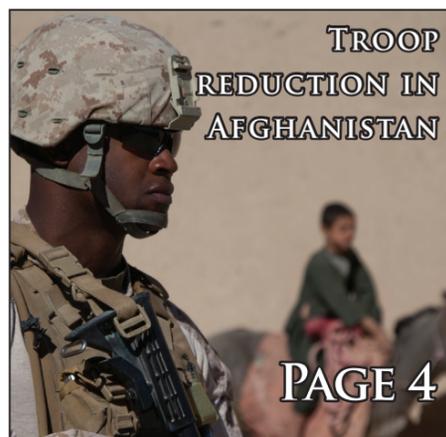


THE PARRIS ISLAND BOOT



TROOP
REDUCTION IN
AFGHANISTAN

PAGE 4

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www.marines.com

Recruiting Duty: No day at beach



Page 3

Photo by Sgt. Scott Schmidt

Going to great lengths to find the best to become the next generation of Marines, Sgt. Le'Mon Eluett, recently earned the title of Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale's recruiter of the year for fiscal year 2012. Eluett's success has propelled the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native to lead a recruiting substation as a sergeant.

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society ups quick assist loans back to \$500

Lance Cpl. David Bessey
Staff Writer

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society increased the quick assist loan cap to \$500 for all active-duty Marines and sailors Feb. 1 to better meet the monetary needs of service members in today's military.

In 2008, the loan's maximum limit was decreased from \$500 to \$300 due to the national recession and lack of funds in the relief society's coffers.

The loans are a short-term, interest-free solution available to service members facing an urgent financial need.

"This program is our best defense against questionable payday lenders who create a cycle of debt with triple-digit interest and short-term repayments that adversely impact service members and their families," said Carl Jensen, executive vice president of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

A service member can apply for a loan from \$100 to \$500 and will receive a check within nine to 12 minutes of approval, said Ron Grindle, director of Parris Island's Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society chapter.

"Allotments are automatically deducted from a service member's pay to pay off the loan within three to 10 months," said Grindle, a native of Morrisville, Pa.

Approximately 60 percent of service members who visit the relief society's local chapter apply for a loan, said Grindle.

Applicants must have at least four months of service remaining, no current quick assist loan balance, no disciplinary action that reduced pay or bankruptcy filing.

The relief society will continue to change and adapt as the needs of service members change, said Grindle.

More than 43,000 loans were provided to active-duty service members last year, said Jensen.

Since 1904, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society has provided financial assistance and education to active-duty and retired members of the United States Navy and Marine Corps.

Service members can contact the Parris Island chapter for additional services at 843-228-3512.

SAME-SEX COUPLES ELIGIBLE FOR MILITARY BENEFITS

Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Service members and retirees with same-sex partners will qualify for up to two dozen benefits typically afforded to troops' families, while housing and health care remain off limits, the secretary of defense announced Feb. 11.

Calling it "a matter of fundamental equity," outgoing Defense Sec-

retary Leon E. Panetta signed the memorandum extending benefits giving the military until Oct. 1 to comply.

In the memo to the service chiefs outlining the new policy, Panetta noted the U.S. military has "essentially completed" repeal of the so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law that barred gay and lesbian military members from serving openly.

Now, the secretary wrote to the chiefs, military leaders' work must

"expand to changing our policies and practices to ensure fairness and equal treatment and to taking care of all of our service members and their families, to the extent allowable under law."

Housing, medical and dental care, and overseas command sponsorship for same-sex partners are not included in this round of policy changes. As Panetta noted in a

SEE BENEFITS PAGE 2

New online sergeants course launched

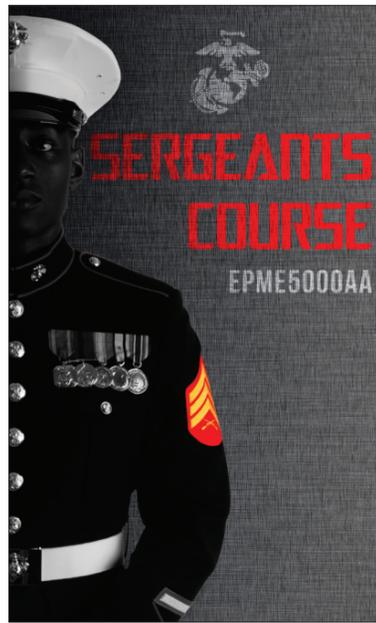
Gunnery Sgt. Bill Lisbon
Public Affairs Chief

A new MarineNet version of the nonresident sergeants course was launched Feb. 7, replacing the former Marine Corps Institute's edition of the professional military education.

Open only for enrollment by Marines ranked sergeant and above, the Sergeants Course Distance Education Program is a prerequisite to attend the resident course at one of the Corps' staff noncommissioned officer academies.

The curriculum is designed to provide Marine sergeants with additional knowledge and skills to assume leadership roles of greater responsibility in combat and in garrison, according to a MarineNet press release.

SEE COURSE PAGE 2



NEWS BRIEF

Notice to Boaters

Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island is scheduled to conduct extended live-fire training Tuesday and Wednesday from 6 a.m. to midnight. The marsh and waterways in the range impact area, to include Archers Creek, Ribbon Creek, Edding Creek, and portions of the Broad River adjacent to Parris Island small-arms ranges, will be closed to boater traffic.

For questions regarding firing times and waterway closures please contact the Weapons and Field Training Battalion Range Control at 843-228-3170.

BENEFITS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

statement, those benefits are restricted under the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines "spouse" as someone married to a person of the opposite sex. The Supreme Court is reviewing the law, and is expected to rule on it later this year.

"In the event that the Defense of Marriage Act is no longer applicable to the Department of Defense, it will be the policy of the department to construe the words 'spouse' and 'marriage' without regard to sexual orientation, and married couples, irrespective of sexual orientation, and their dependents, will be granted full military benefits," Panetta wrote.

To be eligible for 22 of the benefits, service members and their same-sex partners must file a "declaration of domestic partnership." That declaration entitles same-sex partners to military identification cards, commissary and exchange shopping privileges, child care and youth programs, sexual assault counseling and other benefits.

Two of the new benefits are available at the service member's election: hospital visitation and membership in family readiness groups.

Panetta's guidance to the services di-

rected they make "every effort" to have systems in place to accept same-sex benefit requests by Aug. 31. In no case, he wrote, may the services delay beyond Oct. 1 in rolling out the benefits.

Still, the policy change will take time, a senior Pentagon official said, as regulations and instructions, systems and software all have to be updated, and workers will need to be trained in new processes.

"Normally, we're looking at a year" to make such changes, the official noted. "This is a very ambitious schedule; we're really pressing hard to do this."

Another official said the Defense Department is working to see if the housing benefit can be added to the list and is developing a mechanism to allow burial of same-sex partners at Arlington National Cemetery. The domestic partnership declaration isn't feasible in cases where one or both partners have died, the second official added.

Retirees and their same-sex partners will be able to file the declaration once the new systems are in place. The first official estimated that 5,600 same-sex couples include an active-duty service member, 3,400 include a Reserve or National Guard member, and 8,000 include a retired military member. The cost of implementing the new benefits, the official added, would be negligible.

Eligible Benefits

The following benefits are now authorized for service members, their same-sex partners and their children, if applicable, after the couple sign a declaration attesting to the existence of a committed relationship.

- Dependent identification cards
- Commissary privileges
- Exchange privileges
- Morale, welfare and recreation programs
- Legal assistance
- Joint duty assignments
- Child care
- Youth programs
- Youth sponsorship program
- Emergency leave
- Emergency leave of absence
- Space-available travel on military aircraft
- Family center programs
- Sexual assault counseling program
- Surveys of military families
- Quadrennial quality of life review
- Exemption from hostile-fire areas
- Transportation to and from certain places of employment and on military installations
- Transportation to and from primary and secondary school for minor dependents
- Authority of service secretary to transport remains of dependent
- Disability and death compensation (dependents of members held as captives)
- Payments to missing persons

COURSE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Upon completion of the course, "Marines will have a greater knowledge of their role as ethical leaders, recognize how personal actions stimulate change in the behavior and attitude of subordinates and possess additional tools to guide their Marines' personal and professional development. They will be better prepared to make sound decisions that promote and support organizational values and leadership philosophies, and they will possess an increased understanding of maneuver warfare and its application at the squad level," stated the release.

The new sergeants course curriculum includes nine subcourses: administration, communication, warfighting, squad operations, tactical planning, tactical tools, training, leadership I and leadership II. The MCI version consisted of seven subcourses.

This computer-based, interactive multimedia instruction leverages learning technologies and problem-based situations that a Marine sergeant will encounter, to emphasize leadership development and warfighting skills needed as a small-unit leader, stated the release.

While completion of the MCI version satisfies professional military education requirements for sergeants, they are encouraged to complete the new course since the curriculum is different and contains the most up-to-date information, according to information on the MarineNet website.

Those who want to complete the MCI version have until June 30, otherwise they will be automatically disenrolled.

MarineNet students have 365 days after enrollment to complete the course.

For more information about this course, visit <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/cdet>.

RECYCLE

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4th Recruit Training Battalion
cordially invites you to join in a
Celebration of Women Marines
ON
Friday, March 1st, 2013
as we commemorate the 70th Anniversary
of the official formation of the Marine Corps
Women's Reserve on February 13th, 1943.

The celebration will be held aboard
Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island
Day Activities - 0745
Evening Events - 1730

All are welcome

To purchase your evening tickets (\$40.00 each)
<http://70thcelebrationofwomenmarines.eventbrite.com>

For more information regarding what the day events include please
visit our Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/celebrationofwomenmarines

For specific details contact information listed below
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Recruiting Duty: No day at the beach

Sgt. Scott Schmidt

Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – Projecting a temperament and work ethic unmatched by his peers, Sgt. Le'Mon Eluett wants to win. You wouldn't know it by speaking with him though.

As a recruiter in Margate, Fla., Eluett had a rocky start according to his staff non-commissioned officer in charge, Master Sgt. Elvis John-Baptiste. His growth and resulting success quickly smoothed his path to earning the title of Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale's recruiter of the year.

Eluett has recently been put in charge of his own substation, making him the only sergeant in RS Fort Lauderdale to do so. He recently sat down with the 6th Marine Corps District's magazine, "The Pacesetter," to give us some insight to his achievements:

Q: Was being recruiter of the year a goal you set for yourself or was it a surprise?

A: It was a complete surprise! I've never been an award chaser; I'm just a team player. Good things come to people who don't focus on personal gain. I'm a firm believer in "one team, one fight." I just did whatever was needed from me to accomplish our mission, even if it meant more time and effort on my part.

Q: How does it feel being the recruiter of the year?

A: It has been an eye-opening experience. If I were told that I would achieve that pinnacle of success on this duty back in (recruiter school), I wouldn't have believed it. I struggled in recruiter school. But my time has now passed, my new focus is pushing my team to achieve even more than I've accomplished as a recruiter.

Q: Did you want to be a recruiter?

A: I actually had it in my mind to volunteer, but not as early as I was selected. I wanted to have a few more experiences in the fleet before I went on recruiting duty. The reason I even considered recruiting duty was because I was told it's one of the most challenging things you can do. ... not every Marine has the ability to convince a complete stranger to dedicate their lives to an organization for four years. As any other Marine, I'm eager to find the next challenge.

Q: Historically, during times of recession, recruitment picks up. Does this mean recruiting is easy today?

A: In my opinion, it doesn't. In today's recruiting environment we are finding quality verses quantity. The bar has been raised and our standards are higher than ever before, which means most of the office traffic is disqualified. We're searching for the diamond in the rough.

Q: How did you make sure standards remained high among your future Marines as a recruiter?

A: I treated my poolees as if they were already Marines, teaching them the standards we believe in, also making sure I wasn't chasing just anybody to join. I felt like I was the gate keeper, and I would only allow the best to join this gun club. In my mind, I was hunting for my potential replacement ... looking for the next sergeant major of the Marine Corps or the next commandant of the Marine Corps.

Q: How do you keep your standards high for your recruiters?

A: I simply ask my recruiters a genuine question. Can you see yourself leading this individual back in the fleet? Is that who you want to be your lance corporal? If they can't give me a straight answer, then it's time to go back to the drawing board and find the needle in the haystack we're really looking for.



Photo by Sgt. Scott Schmidt

Sgt. Le'Mon Eluett, recruiter, speaks to a potential applicant on the streets of Boca Raton, Fla., on Feb. 6. Eluett recently earned the title of Recruiting Station Fort Lauderdale's recruiter of the year for fiscal year 2012 and now leads a recruiting substation in Margate, Fla.

Q: What has been your biggest challenge as a recruiter?

A: Humbling myself... Every (noncommissioned officer) and staff NCO comes to this duty as a leader, and having to adjust to this new environment isn't the easiest thing to do. It's easy telling a corporal and below what to do, but it's a new challenge when you're finding yourself leading your peers.

Q: What are some of your tricks to recruiting?

A: The only trick I had up my sleeve was honesty. No need falling into the stereotype that all recruiters are liars. I used facts, using our historical data to out sell any competition we face as recruiters.

Q: In your opinion, what makes or breaks a recruiter's ability to be successful?

A: Honestly, I would say their desire to succeed. Marines don't lose; we don't know how to lose. When you lay down in your bed every night after a long day at the office, do you feel you left everything on the field? Do you feel like you put fourth your absolute best? If any of the answers end up being no, then it's time to make a change.

Q: What are your words of wisdom?

A: Stay true to who you are and what you represent. If you love this organization, then you will do exactly what is expected of you as a person and most of all as a Marine. We sell everyday that we are the best in the world, that we are the tip of the spear. If this is true, and we are the gold medal winners, we need to show it 100 percent of the time. In the words of Vince Lombardi... "Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit."



Photos by Cpl. Kowshon Ye

Gunnery Sgt. Donnie Bridges, company gunnery sergeant with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, climbs up a hill to survey the area in Kajaki, Afghanistan, on Feb. 8.

US troop numbers in Afghanistan to be cut by half in 2013

Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – U.S. troops in Afghanistan will decrease by 34,000 over the coming year, President Barack Obama announced Feb. 12 in his annual State of the Union address.

The drawdown means more than half of the approximately 66,000 troops currently in Afghanistan – 8,300 of which are Marines – will leave one year before the United States ends combat operations and hand security back to the local government.

“After a decade of grinding war, our brave men and women in uniform are coming home,” Obama said in his remarks to a joint session of Congress earlier in the day.

“Already, we have brought home 33,000 of our brave servicemen and women,” he said during the address. “This spring, our forces will move into a support role, while Afghan security forces take the lead.”

The president credited “the troops and civilians who sacrifice every day to protect us. Because of them, we can say with confidence that America will complete its mission in Afghanistan, and achieve our objective of defeating the core of al-Qaeda.”

America’s commitment to a unified and sovereign Afghanistan will endure beyond 2014, Obama said, but the nature of that commitment will change.

“We’re negotiating an agreement with the Afghan government that focuses on two missions: training and equipping Afghan forces so that the country does not again slip into chaos and counter-terrorism efforts that allow us to pursue the remnants of al-Qaeda and their affiliates,” he noted.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, in a statement, said he welcomes the commander in chief’s announcement. The figure was based, he said, on Gen. John

Allen’s strategic recommendation of a phased approach to decreasing the force, now numbering about 66,000.

Allen turned over command of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force and U.S. forces in Afghanistan to Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. during a Feb. 10 ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The secretary said in his statement that in consultations with the president and his national security team, “I strongly supported Gen. Allen’s recommendation and I believe the president’s decision puts us on the right path to succeed in Afghanistan.”

Panetta said he is confident Dunford will have the combat power he needs to protect coalition forces, continue building up Afghan forces, and “achieve the goal of this campaign to deny al-Qaeda a safe haven to attack our homeland.”

Panetta noted the United States, NATO and the Afghan government agreed in Lisbon in 2010, and affirmed in Chicago in 2012, that Afghanistan will assume full responsibility for its security by the end of 2014.

“We are on track for that goal,” he said, “and we will maintain a long-term commitment to Afghanistan including through the continued training and equipping of Afghan forces and counter-terrorism operations against al-Qaeda and their affiliates.”

The American people should never forget 9/11 is the reason their men and women are fighting in Afghanistan, Panetta said.

“After more than a decade of great sacrifice and hard-fought progress, we are now on a path to an Afghanistan that cannot be used as a launching pad for attacks against our nation,” the secretary said.

“Our troops on the ground will continue to be in a tough fight, and they will continue to face real challenges, but our fundamental goal is now within sight,” he concluded. “Thanks to their continued dedication and sacrifice, I believe we will prevail.”



1st Lt. William Kavanagh, company executive officer with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, looks through his rifle’s scope in Kajaki, Afghanistan, on Feb. 8.

MARINES.COM



FAMILY DAY SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY

WELCOME TO FAMILY ORIENTATION DAY AT PARRIS ISLAND

- 6am - 10pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) open
- 6am - 6pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court open
- 7am - 5pm.....Engraving Shop open
- 7:30am - 4pm.....Douglas Visitors' Center open- please register upon arrival
- 10am - 12pm.....Marine Corps 101 Brief including a "Behind the Scenes" tour at Douglas Visitors' Center
- LUNCH.....Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club), Food Court, Subway, Golf Course
- 1:30pm - 3pm.....Family Orientation Brief at the Lyceum
- 5pm - 8pm.....Steak Night at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club), reservations required

THURSDAY

WELCOME TO FAMILY LIBERTY DAY AT PARRIS ISLAND

- 6am - 4pm.....Douglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
- 6am - 10pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) open
- 6am - 6pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court open
- 7am - 5pm.....Engraving Shop open
- 7am.....Motivational Run at Peatross Parade Deck
- 8am.....Depot Museum opens
- 8am - 9am.....Marine Corps 101 Brief at the Douglas Visitors' Center
- 8:15am.....All Weather Training Facility (AWTF) opens
- 9:30am - 10am.....Battalion Commander's Brief to Families and Liberty Ceremony at AWTF
- 10am.....Liberty Begins
- 10am.....Marksmanship Training Unit Open House
- 10:30am - 1pm.....Family Day Buffet at the Lyceum - new Marines eat for FREE!
- 2pm.....Warrior's Prayer at Recruit Chapel
- 3pm.....Liberty Ends
- 4pm - 4:30pm.....Command Reception with Depot Command Members at Traditions Lounge
- 4:30pm.....Command welcome remarks
- 4:45pm.....Family Day Dinner with Depot Command at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)

FRIDAY

WELCOME TO GRADUATION DAY AT PARRIS ISLAND

- 6am - 2pm.....Douglas Visitors' Center open - please register upon arrival
- 6am - 10pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) open
- 6am - 6pm.....Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) Food Court open
- 7am - 5pm.....Engraving Shop open
- 7:45am.....Morning Colors at Barrow Hall
- 9am - 10am.....Graduation at Peatross Parade Deck (weather permitting)
- 11am - 1pm.....Lunch Buffet at Traditions (Officer/SNCO Club)

