Commanders will need to recom- mend approval of a specific date of separation when submitting a Marine's request for early release and must pro- vide specific justifications for individual Marines not recommended for approval to participate in the program.

The VEERP is approved for Marines with an EAS on or after Oct. 1, 2012. Marines with an EAS on or before Oct. 1 of the year are not eligible to separate prior to the end of their service obligation. Approval may be made eligible for an honorable discharge and is subject to the Marine Corps' approval.

Within 30 calendar days of approval, the Marine's EAS will be determined to be early and any remaining leave will be converted into a non-sick leave balance.

Those not eligible for leave are Marines in the four categories who are not recommended by their commanding officer for early separation.

Marines who manifest symptoms of combat stress or traumatic brain injury and are undergoing pos- tips or other prescribed therapies are not eligible for separation. Marines that are in medical treatment are also not eligible for separation.

Upon the larger group's return home to the Combat Center, the Inspector General's Office is committed to bringing to light a growing trend of cases involving Marines losing their gear or having it stolen because of recklessness on their part.

The problem is the lack of accountability, "from the Marines," said Gunnery Sgt. Michael Lamar. "Even when it is stolen, the stolen gear is not responsible ultimately falls on the Marine who signed for the gear.

The Combat Center's Inspector General's Office is committed to bringing to light a growing trend of cases involving Marines losing their gear or having it stolen because of recklessness on their part.

The problem is the lack of accountability, "from the Marines," said Gunnery Sgt. Michael Lamar. "Even when it is stolen, the stolen gear is not responsible. "We see it time and time again," Lamar spoke of a case in base housing where one resident left the garage open for a number of days, which was resulted in the theft of their belongings.

While the dry, barren envi- ronment might seem to be a severe disadvantage to the "value" of the LVTs, newer versions of the service's amphibious landing vehicles, have used the sandy terrain to their advantage to strengthen their skills.

There are always improvements with Delta Company's professional- nalism and their ability to main- tain their amphibious unit – the desert. The AA Vs, the desert version, are designed to operate in cold weather. The new amphibious training will be a vehicle for the Marine Corps to test the limits of their vehicles in the desert.
Corps cracks down on drugs

The Provost Marshal’s Office, Criminal Investigation Division, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., has a Special Enforcement Section that routinely initiates narcotic interdiction operations. Over the past year, several operations have targeted the illegal use and distribution of synthetic drugs, mainly the synthetic stimulants mefephedrone, methylethylketamine, and 4-methylmethycathinone (MMDPV), and marijuana-mimicking substances more commonly referred to as “Spice” and “Bath Salts.” These synthetic drugs are fabricated through chemical compounds and have recently been seized by Marine Law enforcement officers aboard several Marine Corps members due to their severe adverse effects. On Nov. 24, 2010, the Drug Enforcement Administration placed five specific chemical compounds typically found in Spice into Schedule I of the Controlled Substance Act under the authority of 21 U.S.C. 811. On July 9 this year, President Barack Obama signed into law a ban on the sale, possession, manufacture and distribution of 31 chemicals used in synthetic marijuana and bath salts, including MMDPV and mephedrone. Possession or distribution of a banned substance is a violation of Article 87 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Marine Corps policy requires that violators will be processed for administrative discharge.

of criminal investigations this year conducted by CID, aboard MCAGCC were drug related.

In an effort to counter this alarming trend, the Commanding General has placed numerous smoke shops within the high desert area, off limits. Surveillance operations are routinely conducted in the vicinity of these smoke shops. Active duty service members seen entering these businesses are then detained and cited with an offense report. If they are caught possessing a controlled substance, a criminal investigation is initiated and the results are turned over to the Marine’s parent command for administrative action. In the past 90 days, a number of active duty service members have been caught and arrested for this criminal activity. The challenge goes out to every active duty service member and civilian living and/or working around the installation to protect our heritage, preserve our honor, and live up to the principles upon which our beloved Corps was founded.

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I like ground fighting,
Dirt bikes are the least
My first bike
It's actually a lot more
My CO came up to me and asked
When I first started
I have seven motorcycles.
Me and my friends would joke
I have a bronze star
The most important rule
I go on rides
I went around for two days
There's no competition
I used to box every Thanksgiving.

In Afghanistan, I did the opposite.
In Iraq, I lifted weights a lot.
In the career planners' office,
give me BAH." Jokingly he told me if I reenlist, he'll get me BAH. So I said alright.
I thought I was getting out.
I've been in Twentynine Palms for seven years,
I got into
made the team.
I was really hard headed
Joining the Corps was
house and talked to my parents.
I came back when I was 17.
A few weeks later, my roommate came to my house and talked to my parents.
I dildoing the Corps was a pride thing.
I hated boot camp and the School of Infantry. I went from some people
looked up to to being treated like dirt. It was a big culture shock for me.
I hated boot camp
My heart is
I had a range
Marine Corps, I liked rock. I was just amped up all the time. I figured out that
behind my parents' house. We mainly used shotguns.
I'm Joining the Corps was

Growing up I like a lot of rap,
I was a 2003 sportster, gun blue. It actually got stolen out of a parking lot. I parked it over-night, went down to San Diego, and when I came back in the morning, it was gone.

The observations office,
Several motorcycle riders in Afghan Ball, I didn't steal my bike.

Me and my friends would joke
I have a bronze star with a "V." I got it in Afghanistan. My favorite medal by far though is my NAM.

I got it in Afghanistan. My favorite medal by far though is my NAM.

The most important rule of Afghan Ball is you have to talk smack.

A lot of people don't know
I'm still with the shotgun.

I had the coworkers say "V." I got it in Afghanistan. My favorite medal by far though is my NAM.

Grown up is you have to talk smack.

You get that feeling after you graduate like,
"Oh yeah I'm a Marine
than you get to SOI.

I've been in Twenty Five Palms for seven years, 2/7 for seven years and Fox Company for seven years.

I thought I was getting out.
I did a little bit of it. One day my company got asked if I was going to re-number, I told him no. When they asked, "Why not?" I said, "Because you won't give me BAH." I'm very tell him if I'm keeping, I'll tell him no. When they asked, "Why not?" I said, "Because you won't give me BAH." I'm very

I was dead set on it. One day my company gunny asked if I was going to re-enlist, I told him no. When he asked, "Why not?" I said, "Because you won't

A lot of people don't know
A chopper, a heritage, a dirt bike, two of them are kind of a mixture, a Honda Magna and an R1.

At a very young age, I knocked out both of my brothers, and it's been like that ever since.

The Observations office,
Several motorcycle riders in Afghan Ball, I didn't steal my bike.

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I was dead set on it. One day my company gunny asked if I was going to re-enlist, I told him no. When he asked, "Why not?" I said, "Because you won't
Military scholars ahead of competition for college admissions

By Jessica Newby
DeCA public affairs specialist

FORT LEE, Va. – Commissaries are once again playing a key role as government agencies and organizations across the U.S. support the 2012 Feds Feed Families food drive campaign, which runs through Aug. 31.

“Feds Need Families” is a nationwide food drive campaign run by the U.S. Department of Defense in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service. Feds Need Families is tied to its local installation’s ability to provide support to pick up and deliver the donated items. Commissaries support the Feds Need Families campaign.

DeCA’s customers and employees can and will make a difference in the lives of the children and families dealing with hunger.”

- Joseph H. Jeu

Chief Human Capital Council is managing the campaign. Commissary participation is tied to its local installation’s ability to provide support to pick up and deliver the donated items.

“DeCA’s customers and employees can and will make a difference in the lives of the children and families dealing with hunger,” Jeu said.

Story by
Sgt. Heather Golden

The most needed items for donations include:

- Canned vegetables – low sodium, no salt
- Canned fruits – in light syrup or its own juices
- Canned proteins – tuna, salmon, chicken, peanut butter and beans
- Soups – stew, chili, chicken noodle, turkey or rice
- Condiments – tomato-based sauces, light soy sauce, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing or oils
- Snacks – individually packed snacks, crackers, trail mix, dried fruit, granola and cereal bars, pretzels and sandwich crackers
- Multigrain cereal
- 100 percent juice – all sizes, including juice boxes
- Grains – brown and white rice, oatmeal, bulgar, quinoa, couscous, pasta, and macaroni and cheese
- Paper products and household items – paper towels, napkins, cleaning supplies
- Hygiene items – diapers, deodorants (men and women), feminine products, tooth paper, tissues, soap, toothpaste and shampoo

Donations to the program help charitable organizations such as local food banks.

“In this tough economy, sometimes it’s hard to make ends meet,” said Director and CEO, DeCA, Joseph H. Jeu. “More people than ever before are using food banks, which are struggling to meet the need than ever before are using food banks, which are struggling to meet the need than ever before.

Materans who qualify for and are accepted into the program are given special consideration for admittance into participating schools. With more than 200 schools within the LSP partnership, schools are even going as far as to reserve a specific number of seats for Materans. Acceptance into the LSP does not guarantee acceptance into the participating schools.

To qualify, applicants must be active duty, reserve or veteran Materan planning to attend a school as fresh-man or transfer students. Those currently on active duty must be honourably discharged before the beginning of the school semester. Applicants must have an Armed Forces Qualification Test score of at least 50 and a General Technical score of at least 115, and be a high school graduate. High school equivalencies, like the GED, will only be considered with significant college credit. Waivers for all the above requirements are available on a case-by-case basis.

To apply, Materans need to submit an unofficial copy of their high school transcript, an unofficial copy of their college transcripts, their SMART transcript; certified true copies of Record of Service, Basic Individual Record, Basic Training Record, athletics record, and a letter of recom-mendation from their commanding officer or any offi-cier for whom they have worked. Photo and email con-tact information for this officer is also accepted in lieu of a letter. The endorsements should be similar in structure to the endorsement required in a Marine Corps fitness report, and should detail “the Marine’s demonstrated performance and potential for growth and successful completion of a college degree program,” according to the website.

For more information, to find schools or to get turned on an application, go to the LSP website and click the red icon marked “Materans” in the center of the page.

The Leadership Scholar Program is available on a case-by-case basis.

“Application packages can be sent by mail to: Leadership Scholar Program Marine and Family Program Division ATTN: Caitlin Pfister 2800 Nauvoo Road Quantico, Va. 22134 The packages can also be faxed. Contact the LSP at (703) 429-4124 for faxing directions.”

A full list of participating schools can be found on the LSP’s website at: http://www.leadershipscholarprogram.com

The list includes both public and private schools, and even a handful of Ivy League universities.

A new academic partnership may mean all the dif-ficulties for transitioning Materans waiting on acceptance letters to their schools of choice. The Leadership Scholar Program, which is spon-sored by Materans Corps Community Services, connects colleges and universities with the kind of high-caliber applicants schools look for in potential students.

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S
ummer Time! What do you think of when you think of summer? Beautiful weather, enjoying cool waters of the on-base pools, soaking up the vitamin D-rich sunshine or working out in one of our gyms to prepare for this year’s summer reveal?

For many of us, summer means it is time to re-fresh and renew our resolutions to be healthy. Keep in mind that there is more to being healthy than a good SPF sunscreen and a low BMI; mental health is often the forgotten link in living a more health-conscious life. While you are contemplating what changes you are ready to make, take a moment to reflect on your relationships, your stress levels and goals that you may want to set for your own mental well-being.

Classes and workshops are available for individuals and couples and range from topics such as Stress and Anger to Couples Communication.

Services and resources are available to assist you in reaching your fullest potential. For more information, call 830-6345.

GEAR, from A1

AAV, from A1

“Get the best of both worlds. You get the best of amphibious and grunt, especially in this company,” said Cpl. Dustin S. Frank, crew chief, Co. D, 3rd AABn. “Most of the time it’s exciting, especially when we do field operations.”

The 3rd AABn. Marines call themselves “Alligators,” taking it from the original rescue vehicle. As the Marine Corps only ship-to-shore tactical vehicle, the AAV stands as the forefront in amphibious assaults with the capable Marines of 3rd AABn inside.

“Amtracks play a big part in it,” Frank said. “It’s what the Marine Corps is — Amphibious.”

Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion engage in live-fire target practice July 12 at Range 110A.
Eleyna Newton, 9, daughter of Gunnery Sgt. Frankie Newton, student, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, has fun with arts and crafts July 19 during Vacation Bible School at the Combat Center’s Protestant Chapel. The event was part of a week-long program with games and activities teaching kids about the Bible.

Combat Center kids attend Vacation Bible School at the Combat Center’s Protestant Chapel July 19.

Brenan Dougherty, 8, son of Maj. Eric Dougherty, infantry team officer, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, rocks out on an inflatable guitar during Vacation Bible School at the Combat Center’s Protestant Chapel July 19.

See page B2 for Sunset Cinema movie schedule
F	rom the desert snow that fell the day she was born in 1982 at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, to her status as the world’s fastest woman in 400 meters, DeeDee Trotter has been extraordinary. Like one in seven billion extraordinary.

“My whole life I knew I was fast,” Trotter said. “People saw me running on the court and told me I should track. I guess I was all worked out. I was blessed to be naturally gifted.”

Determined to go to the University of Tennessee, her dream became a reality with the help of a track scholarship. Though basketball was her first love, Trotter’s success on the track earned her scholarships. She left basketball behind. “It was either come up with $30,000 or run track. It wasn’t that difficult a choice,” she said. “My basketball dream had to fade away.”

But the commitment paid off, and her running career accelerated. She was professional during her junior year of college, making her the first woman from the school to do so.

Trotter’s dedication to maximum performance landed her a world championship and an Olympic Games. She went on to compete in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, winning gold in the women’s 4x400 meter relay, and she came in fifth place for the 4,000-meter race.

She became the No. 1 USA Track Champion in 2006 and 2007, defeating top-ranked runner Sanya Richards during the 2007 season. “That DeeDee is gone. I overcame one setback career-wise,” she said. “I started rapping Pass the Baton, pass the baton, and the kids were saying ‘Hey, you’re in the back-ground. They made me feel like a true down-load’,” she added. She started making YouTube videos for the kids, all comical spoofs. “She also talks to ques-tions submitted by takers each time pertaining to her diet and the items on her ‘basket list.’”

“When I race, I can hear a group of kids singing my song, and every time I hear it I think of Trotter,” DeVos added. “I plan to put more time into [the organization] so that youth can continue to feel better about their sport.”

DeeDee Trotter has been training hard at facilities in Florida in preparation for the Olympic Games. She will compete in the 400-meter races scheduled for Aug. 3, 4 and 5.


The moment of excitement comes and goes. Making the team was exciting, but now that we are preparing to race in the Olympics, we got to get back to business. I’m so in the zone, I can’t focus on being excited.”

- DeeDee Trotter

Trotter had training hard at facilities in Florida in preparation for the Olympic Games yesterday. You can catch her in action during the 4x400 meter race scheduled for Aug. 3, lane 3.
When: 5 - 9 p.m., every Sunday
Where: Pappy and Harriet’s Pioneertown Palace
Enjoy a live performance from local well-known band or visit http://www.theatre29.org
For tickets and information call 316-737-7363
Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.

The movies of director Wes Anderson are an acquired taste. The dry humor, quirky rhythms and oddball characters of The Royal Tenenbaums, Rushmore, Fantastic Mr. Fox, and his handful of other films haven’t exactly attracted fledgling filmgoers down at the local multiplex.

“The Royal Tenenbaums,” “Rushmore,” “Fantastic Mr. Fox,” and his handful of other films haven’t exactly attracted feeder frenzies down at the local multiplex. "The Royal Tenenbaums," "Rushmore," "Fantastic Mr. Fox," and his handful of other films haven’t exactly attracted feeder frenzies down at the local multiplex.

Quirky comedy about ’60s child romance is midsummer gem

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The two get together for the Nothing Formal Comedy Show

For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit http://www.morongocasinoresort.com

Darley Perez vs. Michael Katsidis

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Petty Officer 1st Class Cedric Taylor observes an SH-60B Seahawk helicopter from Helicopter Anti-submarine Light Squadron remove cargo from the flight deck of the guided-missile destroyer USS Farragut during a vertical replenishment July 21.

Marines with Security Cooperation Task Force Africa Partnership Station 2012 train with French Marines from France’s 3rd Marine Brigade on an obstacle course at Fort De Penthievre, France, July 22.

Sailors and Marines aboard landing dock ship USS Fort McHenry man the rails as the ship arrives in Lorient, France, July 20 for a scheduled port visit.

Visit the official Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter

Whatever you’re looking for, you can find it in the Observation Post Classified section.