



OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

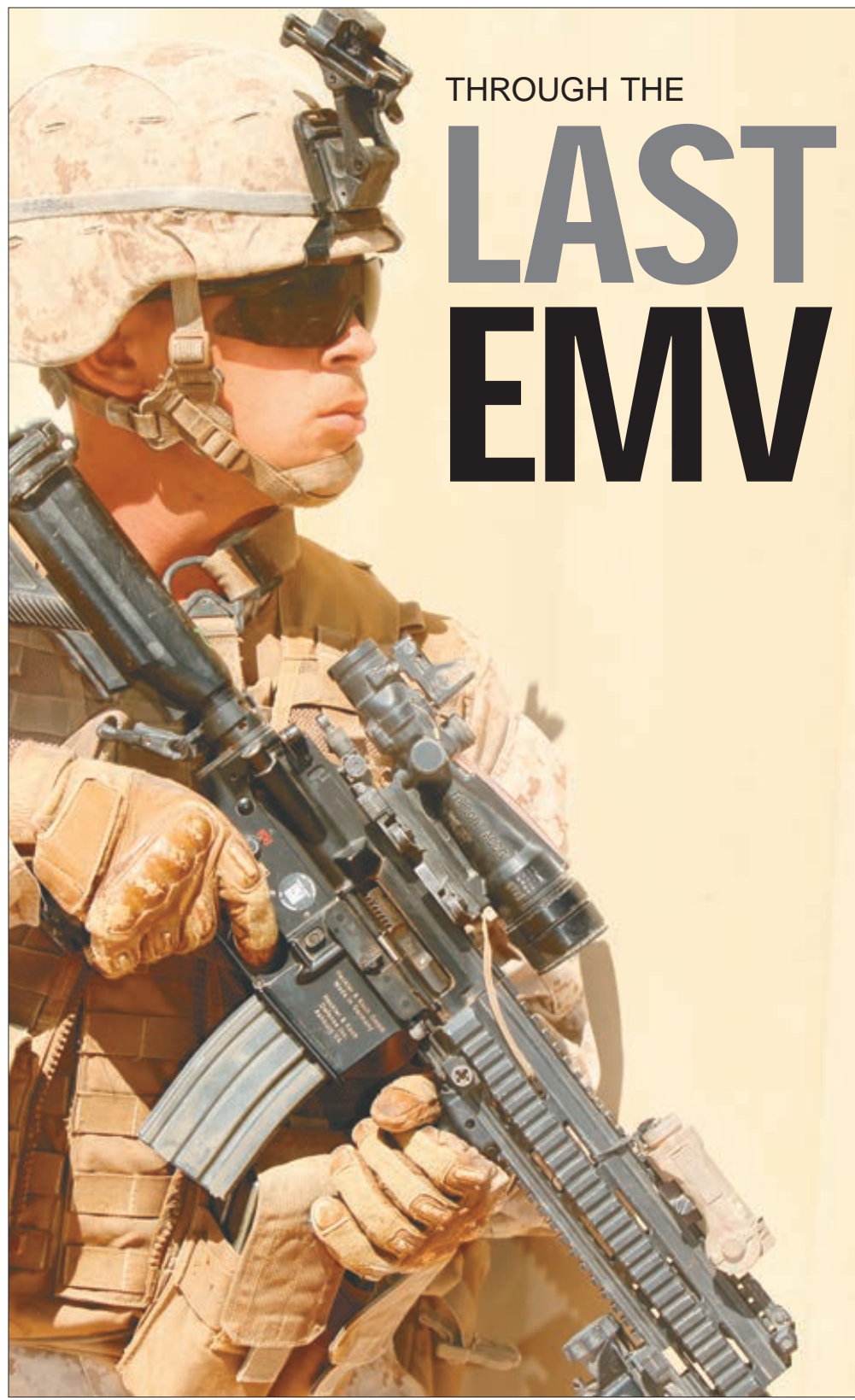
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September 28, 2012

Vol. 55 Issue 33



THROUGH THE LAST EMV

[Above] Pfc. Allen Austin, infantryman, 2nd Platoon, Company A, provides 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, during the Clear, Hold, Build-4 portion of Enhanced Mojave Viper at Range 215 Sept. 25. [Right] Marines with 1/3, evacuate a simulated casualty during the unit's CHB-4 portion of their EMV cycle at Range 215 Sept. 25.



1/3 conducts final CHB-4 exercise

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

Marines with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conducted the Clear, Hold, Build-4 portion of their Enhanced Mojave Viper training Monday at Range 215's military operations on urban terrain town.

This CHB-4 was the last to be conducted as EMV, which is being replaced by Integrated Training Exercise as the required deployment training. This makes 1/3 the last Marines to go through EMV.

"It's great to be able to say you've been through this and done it," said Cpl. Edward Smolko, squad leader, weapons platoon, Company A, 1/3. "It's really good training."

CHB-4 is a complex training cycle that was designed to effectively prepare Marines for combat environments.

"This is the last Enhanced Mojave Viper we will be doing before the shift to ITX in the spring," said Capt. David M. Mitchell, officer in charge, team 4, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group. "ITX seeks to maintain the core competencies of the Marine Corps Doctrine while preparing units deploying to Operation Enduring Freedom."

The 72-hour exercise evaluated the 1/3 Marines on their abilities to handle different obstacles they encountered on a variety of missions on the range.

Marines dealt with simulated enemy fire, improvised explosive devices as they cleared the area of insurgents, held the areas they'd secured and launched general security operations.

"Our task right now is to go into this village," Smolko said. "We are trying to help the local government get their foothold back with this town and get the Taliban out of here so that everyone can live peacefully."

In the streets of the MOUT town, roamed Afghan role players, who provided a realistic overseas environment.

The role players took parts as anything from civilians to insurgents. The Marines learned to deal with language barriers and cultural differences, all the while being able to conduct their operations safely.

"It's pretty realistic. I think it's really good for the new guys to get out

See **ITX** page A7

RECON AIR RAID

2nd Recon takes on Bridgeport

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Ali Azimi
Combat Correspondent

The hour and a half flight was fatiguing. Even though the C130 flew through clear skies, the high buzz of the propellers sounded as if sand was being thrown into it.

A platoon of reconnaissance Marines were crunched in its cargo area awaiting their arrival in the mountains. Their weapons never left their hands.

The C-130 Hercules landed in an area more than 6,000 ft above sea level. As the rear of the plane lowered its doors, recon rushed out.

Marines with 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion conducted an air raid exercise in the Marine



Cpl. James Coe, reconnaissance Marine, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, provides security for his fellow Marines after exiting a KC-130 at the Sweet Water training area, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Sept. 17.

Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center training areas Sept. 17.

The exercise made the most of air to ground integrations with the use of an assault force as well as the KC-130s, MV-22 Ospreys, AH-1Z Super Cobras, F/A-18 Hornets, and Omega Tanker.

The battalion, currently at the Combat Center for Enhanced Mojave Viper, traveled approximately hundreds of miles in a KC-130 and Ospreys, escorted by four F/A-18s to fight off aggressors in route.

"We practice integration in the objective area, but when you take that objective area and stretch it 300 nautical miles away you expose a lot of other mission essential tasks that come with it," said Lt. Col. Robert Freeland, Marine Medium Tilt-rotor Squadron 162, commanding officer. "The V-22s flew a long way. We were able to get up to altitude and take advantage of characteristics to burn less gas, to go a little faster and stay clear of some of the turbulence that we can run into down below."

See **BRIDGEPORT** page A4

DOD to revise sexual assault prevention training

Claudette Roulo
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—Calling sexual assault "an affront to basic human values," Pentagon Press Secretary George Little announced today the Defense Department is revising its sexual assault prevention and response training requirements.

In a Pentagon news conference, Little said Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta repeatedly has stated there is no place for sexual assault in the military or in the department. "[Sexual assault] is a crime that hurts survivors, their families, their friends and their units," he added. "In turn, sexual assault reduces overall military readiness."

The defense secretary has taken numerous steps to ensure the department is doing all it can not only to prevent sexual assaults, Little said, but also to ensure a climate that supports victims' ability and desire to report the crime and to hold perpetrators accountable. Some of those steps include:

- Elevating disposition authority for the most serious sexual assault offenses;
- Working with Congress to establish "special victims unit" capabilities in each of the services so specially trained investigators and prosecutors can assist when necessary;
- Implementing an integrated data system called the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database for tracking sexual assault reports and managing cases while protecting victim confidentiality;
- Establishing a new policy giving service members who report a sexual assault an option to quickly transfer from their unit or installation as a way to protect them from possible harassment and to remove them from proximity to the alleged perpetrator;
- Establishing a credentialing and certification program

See **ASSAULT** page A7



Marines serving with India Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, swab the breach of an M777 Lightweight Howitzer after firing a round during a regimental exercise here Sept. 13. The exercise aimed to develop and sustain 11th Marine Regiment's ability to plan and execute artillery fires.

CANNON COCKERS

When artillery rounds **STRIKE** the impact areas aboard Camp Pendleton, the **EXPLOSIONS** release a dull echo through the corridors of mountains and valleys that lead to small vibrations around the base. When the **FIREPOWER** is magnified by nine artillery batteries and ordnance from missiles and attack helicopters, the echoes turn into a rolling **THUNDER** that **RATTLES** a large portion of the base.

Story and photo by
Sgt. Michael Cifuentes
1st Marine Division

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — The 11th Marine Regiment, a regiment comprised of four artillery battalions and a headquarters battalion, hosted a large-scale combined-arms training evolution here Sept. 9-15 dubbed Fall Fire Exercise. The artillery Marines took ownership of the ruckus caused by their combined 24 howitzers and three batteries firing High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems.

Captain Chris M. Cotton, commanding officer, India Battery, 3rd Bn., 11th Marines, said the mission of the exercise was to develop and sustain the regiment's ability to

See **ARTILLERY** page A7

This Week in Combat Center

History



Reprinted from the Observation Post dated Sept. 25, 1998 Vol. 44 Issue No. 33

3/4, all present and accounted for

Cpl. Jason Angel
Combat Correspondent

The remaining members of 3rd Bn., 4th Marines recently arrived to the Combat Center. After the four-month long move, roughly 600 Marines of this infantry battalion are now all permanently stationed here.

Many of the Marines came from Camp Pendleton, and a few others came from Hawaii and MSG duty.

The move was made so that 3/4 could be on station with its parent unit, according to Capt. Christopher A. Schaefer, 3/7 executive officer.

"Our parent unit is the 7th Marine Regiment," he said, "and regardless of its name, 3/4 has always been attached to 7th Marines.

As was expected, the desert environment is coming as quite a change to the junior Marines.

"It's quite a change for them," Schaefer said. "These Marines are use to living on the coast in the heart of southern California, and now they've come to a relatively small community in the high desert. It's going to take a while for them to adapt."

To help the Marines and their families become accommodated to life in the desert, 3/4 has held numerous family nights. There, spouses of the enlisted are invited to come and address their different concerns.

"This is a big adjustment," said Cpl.

Gregory T. Westhoff, a 20-year-old Silt, Colo., native and infantryman with 3/4. "It's nice to be working with our parent regiment, but when we're off-duty there's not much to do around here. Everything is so far away that a car is mandatory."

And while Twentynine Palms isn't on the 'Nation's List for the Top 10 vacation spots in America,' it is on the Marine Corps' list for Top Live-Fire Bases.

As the premier live-fire base in the Marine Corps, the Combat Center will benefit the Marines of 3/4 to no end.

"The training opportunities here are leaps and bounds over those available at Camp Pendleton," Schaefer said. "As a battalion, we're looking to improve our ability to perform mechanized combined arms exercises. The Combat Center is the only place that we can do this, so we're going to take every opportunity we can train."

With only a month on station, 3/4 has not yet participated in a Combined Arms Exercise here. They have participated in a few exercises of their own, though. The battalion will be traveling to the National Training Center Fort Irwin in October to participate in opposing force exercises with the Army, and will also participate in Steel Knight in December.

As a final message to the other division units aboard the Combat Center Schaefer said, "We're here and we're ready. Ready to train to the best of our ability, and ready to work with our sister battalions to become a regimental combat team."

Morongongo Basin hosts Search and Rescue Desert Run

On October 5, 6 and 7 there will be a 15-20 mile off-road desert run, balance beam, articulation ramp, kids games, prize drawings, vendor displays, hot food, and a drawing.

This is not a race, so bring the whole family. Motorcycles, quads, buggies and all other off road vehicles welcome.

The Desert Run is a 4-wheel drive course with 5 game playing stations along the way and the half waypoint has restrooms available. Participants will encounter rocks, sandy washes, hills and some extreme areas for the hardcore enthusiast. If you don't feel comfortable with an obstacle, we'll direct you to the easy way around. Our event is co-sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management and held at Means Dry Lake in Johnson Valley, Calif. Our event will have plenty of family fun at the base camp and a course sure to please everyone. Last year, we gave away over \$10,000 in prizes! Over 450 vehicles participate annually, making the total attendance at approximately 1,800 people. There will be a truck and Jeep teeter-totter, vehicle articulation ramp, kids games, bounce house, vendor displays and much more.

For mor information call 760-365-8185 or 760-366-4175, email mbsar_desertrun@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.desertrun.org>

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Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

In Oceanside:

- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

In San Diego:

- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
- Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

In National City:

- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

In Twentynine Palms:

- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

In Yucca Valley:

- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

In Palm Springs:

- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.

For the complete orders, but not off-limits, check out the Combat Center's official website at <http://www.marines.mil/units/29palms>

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See answers on page A3

ORANGE BOWL

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ACROSS

- Peace Corps counterpart
- Mideast desert region
- A thousand thou
- Ticked off
- Dean Martin's "That's _"
- "You _ My Sunshine"
- They're planted in beds
- Animal house?
- Singer DiFranco
- Go bad
- Lustrous fabrics
- Felt in one's bones
- __ Maria (coffee-flavored liqueur)
- Classic Mae West line
- Duke it out, in practice
- Perjures oneself
- D sharp equivalent
- Having songlike quality
- Grappler's surface
- Bumped off
- Fight site
- Some sibs
- Paquin or Magnani
- Whales the tar out of
- O'Hare abbr.
- Baseball yearbook listing
- Cold-weather garments
- Bit of hen fruit
- "Great" or "lesser" creature
- Ely of films
- 1988 Michael Keaton film
- "__ day now ..."
- Whopper creators
- Periodic table figs.
- Duke it out
- Come after
- Photo finish

DOWN

- Travelers' documents
- Cara or Castle
- Yarn buy
- Danson of "Cheers"
- Rene'e of silents
- GOP elephant creator Thomas
- CPR giver
- "Here __ nothing!"
- Book boo-boos
- Traces of a bygone civilization, e.g.
- Lab rat's puzzle
- Dumbbell material
- Most August births
- Tyrolean tune
- Parts of some winter caps
- 100-meter man, e.g.
- Dance under a pole
- Stiller's mate
- Block, legally
- Shepard in space
- Pesky kid
- Sicilian peak
- Hunk of meat loaf
- Fiery heap
- Field of expertise
- Well-suited for molding
- Gain in the polls
- Provide lodging for
- Immovable blockage
- Rejoinder to "'Tis!"
- Attraction near Orlando
- Actress Witherspoon
- Kuwaiti, for one
- Admonition to Junior
- Cameo stone
- Salty septet
- Otherwise
- One-man Robert Morse play
- Hagen of stage and screen

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

THE B-BOY

Cpl. Jose Linares

Headquarters Battalion,
Freight clerk, Defense Management Office,
24, Sacramento, Calif.

INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY

LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

September 24, 2012

- > **When I started middle school**, that's when I started dancing.
- > **They had an afterschool** program and I saw these two guys doing head spins and I was like, "Whaaat?"
- > **I thought it was so cool.** They were trying to get people to join their afterschool program. So I started going to learn.
- > **It took me a long time** to actually learn the head spin. It took years and years to develop all the different moves.
- > **It seemed like my friends** were learning it so fast and it took

me forever.

> **The next year I got** in the crew, "Underground Flow." That's when we started traveling to do competitions. I'm still with Underground Flow.

> **It was on and off** throughout high school.

> **My junior year**, they made me switch schools. I was there in some art class and some kid was talking about breaking, so I was like, "Oh, what's up? I can break." He said, "Oh, you can break? Let's go to the back of the classroom. Let's see you break."

> **I guess he didn't believe me** because I was so nerdy, with glasses and braces.

So I go to the back of the classroom and did a bunch of windmills and he was like, "Whaaat?" He was blown away and told me they practice upstairs in the lobby.

> **I went upstairs** and started breaking and started teaching them.

> **That first time I went up** there during lunchtime, people passing by saw me doing a bunch of head spins and windmills. They started creating a crowd, like a big huge crowd, and the security guards thought it was a fight. So then everybody thinks it's a fight and the whole school runs over there.

> **So they said, "You can't do this anymore.** You're not allowed to do this at school." They made us stop breaking. We started breaking in front of the school, and they couldn't do anything about it.

> **I think of it as artwork.** You have to be very creative. The beginning moves are all basic. From that you kind of build on yourself. You make it your own. Everyone has to make it their own. If you are just doing what the other person does, it's not good. It's not easy, but if it was easy, everyone would be doing it.

> **This dance is spiritual. It's confidence.** It's about being humble, having heart and character and being yourself. You could learn a bunch of moves,, but if you have never been to a competition you will never really understand the dance.

> **I try to go to competitions** when I can. It makes it much easier to go to Los Angeles for competitions now that I'm at Twentynine Palms.

> **I've been hooking** up with these guys called "Odd Squad" from Indio, Calif. They are like my brothers. I met them while I was up here and they're like family now. I go there every weekend and they give me my own room.

> **We go to practice and we go to events.** We try to go to an event every other month, just because of gas and money. These other crews wake up and drive half an hour to competitions. We have two hours there, two hours back.

> **I went to "So You Think You Can Dance"** in 2008. This was before I joined the Marine Corps. My friend actually convinced me to go. We decided to drive up to L.A., the two of us and some other guys. I thought I'd just go with them.

> **I originally didn't really** want to try-out, because I'm not a dancer, ballet and all that. We went up there and we all ended up passing through two rounds and in the third round they accepted me, but not the other guys. So they had to wait outside. I was in the back room, practicing and I kind of hurt my foot and there was another competition in San Francisco that same weekend. I just ended up leaving the try-outs.

> **I joined the Marine Corps** in December of 2008. A lot of people are still shocked I break dance. They're like, "Oh wow. That's so cool. I've never seen that before."

> **I was part of "Marines got Talent"** this year. I put the routine together that day and I put the moves and the music together. It just started falling into place. My worry was I was going to forget something, so I did the rehearsal over and over all out when I should have just gone through it relaxed. I got out there and I was gassed. Right when the show was over I laid down on the ground. I couldn't breathe or move. Lesson learned.

> **When I am dancing anywhere**, if it's in the circle or at a competition, I am, really alone. It's me, the floor and the music. It takes a lot of time to understand really what b-boying / b-girling (beat boy/ beat girl) really is, but anyone could do it. I've seen and taught young, old, small or big. You can do anything.

> **It's a stress reliever.** If I don't dance all week I get grouchy. I can be mean to customers, but when I come back to work after breaking that weekend I'm relaxed, rejuvenated.

> **I see myself doing** this the rest of my life.



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COMPETITION BREEDS EXCELLENCE

*A Marine stares through the rifle combat optic of his weapon at a target just 200 yards away. His finger rests lightly on the trigger as he breathes in slowly and steadily. As the Marine exhales, he gently squeezes the trigger. **Bang!** The carefully aimed projectile twists out of the barrel and sails through the air — striking the target with flawless accuracy.*

Cpl. Chelsea Flowers Anderson
Marines Magazine

The acutely honed marksmanship skills Marine marksmen strive to perfect will aid in destroying the enemy. And the dead-on accuracy of expert shooters helps ensure Marines win competition medals as members of the Marine Corps' shooting team.

Winning, or even ensuring every Marine is a rifleman, hasn't always been the case for the Corps.

Before 1900, marksmanship in the Marine Corps was far from impressive — less than an estimated 100 Marines could meet basic marksmanship requirements. And when Marines on the Corps' rifle team finished poorly in their first shooting match in 1901, they decided to take aim on becoming the best.

Born out of that very first Marine Corps Rifle Team were the drive and desire that developed into ensuring every Marine is a rifleman.

The Corps' leadership instituted training and standards for marksmanship. They also provided incentives, such as a three dollar per month pay bonus for those that qualified as rifle experts. Their hard work paid off — by 1911, the Corps was winning competitions. Better yet, the ethos of excellence was taking hold and by 1917 every Marine sent to the fight was a trained and qualified marksman.

This dedication to excellence no doubt played a pivotal role in Marines winning in battle as well. The accounts from the fierce fighting at Belleau Wood bear evidence that the enemy could not advance, even with artillery and machine gun fire, against the accuracy and range of Marine riflemen.

"Marksmanship is something that's in our roots," said Capt. Nicholas J. Roberge, officer-in-charge of the Marine Corps rifle and pistol shooting teams at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. "Marines are good shooters. We should keep that tradition going as long as we can."

Team members appreciate their unique experiences to represent the Corps and are willing to put forth the effort and discipline required to maintain their expertise, said Cpl. Neil Sookdeo, small arms weapons instructor and 2011 Marine Corps shooting team member.

Team members spend as much of their time as possible putting rounds down-range. They host mini competitions to keep training diverse and interesting.

"If you shoot the same thing over and over, you get bored



PHOTOS BY CPL. CHELSEA FLOWERS ANDERSON

Sgt. Joshua Martin, Marine Corps shooting team, prepares to fire during rifle practice at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Dec. 8, 2011. The intent of the shooting team program is for the members to achieve advanced marksmanship techniques and then share those skills with other countries and other Marines. It is this passing of knowledge that makes the team so valuable to the Marine Corps mission.

with it," Roberge said. "We try to shoot different weapons at rapid and slow fires just to change the training up."

All the work that team members put forth gives them a sense of pride in what they do.

"It's a big honor," Sookdeo said. "There aren't a lot of people in the Marine Corps that get to do it. It takes a lot of work to get here and the people that do get here recognize it. We don't take it for granted, not for a second."

Those with the top marksmanship skills to become members of the rifle and pistol teams join a rich history of elite marksmanship in the Corps, a history current members and future members will continue in coming years.

Honing Expertise, Sharing the Skills

Qualifying for one of the Corps' shooting teams is tough. Roughly a dozen Marines were chosen to compete on the Corps' 2012 rifle and pistol teams. Although team members represent various military occupational specialties, the Marines have two things in common: their skill in marksmanship and their eagerness to learn and then share their knowledge with the rest of the Corps.

"The whole intent of the shooting program is to obtain and master as many advanced marksmanship skills as you can and

then share those techniques with other Marines," Roberge said.

One of the Marines chosen to share his expertise is Sgt. Louis Esparza. He was selected to be head coach of the Marine Corps pistol team after racking up an impressive record for marksmanship competition at division matches on Okinawa and the Marine Corps Championship at MCB Quantico, Va. He furthered his record, advancing to third place out of more than a hundred competitors at the 2011 inter-service pistol competition — the first Marine to place in the top three in the past five years.

Esparza said experience on the teams ensures team members have more in-depth expertise on marksmanship, making them better teachers for other Marines.

"We take Marines and teach them how to digest all the little bits of fundamentals," Esparza said. "They go out and teach other Marines. That's why it's really important."

Shooting Tips from the Pros

The passing on of this knowledge begins with instruction on shooting. The Marines train and coach all 2nd lieutenants who attend The Basic School aboard MCB Quantico, Va., as well as Marines requalifying in and around the National Capital Region. Team members also pass their marksmanship knowl-

BRIDGEPORT, from A1

The assault force was divided into two training areas, Hawthorne and Sweet Water, each with a specific objectives.

The V22s dropped 37 Marines off at the Hawthorne training areas, where the main raid took place. Recon Marines entered and cleared buildings until they reached a simulated high value target.

Flying above the Marines were two AH-1Z Cobras, providing air support.

"They're the eye in the sky, with a human looking through the sensor, talking on the radio, telling the guys on the ground what he's seeing in real time," Freeland said. "That's the ground air integration that makes the Marine Corps such a powerful fighting force."

At Sweet Water, a KC130 dropped off 36 recon Marines where they seized the airfield, set up a ground refueling point and held security.

"We went up there and made sure everything was safe," said Lance Cpl. Brady J. Hopper, reconnaissance Marine, 2nd Recon Battalion. "We spotted certain trucks and things that came in and reported it up."

The cobras soon joined the Marines at Sweet Water, where they were able to fuel up and return to the sky.

"Our movements were quick," Hopper said. "We were tactical, everybody did pretty well."

In addition to the refueling at Sweet Water, the Omega Tankers provided refueling mid-mission at more than 17,000 ft. above sea level.

With objectives complete, Marines at both training areas loaded up into their aircrafts and headed back to the desert.

"There were a lot of players, a lot of detailed planning," Freeland said. "I think the execution was so smooth because we had a lot of professionals involved in it and it worked out very well."



LANCE CPL. ALI AZIMI

Marines with 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion load up into a KC-130 after an air raid exercise at the Sweet Water training area, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Sept. 17.



Sgt. Sean Morris, Marine Corps shooting team, sights in during practice at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Dec. 8, 2011. For the last 100 years, the Marine Corps shooting team has carried on the legacy of elite marksmanship in the Corps by scoring high in competitions as well as instructing other Marines in the fundamentals of marksmanship.

edge on to more elite shooters and possible future Marine Corps team competitors during intramural competitions and the yearly division competitions at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan.

The best shooters from around the Marine Corps participate in these matches and the top competitors are often considered for the official shooting teams.

In addition to Marines, the shooting team members work with civilian groups and other service members at various matches and clinics around the country. This only further helps to diversify the team's techniques.

"Whether Marine, other service member, or civilian, each type of shooter brings his individual experiences to the table," Roberge said. "This exchange of ideas enhances each shooter, and furthers the development of marksmanship throughout the nation. Where we may be limited in certain areas or disciplines, civilians may have different techniques we were otherwise not aware of."

These additional techniques enhance the Marines' performance as they prepare for competitions later in the year.

Competing Against the Best

The majority of the team's competitions occur midyear, between April and August. They compete in inter-service competitions such as the Army inter-service pistol competition at Fort Benning, Ga., and the rifle inter-service match at MCB Quantico. The competitions, whether against the other United States military services or civilian teams, take place worldwide — with teams representing the Corps across the U.S. and abroad in locations such as Australia and England. During these matches, Marines show off the skills they've perfected.

"Between both teams, we'll fly over 25,000 miles, and drive another 7,500 over 200 days for about 20 different matches," Roberge said.

At these competitions, the Marines have the opportunity to earn points toward becoming a Distinguished Marksman and a Distinguished Pistol Shot through up-to-four leg matches per year to include the Marine Corps Championships, the Inter-service Championships and the National Championships. Competitors can also win a Secretary of the Navy Trophy rifle, typically an M1 Garand, for winning a match or being the highest scoring new shooter, known as a 'tyro.'

"The overall prize though is to increase a shooter's confidence in the ability to accurately fire small arms, and bring back these advanced skills to their units for their Marines to learn and apply," Roberge said.

Even though the mid-year competitions serve as an

opportunity for prizes and awards, they are merely preparation for the most important competition: nationals.

"The U.S. Rifle National and Pistol National Championships are the most widely recognized shooting events in the United States," Roberge said. "Nationals are the primary competitive event the Marine Corps Shooting Team trains for throughout the shooting season. The knowledge gained by competing amongst the best in the nation gives us more tools and techniques to teach marksmanship to others, and positively impacts our ability to shoot better."

In 2012, the two Marine Corps Pistol Teams placed second and third out of six teams at the 53rd Annual Pistol Inter-service Championship in Fort Benning, Ga. The Marine Corps Rifle Team will head to the 51st Interservice Rifle Competition.

"The team has done well so far this year," Roberge said. "We had a great showing at the Eastern Division Matches and Marine Corps Championships. We also had top placements at State and Regional matches for the Rifle and Pistol teams."

Joining the Team

The best way for Marines who want to be considered for the rifle or pistol team to get started is with intramural or

division matches on Marine Corps bases. They must then get permission from their command before submitting an application to the Weapons Training Battalion at MCB Quantico, Va. If selected, they will serve a normal two-to-three year tour with the team. Prospective Marine shooters should understand up front that becoming a member of the team isn't an easy commitment and requires more than the ability to put rounds in the black.

"We're looking for a great shooter," Roberge said. "But he or she absolutely must have the right attitude. We have developed chemistry on the current team, and we'd like to be able to maintain it. If they're not a team player, I don't care if they're winning everything, we don't want them."

This mindset of unity and common purpose drives the members of the Marine Corps shooting teams to not just win competitions, but to hone their marksmanship skills so they are better equipped to bring those skills to Marines Corps-wide. With every shot the members of the Marine Corps rifle and pistol shooting teams put down-range, with every clinic they coach and with every trophy they bring home, they are proving to other military branches and the world that Marines truly are known and feared for their marksmanship. They carry on the proud tradition that every Marine is a rifleman and serve as a call to excellence for all Marines.



A Marine with the Marine Corps pistol shooting team fires during practice at the ranges on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Dec. 8, 2011.



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ARTILLERY, from A1

plan and execute artillery fires. Specifically, the artillery battalions trained in all aspects in fire support coordination, maneuvering, counter firing and supporting regimental command and control.

"We're really working to improve our core mission-essential tasks, which as artillery, is providing mass fire support on objectives and targets so infantry can complete their missions with little or no resistance," said Cotton, a native of Butte, Mont.

The battalions pushed their firing batteries to different locations to simulate positions they'd hold while on offense and defense in battle. Staff Sgt. Brian M. Meyer, assistant operations chief, 11th Marines, said the exercise standardizes the training criteria and proficiency across every battalion in the regiment, which leads to keeping the Marine Corps' artillery capabilities at its peak.

"Regimental exercises give the Marines a very fundamental and real approach to help the Marines on the ground (infantry) and help them quickly," said Meyer, a native of Wittenberg, Wis.

As firing missions were called upon from the regiment's headquarters element, the Marines manning the M777 Lightweight Howitzer were prepared to fire accurately on command. Cotton also said the artillerymen are capable of moving positions with the howitzers, and upon the order, can stop, dismount from the trucks that pull the howitzers, prepare the cannon to fire and have rounds impact targets in less than five minutes.

"We're well-trained, all-weather, reliable, accurate and very lethal," Cotton said.

In previous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marines serving with battalions from 11th Marines were assigned non-artillery roles on the battlefield — from providing outpost and convoy security to serving as provisional rifle platoons. Cotton said his cannoners are enthusiastic in getting back to their artillery jobs and sharpening the skills needed to provide fire support.

"We're back — back to execute that accurate and timely fire support," Cotton said. "The boys are back, and we're in top notch."

Hundreds of rounds impacted throughout the training grounds aboard Camp Pendleton, and some Marines firing the weapon systems said the amount of firepower they can hear coming from fellow gun batteries from their flanks was overwhelming.

Corporal Andrew McClelland, an assistant section chief with India Battery, 3/11, said no other long-range weapon system matches the same effect of the howitzers — "it's that decimating power."

"We want to be able to hit the enemy fast, and hit them hard," said McClelland, a native of Borger, Texas.

Major General Ronald L. Bailey, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, said the artillery element of the division is the "king of battle."

He also said the exercise was invaluable to every element of the regiment, from logistical support, to communications, and all skills associated with getting a firing mission to the gun line.

ITX, from A1

there and see how things really work," Smolko said. "You get pretty much the exact thing you'd experience."

Cherry pickers are scenario inserts that require a Marine or Marines to become a simulated casualty or casualties to prepare the exercise force Marines to properly assess and execute the situation."

1/3 Marines proved themselves capable as they rushed to their comrades to provide medical care and evacuated them for further treatment.

The next time 1/3 Marines return to the Combat Center before a deployment, they will find EMV to be long gone and replaced by ITX.

"You never know what's going to happen wherever you go. It just prepares you for every situation you might encounter," Smolko said. "I'm looking forward to seeing what they change and how they improve things."

EMV, the standard deployment training

is scheduled to be replaced by ITX next year.

This change is siad too to help aid in the change in the deployment environment Marines will face.

The ITX will retain much of same, or slightly modified fundamental core events found in EMV. It will still involve

defense fend off the enemy. Finally they launch a counter-attack on day three.

Battalion Stability Operation will replace CHB-4. This portion will provide a replication of the current operating environment.

Marines going to OEF will have training very similar to the current CHB-4, with Afghan role players and training scenarios.

Units that will be part of the Unit Deployment Program will focus more on the skills an expeditionary unit would have to be well versed in.

"EMV and ITX have a focus on core competencies with an application on the specific techniques and procedures that are applied on the current theater," Mitchell said. "Humanitarian assistance, disaster response, NEOs. There's going to be a little bit more of a combination of those mission sets for a UDP or a MEU battalion inside of ITX."

This is the last Enhanced Mojave Viper we will be doing before the shift to ITX in the Spring.

— Capt. David M. Mitchell

ASSAULT from A1

aligned with national standards to enhance the quality of support from sexual assault victims' advocates;

— Issuing a new policy requiring the retention of sexual assault records for 50 years; and

— Enhancing training for investigators and attorneys in evidence collection, interviewing and interacting with sexual assault survivors.

"The goal of this department is to establish a culture free from the crime of sexual assault," Little said. "And one that deters potential perpetrators and supports survivors."

The Defense Department has a zero tolerance policy for sexual assault, Little said, noting that the health of the force is a major priority for Panetta. "We must hold perpetrators accountable, and we must do everything we can to prevent [sexual assault] in the first place," he added.

"The focus is on ensuring that we do everything that we can to provide complete and comprehensive training, that we create a safe environment for our service members, especially when they enter the force, and on ensuring accountability," Little said.

And accountability is most appropriately delivered through the chain of command, he added.

"One very important part of that process is ensuring that commanders and senior enlisted leaders are properly trained to set the right tone in their units and respond appropriately to any instances of sexual assault within their commands and organizations," the press secretary said.

In January, Panetta directed a review across all services of pre-command sexual assault prevention and response training, Little

said. The defense secretary received the results of the report earlier this year, and based on those results is now directing further action, he said.

Each of the service secretaries and the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness were directed to develop and implement standardized requirements and learning objectives for sexual assault prevention and response training, Little said. The intent is to improve the awareness and response of prospective commanders and senior enlisted leaders, he explained.

"At the same time, it is clear that the department must continue to do more to prevent sexual assault, especially in initial military training environments," Little said. "Our newest service members are the most vulnerable and most likely to experience a sexual assault."

With this in mind, Panetta today also directed a thorough review of the policies and procedures related to all military training of enlisted personnel and commissioned officers, Little said.

"That review will assess initial training in several areas," he told reporters, including the selection, training and oversight of instructors and leaders who directly supervise trainees and officer candidates; the ratio of instructors to students; and the ratio of leaders in the chain of command to instructors.

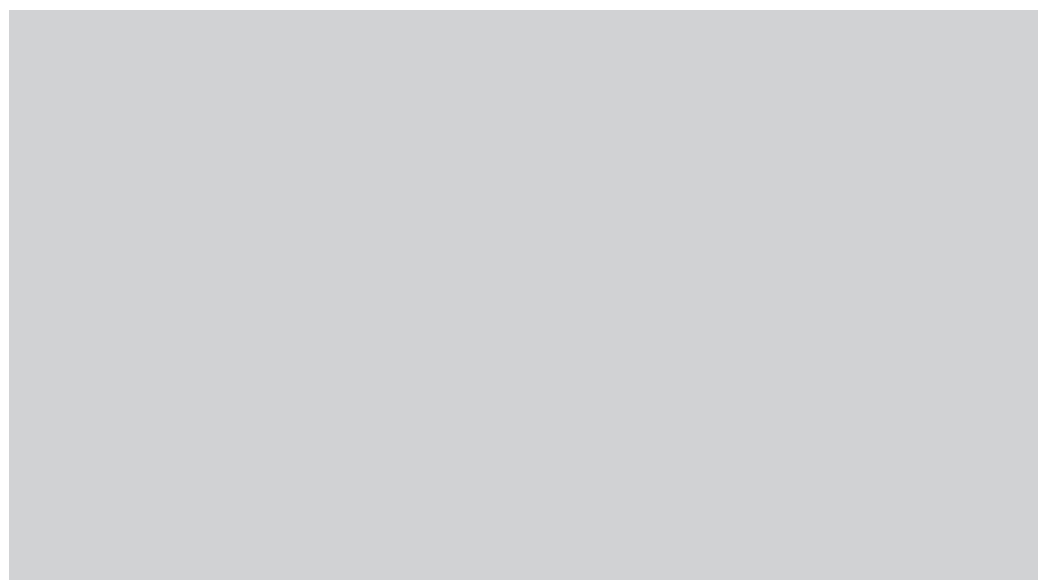
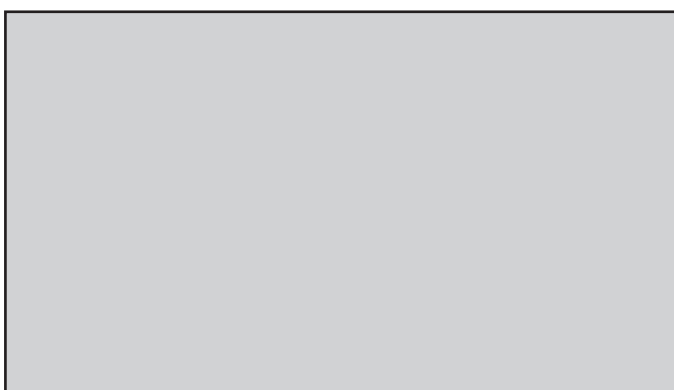
The review, scheduled to be completed by February, also will assess potential benefits of increasing the number of female instructors conducting initial military training.

"All members of the military and this department must have an environment that is free from sexual assault," Little said. "The department remains strongly committed to providing that environment and ensuring the safety and security of those entrusted in our care."

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WeekINPhotos

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Reserve Craft Beach Naval Base Guam

[Right] The Marines and sailors with Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with soldiers with 1st Company, 51st Infantry Regiment, 15th Brigade, Japanese Ground Self Defense Force dismount from combat rubber raiding craft during a boat raid, Sept. 22. The JGSDF are integrated into BLT 2/1 during the MEU's Fall Patrol deployment, where they conduct bilateral exercises to help strengthen military ties between Japan and the Marines. The 31st MEU is the only continuously forward-deployed MEU and is the Marine Corps' force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

[Middle] Six combat rubber raiding crafts bearing Marines and sailors with Co. F, BLT 2/1, 31st MEU, and soldiers with 1st Company, 51st Infantry Regiment, 15th Brigade, JGSDF, approach the beach during a boat raid Sept. 22.

[Bottom, right] A combat rubber raiding craft bearing Marines and sailors with Company F, BLT, 2/1, 31st MEU, and soldiers with 1st Company, 51st Infantry Regiment, 15th Brigade, JGSDF, approaches the beach during a boat raid in Guam Sept. 22.

[Bottom, left] A Japanese soldier looks down the sights of his Howa Type 89 assault rifle while laying in the prone position during an integrated amphibious raid Sept. 22.



LANCE CPL. CODEY UNDERWOOD



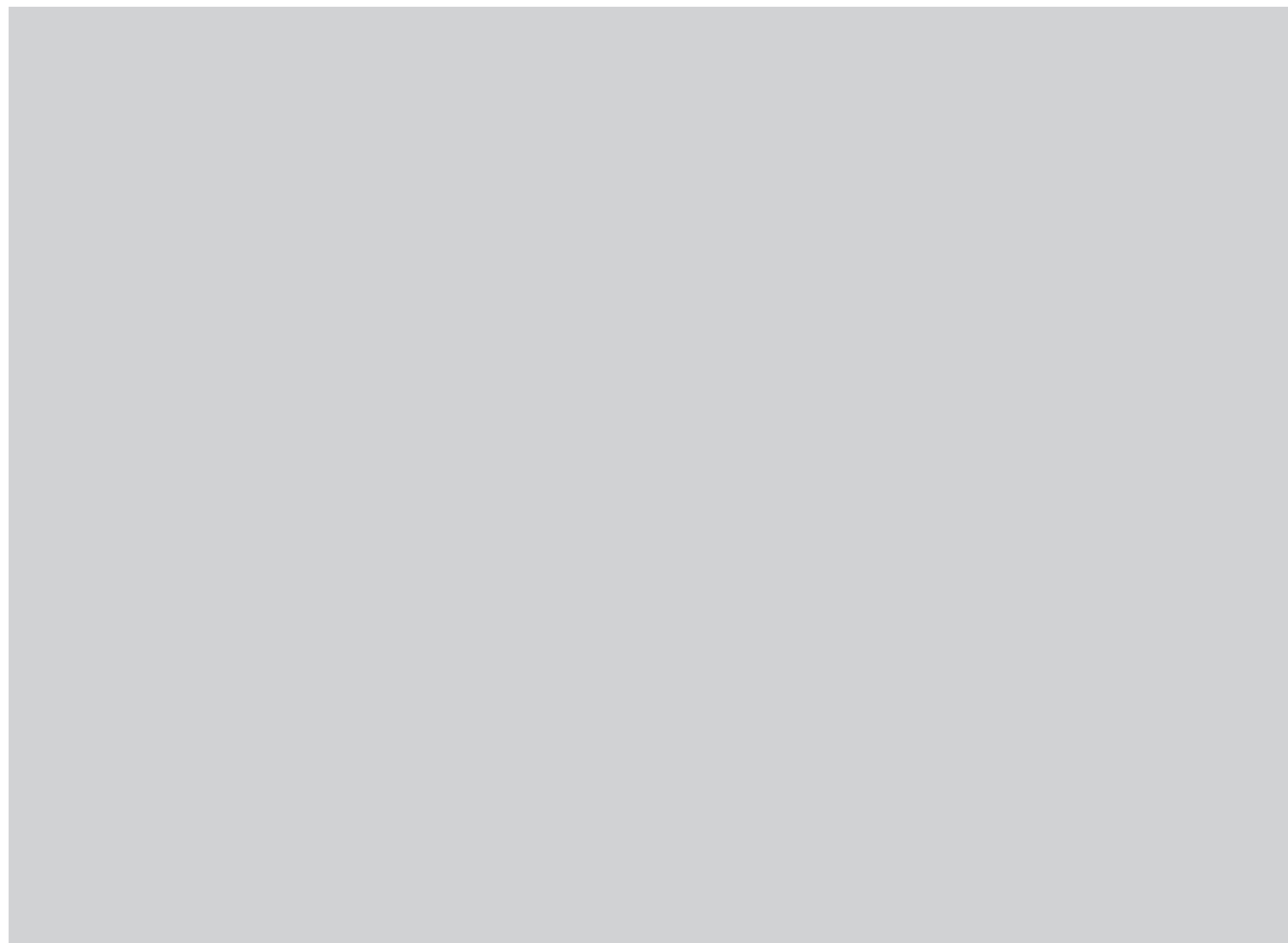
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Belle of the Ball

Story by
Lance Cpl. Lauren Kurkimilis

The Marine Corps Birthday Ball is a long-standing tradition and a magnificent affair. For Megan Drake, it will be unlike anything she has ever experienced.

Megan Drake is going to be treated like a celebrity. She's going to be the center of attention as a guest at one of the most prestigious and internationally celebrated events this year.

Actually, it has been happening every year since 1925.

The Marine Corps Birthday Ball, a long-standing and revered tradition, is celebrated world-wide by Marines young and old. In a service known for taking its customs seriously, the ball ranks up there at the highest.

New dresses, new shoes, a new hairstyle and painted nails.

For a girl, just preparing for the event is part of the fun.

A Night to Remember

Megan and her husband, Pfc. Calib Drake, grew up in neighboring Kansas towns, were high school sweethearts and are about to embark upon their first Marine Corps Ball together. The most formal event they ever attended was prom, which was special, but most certainly not black tie.

"I've really only ever been to prom," said Megan. "But that's so different from a formal ball. At first, I didn't know what to expect. I'm really excited, but it still feels a little overwhelming."

Once a year, not only do Marines get to celebrate their proud heritage during the Marine Corps Birthday Ball, but they get to share that honor with those closest to them. They enjoy the rare opportunity to dress to the nines and enjoy an evening of celebration and elegance.

"I love dressing nice, and I want to make a good impression," Megan said. "So I'm just going to try to be as prepared as possible."

Linking Up with Like Minds

Ceremony, tradition, and etiquette are key elements that bring the Marine Corps Birthday Ball to life. The Lifestyle Insights Networking Knowledge Skill organization better acquaints families with the Marine Corps by holding events like Belle of the Ball.

Like a mother prepares her daughter for a coming-out cotillion, the L.I.N.K.S. mentors guided the women through the ball experience. They shared their personal accounts of their time at the ball and passed down knowledge.

"For me, the most significant thing about the ball is the tradition," said Sharon Altemoos, Marine wife and mother. "I've been around the Marine Corps my whole life, but when they play the 'Marines Hymn' as the cake comes in, it still brings a tear to my eye. It's that sense of pride, integrity and tradition that makes the Corps so special. The ball is our chance, as the supporters of Marines, to celebrate our life of honor, courage and commitment with our Marines."

The Belle of the Ball event was put together to give the women who have never been to the ball before the opportunity to see what's expected before they get there. The women learned Marine Corps tradition and history, social and table etiquette and what is considered proper ball attire.

"Just walking in (to the Belle of the Ball event) and seeing how the tables were set up showed just how proper the ball is going to be," Megan said. "It was so elaborate."

Thirteen tables were arranged in the large ball room. They were placed with proper table settings and ornate centerpieces. Belle of the Ball was designed to show how things will look and play out during the night of the ball. There was a guest speaker, presentation of the colors and cutting of the cake. The event was completed with a ball gown giveaway.

"Going there helped me out a lot," Megan said. "Now, at least, I sort of know what to expect and I won't be completely surprised or unprepared."

Ribbons and Curls

Megan has most of her pre-ball preparations planned out and is approaching it with a very do-it-yourself attitude.

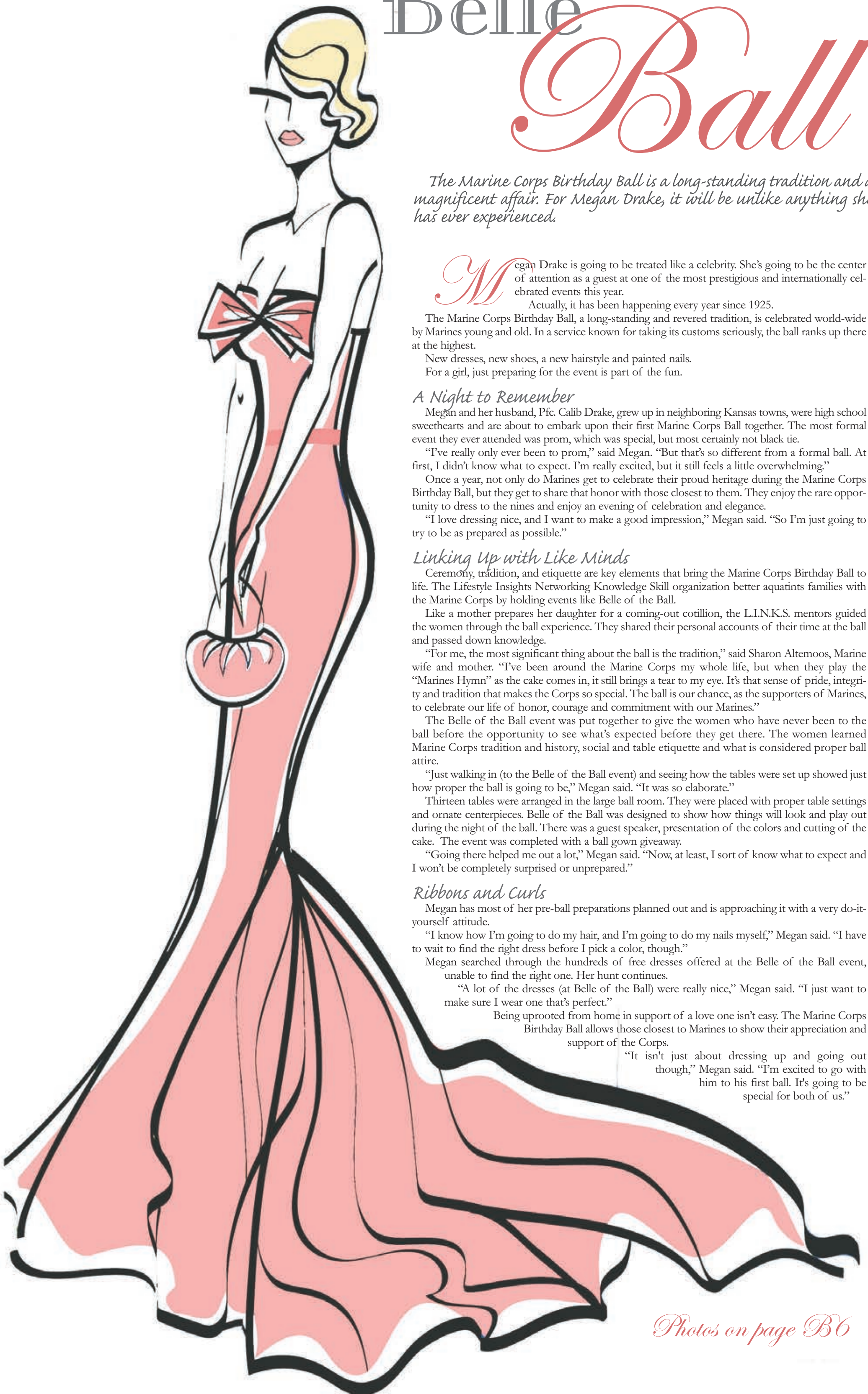
"I know how I'm going to do my hair, and I'm going to do my nails myself," Megan said. "I have to wait to find the right dress before I pick a color, though."

Megan searched through the hundreds of free dresses offered at the Belle of the Ball event, unable to find the right one. Her hunt continues.

"A lot of the dresses (at Belle of the Ball) were really nice," Megan said. "I just want to make sure I wear one that's perfect."

Being uprooted from home in support of a love one isn't easy. The Marine Corps Birthday Ball allows those closest to Marines to show their appreciation and support of the Corps.

"It isn't just about dressing up and going out though," Megan said. "I'm excited to go with him to his first ball. It's going to be special for both of us."



Photos on page B6



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Rockin' Karaoke 7-10 p.m.
 Friday: Social hour with food, 5 - 7 p.m. followed by DJ Gjettblaque, 8 - 11 p.m., Ladies Night
 Saturday: Variety Night, DJ Gjettblaque 8 - 11 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Monday: Margarita Mondays
 Thursday: Warrior Night 4:30
 Friday: Karaoke Night 6 - 9 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Friday: Steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch
 Monday: All-hands steak night, 4:30 - 8 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Monday: Steak night, 5 - 7:30 p.m.
 Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Thursday: Taco Night, 5 - 7 p.m.
 Right Hand Man night 4:30 - 8 p.m.

For complete calendars visit <http://www.mcsc29palms.com>.

Local Events

Darkum Asylum

When: Oct. 19-31, check website for times
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms, Calif.
 For more information call 316-4151
 or visit <http://www.theatre29.org>

Laura Marling

English folk musician from Eversley, Hampshire.
 When: Friday, Oct. 5
 Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace
 53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown, Calif.
 For more information, call 365-5956.

Free Line Dance Lessons

Learn to dance to traditional country music
 When: 5 - 9 p.m., every Sunday
 Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall
 50048 29 Palms Hwy, Morongo Valley, Calif.
 For more information, call 363-3343.

Lower Desert

Joe Walsh

Former Eagles guitarist performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday Sept. 29
 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella, Calif.
 For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit
<http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Ian Anderson

Professional flutist plays
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, Oct. 19
 Where: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

John Legend

Nine-time Grammy Award winner performs
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, Nov. 16
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
 For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Sinbad/Zapp

Comedian performs
 When: 8:00 p.m., Friday, Nov. 23
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon, Calif.
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, September 28

6 p.m. - Total Recall, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Savages, Rated R
 Midnight - The Campaign, Rated R

Saturday, September 29

7 p.m. - Sounds of Freedom Music Festival, featuring Hinder and Theory of a Deadman at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Grey Field

Sunday, September 30

12:30 p.m. - Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, Rated PG
 3 p.m. - Odd Life of Timothy Green, Rated PG
 6 p.m. - Step Up Revolution 3D, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. - Bourne Legacy, Rated PG-13

Monday, October 1

7 p.m. - Savages, Rated R

Tuesday, October 2

7 p.m. - Step Up Revolution 3D, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, October 3

5:30 p.m. - Odd Life of Timothy Green, Rated PG
 8:30 p.m. - The Watch, Rated R

Thursday, October 4

5:30 p.m. - Moonrise Kingdom, Rated PG-13
 8:30 p.m. - Savages, Rated R

Clint Eastwood's baseball drama hits a sweet spot



COURTESY PHOTO

Clint Eastwood plays Gus Lobel, who's been one of the game's top scouts for decades, but time has taken its toll. These days, grumpy widower Gus has trouble seeing, has trouble peeing and can't park his car without banging into something. The Atlanta Braves, who've signed a parade of star players on his advice over the years, wonder if they should put their faith in him once more, or put him out to pasture.

NEIL POND

"Trouble With the Curve"

Starring Clint Eastwood, Amy Adams & Justin Timberlake
 Directed by Robert Lorenz
 PG-13, 111 min.

A Hollywood icon takes a swing at America's pastime in "Trouble With the Curve," a cross-generational crowd-pleaser about an elderly professional baseball scout who strikes out when it comes to relating to his now-grown-up daughter.

Clint Eastwood plays Gus Lobel, who's been one of the game's top scouts for decades, but time has taken its toll. These days, grumpy widower Gus has trouble seeing, has trouble peeing and can't park his car without banging into something. The Atlanta Braves, who've signed a parade of star players on his advice over the years, wonder if they should put their faith in him once more, or put him out to pasture.

"Time's change — Gus can't even turn on a typewriter," huffs one of the organization's young suits, "Let

alone a computer."

Gus' daughter, Mickey (named after Mickey Mantle, her dad's idol), is now a successful Atlanta attorney, played by Amy Adams. Mickey grew up around locker-room talk and baseball fields, but — for reasons we find out about later — can't get her dad to join her on any meaningful strolls down memory lane.

Just before he's sent to North Carolina to scout a hotshot high-school slugger at the end of the season, Gus gets some unwanted news from his eye doctor. Concerned that her dad can't see well enough to do his job, much less drive, Mickey postpones work on an important legal case to join him one more time in the small-town bleachers.

There they run into one of Gus' old scouting recruits, Johnny Flanagan (Justin Timberlake), a former MLB pitcher now a scout himself for the rival Boston Red Sox. Johnny's there to check out the same player as Gus, a pompous home-run belter who's practically already packing for his spot in the major leagues — but who, as it turns

out, has a bit of difficulty getting his bat around on one particular kind of pitch.

It's just a matter of time, of course, before Johnny's also checking out Mickey.

How many more movies will Eastwood, now 82, make? Probably not many, and maybe not any. Like Gus Lobel, he knows that times change and torches have to be passed.

And you can sense a torch being passed here. The first movie since 1993 in which he's starred but not directed, "Trouble With the Curve" finds Eastwood relinquishing the decisions behind the camera to his protégé, Robert Lorenz, here making his directorial debut after serving for nearly 20 years as the assistant director for "Million Dollar Baby," "True Crime," "The Bridges of Madison County" and practically every other film Eastwood made during that span.

But the movie nonetheless bears a lot of Eastwood's straightforward, clear-headed filmmaking mojo. And the small group of veteran scouts from other ball clubs with whom Gus hangs, who usually end up chatting about clas-

sic movies, is a nice, almost inside touch, perhaps even a salute — a bunch of old-timers talking Hollywood with the guy who used to be "Dirty Harry."

The cast also includes the dependable John Goodman as Gus' old friend and supporter in the Atlanta Braves organization, and Eastwood's own actor son, Scott, as a Braves player in a bit of a slump.

The movie will particularly resonate with viewers who can relate to watching an aging parent deal with the infirmities of the advancing years, but not wanting to "become a burden" to their adult sons or daughters. In that regard, it's tender, touching, moving and often funny, and the scenes between Adams and Eastwood have an honest, been-there, lived-in feel.

Last year's brilliant, brainy "Moneyball" may have scored first on the topic of gut instincts versus statistics. But on practically every other pitch, for baseball fans and especially Clint Eastwood fans, "Trouble With the Curve" repeatedly hits the sweet spot, right there where every batter wants it, and sends that ball sailing.

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Belle of the *Ball* (In photos)



[Left] Natasha Harth, mentor, Lifestyle Insights Networking Knowledge Skills, discusses appropriate behavior for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball Saturday with Combat Center women Saturday during the first Belle of the Ball event at the Community Center on base. The event taught formal affair etiquette to women who may have never been exposed to black tie events. It also familiarized them with the Marine Corps customs and history regarding the Birthday Ball.

[Bottom, left] Kama Shockey, mentor, L.I.N.K.S., models a dress appropriate for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball as Cpl. Steven Steigleder escorts her down the catwalk Saturday, during the first Belle of the Ball event at the Community Center on base.

[Bottom, right] Women shop through free dresses offered Saturday during the first Belle of the Ball event at the Community Center on base.

PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. LAUREN KURKIMILIS

