

THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



See Alpha and Oscar companies' graduates

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Gen. James F. Amos' 237th Marine Corps birthday message

Commandant of the Marine Corps

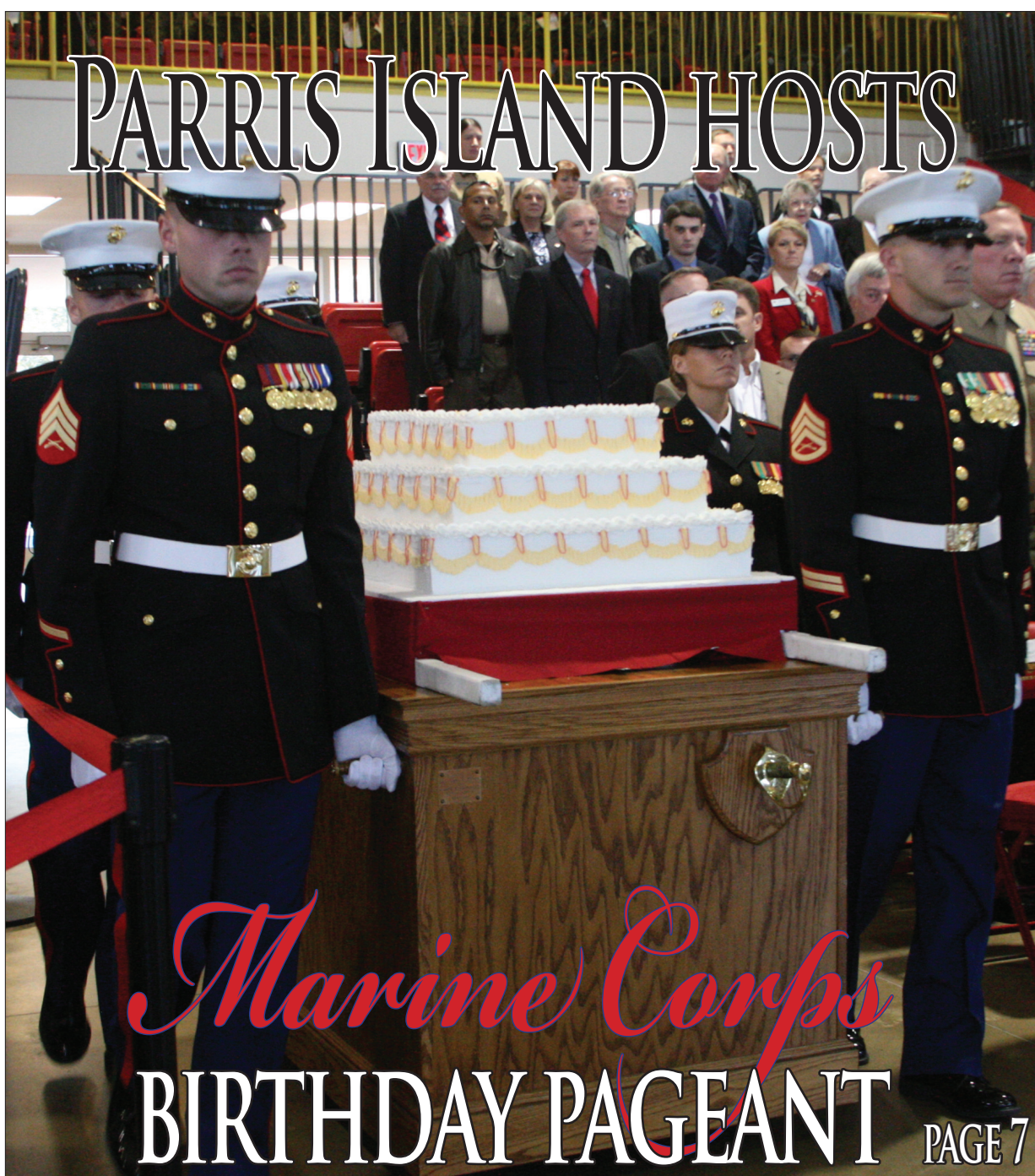
As we pause to celebrate the 237th birthday of our Corps, we reflect on the rich legacy of service handed down to us, we recommit ourselves to the tasks at hand, and we look forward toward a bright future in service to our country.

Marines exist to fight and win our nation's battles. We are most proud of our well-earned reputation for answering the clarion call first. This was never more evident than at the epic battle of Guadalcanal 70 years ago. Picked to lead the first allied counter-offensive of the Pacific War because they were the "most ready," Marines landed on Aug. 7, 1942, in the Solomon Islands. They persevered through months of unremitting deprivation and bitter combat. By the time the veterans of the blue diamond, the cactus Air Force, our legendary Marine raiders, and initial elements of the follow-me division gathered together to raise a canteen and toast the birthday of their beloved Corps some three months later, the battle was no longer an issue. The situation was well in hand ... victory was assured.

We carry that same legacy of resolute commitment and valor today. Over the past year, Marines have stood firm in the toughest of circumstances and on numerous occasions. We've taken the fight to the enemy in Helmand and to the Horn of Africa. We've manned the ramparts of beleaguered embassies in the Middle East and North Africa, fought alongside our allies throughout the world, while behind the scenes, afloat and ashore, other Marines did the painstaking hard work required to maintain our high levels of readiness and efficiency.

As we look toward the future, we know that our sentimental place in the hearts of our fellow Americans and critical role in the defense of our way of life are assured. America has always wanted a Marine Corps ... it's always been that way. Now, more than ever, America needs its Marines as we confront a dangerous and unpredictable world. Faced with difficult days ahead, we will continue to draw strength from our rich heritage and the shared values of the Marines to our left and to our right. We know who we are ... we know what we stand for. As ever we will strive to be found worthy of the legendary trust of our fellow Americans.

I salute the enduring faithfulness of those who have gone before, of those who wear our cloth today, and of the families who stand so resolutely at our sides. Happy birthday Marines ... and semper fidelis.



PARRIS ISLAND HOSTS

Marine Corps
BIRTHDAY PAGEANT

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Photo by Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill

Marines from Weapons and Field Training Battalion escort the birthday cake to the center of the All-Weather Training Facility for the cake-cutting ceremony during the 237th Marine Corps birthday celebration Nov. 7. The cake was cut by Brig. Gen. Lori Reynolds, depot commanding general, and presented to retired Master Gunnery Sgt. E. Anderson, 90, the oldest Marine present, and Lance Cpl. Octavia Davis, 18, the youngest Marine present, as part of Marine Corps birthday tradition.

Alpha shoots down training



Photo by Lance Cpl. David Bessey

Rct. Cole Benacquista, 18, Platoon 1081, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, aims at his target during his combat marksmanship evaluation on Parris Island's Hue City Rifle Range on Oct. 19. Recruits fire at moving targets and perform several other shooting drills at distances of 25 and 100 yards during Basic Warrior Training. Benacquista, who is from Pickerington, Ohio, is scheduled to graduate with his company today.

Lance Cpl. David Bessey
Staff Writer

Recruits of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, shot their way through Basic Warrior Training by qualifying in combat marksmanship on Parris Island's Hue City Rifle Range on Oct. 19.

The purpose of combat marksmanship is to teach recruits how to engage and immobilize targets at close range by using a series of firing drills, said Cpl. Noah Berry, 24, a marksmanship coach with Weapons and Field Training Battalion, and a native of Annapolis, Md.

Before being evaluated, the recruits were given classroom instruction on firing positions, vulnerable areas on their targets, and how to quickly reload their weapons.

The firing drills are about three to five seconds long. Recruits have to quickly sight in on their targets and fire a series of shots before time runs out.

"The coaches taught us how to use speed and control with our weapons," said Pfc. Rafael Colon, 20, of Platoon 1081.

Some of the recruits struggled with learning how to engage moving targets.

The coaches were very hands-on and taught recruits to accurately shoot moving targets, said Colon, a native of Elizabeth, N.J.

They said the best time to fire at a moving target is just as it appears. When the target is first raised, recruits must quickly sight in and fire within the allotted amount of time, said Colon.

When the recruits finish close-range firing, their scores are tallied, officially qualifying them as rifle marksmen, sharpshooters or experts.

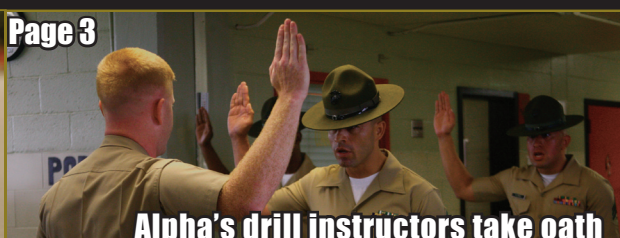
With their evaluation behind them, the Marines of Alpha Company are now equipped with the basic knowledge to quickly move, sight in on a target and bring them down before they have a chance to attack.

Marine travels across Pacific to support family



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Alpha's drill instructors take oath

Marines lend helping hands to Hurricane Sandy victims



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Sgt. Ryan Flohr, senior drill instructor of Platoon 1080, Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, tells his new recruits what will be expected of them for the duration of their stay on Parris Island on Aug. 18. This speech is the first impression the recruits have of the drill instructors who guide them through the majority of recruit training. Alpha Company is scheduled to graduate today.



Photos by Cpl. Tyler Reiriz

Drill instructors serving with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, recite the drill instructors' creed Aug. 18 before taking charge of the recruits whom they will lead for the next three months on Parris Island. The recruits are scheduled to graduate today.

Alpha Company recruits meet their DRILL INSTRUCTORS

Cpl. Tyler Reiriz
Social Media Editor

More than 500 recruits with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, sat stoically as they waited for their drill instructors to speak on Aug. 18. The silence was finally broken with the beginning words of the drill instructors' creed.

The creed is a reaffirmation of the principles and responsibilities of all drill instructors.

"The creed is what we are," said Staff Sgt. Charles Kelley, a chief drill instructor with the company. "It was written for drill instructors, by drill instructors.

It is our mission statement."

Sgt. Ryan Flohr, senior drill instructor of Platoon 1080, said it is important that the recruits hear the drill instructors renew their dedication to making Marines.

"These recruits are entrusted to my care—the first line says it all," he said. "That lets them know that yes, I am going to train them hard, but I'm going to take care of them."

When the creed was complete, the recruits understood the responsibilities and commitments their drill instructors had undertaken. After the creed, the senior drill instructors gave a speech to their

recruits letting them know what will be expected of them during recruit training.

One part of the speech includes the phrase "we will not give up on you, even when some of you have given up on yourselves."

The speech and drill instructors' creed are perhaps some of the most important words the recruits will hear during their time on Parris Island. The speech concludes with a reminder to the young men as to why they chose the difficult path ahead of them.

"We offer you the challenge of recruit training, and the opportunity to claim the title of United States Marine."

NEWS BRIEF

Notice to boaters

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island is scheduled to conduct extended live-fire training Nov. 18 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The marsh and waterways in the range impact area to include Archers Creek, Ribbon Creek and Edding Creek will be closed to boater traffic.

For questions regarding firing times and waterway closures, contact the Weapons and Field Training Battalion range control at 843-228-3170.





Photos by Cpl. Tyler Reiriz

Rct. Tamera Smith, Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, looks up at the 10-foot-tall platform she will have to leap from as part of the swim qualification Sept. 11 on Parris Island. Smith had not entered the deep end of a pool in 16 years. Smith, a 23-year-old native of Junction City, Kan., is scheduled to graduate today.



Rct. Tamera Smith, Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, leaps from a 10-foot tower into the recruit swimming pool on Parris Island on Sept. 11. Smith had a lifelong fear of heights and deep water, but overcame both during swim qualifications.



Rct. Tamera Smith, Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, climbs out of the recruit swimming pool on Parris Island on Sept. 11. After completing a 25-meter gear-assisted swim, Smith and her fellow recruits learned a variety of techniques to help them swim in different situations.

Marine faces lifelong fear at recruit pool

Cpl. Tyler Reiriz

Social Media Editor

Sixteen years ago, a 7-year-old girl injured herself after jumping from a high-dive at her local pool, leaving her afraid of heights and deep water.

More than a decade later, Pfc. Tamera Smith of Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, faced both of those fears during swim qualifications Sept. 11 on Parris Island.

The recruits from Oscar and Alpha companies went to the recruit swimming pool to learn the water survival skills they will need as Marines. Many of the recruits, including Smith, were classified as “iron ducks,” meaning they had difficulty or a fear of swimming.

Swimming instructors take extra time preparing these recruits, making sure they know the fundamentals before moving them to the more difficult parts of the training.

The swim qualification consisted of several events that gave recruits the opportunity to learn how to keep their heads above water and avoid panicking. They learned how to use issued gear as improvised flotation devices and how to quickly discard heavy equipment that could pull them underwater.

When Smith leapt from a 10-foot tower into the water below, it was the first time she had entered deep water since she was 7 years old. For her, the training was about more than simply learning how to swim.

“I’ve been afraid of this basically my whole life,” said Smith, a 23-year-old from Junction City, Kan. “But if I can face a fear like this now, I know I’ll be better prepared to face the fear of combat if I ever experience that.”

Smith said she gained confidence from her senior drill instructor, Gunnery Sgt. Sigrid Rivera, who gave the recruits advice and encouragement between swim events. Smith said when she told Rivera she was afraid, the senior drill instructor told her to “drop kick fear in the face.”

“It’s important for the recruits to face a personal challenge,” said Rivera, a 29-year-old native of West Palm Beach, Fla. “It’s going to build not just a better Marine, but a better person.”

By the end of that week, Smith was officially qualified and ready to continue recruit training.

“I am very proud of myself and my fellow recruits who were iron ducks,” she said. “It was very hard for all of us, but we did it. I conquered my fear.”

Smith is scheduled to graduate with her company today.



Rct. Jemma Lara, Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, stands on the battalion's parade grounds during drill practice Nov. 1. Lara, a 19-year-old from Saipan, joined the Marine Corps to help support her family. Lara's first visit to the U.S. was for recruit training. She is scheduled to graduate today.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda

Saipan native travels across Pacific to join Corps, support family

Lance Cpl. Caitlin Maluda
Staff Writer

A 19-year-old girl stepped foot in the continental United States for the first time, leaving her home in the calm islands of Saipan for a much more stressful environment – Marine Corps recruit training.

Pfc. Jemma Lara, of Platoon 4033, Oscar Company, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, wanted to show her family she could help take care of them and shoulder some of their burdens. She followed in the footsteps of her older brother and enlisted in the Marine Corps.

“This summer, I went and signed up with the Marine Corps,” said Lara. “This is the first time for me to leave my island.”

Since Saipan is a U.S. territory, residents are eligible to enlist.

Lara prepared herself as best she could for the challenge that she chose to take.

“I learned everything I possibly could about the branch-

es,” said Lara. “But I didn’t want to just wing it. I wanted to prove to myself I would grow up and protect and help my family. I wanted to show that they don’t have to suffer anymore, and that I’ll take the burden for it all.”

Eight years ago, Lara’s father was moved to a medical facility in the Philippines after developing lung cancer. This left Lara, her mother and her siblings on their own.

The small island is very family oriented, Lara said. She enlisted into the Marine Corps because the Corps is considered a large family, and her brother is a Marine as well.

Lara chose to specifically join the Marine Corps because she said she thought it would give her the challenge she was searching for. Although her family supports her decision, they initially tried to talk her out of it, which only caused Lara to become more determined.

“Even my brother tried to persuade me not to go,” said Lara. “But they understood that I challenged everything.”

Lara said she felt that if her brother could make it

through training, she could too.

Lara visited her first airport, arrived in South Carolina and was promptly taken to Parris Island for her first night in the United States.

“I just didn’t realize how fast everything would be moving,” said Lara, referring to her first meeting with a drill instructor. “It’s challenging trying to reach to their standards.”

Lara said that earning the title does not feel real even after making her way through every obstacle that was thrown at her during training. She said the responsibility that comes with the title of Marine has left her speechless with pride.

Lara said coming to the United States and completing the 13-week journey was the most significant thing she has ever done.

Accomplishing feats that few people go through, she volunteered for the opportunity to prove to herself and her family that she could support them. Today, she walks proudly across the Peatross Parade Deck as a Marine.



Photo by Cpl. Bryan Nygaard

Marines with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit assist in the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts by picking up trash in the streets of Staten Island, N.Y., on Nov. 5. The 26th MEU curtailed predeployment training to sail for New York on Nov. 1 to help with the cleanup of the devastating storm.

Marines assist New York's storm-stricken Staten Islanders

Capt. Lucas Burke

26th Marine Expeditionary Unit

NEW YORK – Marines assigned to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit are continuing to help clear debris in the storm-stricken Staten Island community after they deployed aboard Navy ships to New York on Nov. 1 as part of Hurricane Sandy relief efforts.

The MEU was able to provide generators, fuel, clean water and helicopter lift capabilities to aid those suffering from the disaster.

“First and foremost, our thoughts and prayers go out to those impacted by Hurricane Sandy. The capabilities of the 26th MEU are augmenting the larger relief efforts currently being executed at the federal, state and local level,” said Col. Matthew G. St. Clair, commanding officer of the unit.

The unit has been using helicopters to survey damaged areas of Staten Island in preparation of follow-on support to local residents.

The flights have also allowed the Marines to land in the hardest-hit areas and see

what local leaders and residents needed the most.

“We’ve all seen the news, but to actually walk around and talk to people about what they are going through allows us to build a clearer picture as we conduct our planning,” St. Clair said. “Despite the devastation, seeing the communities come together and help each other is motivation for us.”

Marines are moving house to house through Staten Island, surveying damaged structures, assisting those in need of medical support and providing manpower to remove damaged household goods from residents’ homes.

The eastern shore of Staten Island has seen some of the worst destruction from Hurricane Sandy.

The 26th MEU, stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was in predeployment training when it received orders to head north to the destroyed coastal regions of New York and New Jersey.

“The Marines and sailors of the MEU are extremely motivated about assisting other Americans in a time of need. This deployment demonstrates the responsiveness of a MEU in support of a crisis and the expeditionary nature of the Navy-Marine Corps team,” said St. Clair.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Holmes

Cpl. Shaun Malcolm, a Marine with Headquarters and Service Battalion, wears a Marine Corps uniform similar to the one worn by Marines in 1805 for the Marine Corps birthday pageant Nov. 7 on Parris Island. The pageant was part of the depot's celebration of the 237th Marine Corps birthday.

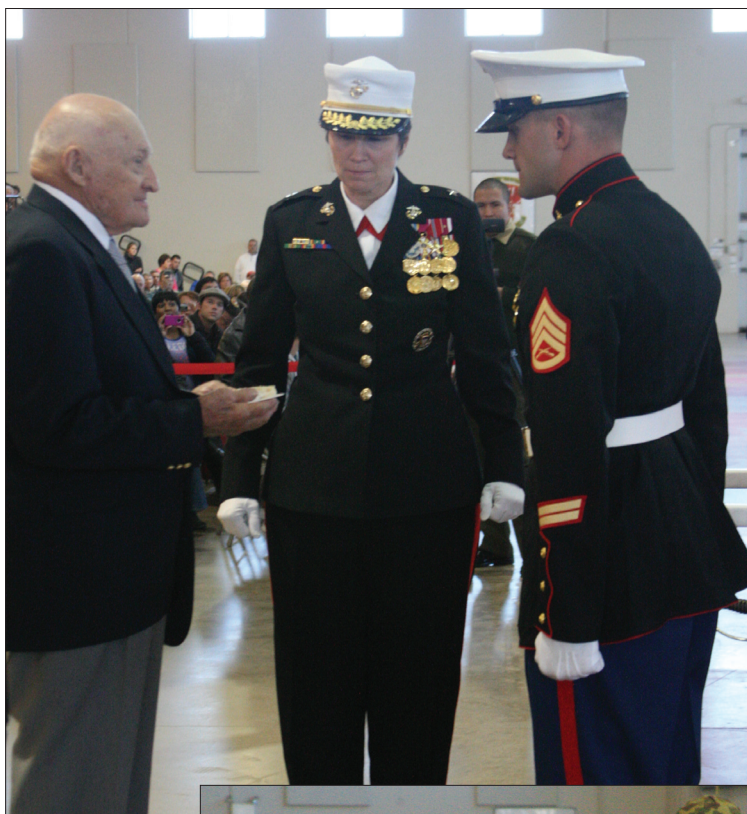


Photo by Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill
Brig. Gen. Lori Reynolds, center, depot commanding general, hands a piece of the birthday cake to the oldest Marine present at the 237th Marine Corps birthday celebration, retired Master Gunnery Sgt. E. Anderson, 90, as part of the traditional birthday ceremony. The oldest Marine hands a piece of the birthday cake to the youngest active-duty Marine, symbolizing the transference of Marine Corps history and tradition to the Corps' younger generations.



Photo by Lance Cpl. MaryAnn Hill

Marines and sailors wear historic uniforms during the 237th Marine Corps birthday pageant Nov. 7 at the All-Weather Training Facility on Parris Island. The birthday pageant showed an audience of Marines, sailors, recruits and civilians the differing uniforms worn by Marines throughout the past 237 years.

NEWS BRIEFS

Money being collected for holiday meals

The Staff Noncommissioned Officers Spouses Club is currently collecting money to provide holiday food vouchers to Parris Island families in need this Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those wishing to donate must contact their unit sergeant major or leave donations in deposit boxes located at the Religious Ministries Center in building 854 or at the Navy Federal Credit Union. Checks should be made payable to Holiday Meal Help Program, with "2012 SNCOSC HMHP" written on the check's memorandum line. The money collected will provide vouchers redeemable at the Parris Island commissary. Donations for Thanksgiving must be received no later than Nov. 16, and Christmas donations must be received by Dec. 17. For more information, contact club president, Rosa Robertson, at 843-263-5869.

Teens invited to Parris Island open house

The Parris Island Teen Center is hosting a free open house with video games, basketball and music for military children ages 13-17 from 7-10 p.m. Nov. 17. The center is located at 501 Wake Blvd. For more information, contact Debbie Andoga at 843-228-1669.

Thanksgiving bash set for single Marines

A free Thanksgiving bash sponsored by the Single Marine Program is scheduled for Nov. 14 at 6 p.m. at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort's Afterburners club. A full Thanksgiving meal will be provided along with live music and prize giveaways for active-duty personnel. Single Marines and sailors, single parents, and geographical bachelors are invited. For more information contact the program office at 843-228-7405.

