

# The Windsock

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## Ace of Spades executes close air support mission in Afghanistan



CPL. GREGORY MOORE

AV-8B Harriers with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing's Marine Attack Squadron 231 patrol the skies of Helmand province, Afghanistan, during a recent mission. VMA-231, the "Ace of Spades," is currently assigned to 3rd MAW (Forward), the aviation combat element for the southwestern regional command of the war in Afghanistan.

## 69 years ago today, legendary WWII ace makes final flight

CPL. ANDREA CLEOPATRA DICKERSON  
MCAS CHERRY POINT

On this day in 1944, Col. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, World War II ace and leader of Marine Fighter Squadron 214, the infamous "Black Sheep," downed three Japanese aircraft during his final combat mission of WWII. This feat brought his total number of downed enemy planes to 26, tying the mark in aviation history set by Army Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, who downed 26 planes in World War I.

During his last mission, Boyington made several flights through hostile enemy fire over Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. His aircraft went down during the ensuing dogfight.

A Japanese submarine recovered the downed Marine from the wreckage and transported him to the first of many prisoner of war camps he would see during the remainder of the war. While at these camps he was often beaten, interrogated and nearly starved.

After approximately 20 months as a POW, Boyington was rescued and returned to the United States where President Harry S. Truman decorated him with the Medal of Honor and Navy

Cross.

The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt had awarded Boyington the Medal of Honor during his captivity, and the medal was held at the Capitol until he could receive it.

As stated in the citation, he was also commended for his outstanding leadership abilities: "Under his brilliant command, our fighters shot down 20 enemy craft in the ensuing action without the loss of a single ship. A superb airman and determined fighter against overwhelming odds, Major Boyington personally destroyed 26 of the many Japanese planes shot down by his squadron and, by his forceful leadership, developed the combat readiness in his command which was a distinctive factor in the Allied aerial achievements in this vitally strategic area."

Boyington retired Aug. 1, 1947, as a colonel.

During his time in and out of the service, the Medal of Honor and Navy Cross recipient left his mark on the Corps. It is that same dedication to duty and fighting spirit that continues to uphold the legacy of Marine Corps aviation.



COURTESY PHOTO

Maj. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, commanding officer of Marine Fighter Squadron 214, photo circa 1943-1944.

## New hangar to consolidate rotary wing assets in New River



CPL. SCOTT L. TOMASZYCKI

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 366 and Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 467 are scheduled to return to Marine Corps Air Station New River in 2014 after a new hangar is built for the MV-22B Osprey squadrons there, making enough room to fit all of the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing's rotary wing assets on one air station. The hangar is estimated to cost \$141 million and will be the largest Marine Corps building on the East Coast.

CPL. SCOTT L. TOMASZYCKI  
MCAS CHERRY POINT

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 366 and Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 467 are scheduled to return to Marine Corps Air Station New River in 2014, pending the completion of a new hangar complex that recently broke ground. When Osprey squadrons with Marine Aircraft Group 26 move into the new hangars, HMM-366 and HMLA-467 will take over the hangars the Osprey squadrons vacated.

Moving the squadrons from Cherry Point to New River and geographically collocating all MAG-29 squadrons will streamline operations for the units and the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. Maj. Jeff Hubley, the executive officer of HMM-366, said simply being closer to the squadrons' New River-based storage facilities will improve efficiency.

"The logistics piece is what we struggle the most with because our parts warehouse is 50 miles away, and we rely on ground transportation to do up to three runs a day to bring us the stuff we need," said Hubley. "It would be easier to just run down the street to get something if we needed it."

Hubley said the current maintenance system is working, but would be simplified by the move. Turnaround time on aircraft

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Sandy Hook vigil at  
Twentynine Palms

See A6 for photos and more information



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CPL. KYLE N. RUNNELS

Marines and Sailors assigned to 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit's maritime raid force land aboard the USS San Antonio (LPD 17) while conducting maritime interdiction operations during the MEU's group sail exercise Dec. 18. The exercise consists of multiple training scenarios to include a visit, board, search and seizure; variations of raids; and tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel simulations. The 26th MEU operates continuously across the globe, providing the president and unified combatant commanders with a forward-deployed, sea-based quick reaction force. The MEU is a Marine Air-Ground Task Force capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations. The 26th MEU is slated to deploy in 2013.

# Maritime raid force seizes the USS San Antonio

CPL. KYLE N. RUNNELS

26TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT

**USS SAN ANTONIO** – Marines and Sailors with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit's maritime raid force conducted a maritime interdiction operation training exercise at sea aboard the USS San Antonio (LPD 17), Dec. 18.

"This training was teaching anti-piracy techniques," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Bagorskas, and lead MIO instructor with the special operations training group. "This training gives them another tool the Marines can use to accomplish their mission. Instead of just being land or air based, this helps take us back to our roots of the continental days when Marines would fight pirates on ships."

"It also gives the MEU the ability to interdict suspected pirate vessels and gives them the ability to board vessels, whether they are large or small, in order to figure out what is going on and secure the ship," said Staff Sgt. Ryan J. Kuperus, and lead tactics instructor with SOTG.

Bagorskas brought up a recent MIO the 15th MEU conducted called Magellan Star. During the mission, the Marines and Sailors helped secure a pirate-seized German cargo ship off the coast of Yemen in 2010, safely rescuing all hostages and capturing the pirates without having to fire a single shot.

This training exercise simulated the San Antonio being a non-compliant ship that was boarded by the Marines and Sailors who inserted from a CH-53E Super Stallion and two MH-60S Seahawks.

Bagorskas said once the Marines boarded, they pushed through the ship and secured main objectives. During the mission, they neutralized a threat in the well deck, established and maintained communications, and evacuated two crew members who sustained injury. Once the ship was cleared and deemed safe, they handed the ship over to the Navy ship control team.

Perfecting this training gives the 26th MEU the capability to safely and proficiently perform this operation while on deployment, if necessary. To provide guidance,



CPL. KYLE N. RUNNELS

Marines assigned to 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit's maritime raid force air evacuate a casualty off the flight deck of the USS San Antonio (LPD 17) while conducting maritime interdiction operations during the MEU's group sail exercise Dec. 18.

Marines and Sailors from SOTG graded the boarding and clearing of the ship.

"It is important to train on exercises like this and improve their skill set because part of the MEU's area of operations is the Gulf of Aden," said Kuperus. "That area has been a real hot spot of pirate activities in the last couple years."

As the first major training operation these Marines and Sailors have conducted since completing the course for visit, board, search and seizure, Kuperus said they performed well. He said as long as they maintain brilliance

in the basics, they will continue to be successful.

This exercise was part of the 26th MEU's third major training evolution of their pre-deployment training program. The 26th MEU operates continuously across the globe, providing the president and unified combatant commanders with a forward-deployed, sea-based quick reaction force. The MEU is a Marine Air-Ground Task Force capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations. The 26th MEU is slated to deploy in 2013.

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maintenance will be reduced from eight hours to about two, and the Marine Corps will save a significant amount of time and resources.

The new building that will house the Osprey squadrons is estimated to cost \$141 million and will house 48 MV-22B Ospreys – every aircraft belonging to four Osprey squadrons.

“It’s going to be the largest Marine Corps building on the East Coast,” said Doss Comer, the facilities manager for New River.

Comer is a retired lieutenant colonel who flew CH-46 Sea Knights out of New River for 14 years. During his entire time there, New River has been one hangar short of providing space for all deployable squadrons. To compensate, squadrons were “hot seated,” meaning as one squadron moved out of a hangar for a deployment, a squadron returning from deployment moved in. Squadrons that did not fit were headquartered at Cherry Point.

“It’s a major capital improvement for New River,” said Comer. “The squadrons were all supposed to be here anyway, but we didn’t have room for them. This is just to make room for them.”

# Sandy Hook vigil in Twentynine Palms



LANCE CPL. LAUREN KURKILIS

A Marine with the Marine Corps Communication Electronics School lights a candle in honor of the victims of the Dec. 14 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Conn., outside Oasis Elementary School, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Dec. 19.

## 'Warhorses' deliver .50-caliber punch

LANCE CPL. CHRISTOPHER JOHNS

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR / 3RD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

**MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif.** – “When I was deployed to Afghanistan in January 2011, the scariest thing I saw was a bright flash come up into the air from a truck on the side of the road. Even though nothing happened, I was glad I had my gunners in the back of the aircraft ready and trained if things got hairy,” said Capt. Madeline Dougherty, the quality assurance officer and a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 “Warhorses.”

Pilots and crews serving aboard CH-53E Super Stallions performed weapons training to perfect their responses above El Centro, Calif., Dec. 20.

“We perform training like this about twice a month,” said Dougherty. “If we didn’t train like this, we would have crew chiefs who don’t know how to use the weapons systems, and it’s important to train to have those skills just in case the need should arise.”

Before training began, ordnance Marines ensured the weaponry was properly attached to the aircraft and all ammunition secured and prepared aboard the aircraft.

“The aircraft has three weapons systems attached to it, two on the doors on each side and one in the rear on the ramp,” said Lance Cpl. John Mathiasmeier, an aviation ordnance Marine with the Warhorses.

“These weapons will fire 950 to 1,100

rounds per minute up to 2,000 meters,” said Mathiasmeier. “If the weapon isn’t properly secured to the aircraft with the proper mounts, it becomes useless.”

While flying the armed aircraft, pilots must ensure targets come into the sights of the GAU-21 .50-caliber weapon system for crew chiefs and gunners to get the best shot possible.

“All I see when I fire this weapon is a lot of tracers and even more destruction. It’s more exciting than sky diving to me,” said Lance Cpl. Shawn Eastman, a weapons and tactics instructor with the Warhorses. “We fire 75-round bursts at targets to suppress [mock enemies] for training like this, because we need to be able to perform in training the way we do in combat. If we can’t effectively fire and suppress the enemy, then we may not be able to put Marines on the ground, even though we would normally have other aircraft to help attack and destroy the enemy.”

After engaging the target with 3,600 rounds, crew chiefs communicated with pilots to ensure the threat had been minimized.

“At the end of the day, with this training, crew chiefs and pilots will react in combat the same way they react here, and we can realistically accomplish our mission,” said Eastman. “Whether it’s putting Marines into or picking them up from a landing zone, or giving them supplies, we have to know how to do this or people could die.”



LANCE CPL. CHRISTOPHER JOHNS

Lance Cpl. Shawn Eastman, a weapons and tactics instructor with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 “Warhorses” locks the bolt of a GAU-21 .50-caliber weapon system to the rear, before using it for weapons training aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 20. As a weapons and tactics instructor, Eastman must ensure every weapon aboard the CH-53E Super Stallion is used properly and each crew member receives training before operating it.



LANCE CPL. CHRISTOPHER JOHNS

A Marine with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 “Warhorses” prepares a GAU-21 .50-caliber weapon system for weapons training on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 20. Primarily used to transport troops and supplies, Super Stallion crews need to be prepared to defend themselves from enemy fire.



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**NOW SHOWING**

**Thursday, January 3**  
6:00pm - Skyfall PG 13

**Friday, January 4**  
5:00pm - Life of Pi PG  
7:45pm - Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn 2 PG 13

**Saturday, January 5**  
2:00pm - Life of Pi PG  
4:45pm - Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn 2 PG 13  
7:15pm - Skyfall PG 13

**Sunday, January 6**  
2:00pm - Wreck It Ralph PG

**MOVIE SYNOPSIS**

**Skyfall** - Bond's loyalty to M is tested as her past comes back to haunt her. As MI6 comes under attack, 007 must track down and destroy the threat, no matter how personal the cost.

**Wreck It Ralph** - Ralph is tired of being overshadowed by Fix-It Felix, the "good guy" star of their game who always gets to save the day. But after decades doing the same thing and seeing all the glory go to Felix, Ralph decides he's tired of playing the role of a bad guy. He takes matters into his own massive hands and sets off on a game-hopping journey across the arcade through every generation of video games to prove he has what it takes to be a hero.

**Life of Pi** - A 16 year-old Indian boy whose passage to a new life in America aboard a freighter ends in a shipwreck in the Pacific. He is left to fend for himself on a life raft with an orangutan, hyena and Bengal tiger.

**Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn 2** - After the birth of Renesmee, the Cullens gather other vampire clans in order to protect the child from a false allegation that puts the family in front of the Volturi.

Movies are subject to change without notice