a morning of obedience and obstacle training at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)



Canine Companion puppy Rogahn takes a nap after a play session at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. Prisoners at the Brig train the puppies in obedience techniques for 18 months before giving them to people who need a service dog. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)

Bettering themselves through helping others

Story by Lance Cpl. Rebecca Eller

They both have shiny blonde hair, big brown eyes and slender legs. Poet and Rogahn are residents of the Naval Consolidated Brig aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. However, they are not prisoners, but puppies.

Select prisoners at the Brig receive an opportunity to raise puppies for Canine Companions for Independence, which provides service dogs for wounded combat veterans.

"This is a win-win situation," said Cath Phillips, a dog trainer with CCI and a Temecula, Calif., native. "We have people here who have obviously done wrong; they want to turn their lives around, and they're doing it by loving the puppies for 18 months and then sending the puppy on its way to do something for somebody else."

The brig's staff and clinical services screen prisoners prior to entry in the program, followed by interviews with CCI officials.

"I wanted to come into the program initially because I thought it would be pretty fantastic just to have a dog around," said a prisoner. "What I found out after doing it for a while is I was able to give back and help someone."

The program was introduced to Miramar in 2005 and is beneficial for not only wounded veterans, but the dog handler as well. The dog handlers selected at the

prison learn patience and anger management.

"I had anger issues when I first came here, but the dogs have helped me," said a second prisoner. "They're a nice break, and it feels good doing something selfless."

The dog handlers spend three days devoted to the puppy and then rotate with another handler for two days off. The handlers give up several liberties to train the puppies, but they all agree it is worth the lost free-time.

"Even though we give up free time, the hardest thing is giving the dog up when it's time to let them go," said a prisoner.

In the 18 months the handlers have the puppies, they train them how to perform needed tasks and to avoid distractions. These future service dogs must be able to assist the disabled with various activities such as escorting the blind, retrieving items not accessible by the owner and helping perform household chores.

"We're not just doing time," said a prisoner. "We're progressing, we're making things happen."

Continued next page



Poet, a Canine Companion puppy, receives a treat from her handler after completing a task during a training session at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)



Canine Companion puppy Poet waits to receive a treat from her handler during a play session at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. Prisoners at the Brig train the puppies in obedience techniques for 18 months before giving them to those who need a service dog. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)



Rogahn, a Canine Companion puppy, plays with a toy during a play session at the Naval Consolidated Brig here Jan. 24. Prisoners at the brig train the puppies for 18 months before donating them to those who need a service dog. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)



Rogahn, right, and Poet, left, currently receive training in obedience techniques by prisoners at the Naval Consolidate Brig here. Upon completion of their training, they will be given to people who need a service dog. (Photo by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth)

Helping Marines choose their path: Career Planner of the Year

Story and photos by Pfc. Christopher D. Johns



Career planner of the Year Sgt. Molly A. Howe, a career planner with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3 and a Gilroy, Calif., native, speaks with senior ranking Marines at the Officer's Club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Feb. 3. Career planners met at the Officer's Club for a ceremony awarding Marines for their dedication to mission accomplishment.



Sgt. Molly A. Howe, a career planner with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3 and a Gilroy, Calif., native, accepts the Career Planner of the Year award from Maj. Gen. Andrew W. O'Donnell Jr., 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general, and Sgt. Maj. Anthony A. Spadaro, the 3rd MAW sergeant major, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Feb. 3.

Out of 62 career planners in the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, only one earned the distinction Career Planner of the Year.

Sgt. Molly A. Howe, a career planner with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, continuously takes initiative to better herself and takes time to help Marines choose the right paths for their careers.

Howe won the title after competing against three other career planners on a board where members judged her ability to meet interview and re-enlistment missions. They also evaluated her off duty education, Professional Military Education, rifle qualifications, Combat Fitness Test and Physical Fitness Test.

"[The board] also looks to see what we've contributed to the Marine Corps and to the [military occupational specialty]," said Howe. "I've been really active in trying to improve our MOS."

In the last year career planner school acquisitioned a new company to help teach sales skills to Marines. In order to teach these new skills, the school had to get new materials, new handouts and new videos.

"I participated in the new sales skills video in career planner school," said Howe. "So all the new guys that are going through school get to see my face on the screen teaching them those skills."

By doing this, she plays a big role in teaching new career planners more effective interview techniques with Marines who either want to stay active duty or pursue opportunities outside of the Marine Corps.

"When she interacts with our Marines on a one-on-one basis, not only does she focus on the personal aspect, but she focuses on the overall picture," said Gunnery Sgt. Vargas, a career planner with 3rd MAW and Bayamon, Puerto Rico, native. "Such as the Marine's career, different options they can choose, whether they are financially stable and whether they want to stay in or get out."

Howe's dedication and love of her job shows every time she interviews a Marine.

"Sgt. Howe has been able to come above and beyond her peers when it comes to interviews, and re-enlistments, whether it's a senior enlistment or a junior Marine; she brings it all to the table day in, and day out," said Vargas.

Howe accomplished 124 percent of her overall mission. She completed 100 percent of her interviews and her Commanding General's Inspection was outstanding.

"She is extremely deserving of this award," said Vargas. "I do believe she is the top career planner right here in 3rd MAW."

Now that 3rd MAW is awarding Howe the Career Planner of the Year, the only question left is – What is next?

"I really just want to keep doing my job and help Marines," said Howe.

A humble Howe appreciated the chance she earned to represent the 3rd MAW. Her way of paying it forward is to make sure that the Marines of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing's MWHS-3 are guided in their future endeavors.

Puppies trained at the brig have a successful completion rate of about 60 percent. However, canines trained outside of prison only have a 35 percent average success rate, according to the Canine Companions for Independence newsletter.

"Here [the prisoners'] focus is on the program, and it shows in the dogs," said Phillips.

With the structured life the prisoners live in, they are able to devote more time to the puppies than someone

outside of the military raising canine companions, added Phillips.

Before the puppies leave to help the disabled, the puppies are already helping the prisoners. They provide a purpose for the prisoners to better themselves.

"You're bringing something positive out of the most negative experience of your life," said a prisoner. "You know that you're making something good happen."

Face of defense: Marine mechanic makes lifesaving find

Story Cpl. Brian Adam Jones with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan, Jan. 20, 2012 – Marine Corps Sgt. Christopher Lemke’s diligence as a helicopter mechanic paid off recently when he discovered a potentially deadly flaw in a UH-1Y Huey aircraft, military officials said.

Lt. Col. Ian Clark, left, commanding officer of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, pins the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on Sgt. Christopher Lemke during a ceremony at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, Jan. 12, 2012. Lemke, a mechanic with the squadron, discovered a previously unknown issue with the UH-1Y Huey helicopter that represented an extreme risk to the aircraft and aircrew. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Brian Adam Jones

(Click photo for screen-resolution image);high-resolution image available.

The sergeant was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal in a Jan. 12 ceremony here because of his find.

Lemke, a mechanic with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, nicknamed the “Gunfighters,” regularly conducts inspections on the squadron’s UH-1Y Hueys and AH-1W Super Co-

bra attack helicopters.

It was during a routine phase inspection of a Huey in late December that Lemke, a native of Macomb, Mich., uncovered something that could save countless lives. Phase inspections are regular checks on an aircraft’s various components to ensure they are safe.

Underneath the UH-1Y Huey in the aircraft’s transmission compartment -- an area so difficult to reach that maintainers call it the “hell hole” -- Lemke found something wrong.

“When two metals rub together, it creates this black liquid, and that’s what I found,” he said.

The transmission pylon beam and the main beam joint, which secure the aircraft’s transmission to the airframe, were disintegrating.

“This failure represented an extreme risk to the aircraft and aircrew,” Lemke’s award citation reads.

The citation goes on to state that Lemke’s finding led to a Corps-wide inspection, resulting in an engineering advisory report about a manufacturing defect found on multiple UH-1Y aircraft.

“No one else had ever found such an issue, but when we looked at another aircraft we had in

phase, it had the same problem. There was a fault in the design of the aircraft,” he said.

Lemke was not scheduled to inspect that part of the helicopter as there had never been an issue in the history of the aircraft, but he explained that Marine Corps aircraft maintenance demands more than completing the minimum requirements.

“That’s how I was trained -- it’s the Gunfighter way,” Lemke said of his squadron. “Our job isn’t just replacing things. If we don’t do it right, that’s someone’s life.”

Lemke is known for his work ethic.

“It’s no surprise to me,” Lemke’s supervisor, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Ricardo Paez, said. “He’s always gone in there and done his job the right way.”

Lemke said he hopes younger mechanics in the squadron -- the privates first class, lance corporals and corporals -- see that as aircraft maintainers, they hold lives in their hands.

“I’m 24 years old and the responsibility we hold for our age is astronomical,” Lemke said. “I hope the junior guys around me realize that and go out and provide combat-capable aircraft for the Marines on the ground.”



Lt. Col. Ian Clark, left, commanding officer of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, pins the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on Sgt. Christopher Lemke during a ceremony at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, Jan. 12, 2012. Lemke, a mechanic with the squadron, discovered a previously unknown issue with the UH-1Y Huey helicopter that represented an extreme risk to the aircraft and aircrew. (Photo by Cpl. Brian Adam Jones)

The Miramar Minute

MWSS-373 mechanics wrench through repairs

Video by Lance Cpl. Erica Disalvo

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