

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION

MIRAMAR, CALIF.



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FEBRUARY 2018

# When training calls, Wolfpack hits the sand running



Marines travel to  
Creech Air Force base  
for 10-day  
pre-deployment  
exercise





## Recon Marines, Japanese counterparts ride War-horse aircraft into sunset

Marines exchanged operating procedures and experience with Marine Corps allies overseas.

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## Run to Fund; second annual Flight Line Dash takes over Miramar runway

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar hosted a Flight Line Dash to raise money for multiple charities including the Semper Fi Fund and Navy Marine Corps relief society.

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## Marines share lifestyle with Educators Workshop

Educators from across the country visited Marine Corps Air Station Miramar to experience Marine Corps way of life.

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Maj. Gen.  
Steven W. Busby  
Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



Col. John P. Farnam  
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.



# Making a change:

## Commanding general's vision for 3rd MAW

Video created by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth



MAJ. GEN. STEVEN BUSBY  
COMMANDING GENERAL 3RD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

## ON THE COVER:

Marines with Helicopter Support Team, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, prepare a humvee to be lifted externally by a CH-53E Super Stallion aboard Creech Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 25. The humvee must be secured to the base of an aircraft using two thick metal hooks.



# When training calls, Wolfpack hits the sand running







*Marines with Helicopter Support Team and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, prepare humvees, CH-53E Super Stallions and GAU-21 machine guns for external lifts and turf training aboard Creech Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 25. The units spent 10 days combining weapons systems and maneuvers that can be used to engage the enemy and avoid enemy fire in a combat scenario.*

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Melissa Eschenbrenner

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. –Squadrons preparing to deploy often use an environment that resembles that of Afghanistan. Luckily, mountains and deserts that replicate Afghan terrain and offer squadrons a realistic place to train before deploying are easy to find on the west coast.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 “Wolfpack” spent ten days, Jan. 24 through Feb. 5, aboard Creech Air Force Base, Nev., in preparation for their upcoming deployment.

“This is a building-block training exercise for us,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Sheyda, commanding officer of HMH-466 and a Charlotte, N.C., native. “We are really focusing on the fundamentals while we are here.”

Although the training is considered basic, it must be practiced to ensure combat readiness at all times. The squadron has had successful deployments previously due to similar training efforts.

This exercise focused on three main evolutions; external operations,

employing weapons systems and turf training.

During training, pilots and crew chiefs combined employing weapons systems and maneuvers that can be used to engage the enemy and avoid enemy fire to make the evolution as realistic as possible.

This evolution was not only beneficial for flight crews but ground crew workers as well. It gave everyone a chance to practice their skills in a field environment instead of in an aircraft hangar.

“Operating away from Miramar is great for all our Marines,” said Sheyda. “We can practice in a desert environment with all aspects of the mission working together.”

Marines are known for their ability to effectively accomplish any task at hand. Marines must work hard and train often to ensure mission accomplishment.



A CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 "Warhorse," sits on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 26.



# Super Stallion maintainers surpass standards, ensure safe flight

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns





*A Marine maintainer with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 "Warhorse," secures safety wire to bolts on the tire of a CH-53E Super Stallion during maintenance on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 12. Marine maintainers perform regular maintenance to ensure every flight goes off without a hitch, ensuring a safe flight for all on board the aircraft.*

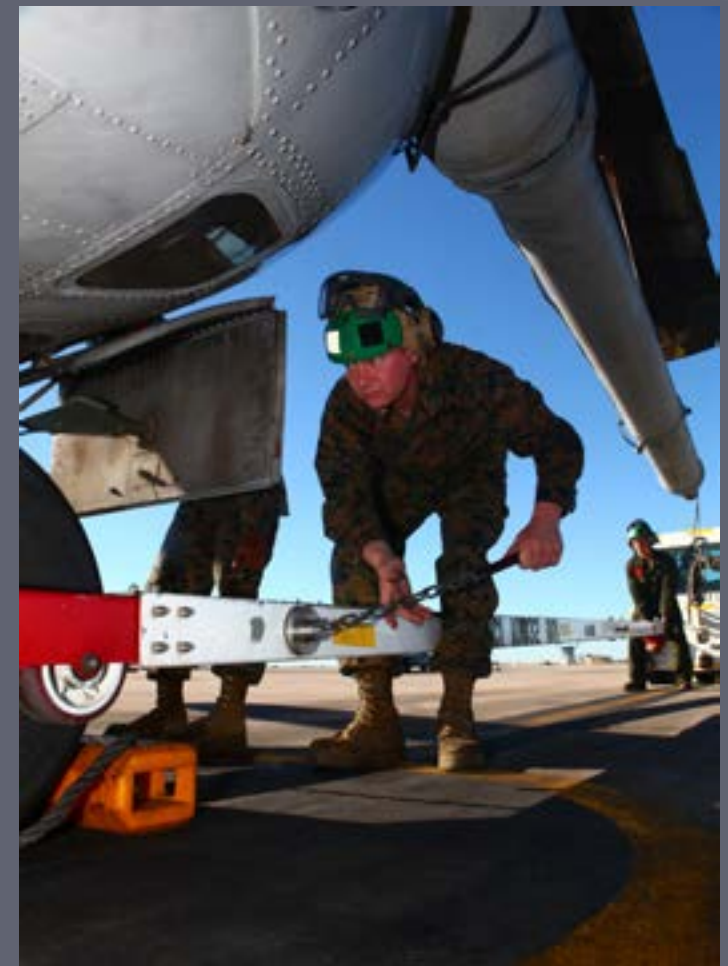
*A CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 "Warhorse," sits on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 26. Each aircraft requires more than 20 Marine maintainers working 30 hours for each hour of flight.*



“

Without the Marines who maintain and repair the aircraft, we would never be able to fly,” said Capt. Madline Dougherty, the quality assurance officer and a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot. “I have complete confidence in the efforts of our maintainers.”

*Lance Cpl. Andrew Lucas, avionics technician with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 "Warhorse," and a Phoenix native, secures a CH-53E Super Stallion to tow it to a new location for scheduled maintenance on the flight line aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 1. Marines from different sections within the squadron do their share when it comes to maintaining aircraft.*



### Aircraft navigate the skies

above San Diego on an almost daily basis performing training missions, test flights and providing aerial support to Marine Corps ground units throughout California. Marines called maintainers are responsible for ensuring these flights can occur safely, and in a timely manner.

“Without the Marines who maintain and repair the aircraft, we would never be able to fly,” said Capt. Madeline Dougherty, the quality assurance officer and a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 “Warhorse.”

Maintainers take care of and repair the Marine Corps’ aircraft to keep the 23-ton machine in the air, and the Marines inside as safe as possible.

“I have complete confidence in the efforts of our maintainers,” said Dougherty, a Winchester Bay, Ore., native. “Even though the majority of the maintainers do not fly, they understand the importance of having aircraft ready to complete the mission.”

These missions can be anything from taking supplies to foreign lands in need of aid, to inserting Marines into a landing zone to fight America’s battles. The common denominator in this variety of missions is this: each aircraft requires up to 20 Marine maintainers working 30 hours for each hour of flight.

“The number of hours these maintainers perform to keep aircraft current is spread out [between] aircraft that are down, and aircraft that are performing the way they were made to,” said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Valentino, a maintenance controller with the Warhorses and a Juliet, Ill., native. “Some aircraft fly 30 to 40 hours a week, some fly that in one month. Trying to balance maintaining 15 [aircraft], the times they fly, and what inspections they need in order to fly can be pretty hectic. The Marines working on these

aircraft focus on doing their jobs, and doing them well to keep Marines safe and performing essential missions around the clock.”

While ensuring every part of the aircraft functions before, after and during flight, Marine maintainers follow certain publications that document how each part should work on the aircraft.

“Every type of maintenance done on the aircraft must be done to a certain standard that is delineated in the maintenance publications,” said Dougherty. “Some examples of standards for major components are that each engine must produce a requisite amount of power given the ambient conditions. If it doesn’t, we can’t fly. Also, aircraft vibrations are measured at very specific places on the airframe and those must also be within limits.”

These regulations and procedures do change though, and these Marines receive newer, updated publications on how to work on the aircraft, explained Dougherty. However, they also know that short cuts cannot be taken and correctly perform maintenance.

Doing the job improperly could have disastrous consequences.

“Some of the crew chiefs flying in the back of the aircraft are maintainers, so we know what it’s like to take our lives into [our] own hands when working on these machines,” said Cpl. Troy Highfield, a collateral duty inspector and aerial observer with the Warhorses and a Lower Burrell, Penn., native. “The work that we do gets inspected, but when you’re in the air you’re kind of just putting your faith in the fact that no one was cutting corners. We inspect these aircraft daily to ensure they’re good to fly. I go through the cockpit to make sure the systems are working fine, while other shops work on their portions of the aircraft.”

Instead of fearing for their lives, pilots, crew chiefs and even ground Marines can trust in the simple fact that these Marine maintainers do the job right, 100 percent of the time.



*Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, looks at the landscape during a familiarization flight in a UH-1Y Huey with the Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 369 "Gunfighters" aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 8. During the flight Toolan fired an GAU-21 .50 caliber machine gun, a GAU-17 mini-gun and the LAU-68F/A laser-guided weapons system.*

# Gunfighters go in for kill with I MEF CG







## Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Melissa Eschenbrenner

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – It is the responsibility of every unit to ensure the commander has all the information he or she needs to lead effectively. When one 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing unit began using new weaponry, they wanted to demonstrate their new capabilities.

Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, flew with the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 “Gunfighters,” Jan. 8, to learn about the UH-1Y Huey and the weaponry it is equipped with.

The exercise included two trips. Each gave the general a different point of view, from the pilot and crew chief.

“Generals only come to fly with us once or twice each year,” said Capt. Timothy Sakahara, a pilot with the Gunfighters and a Lancaster, Calif., native. “They make their rounds [to each squadron] to keep up-to-date with what the squadrons are doing.”

Toolan used the flight to familiarize himself with the Huey’s new laser-guided weapon system, the LAU-68F/A

and used his opportunity in the cockpit to shoot one of the rockets. He also fired the GAU-21 .50 caliber machine gun and a GAU-17 mini-gun.

“It was hard to shoot the [GAU-21 .50 caliber machine gun] because you have to turn it in such tight quarters,” said Toolan. “The mini-gun was awesome to shoot. It is a powerful weapon.”

Pilots practiced various angles of flight to highlight the aircraft’s well known aerial capabilities for the general. They showed how to maneuver quickly to effectively assess and attack threats.

“The Huey is very impressive,” said Toolan. “It is fast and agile, maybe one of the best in the Marine Corps.”

Keeping well-informed about the happenings of the Marine Corps can ensure that Marines transition smoothly as less and less Marines are deployed, explained Toolan after the flight.

Having knowledgeable Marines up and down the chain of command, from privates to generals, ensures every mission runs seamlessly.



*Above: Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, prepares to fly in the cockpit of a UH-1Y Huey during a familiarization flight with the Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 369 “Gunfighters” aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 8.*



*Right: Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, speaks to Marines after a familiarization flight in a UH-1Y Huey with the Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 369 “Gunfighters” aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 8.*

*Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, prepares to fire an GAU-21 .50 caliber machine gun during a familiarization flight in a UH-1Y Huey with Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 369 Gunfighters aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 8.*



# *Recon Marines, Japanese counterparts ride “Warhorse” aircraft into sunset*



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Charlie Company, 1st Reconnaissance Marines along with Japanese recon and intelligence soldiers carry a rubber boat into the back of CH-53E Super Stallions during helocasting training near Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 31. As part of the “Iron Fist” initiative between the Marine Corps and Japanese military, this training exchanged operating procedures and experience with the Marine Corps allies overseas.





Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Strengthening bonds between America and Japan, Charlie Company, 1st Reconnaissance Marines and Japanese recon and intelligence soldiers conquered training activities during an exercise called “Iron Fist.”

Exercise Iron Fist is a bilateral training with the Japanese military forces at the Marine Expeditionary Force level from Jan. 22 to Feb. 15 in Southern California.

“As an expeditionary force, [the Marine Corps] needs to be able to insert troops anywhere in the world, making helocasting a viable option to accomplish the mission,” said Capt. Ryan Bankhead, a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 ‘Warhorse,’ 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and a Prescott, Ariz., native.

Helocasting is an airborne insertion technique used by small unit, special operations forces during operations. These small units are flown by helicopter to a maritime insertion point, where the aircraft slows to 5 to 10 knots forward speed with a low altitude allowing the unit to jump out with all of their gear.

“We’re working with the Japanese in this training to compare standard operating procedures with each other,” said 1st Lt. Neal Ferrano, platoon commander with Charlie Co., 1st Recon Marines and a Marietta, Ga., native. “It allows the Marine Corps to share knowledge with its allies and friends overseas. If we didn’t use this type of insertion, we wouldn’t be able to move small force teams into objective areas in a [stealthy] manner and that would give the Marine Corps one less option during a battle.”

During the training, Japanese soldiers and recon Marines boarded the aircraft with rubber boats to practice “soft ducking,” which involves two Marines jumping out of the aircraft from just above the water while holding onto their boat.

Once in the water, these two Marines take control of the boat and its engine while the remaining Marines jump into the water, ex-

plained Ferrano. After the last Marine has boarded the boat the team continues toward their objective, which can be as far as 12 nautical miles away.

“This kind of training is a little out of our normal realm of training, so it is pretty exciting,” said Sgt. Ryan Hoffman, a crew chief with “Warhorse” and a Circleville, Ohio, native. “As exciting as it is though, you have to be on top of your game, because something could go wrong. You have to pay attention to things you aren’t used to paying attention to, but in the end it makes you a better crew chief and you’re that much more prepared to do these kinds of missions.”

While executing the training Hoffman had to change the way he thinks about his role for this particular mission.

“Normally, [crew chiefs] are in charge in the back of the aircraft,” said Hoffman. “We make all the calls. No matter what the situation is the lead crew chief is going to have the final say. With this kind of training though, we have to work with the cast master, who is in charge of his personnel and when they move - not us. When it comes to the jumpers, we more or less just observe and watch over our side of the mission while he takes care of his.”

For his first time performing this training Hoffman received a surprise just before recon Marines and Japanese were able to jump.

“On our first go the boat flipped,” said Hoffman. “I spoke to some Marines who have done this before, and they said it flips quite often. Other than that, no one was hurt and we accomplished the training and that’s always our ultimate goal.”

The frequency of helocasting training depends on how often a group of recon Marines needs to train for this specific kind of insertion.

Whether as a crew chief performing his first helocasting, a veteran recon Marine observing or Japanese forces training with an ally no one was harmed and the mission was crushed with an Iron Fist.

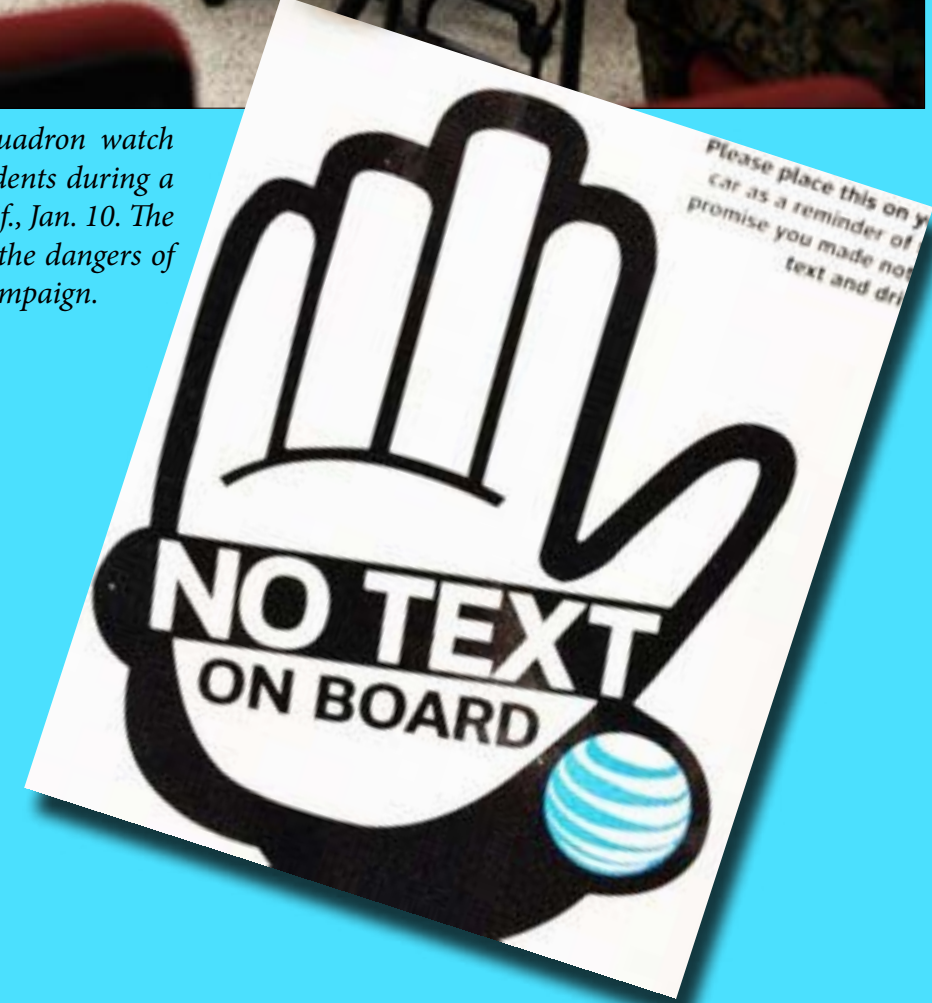




Marines with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron watch a video showing victims of texting and driving accidents during a class aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 10. The simulator was part of a class to bring awareness to the dangers of texting and driving held by AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign.



Click to take the pledge







*Sgt. Shawn Bear, a postal clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and a Bakersfield, Calif., native, crashes while trying to send a text message in a driving simulator aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 10.*

\*100,000 crashes a year involve texting  
- National Safety Council

\*Texting drivers are 23 times more likely to be in an accident  
- Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

\*Distraction from cell phone use while driving extends a driver's reaction as much as a blood alcohol concentration of .08  
-University of Utah

\*In 2010, 18% of injury crashes were caused by distracted driving  
-US Department of Transportation



*A Marine with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron attempts to text while driving in a simulator made to show the user the dangers of distracted driving aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 10.*

### Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Melissa Eschenbrenner

Driving while distracted now takes the lead over driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol and breaking the laws of the road for the leading cause of fatal car accidents in the United States.

The most deadly distraction from driving is one that many would not believe; texting.

Fortunately, campaigns such as AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign are spreading the word in hopes of curbing growing numbers. The campaign gave a class to Marines aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 10.

The class included an informational video and a driving simulator that shows how easy it is to get pulled over or cause a car accident while texting.

The simulator, similar to a video game, is an eight city-block course in which drivers must navigate while responding to texts on a cell phone connected to the game. The drivers must look out for hazards such as cones, parked cars and unpredictable drivers.

The simulator monitors the driver's speed and whether or not they are staying in their lane. In the simulator, drivers can be pulled over by police officers or crash into vehicles, sidewalks or buildings causing them to fail.

"You wouldn't think that it's a big deal [because so many people do it]," said Sgt. Shawn Bear, a postal clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, and a Bakersfield, Calif., native. "But, when you do it in the simulator, and you try your best to concentrate driving, you can see how bad you're doing when you text."

On average, a text message distracts a driver's eyes for five seconds. If a driver does 50 mph, they would cover the distance of a football

field before they looked back to the road.

"We all know it's bad to drive under the influence, because your judgment is impaired and your vision is impaired," said John Osborne, director of external affairs with AT&T. "But, when you're texting, you're taking your eyes off the road completely."

People who text while driving are 23 times more likely to get into a car accident than those who do not. With 75 percent of teens saying that texting while driving is a common thing among their friends, this is a continually growing problem, especially among young drivers.

There are ways to prevent such mishaps, including applications for phones that can be turned on while driving to respond automatically to texts or using a passenger to read and send messages.

People do not always believe sending messages can be potentially life threatening while driving. The simulator puts the startling statistics into perspective for users.

"We are thrilled to have the simulator," said Osborne. "It gives people the chance to try it safely and see the consequences of texting while driving."

More than 100,000 automobile crashes involve texting while driving each year. As more and more people start texting, AT&T hopes to spread the word about the dangers of texting and ask each person who attends a class to take a pledge. The pledge states that nothing on a cell phone is worth risking the lives and safety of anyone on the road and that the knowledge would be passed to spread awareness.

"I am going to do my best to not do it anymore," said Bear. "It's serious; someone could lose their life."



*AT&T's "It Can Wait" campaign offers a simulator to show Marines the dangers of texting and driving aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 10.*





# *Run to Fund*

Second Annual Flight Line Dash  
takes over Miramar



# Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

At 6 a.m., with the cold San Diego breeze making them shiver, volunteers with the Officers’ Wives’ Club hosted the second annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12.

Approximately 500 members of the San Diego community ran to support and raise money for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, the MCAS Miramar Exceptional Family Member Program, the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society and the MCAS Miramar Children’s Library.

“I can’t think of a better [charitable cause],” said Brian Wrona, a human resources recruiter and a San Diego native.

Participants of all ages were able to join in the fun with a 10K, 5K and 1K run.

“I think it’s awesome they have the 1K for the kids and the other runs for the parents,” said Emily Cabana, wife of Maj. Jeff Cabana with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 and a Cincinnati native.

For many of the Flight Line Dash racers, giving back to the military community meant more than coming in first place.

“It’s a win-win situation, whether or not you win the race,” said Cabana.

With different races to participate in, runners of any performance level could show their sup-

port.

“It’s okay to come out; you don’t have to run 1,000 miles an hour,” said Col. John P. Farnam, the commanding officer of MCAS Miramar. “You just do want to make yourself better and enjoy [the fun].”

The race epitomized the commitment Marines have to their community and fellow Marines.

Working together and showing pride for our community is what it means to be a Marine, explained Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.



Left: Runners begin the 10K run during the Second Annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12. The annual run consists of a 10K, 5K and 1K run and is open to runners of all ages.

Above: Leighanne Horne, wife of Capt. Adam Horne with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 and a Lexington, N.C., native, crosses the finish line during the 5K run at the second annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12. More than 500 people came out to either run or volunteer at the event.



# One step at a time; Miramar hosts Dash

Video created by Cpl. Maxwell Pennington and Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza



[Click to watch Video](#)





*Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, right, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, congratulates a runner at the Second Annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12. The run raised money for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, the MCAS Miramar Exceptional Family Member Program, the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society and the MCAS Miramar Children's Library.*



*Runners cross the finish line during the 5K run at the second annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12. The Flight Line Dash consists of a 10K, 5K and 1K run and is open to runners of all ages.*



*Participants warm up before the second annual Flight Line Dash aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 12. The Officers' Wives' Club hosts the annual run to raise money for military related charities aboard the air station.*



*In celebration of Marine Forces Reserve receiving their first Osprey squadron, a Marine color guard was present to bear the nation's colors at Edwards Air Force Base near Lancaster, Calif. Jan 12, 2013.*

# Reserves receive first MV-22 Osprey squadron; Looking for good Marines

Story and photos by Sgt. Ray Lewis

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. --Marine Forces Reserve has never had an MV-22 Osprey squadron—until now. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 764 transitioned into the Reserve's first Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron during a three-part ceremony at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Jan 12.

"It was kind of one big last event to say goodbye," said Lt. Col David A. Weinstein, commanding officer of VMM-764.

The event started with a change of command where Lt. Col. Scott A. Craig, a CH-46E Sea Knight pilot, relinquished command of HMM-764 to Weinstein, an Osprey pilot.

"It has been a busy two years supporting operations and executing the transition plan of action," said Craig, about the tiltrotor transition. "But it's opening doors with the Osprey and we did our best to set those guys up at Miramar."

Weinstein gladly accepted the torch, and said he is very eager to demonstrate the capability the Osprey can provide for the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing. After Weinstein took command, the re-designation ceremony began.

"Over the past 48 years, the CH-46 has flown every clime and place around the world," said Brig. Gen. William Collins, commanding general of the 4th MAW. "It has supported our Marines literally everywhere. It served a mark in our legacy. It has been tested under fire in countless conditions. It's delivered combat troops, supplies, MEDEVACs and has earned the title of the 'battle frog.' We will never forget"

The CH-46 was flown in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. It's hardworking. It has saved a lot of Marine and sailor lives,



said Navy Capt. Josh M. Lieberman, a Reserve flight surgeon.

The ceremony reflected on the history of the CH-46 and the future of aviation with the tiltrotor capability.

“This last year marked a significant milestone... as we just past 100 years of Marine aviation,” Collins said. “How fitting it is to go into this 101st year with another milestone, and that milestone is for this squadron to transition to a new aircraft.”

The Marines of the squadron agree.

“We were the last to fly on the CH-46 in the Reserves and the first to transition to a new aircraft,” said Sgt. Jacob L. Anthony, an Active Reserve aviation operations Marine. “It feels historical.”

According to Boeing, the Osprey is the first aircraft designed from the ground up to meet the needs of the Defense Department’s four U.S. armed services. The tiltrotor aircraft takes off and lands like a helicopter. Once airborne, its engine nacelles can be rotated to convert the aircraft to a conventional airplane configuration capable of high-speed, high-altitude flight.

Marines will get to see that the amazing capability the MV-22 brings will revolutionize 4th MAW, Weinstein said. “We’re headed in the right direction.”

Sgt. Maj. David M. Dyess, sergeant major of VMM-764, said the transition has been a little tough, but the change opens a new door for a new generation of Marines.

“I had a Marine who is going to school to be an MV-22 crew chief come up to me yesterday and say that he enjoyed the school and is looking forward to working on the Osprey,” Dyess said. “It is a learning curve for the Marines but once they get in, it will be an excellent opportunity to carry grunts around.”

After the re-designation ceremony came the official relocation of VMM-764 from Edwards, AFB to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, also in California. But they couldn’t leave without a thank you and goodbye to their brothers and sisters in the Air Force.

For more than 13 years, the airmen have provided Marines with outstanding overall support, said Collins. “We have established relationships that, at this point, we are sad to see go. But as always we will remain friends, and we look forward to seeing you all in the future.”

Weinstein said the Marines of the squadron are very excited to relocate, get started, get airplanes and get flying.

Although VMM-764 is officially a tiltrotor squadron, the unit has to establish programs, obtain qualifications and pass inspections before it can receive the MV-22 Osprey — the first delivery is expected in November 2013. The unit plans to be a fully operational tiltrotor squadron by mid-2014. The Marine Corps will transition the one remaining Reserve CH-46 squadron, HMM-774, to a tiltrotor squadron by 2017.

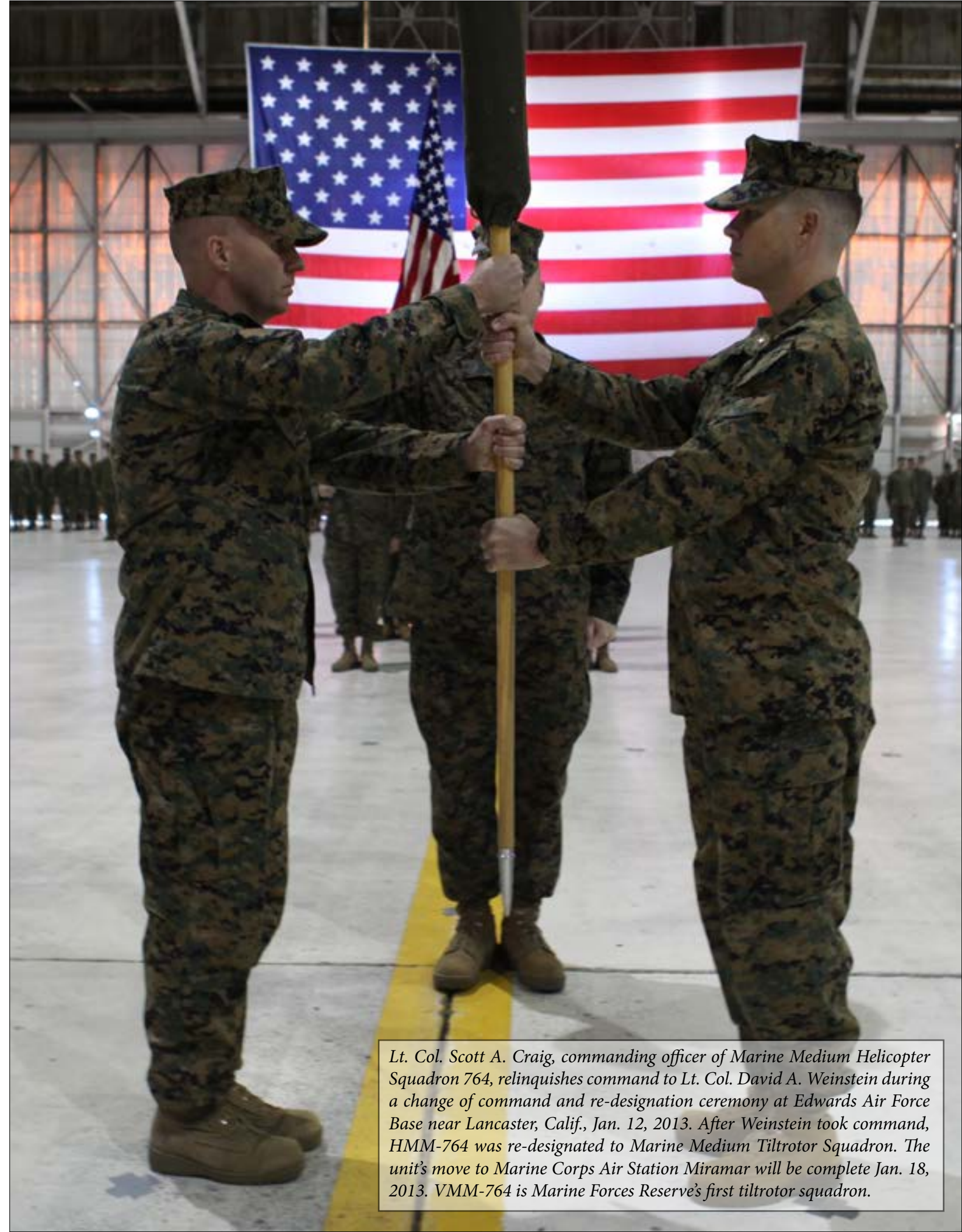
“As we transition to the MV-22, the airplane itself has a new capability... that has taken us to the next chapter of Marine Corps history,” Collins said. “It, right now, is providing our commanders across the globe ... an unprecedented level of performance in the tactical, strategic ... and operational options for our commanders. We look forward to the transition of this capability within 4th MAW.”

The Marines that stayed with the squadron are Active Reserve Marines that lateral moved from CH-46 to MV-22.

That only left VMM-764 with a fraction of what the unit needed. The tiltrotor unit now needs to fill 70 percent of their enlisted Selected Marine Corps Reserve slots.

Marine recruiters are looking for MV-22 specialists for airframes, avionics, general support equipment, flight equipment and the seat shop to send to school over the next few years, he said.

Marines interested in affiliating with VMM-764 should contact the prior service recruiter at Site Support Miramar at 858-577-8345.



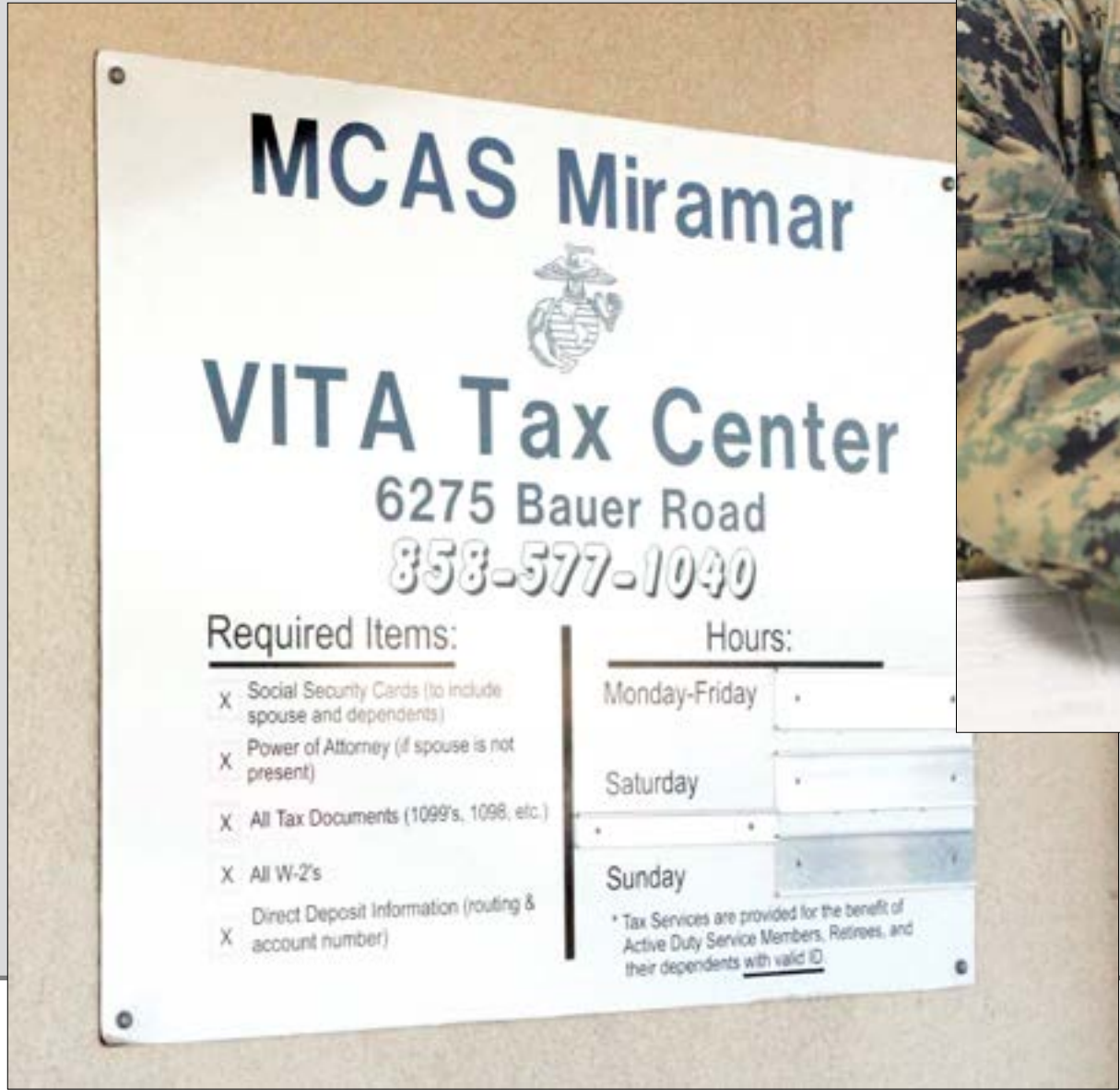
*Lt. Col. Scott A. Craig, commanding officer of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 764, relinquishes command to Lt. Col. David A. Weinstein during a change of command and re-designation ceremony at Edwards Air Force Base near Lancaster, Calif., Jan. 12, 2013. After Weinstein took command, HMM-764 was re-designated to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron. The unit's move to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar will be complete Jan. 18, 2013. VMM-764 is Marine Forces Reserve's first tiltrotor squadron.*



# Tax center serves Miramar community

*Right: Pfc. Vania Diaz, a volunteer tax preparer with the tax center, prepares a 1040 form during a private opening of the tax center aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 30. Diaz is one of 13 Marines volunteering to prepare and electronically file returns.*

*Below: The entry sign at building 6275 presents the hours and contact information for the tax center aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 30. The tax center opens to the public Feb. 7. Tax center customers should bring their W-2s, a social security card, a military identification card and any other relevant information.*



*Right: 1st Lt. Guy Smith, officer-in-charge of the tax center, gathers the volunteer Marines to answer questions and address concerns at the tax center aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 30. The Marines discussed issues encountered during the soft opening of the tax center.*

## Story and photos by Cpl. Melissa Wenger

The annual rush for tax refunds is rapidly approaching Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Beginning Feb. 7, active duty service members, retirees and their families can visit the Tax Center for free tax return assistance.

A team of 13 Marines and one civilian volunteer received almost two weeks of training from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and California State Franchise Tax Board to qualify them to prepare and file tax returns.

The volunteers handle issues specific to those in the military community.

“As service members ourselves, we know how to read your W-2,” said 1st Lt. Guy Smith, tax center officer-in-charge. “We know that that combat pay is going to be excluded on the federal side of things and for most states as well. Just like going to a military legal assistance attorney gives you that unique military perspective a lawyer out in town probably couldn’t give you, I think that the same applies for our [tax preparers].”

After the client’s return is carefully prepared, a quality reviewer assesses it before it is filed electronically. Tax payers can expect to receive a refund between an average of seven and 10 business days.

This year, the IRS delayed accepting tax

returns until Jan. 30 due to fiscal negotiations and tax law extensions. Jennifer Frapwell, a volunteer tax preparer, warned clients to exercise patience before attempting to file a return. Some institutions may not have released all income and expense information to customers right away.

“I would say the biggest thing this year that I want to remind people of is to wait until all of your tax documents arrive in your mailbox [before filing],” said Frapwell.

The Tax Center is located at building 6275 and the volunteers will assist clients on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Clients must present a military identification card, a copy of their W-2, a social security card, their bank’s routing and accounting numbers for direct deposit purposes and any other relevant documents.

“If you are a military member, it is definitely worth it to come see a military tax preparer,” said Frapwell. “We have similar financial situations and we understand what to do with your income and what questions to ask to hopefully find you some more refunds.”

For more information, contact the tax center at 858-577-1040.





# CORAL SEA VETERAN RETURNS TO SHARE STORIES, INSPIRE

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

In May 1942, retired Lt. Cmdr. Robert Gale, then a young seaman, fought in the Battle of Coral Sea aboard the USS Lexington. Now at the age of 91, Gale can still remember every moment of that battle.

Gale shared his stories with Marines and sailors during a Warriors of the Faith event at the base chapel aboard MCAS Miramar, Calif., Jan. 23.

Warriors of the Faith is an event designed to bring active duty and veteran service members together to share their stories. The program began two months ago at the station chapel.

"It helps vets have that connection to active duty and makes them feel like they are still contributing [to the armed forces], which they are," said Cmdr. Wayne Freiberg, the base command chaplain with the MCAS Miramar Chapel and a Hopkins, Minn., native.

The program promotes the community coming together and shows how veterans used their beliefs to help them through their experiences.

"This is an outreach of the chapel to let people know that we're here," said Freiberg. "You can be a warrior and have faith, combining the two make us resilient and healthy." Most the members of the program are members of the chapel and are connected to Miramar in some way.

"[Miramar] is like home to me," said Gale.

In 1974, while stationed here, Gale helped build the Miramar Sports Complex and the Great Escape which Miramar Marines use to this day.

Even 73 years later, he can still recall many memories, including the first day he joined the Navy.

"I joined Dec. 14, 1940. The day after I turned 18," said Gale.

Gale served aboard the USS Lexington and remembers the blows to the ship which lead to it sinking during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The Lexington's port water main ruptured after being hit by a torpedo, added Gale.

His recollection of his experiences fascinated Marines, who came out to hear the story of this historic battle.

"He's a great man," said Lance Cpl. Jacob Flores, a bulk fuel specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron and a Brooklyn native. "I'm just excited I get the chance to relive the past."

By listening to the stories of veterans, Marines can understand pieces of the history that built the military they are a part of today, explained Flores.

The chapel does the Warriors of the Faith monthly and welcomes anyone to come hear the tremendous stories of these veterans.





# Marines share lifestyle with Educator Workshop

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

High school can be the starting point in any person's career, and many look to teachers and counselors for help in choosing the fate of their futures.

As a commandant of the Marine Corps directive, the Educators Workshop Program brings educators from around the country together to experience different aspects of the Marine Corps, so they can share their knowledge with students considering the military as a career.

"By giving the educators a chance to experience a little bit of the life of a Marine, we are able to present the Corps as a viable option after high school," said Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl, a community relations specialist with MCAS Miramar and a Toledo, Ohio, native.

Teachers, counselors and principals from Recruiting Station Kansas City, Mo., district and Recruiting Station Twin Cities, Minn., district ventured to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., to see life after recruit training, Jan. 30.

"[I think] the main goal for this is to learn more about what it is to be a Marine," said Devin Johnson, a math teacher with Hallsville High School and a Lincoln, Mo., native.

As an educator, Johnson knows that educators should be as knowledgeable as possible if a student wants to know more about the military.

"Students ask us all the time about the different branches of the military and ask us about career choices," said Johnson.

While on Miramar, the educators received a taste of the benefits offered to Marines.

"It was an eye opener," said Johnson. "There are many benefits for careers and education."

Educators saw how the Corps molds its service members into both combat-ready and morally-sound Marines.

"The overall goal in developing character and good members of society is a unique quality about [the Marines] because it's been emphasized throughout the three days," said Johnson. "We want to create young men and young women that are ready to benefit society, and that's what the Marine's goal is too."

During the week-long event educators learn various aspects of the Marine Corps entry process including Recruit Training, firing on a rifle range and even witness a Marine Recruit Training graduation.

"[Educators] go through recruit [physical training] sessions, a tour of the depot and a mock pick up to see what the recruits see the first time they meet their drill instructors," said Staff Sgt. Steven Gentry, a chief drill instructor with Kilo Company, 3rd Marine Recruit Training Battalion aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., and a Seattle native.

Marines like Gentry see this as a good opportunity for teachers and counselors to get a personal experience of the Marine Corps lifestyle.

"I think it gives good insight to [people] who don't know very much about the Marine Corps and helps [their students] make the best decision possible to decide if the Marine Corps is right for them," said Gentry.

Overall, most educators walked away grateful for the experience.

"I appreciate the Marine Corps for this opportunity and suggest it to any educator that wants to know more information," said Johnson.

The Educators Workshop Program runs from January through August and educators will visit MCAS Miramar throughout that time.

*Right: Jared Fredenburg, a teacher with Sioux Falls High School and a Sioux Falls, S.D., native, plays pingpong at the Great Escape during an Educators Workshop aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 30.*



*Left: Educators walk into the library during an Educators Workshop aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Jan. 30. The Educators Workshop brings educators from around the country together to experience different aspects of the Marine Corps.*







# Marine's quick response saves a stranger's life

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

CAUTION





*1st Sgt. William Cuellar, formally with Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38 and a Houston native, stands in front of the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar sign aboard MCAS Miramar, Calif., Jan. 16. Cuellar helped in the rescue of Eva Pena, a victim of a car accident.*

On a winding narrow back road, a woman cries for help and through the rain she sees a glimpse of hope.

"I was going to my friend's house up in Temecula on Christmas Eve, driving up a road which has a cliff to the side," said 1st Sgt. William Cuellar, a Marine formally with Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38 and a Houston native, about a day that started like any other.

Though the rain made it hard to see through his windshield, Cuellar's eyes still managed to catch an alarming sight.

"I noticed there was a vehicle in my peripheral vision to the right with the brake lights vertically. The car was on its side," said Cuellar.

Immediately after seeing the car, Cuellar pulled off to the side of the road and ran to the scene.

"I noticed there was a lady inside the car crying, so I pulled my phone out and called 911," said Cuellar.

After calling the police, another car pulled up and the driver asked if Cuellar needed help and that's when he handed the phone over and made a decision most might consider irrational.

"I ran to the vehicle, jumped on top of it, which was the passenger's side, opened the door, told her to unbuckle her seat belt and I reached down and pulled her out from the passenger's side," said Cuellar.

After pulling her out, Cuellar put her across his shoulder and placed her in the back seat of a gentlemen's car who had stopped to help him, explained Cuellar.

With smoke coming from the car and the fear that it could quickly catch fire, Cuellar went with his gut and pulled the victim from the car. It was not until after pulling the woman out that Cuellar noticed another danger. The car laid at the edge of the road where only a tree kept the car from falling down the steep cliff. Had the tree not been there, it

would have easily fallen, explained Cuellar.

"I just reacted; I didn't do anything that any other Marine wouldn't have done," said Cuellar "I don't think I did anything special."

Even though in his own eyes Cuellar does not feel like a hero, in the eyes of the Pena family he is more than that.

"I was very [scared] but he told me 'you're okay' and he was there to help me out of the car," said Eva Pena, the crash victim and a Murrieta, Calif., native.

Eva Pena works at the Harrahs Rincon Casino and has used the same road for the last eight years for her daily commute.

With rain and ice on the road Pena lost control and her car hydroplaned into oncoming traffic before it finally flipped to its side, stopping only after hitting a tree. After spending about ten minutes in the vehicle crying out for help, Eva Pena saw the face of Cuellar.

"For me it felt like an hour," said Eva Pena. "I thought he was an angel sent to save me."

After pulling her out of the vehicle, Cuellar called her husband, Roberto Pena and explained the situation.

There are no words to explain how awful it was to hear she had crashed, explained Roberto Pena, a Murrieta, Calif., native. Thanks to Cuellar's quick aid, the Penas will be able to celebrate their upcoming anniversary and are grateful for all he has done.

Roberto Pena has yet to meet the man who helped his wife, but wishes to shake his hand for his actions.

"Thank you [Cuellar,] so much," said Roberto Pena.

Eva Pena feels that because of Cuellar's actions she has received the best Christmas present.

"I feel he saved my life, and because of him I have many more Christmas Days to spend together with my family," said Eva Pena.



*Roberto Pena, left, and Eva Pena, right, stand in front of their home in Murrieta, Calif., Jan. 15.*





*Eva Pena's Honda Civic after a near fatal car accident Dec. 24, 2012. Pena was rescued by 1st Sgt. William Cuellar, formally with Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, after he stopped to help an overturned car.*

*The sight of Eva Pena's near fatal car accident is filled with winding roads and steep embankments. Pena was pulled from her overturned Honda Civic by 1st Sgt. William Cuellar, formally with Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, Dec. 24, 2012.*



# *Marine's quick response saves a stranger's life*

Video created by Cpl. Isaac Lamberth



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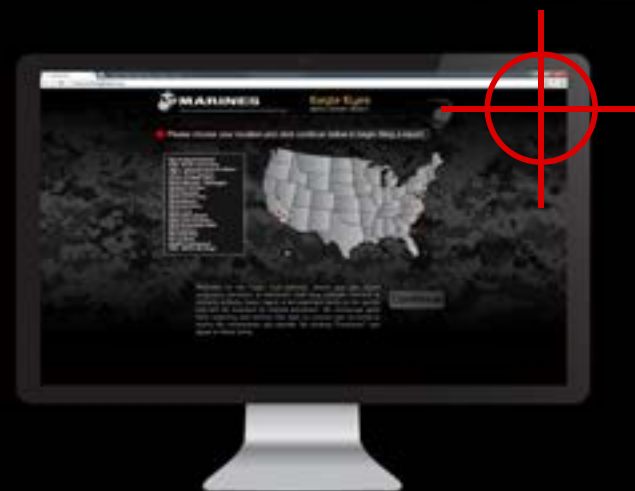
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