Repeal allows service members to serve openly

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The law is passed, the studies completed, the findings certified and the service member training accomplished. After years of debate and months of preparation, the Defense Department started on a new footing Tuesday, with the repeal of the so-called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law that since 1993 has banned gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military.

“Statements about sexual orientation are no longer a bar to enlisting in the military or a cause for dismissal,” said Army Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton, chief of staff for the Pentagon’s repeal implementation team.

In addition, former service members separated from the military under Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell based solely on their sexual orientation, will be eligible to reapply to return to military service. Patton said their applications will be evaluated using the same standards as all other candidates, and decisions will be based on needs of the service.

As these long-anticipated changes take place, Patton said he expects the repeal implementation to stay on track because of the pre-repeal training across the force. In addition, many other existing policies considered “sexual-orientation neutral” remain in place.

Duty assignments won’t be affected, and living and working conditions won’t change, Patton said. Service members won’t be separated or segregated based on sexual orientation, and will continue to share billeting and berthing as in the past.

With repeal, benefits will remain as they are. Service members will be able to designate whomever they want to receive member-designated benefits such as Serviceman’s Group Life Insurance, he said. Other benefits, such as basic allowance for housing, are limited by law and statute to cover only opposite-sex spouses and can’t be extended to same-sex partners, Patton said.

However, the Defense Department is studying the possible extension of other benefits where eligibility is not specifically defined by law, such as use of military morale, welfare and recreation facilities by same-sex partners. “We have not arrived at a decision on that,” Patton said. “The department continues to explore that possibility, post-repeal.”

More Active Marine Reserve billets, bonuses available

By Lance Cpl. David Flynn
Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — With more and more Marines opting to remain in the Corps, the reenlistment process is becoming increasingly competitive. Marine Corps Recruiting Command’s Active-Reserve Program offers Marines another chance to stay in and experience a side of the Corps that many don’t know exists.

Though the primary purpose of AR Marines is to support the reserve, they serve side-by-side with active duty Marines, work full-time, receive active duty pay and benefits and can change duty stations as often as active duty Marines. Active-reserve Marines also deploy, serve in billets such as drill instructor duty or recruiting duty and qualify for the same retirement benefits of active duty Marines.

There will be more opportunities for Marines to join the AR program during Fiscal Year 2012. The AR program has 276 available billets for FY12 in comparison to the 198 billets available during FY11. According to Master Sgt. Donald Ogden, prior service recruiting quality control chief, MCRC, there are a few MOS’s with a large number of billets available for Marines.

“We are looking for a lot of Marines in the (0111) administrative specialist, (3451) fiscal/budget technician, (2111) small arms repairer/technician and (3043) supply administration and operations clerk job fields,” said Ogden.

Though some MOS’s are of particular importance, Marines from any job field may submit packages for the AR program.

“There are active-reserve billets for Marines in most job fields,” said Ogden. “Retraining in a new MOS is also available for sergeants and below.”

2nd Bn enriches marriages

By Lance Cpl. Eric Quintanilla
Chevron staff

Marine Corps Family Team Building and Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego chaplains hosted the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program for 2nd Recruit Training Battalion Monday.

The 4-hour class, offered four times a year, is for couples looking to build and enhance their relationships, whether they are engaged, newlyweds or have been married 30 years. Marriage is tough, a lot of marriages don’t work out,” said Lt. Stephen Brown, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion chaplain and class instructor. “It’s something we need to fight for.”

Inside the classroom the lights were dimmed, flower petals were scattered across the tables and dinner was provided to set the scene of a romantic date night for the couples. Child care was also provided so the couples could

Marines share cultures

By Lance Cpl. Eric Quintanilla
Chevron staff

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego celebrated Multicultural Heritage Day at the Command Museum courtyard Sept. 15.

The annual event showcased 22 different cultures from around the world with information booths and performances to help service members and their families better understand the diversity that is found throughout the Marine Corps. This is one of eight observances used to help promote equal opportunity and awareness throughout the year.
to the AR program needs to be FY12, there are still three available billets for Marines interested in making the move during FY11.

“There are still two billets available for (3454) fiscal/budget technicians and one for a (6152) CH-46 helicopter airframe mechanic,” said Ogden.

For non-commissioned officers interested in the AR program is bonuses. Bonus of $11,000 for corporals and $15,000 for sergeants are available for NCOs who hold a qualifying MOS. The qualifying MOS’s will be released via a MARMAD in early October.

To learn more about the AR program, contact your local prior service recruiter or call MCRC at (703) 432-9600.

You can find contact numbers for your local PSR through Marines.com or by calling 1-800-MARINES.

Marine Band San Diego’s Party Band performed during Fleet Week’s Big Bay Family Festival at Broadway Pier, San Diego Sunday. The nine piece Party Band played a 45-minute show for those in attendance at the Fleet Week San Diego free Family Day.

The event was held on visitor’s Thursday, 6 p.m. until Oct. 13.

In addition to the fashion show and giveaway, the event will also include:

• Cocktail Hour
• Giveaway and Fashion Show is slated for Oct. 14 from 4 until 8:30 p.m., on the Bayview Restaurant Lawn. Active duty spouses will be able to choose one free formal gown at the event.

In addition to the fashion show and gown giveaway, the event will also include:

• Vendor Products
• Cocktail Hour
• Dinner

Donations of gently used ball gowns are greatly appreciated and accepted at Bldg. 46, Fleet Week San Diego, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the event.

Those couples who have recently had a new family addition, who are expecting one, are invited to attend the MCRD Budgeting for Baby Workshop Friday from 9:30 until 11 a.m. in Bldg. 14 (the Personal and Professional Development Center). The event is facilitated by a Navy-Marine Corps Relief Fund counselor on how to build a monthly budget and on how the new addition will affect finances and resources.

The Navy Marine Corps Relief Fund staff reserves the right to publish any content submitted.

The annual MCCS Ball Gown Giveaway and Fashion Show is slated for Oct. 14 from 4 until 8:30 p.m., on the Bayview Restaurant Lawn. Active duty spouses will be able to choose one free formal gown at the event.

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**Twins Platoon** crosses generations in the Twin Cities

By Cpl. Jeffrey Cordero
We Marine Corps District

MINNEAPOLIS — Thousands of Minnesota Twins fans stood watching as 150 men and women walked across the field, stopped and raised their right hands in an oath of enlistment into the United States Marine Corps. Many of them were straight out of high school, apprehensive and not knowing exactly what they were getting into. This scene played out originally 44 years ago at the old Metropolitan Stadium, and again Sept. 5, at Target Field.

“The day we took the oath out there it felt like you had quite an honor bestowed on you,” said Charles Baker, a member of the original Twins Platoon who served in Vietnam.

The original group was known as the Twins Platoon and now 44 years later a new group of 24 local young men and women raised their right hands in front of thousands, carrying on the legacy of the original platoon.

“They’re following up behind us, the younger generation is picking up,” Baker said. “We’ve all gotta progress, you know. The original Twins Platoon was a group of men and women from the Twin Cities and surrounding areas.

On June 28, 1967 the members of the Twins Platoon were sworn into the Marine Corps during a pregame ceremony, before the Minnesota Twins faced the Boston Red Sox.

During the fourth inning of the game, the group was taken to buses waiting for them outside and sent to Marine Corps recruit training. The group was split into two platoons at boot camp. They all attended boot camp together and most subsequently attended the same military occupational specialty school.

Many of the Marines remained within a 10 mile radius of each other while deployed to Vietnam according to Christy W. Sauro, a member of the original Twins Platoon.

Sauro always wondered what had happened to the rest of the platoon’s members. His interest eventually led to years of searching for the rest of the platoon and an idea to write a book, following some of the members from before they were recruited through their return from Vietnam.


In 1967 the draft was in effect. Young men who did not attend college were more than likely to receive a Selective Service notice to report for military service. The draft was for service in the Army. The Marine Corps remained a volunteer service and an alternative to the Army.

“I enlisted,” Baker said as he chuckled. “No draft was involved otherwise indicated. But, it had opportunities outside the Marine Corps, but I don’t think any of that would have given me the opportunity to give back to America what it’s given me.”

All of the members of the Twins Platoon, past and present, agree about their mixed feelings when deciding to serve in the Marines. All who participated in the Sept. 5 ceremony joined directly after high school. All are between 17 and 19 years old. All are no longer on the line for their country. And all are “apprehensive” about boot camp.

“I was really apprehensive about joining,” said Baker. “I signed up and then I thought maybe I didn’t want to. My friend linked me to his father who had served in two Jims,” he continued. “After some drinks and a good conversation, he gave me an emblem he wore during the fight. I’ve worn it ever since.”

As was the case for the Marines in the 1967 Twins Platoon, there is a war being fought overseas. The battlefield is no longer in the jungles of Southeast Asia, but the dry deserts of the Middle East, where temperatures vary from scorching during the day to near freezing at night.

“I am honored to have been selected to be taking part in the Twins Platoon, especially with members of the original 1967 Twins Platoon on the field,” he said. He not only felt ready for boot camp but also to serve in the Marine Corps. Tiedeman enlisted for a position in the infantry.

“I think being a part of the infantry is the best way I can serve my country,” he said. “It had opportunities outside the Marine Corps, but I don’t think any of that would have given me the opportunity to give back to America what it’s given me.”

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“The biggest thing is the opportunity to serve,” said Torrey Tiedeman, 19, from Rochester, Minn., a member the current Twins Platoon. “There is a kind of curiosity I have with the Marines. I have Tim Walz’s nomination to the Naval Academy but I chose to leave it to enlist in the Marines.”

Tiedeman believes the opportunity to stand next to the original platoon is exceptional, especially in front of thousands of people.

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“Until I read the book, I didn’t even know we won the game that night,” Baker said as he laughed. Men and women have since been enlisting through the Marine Corps with a distinctive pride in serving their country. Many have left behind other dreams and aspirations to become part of “the few, the proud.” The tradition carries on to this day.

Charles Baker, member of the original 1967 Twins Platoon
“Recruits need to remember why they came here and what they wanted to be,” said Sgt. Van A. Black, “If they forget why or they are not here for themselves, they probably won’t make it at all.”

Black is the Senior Drill Instructor for platoon 2149, Company G, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion. He and Staff Sgt. Anthony Glenn II, SDI, platoon 2155, Co. G., 2nd Bn., have seen many recruits go through training during their time on the drill field. Both of them agree that phase one of recruit training is imperative to turn civilians into recruits.

Once recruits get here, they still talk and act like civilians, said Black, 29, from Arlington, Texas. They are taught how to be recruits by marching to places and being taught how to speak and understand military language, among other things.

During the four days of forming, which takes place in week one of training, recruits are exposed to an excessive amount of controlled chaos. Some drill instructors think these days are most crucial to success in boot camp.

“That’s when they get the most stress and culture shock,” said Black. “If they don’t get the initial shock, they usually won’t adapt well to anything else.”

During this time, drill instructors get the recruits acclimated to the tempo of recruit training, said Glenn, 33, native of Atlanta. It’s important they pick up on instant obedience to orders and discipline.

Pick-up, or commonly known as ‘Black Friday,’ can set the tone of what the drill instructors expect from the recruits and what they will experience during their training cycle.

The first phase consists of several important events. These events are Initial Drill, Initial Physical Fitness Test, Swim Qualification, the Confidence Course and the Obstacle Course.

These events are only the tip of the spear, and what Black considers an introduction to boot camp. All the basic classes are covered in first phase, and will be revisited over the course of training.

“Breaking the cycle up into phases prevents the recruits from getting tunnel vision and actually feel like they are making progress,” said Glenn, who has served 13 cycles as a drill instructor. “Once the recruits make it through first phase, they feel like they made it as a team and are ready to move forward.”

Everything is earned, nothing is given, explained Glenn, including Company G’s completion of first phase.

**Company G recruits participate in the Confidence Course, Sept. 12. The Confidence Course consists of several obstacles that are designed to help recruits overcome their fears, utilize the use of teamwork and boost confidence.**

Company G recruits are introduced to the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. MCMAP is practiced throughout the entire cycle, and once they are tested they will receive a tan belt. The tan belt is the first of the five belt structure belonging to MCMAP.

Company G recruits practice leg sweep during the Combat Conditioning Exercise, Sept. 14. This exercise is a demanding physical training course comprised of martial arts and movement techniques that is expected to assist while in combat situations.
Sgt. Justen Greidanus, drill instructor, Company G, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion uses controlled chaos to produce a stressful environment during the Senior Drill Instructor Inspection. This inspection is used to test the recruits on the information they have retained during their first three weeks of recruit training.

Company G recruits practice leg sweep during the Combat Conditioning Exercise, Sept. 14. This exercise is a demanding physical training course comprised of martial arts and movement techniques that is expected to assist while in combat situations.
Lance Cpl. Scot Vanderwood calls for help as part of his role-playing of a casualty during a mass casualty drill staged at Camp Leatherneck. The exercise measured the efficient response, skill level and capacity of the base to manage crises.

Casualty victims in the area of the drill, blanketing the scene of the drill. Paramedics tend to simulated mass casualty victims during a drill at Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province. Simulated casualties were special effects makeup and detailed models of injuries to bring injuries such as lacerations, compound fractures, severed body parts and punctured wounds to life. These injuries tested the emergency team’s skill proficiency in applying life saving procedures and stabilizing the victims prior to evacuation, said Gastrock.

As the casualty drill concluded, leaders of the emergency teams on scene gathered to review the first responder’s performance and note areas of improvement. The seamless combined efforts of multiple emergency teams that responded to the drill led to the successful outcome of the drill, said Gastrock.
Girls get down, dirty for powder puff tournament

by Cpl. Kristin E. Moreno
Chevron staff

Donned in flags instead of pads, powder puff football pairs to take to the gridiron for another year of gut-wrenching good humor and good times.

These athletes may appear sweet and innocent, but don’t be deceived. Their seemingly subdued demeanor is enough to crush coal into diamonds and, given witness to one game, spectators’ preconceptions will change with the snap of the first ball.

Although the tournament is still three weeks away, the Headquarters and Service Battalion powder puffs are already hitting the field for practice. As defending champions, they’re not taking this tournament lightly, refusing to underestimate any team that may step up to that line of scrimmage.

The two-day tournament will take place aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego Oct. 18-19.

New this year, the depot champion will proceed the following day to compete in a tournament aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar against the Miramar and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton powder-puff football victors in an attempt to claim the tri-base championship title and ultimate bragging rights, making the victory all the sweeter.

“There’s a lot of potential on the team, so there shouldn’t be any reason why we can’t pick up (the fundamentals) quickly and come out with the title,” said Cpl. Mariella Martinez, safety and returning player for H&S Bn.

Martinez said their biggest weakness is just getting down the plays due to the inexperience on the team; however, their ability to keep on their toes will prove beneficial in the long run and hopefully put them in the front.

During practices, the team primarily focuses on fundamental skills, such as blocking and pitching the ball, but they also run offensive plays and scrimmages to get a feel for what a real, fast-paced game is like.

Most football players wear layers of pads for protection, but powder puff girls only need one form of protection and that is a stiff arm to the opponents face as they zig and zag to the promise land for six.

“Anxiety will be the biggest challenge,” said Cpl. Shanaya Samuel, offensive lineman and returning player for H&S Bn.

“Usually we just play within the depot, but the winning team will compete against Miramar and Pendleton, so that’s a lot of added pressure.”

Samuel said relieving tension will be a key to their success. They must remind themselves that although they’re in it to win it, they’ll have one up on the other teams if they learn to relax, communicate and have fun.

Service members are encouraged to come out and support the unit teams in the tournament and see firsthand the difficulties that can arise in ones marriage.

Because it’s called powder puff they think that it’s not tough, but it is,” said Martinez. “It’s not a cutey game. It’s football.”

MARRIAGE

This was done to ensure the couples felt comfortable and enjoyed the time they had to work on their marriages. explained James Stewart, MCPFTB life skills coach and class instructor.

“We’re giving couples a set of tools for those problems we know will come up in a marriage,” said Stewart.

At the beginning of class a clip from the movie “Fireproof” was shown as an example of how arguments can escalate. The scene showed a couple go from a small disagreement to questioning their marriage. This clip was used as a recurring example throughout the class and couples were able to offer suggestions on how things could have gone differently.

“It’s about the dynamics of communicating effectively and discovering each other,” said Stewart.

The class focused on how couples can have a healthy marriage through better communication with each other and how to recognize danger signs.

“Every marriage starts out with good intentions but then complications come up,” said Brown. “Marriage takes a lot of work, a lot of forgiveness.”

Stewart, who has been married 30 years, knows firsthand the difficulties that can arise in one marriage.

“It’s about the dynamics of communicating effectively and discovering each other, Stewart explained.

“Not every relationship is perfect, not every problem can be solved,” said Stewart “Ask yourself ‘Is this situation bigger than my marriage?’”

Throughout the class, the couples referred to workbooks and activities to learn more about each other and their relationship as a whole. Some workbook pages included listing the things they appreciate about their partner and why those things matter to them. After each entry was filled out the workbooks were passed to their partner so they could understand the other person better.

The couples also had the choice to share some of their workbooks entries with the class. Although this type of participation was encouraged in order to get to know other couples and share their experiences, it wasn’t a requirement.

The class had a lot of information. I learned how to have a different perspective on things and how to approach them,” said Sgt. Lee Yuen, drill instructor, Company H, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, who has been married for six years. “The most important thing in a marriage is to understand what is being talked about and not assuming or misinterpreting.”

Although a Power Point presentation accompanied the class, the instructors only used it to highlight key points and for visual aids. Instructor used examples, both hypothetical and from their own marriages, to explain situations and how to resolve issues.

Sgt. Adrian N. Cardenas, drill instructor, Company F, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion and his wife Jennie have been married for 11 years and have six children, four girls and two boys. They both learned ways to strengthen their marriage taking this class.

“It was very eye-opening. (The class) exposed some of our faults and things we need to work on that we weren’t aware of,” said Cardenas.