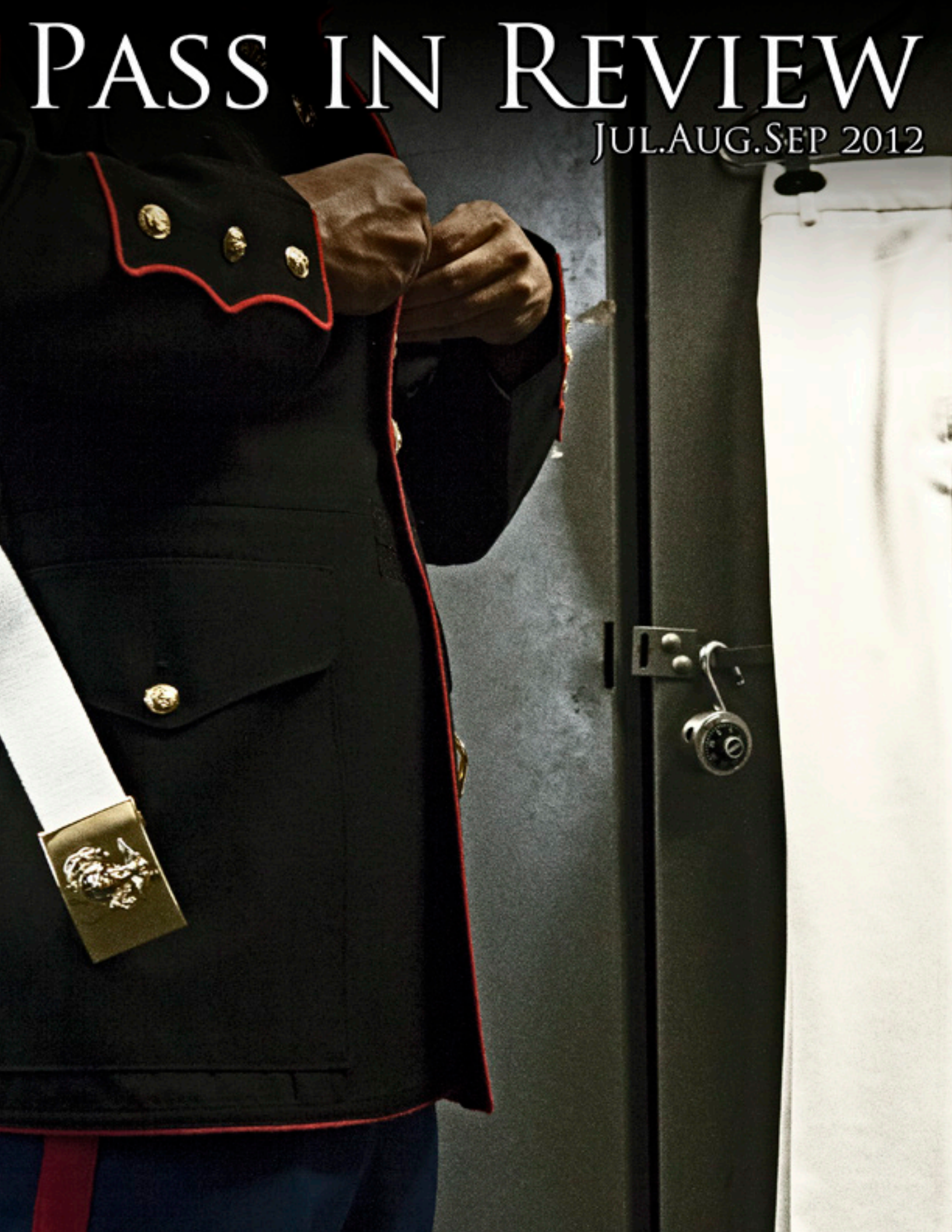


PASS IN REVIEW

JUL.AUG.SEP 2012





Pass in Review

Jul/Aug/Sep 2012



Photo by Cpl. Dengrier Baez

Moving the Barracks

Motor transport logs more than 330,000 miles annually driving the ceremonial mission of the Barracks

Page 6

Living history

Five Montford Point Marines weave together their personal stories to depict the struggles of 22,000

Page 10

Marching first

Maj. Sarah Armstrong becomes the first female to hold the billet of parade commander for a Friday Evening Parade

Page 22

Other Stories

Live life outside the box

Page 16

Field Day

Page 20

Sounds of Summer

Page 26

Front cover photo illustration by Cpl. Dengrier Baez

Back cover photo by Cpl. Dengrier Baez

Pass in Review is published quarterly by the Public Affairs Office, Marine Barracks Washington, 8th & I Sts. S.E., Washington, D.C., 20390-5000. The Secretary of the Navy has determined that this publication is necessary in the transaction of business, required by law, of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing Policy Committee.

Commanding Officer :
Sergeant Major :
Public Affairs Officer :
Public Affairs Chief :
Editor :
Staff Writers:

Semper Fidelis

Col. Christian G. Cabaniss
Sgt. Maj. Eric J. Stockton
Capt. John D. Norton
Staff Sgt. Ryan S. Scranton
Sgt. Austin Hazard
Cpl. Dengrier Baez
Cpl. Jeremy Ware
Cpl. Mondo Lescaud



10



20



26

CHECK US OUT AT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.BARRACKS.MARINES.MIL



NCOs first line of defense against drug abuse

STORY BY CPL. DENGRIER BAEZ

It’s 3 a.m. and someone is beating down my door. My heart is racing, my brain asleep and my body sluggish. Half-stumbling, I make my way to grab the door handle and pull. I step into a scene from a chaotic movie. My Marine alerts me that Pfc. John Doe is on his floor and he’s not responding. What to do?

Not all things are picture perfect and even in our beloved Marine Corps you find those individuals who decide to do the wrong thing. Recently, the Corps has tackled many issues ranging from racism to hazing. Drugs and alcohol abuse are among the many issues. As a leader of Marines, they present a great challenge.

The fact is, if you lose a Marine in garrison, that’s one less troop in the fight. Sure, there are programs to prevent such behavior, but in reality, who’s responsible for enforcing them? The noncommissioned officers. As stated in Marine Corps Order 5300.17, prevention awareness education is the foundation of any substance abuse prevention program. Education and training enhances mission readiness and provides requisite knowledge of the effects of alcohol and drug abuse, ultimately assisting in making responsible decisions.

Whether it’s alcohol, over-the-counter medication, a designer drug such as spice, or publicly-known drugs like marijuana and cocaine, we need to be aware of the harm they can cause to our fellow Marines. I found the best way to do that is education. Building a trusting relationship with subordinates, as well as your peers, is also key. Let them know that you’re there for them.

Staying “proactive instead of reac-

tive,” meaning tackling the problem before it lays in front of you, should be the mindset of every leader. For example, during field day while going through a Marine’s room, you notice several bottles of cough medicine sitting out on his desk but he shows no signs of being sick. A simple line of questions could give you an idea if this is an issue or not.

“Hey Marine, are you sick? Is your roommate not feeling well? What’s this medication for?” Depending on the answers and the relationship established with the Marine, you’ll be able to determine your next course of action.

As Doe lies in front of me in the fetal position, still not responding, the emergency medical technicians rushed through the door, immediately beginning treatment. I stood aside while they worked. I couldn’t help but question myself. What went wrong? Why didn’t I notice something before this happened? Most importantly, what could I have done to prevent this?

A Marine Corps Times article reported that commands conducted 5,433 alcohol-related screenings during fiscal 2010, a slight increase from the 5,372 screenings done in 2009, according to Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Of those 2010 screenings, about 40 percent, or 2,164, received “early intervention,” which includes a one-on-one session or classroom instruction. Slightly fewer Marines — 1,936 — were sent to scheduled education and counseling sessions in outpatient treatment. About 12 percent, or 609, were sent to more intensive residential treatment programs — a jump from 329 the previous year.

As NCOs, we should encourage our Marines to engage in nondrinking events and productive off-duty activities. Recreational

opportunities must provide a change from the normal routine and a means of reducing stress and combating boredom.

Marines have skills and interests which can be put to productive and constructive use during off-duty hours, to include tutoring, mentoring, coaching sports, involvement in youth programs, and volunteering fire and rescue service, according to MCO 5300.17.

Bright lights from the fire truck, the military police cruisers and the ambulance lit the entire block. Doe was carried out on a gurney by the medical technicians and put into the back of an ambulance. Luckily, he was responsive. The alcohol put him in a near comatose state, but he was revived. In the following months, the Marine spent time at an installation detoxicating and rehabilitating.

Catching up with Doe, he was thankful to have survived the scare. He went on to cease his alcohol consumption completely. Doe had a chance to be part of humanitarian missions and training exercises, thus earning the trust and confidence of his leader. The alternative to his recovery, death.

Fellow NCOs, it all comes down to our core values of honor, courage and commitment; the commitment to the Corps and those Marines who are entrusted to our leadership.

We believe in the maxim of no Marine left behind and we should proceed as such by ensuring a drug-free environment for our war dogs to develop both as outstanding citizens and United States Marines.

For more information in prevention programs you can visit your unit substance abuse control center or look up MCO P5300.12a for the Marine Corps substance abuse program.

TOURING DC



ENTERTAINMENT

DINING

HISTORY

Seeking hidden treasures

Story and photos by Cpl. Jeremy Ware and Cpl. Mondo Lescaud

President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “Life is a great adventure ... accept it in such a spirit.”

In honor of the late president, the “Pass in Review” staff set out to discover what Washington offers Marines stationed here.

There was a beach volleyball oasis right off the national mall; and even a way to explore the Potomac River without being eaten by a mutant fish left over from the days when district residents dumped sewage into the river, but, thanks to clear water initiatives, the river is the cleanest it has been since Archibald Henderson walked along its banks.

Our first stop was Roosevelt Island, a small isle located along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This park is named after Teddy Roosevelt and, while he’s best known for speaking softly and carrying a big stick, he did begin establishing national parks in 1903. This 88.5-acre island is home to several golden eagle families, which can be seen flying around at all hours of the day, and a monument to the former president. The island is not far from the Marine Corps War Memorial and there is a parking lot, but the island is only accessible by foot. Teddy would have wanted it that way.

Our second stop landed us

at what was the Georgetown Docks. Georgetown has been around since before the federal government set up shop here in 1801. The docks were the furthest point up the Potomac that big ships could go. Modern ships are not able to make it this far up river, so the area has been converted into an entry point to the river as well as a relaxing family park.

With the Watergate Hotel, yes that Watergate Hotel, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts providing the backdrop, several would-be sailors embark on rented canoes and kayaks to explore the Potomac that flows around the district. There are different places to rent watercraft along the river and all the prices seemed reasonable for a day of fun for any Marine.

There were two water parks that caught our eyes, the one on the Georgetown waterfront and a new park that is still growing at the Yards, near the Nationals ballpark. The Georgetown Park offers approximately 30 individual surging water fountains uniformly arching water more than 10 feet in the air, perfect for any swashbuckling children looking for a day in the water, and a lovely view of the district, but the Yards is a little more dynamic.

While both parks offer a view of the Potomac, only the Yards offers the attention of water being shot from



the ground à la the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, though on a much smaller scale. This fountain becomes a 10 foot waterfall that cascades in a two-foot-deep pool for little ones to frolic.

Georgetown wins the scenic battle but the children playing at the Yards seemed to be having more fun. But why discriminate? We recommend trying both.

Our final stop found us stumbling across a volleyball court in the southern shadow of the Lincoln Memorial. A few barefoot games in the sand made for a fitting end to our day outdoors in the district.

If you’re looking for something to do in the sun this weekend, or a water park for the kids to play, there are a couple of ideas. Bottom line there is so much to do outside in Washington, D.C., and it’s all just waiting to be explored.

Happy hunting.





MOVING Barracks



Cpl. Jimmie Seals, heavy and light vehicle driver, drives from the motor pool at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling to Marine Barracks Washington May 15. Seals has been in the Barracks transportation unit for approximately three years.

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CPL. MONDO LESCAUD



Around the same time most folks in Washington are pushing the snooze button on their alarms, Sgt. Judes Grandoit, training noncommissioned officer for Marine Barracks Washington’s motor transport section, is heading north on Interstate 295. He’ll make a stop across the street from the Barracks, picking up a few Marines in the process, and jump on Interstate 395 to fight early morning traffic on his way to the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va.

Grandoit is part of a team of approximately 50 motor transport Marines that carry out the herculean task of moving the Barracks. Annually, the team logs more than 330,000 miles on their charter-style buses, pickup trucks, moving trucks, and 8 and 15-passenger vans. The majority of the miles are ground out here on the roads and highways around the Capitol, shuttling Marines to various performances and ceremonies.

“I’ve racked up about 20,000 miles since I’ve been here,” said Grandoit with his usual, big smile. “If you think about it, we drive during the week, after normal working

hours, weekends and holidays.”

The 5-foot-8-inch, 160-pound Haitian Marine is the most senior driver here and is often sought out for advice. He said he feels like the driving never stops, but what keeps it all from getting too monotonous is his outlook on the mission.

“Every time I drive, safety is priority,” he said, this time, without a smile. “I refuse to be responsible for a Marine getting injured. It’s never happened, and if I can help it, it never will. But you have to be careful. You’re not watching out for (improvised explosive devices) here. But you are always alert, looking for drunk and swerving drivers, and dangerous situations like ice in the winter, wet leaves in the fall, and city streets that are slick with oil in the summer.”

Much of the work and trip planning happens before the shiny oxford hits the pedal. There are Marines working the behind-the-scenes before any Marine gets behind the wheel.

The dispatcher, platoon sergeant, platoon staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge and platoon commander are always busy at the motorpool at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, working out logistics and keeping Barracks Marines safe.

Most of the Marines that comprise

the motor transport section have been in the operating force, and have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Their performance on the desert paths was critical to mission success, just as it is with the Barracks on Washington’s city streets.

The Marine Corps requires the brave men and women who defend America’s soil to be able to quickly adapt to and overcome any obstacle; the oldest post of the Corps needs the same.

“It’s different when you come here because there are so many eyes on you,” said Sgt. Chris Madden, Barracks motor transportation liaison, exhaling as he recalls his tenure as a driver here after deploying to Iraq twice. “You could literally be driving and the next minute the commandant could jump in your vehicle. We always have to mind our p’s and q’s.”

The sheer number of events they drive the Barracks units to adds to the stress and pressure of the daily grind. Each year, the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon, color guard, and Marine Drum & Bugle Corps commit to more than 150 events outside of the normal Barracks ceremonies.

A major challenge for these transportation Marines is handling this heavy



The Barracks motor pool at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling holds approximately 15 vehicles, including the eight main coach buses, vans, pickup trucks and cars.

workload efficiently.

“When I first got here, one of my buddies told me to forget about having every weekend and holiday off, because there’s always so much to do when you’re a driver,” said Madden, as he fixes a 6-inch stack of driver log sheets sprawled on his desk. “You hate it at first, but eventually you get used to it.”

For most of the Marines in the transportation section, excluding the staff, duty driver, dispatcher and OIC, work starts at 6:15 a.m. Physical training kicks off 15 minutes later. The workouts end at approximately 8 a.m. After they shower and get dressed in the appropriate uniform, at around 9 a.m., the driving begins for most of them if it hasn’t already.

Marines check in and out of the motorpool throughout the day, as they finish and go back out to new commitments.

If it’s a Tuesday or Friday during the summer, parade days for the Barracks, the Marines perform preventative maintenance on all 15 vehicles to start the work day. They clean their eight charter-style buses inside and out. The other vehicles get a full inspection to make sure they are ready to hit the road, just in case.

Just as the ceremonial marchers with Companies A and B take a small brush and dress the edges of their oxford shoes before the parade, making sure every part of their

uniforms looks immaculate, transportation Marines take a brush with bristles the size of a hand, and dress the edges of their vehicles’ tires. They take as much pride in the appearance and serviceability of their vehicles as they do in their own uniforms.

“Parade days are a beast. Not only do we have to drive folks around that evening, right before the parade, but we might have to drive Marines to different places in the morning, on top of mandatory maintenance,” said Sgt. James Hinson, driver.

It’s not just on parade days that the section provides impeccable service, it’s all the time. Except for the Barracks’ guards and maintenance Marines, transportation is the only Barracks unit that has at least one Marine working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

“It does get overwhelming, but I have to say, we handle it very well,” said Sgt. Andrew Gosein, platoon sergeant, leaning back in his worn chair. “In fact, we hardly ever hear complaining from these guys. Most of us have been out there in war zones and handled our own, so we embrace this challenge because we know it could be worse.”

Gosein said he thinks the Barracks’ ceremonial mission represents the fleet and Marines overseas.

He and the rest of the Barracks spend a lot of time in Arlington National Cemetery.

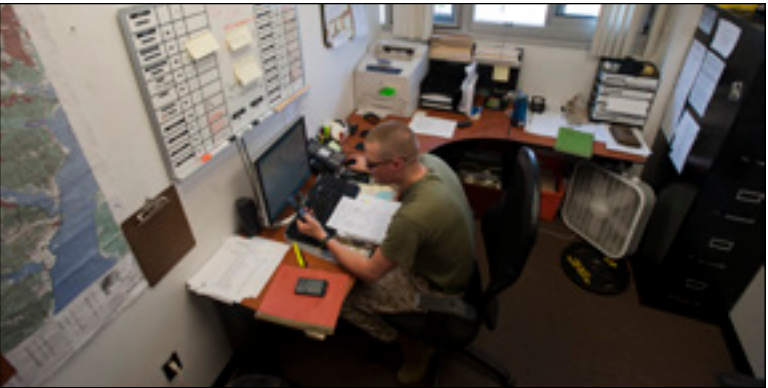
A major part of the mission here is the somber duty of laying Marines to rest. Six of the seven companies here support the funeral ceremonies.

“We’re a rolling poster board of everything the Marine Corps does,” explained Gosein. “Everyone sees our big buses rolling down the highway. Our driving here has the kind of direct, visual impact on the people that our brothers and sisters out there couldn’t have. They aren’t even driving off base that much, let alone in a giant, clean, sexy bus with Semper Fidelis and Marines and logos all over it.”

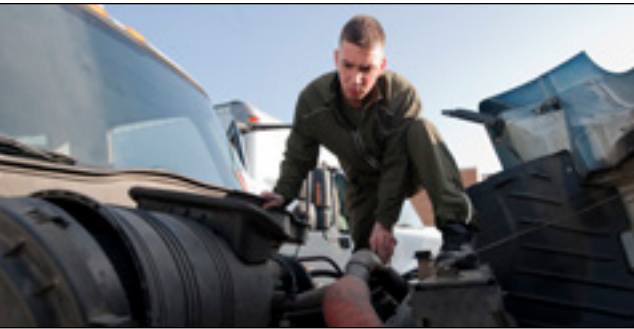
For this reason, the transport Marines are just as, if not more visible than the ceremonial marching elements here. Plenty of people see the huge Marines buses tumbling down the streets and nearly every Marine at the Barracks depends on them to support their various missions.

Their high visibility and the critical role they play in supporting the Barracks keep the platoon of nearly 40 Marines striving for all aspects of personal and unit excellence.

“It’s an absolute pleasure working with these guys,” said Gosein with a tired, but genuine smile. “They are masters at what they do. I know for a fact I can trust every single one of them to do their jobs as best as they can. They adapt and overcome to anything we have to do. At the request of anyone in command, they will turn on the intensity as fast as they turn that ignition key. They get it done.”



Cpl. Robert Nagel, motor transportation dispatcher, answers a call in the dispatcher’s office at the motor pool May 15.



Cpl. Joshua Figueredo, light vehicle operator, inspects a vehicle’s engine as part of the transport section’s regular preventative maintenance.



Living History

The Montford Point Marines

Story and photos by Sgt. Austin Hazard

Seventy years ago, the Corps opened its doors to African-Americans for the first time. Through those doors at Montford Point Camp, in Jacksonville, N.C., walked men who would be drafted into or volunteer for an organization that didn't want them and often did its best to stop them.

This small group of black Marines faced discrimination, segregation, prejudice and unfair standards even as the nation called on them in a time of world war. They paved the way for an unbiased Marine Corps and unknowingly played a part in the ongoing Civil Rights Movement. These men served as equals with their white peers, but were treated as second-class citizens.

Seven decades later, during a ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington in late June, this extraordinary group of men was finally recognized for its contributions to Corps and country with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award a person can receive.

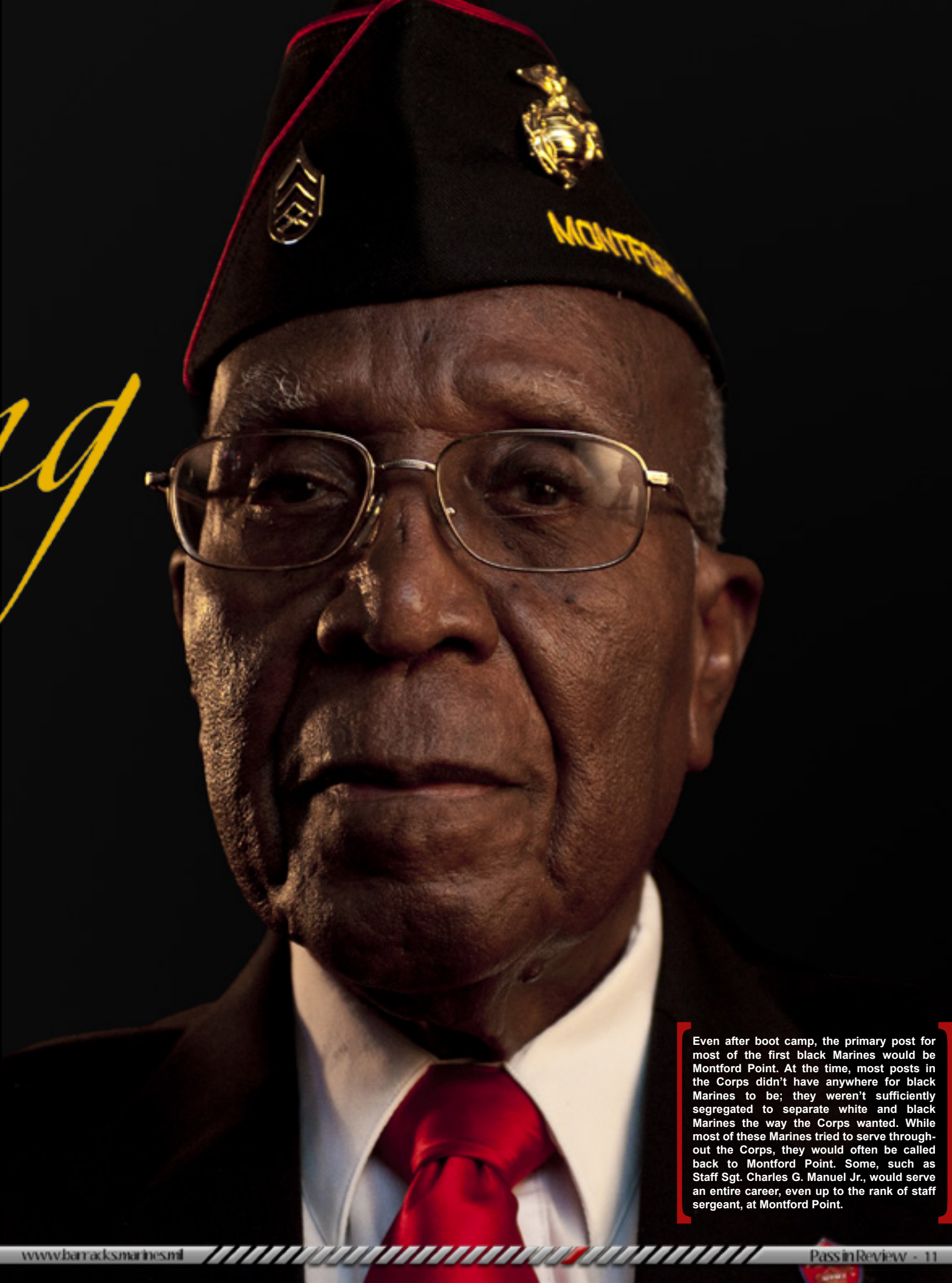
"I enlisted in the Marine Corps June 30 in 1942, but I didn't report for duty because Montford Point Camp was not completed, so I was sent back home," remembered retired Staff Sgt. Charles G. Manuel Jr., 88. "I received orders to report October 16, 1942. When I started duties and started boot camp, I was a member of the seventh platoon of Montford Point Marines."

"I wasn't a volunteer," said Pfc. Willie J. Woods, 86. "I was drafted. At the time that I went over, they had quotas for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. And I was with about 500-and-something men who were there for induction that day."

"I didn't particularly want to go into the Navy," Woods continued. "I knew if I went into the Navy I was going to be a cook, and that didn't please me at all, really. So I chose the Marine Corps."

I wanted the Army, but I chose the Marine Corps. I figured if I chose the Marine Corps, that quota would be filled before I got there, my name being in the Ws, and I would probably get the Army. But it didn't work out that way. I got what I asked for.

"We had a chat with the colonel. He was the one who indoctrinated us into the Marine Corps to tell us what the Marine Corps was going to be like. It should have been sort of a welcoming, I guess. All the information he gave us was to tell us how hard it was going to be, that we wasn't going to enjoy it. In other words, he more or less was trying to talk us out of the Marine Corps. But we knew that the Marine Corps was what we called back during that time an all-white organization and we knew it was going to be tough going. That part of the conversation wasn't really relevant, because



Even after boot camp, the primary post for most of the first black Marines would be Montford Point. At the time, most posts in the Corps didn't have anywhere for black Marines to be; they weren't sufficiently segregated to separate white and black Marines the way the Corps wanted. While most of these Marines tried to serve throughout the Corps, they would often be called back to Montford Point. Some, such as Staff Sgt. Charles G. Manuel Jr., would serve an entire career, even up to the rank of staff sergeant, at Montford Point.

Lasting Legacy



1941

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 8802, forcing all governmental departments to hire regardless of race.



1942

Montford Point Camp opens near Camp Lejeune, N.C., as an all-black recruit depot. Howard P. Perry is the first black recruit.



1943

The first black drill instructors train black recruits. Sgt. Maj. Gilbert H. Johnson and 1st Sgt. George Kidd are among the first.



1945

Frederick C. Branch is promoted to second lieutenant to be the first black Marine officer. He is forced into the reserves.



1948

President Harry Truman signs Executive Order 9801, banning racial discrimination in the armed forces.



1949

Montford Point Camp is closed and the Marine Corps is desegregated. 1st Sgt. George Kidd escorts the last units off camp.



1952

2nd Lt. Frank Petersen becomes the first black Marine aviator. He would fly more than 350 combat missions in Korea and Vietnam.



Long before assassinating President John F. Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald was a Marine. It may speak to his future that he was court-martialed as a Marine. But few may know that it was a Montford Point Marine that court-martialed him. "While I was in Okinawa there, I happened to be the first sergeant of Electronic Company," said 1st Sgt. George Kidd. "I had Oswald. I'm sure everybody's heard of Oswald, the one who shot Kennedy. Lee Harvey Oswald, I gave him a court martial there, while I was in Okinawa. At the time, I didn't have no knowledge of who he was. He had disobeyed the order of a staff NCO (noncommissioned officer) and I think I busted him and had his pay deducted."

this is what we intended to do."

"When we first went in, the commandant made it very hostile for us," started retired Lt. Col. Joe Carpenter, 88, who joined in May 1943. "He said he didn't want us, so (the drill instructors) did everything they could to get rid of us."

"During my training in boot camp, the drill instructors that we had ... all our DIs were white drill instructors," said Manuel. "Our DIs always referred to us as 'you people.' They'd say, 'If you people want to be Marines, I'm going to make Marines out of you dead or alive.' The training was tough, there's no question about it."

"They found out that I had leadership qualities," explained retired 1st Sgt. George Kidd, 88, who was drafted in 1943. "When I went through boot camp, I was what they referred to as an 'acting jack' in my platoon of 48 men. That was an individual in the platoon who had excelled and would eventually be a leader. That is, eventually be a drill instructor."

"We got two weeks of leave after boot camp, and it was my first time leaving the base," said Carpenter. "Of course, the buses always let the whites fill up first. If there was any space, then we could get on. I got to the station around 5 p.m., but I didn't get out of the station until midnight. So I went to Rocky Mount to catch a train to D.C. It was about a six-hour ride on the train. As soon as I walked through the gate at Union Station, I got stopped by a white (military policeman). He stopped me and said, 'You're out of uniform. Your uniform is filthy.' That was because I had to ride behind the coal car. So all the soot and ash from the coal car covered the inside of our car. So I said, 'Ok, well I've got one in my bag. I'll go to the restroom and change it.' He said, 'Nope. I'm going to write you up and send a report back to your unit. And you have to catch a train and go back to your base.'"

"I completed my boot camp

When we first went in, the commandant made it very hostile for us. He said he didn't want us, so (the drill instructors) did everything they could to get rid of us.

- Lt. Col. Joe Carpenter



Black Marine typists like Lt. Col. Joe Carpenter and Kidd were scrutinized much more heavily and not allowed to make corrections on their documents, unlike their white counterparts. Erasures and strikethroughs were not permitted. In fact, company first sergeants would inspect their products with a magnifying glass to ensure the fibers of the paper were undisturbed.

training and, as it turned out, I ended up being a drill instructor. And I brought through four platoons back there then at Montford Point. I guess you could say that I was one of the early drill instructors. I only went in at 18, and turned 19, and stayed up on the field there for four platoons."

"As soon as we finished boot camp, whatever our job was, we just started doing it," said Carpenter. "We didn't go to school like the white Marines did. We did on-the-job training."

"We understood that there were certain things that we, as black Marines, were not allowed to do," stated Woods. "I don't know if it was written or if it was an order that was just passed down, but at the time no black Marine would be in charge of a white Marine. In other words, your only hopes of advancement were within the black part of the Marine Corps."

"September 1944, I joined up with the 1st Marine Division and served at the invasion of Peleliu," said retired Gunnery Sgt. Reuben J. McNair, 86, who enlisted in early 1944 and retired in

1964. "By the time I was 10 or 12 years old, I could strike a match from 25-30 yards with my .22 rifle. So I sort of somewhat anticipated when I get there this is what I would do. However, they had other things on their minds, like unloading ammunition off the ship and taking it to the front and bringing wounded back to the ship. Occasionally, you might get in a close area where you had combat, where you had to anticipate to help yourself, but combat wasn't part of our duties."

"September of '45 they sent me to Norfolk. I stayed there for about three months. While I was there in Norfolk, they put us right next to the Italian prisoners [from World War II]. And of course, they had more liberty in Norfolk than we did because we were African-Americans and the Italians were white," explained Carpenter matter-of-factly. "So they could go anywhere in Norfolk they wanted to, which we couldn't because we were restricted," added Carpenter, who would later earn a degree and pursue a commission.



1955



1955



1965



1969



1974



1979



1990



2012

Capt. Frederick C. Branch retires after being activated for the Korean War. He dies 50 years later.

Sgt. Maj. Gilbert "Hashmark" Johnson retires after 32 years of service, split amongst the Army, Navy and Marines Corps.

400 Montford Point Marines meet at a reunion and decide to start the nonprofit Montford Point Marine Association.

1st Sgt. George Kidd retires after 26 years of service, with combat tours in Korea and 1/9, the "Walking Dead," in Vietnam.

Montford Point is renamed Camp Gilbert H. Johnson. It is the first military installation named after an African-American.

Lt. Gen. Frank Petersen becomes the first black Marine general. He would retire in 1988 as the senior aviator in the military.

David Dinkins, a Montford Point Marine who served from 1945-1946, becomes the first and only black mayor of New York.

The Montford Point Marines are awarded the Congressional Gold Medal at Marine Barracks Washington for their selfless service.

"The first black officer I saw was in 1954 over in Japan," recalled Kidd. "At that time, I was amazed to see that the Corps had really opened up and began to let blacks be officers. Of course, they did promote one officer in '45. They didn't let him be on active duty. Lt. Blanch. As soon as he was commissioned, he went into the reserves. Because back there then, blacks couldn't give whites any instructions. When I was going through my early years, we was always subservient. And we had to, more or less, keep up the old tradition of being a sort of second citizen. After we integrated in 1949, that's when I was able to give instructions to whites.

"I was one of the first blacks to come into the Marine Corps," Kidd noted. "They only brought in 22,000 from 1942-1949. Plus I was the last one to leave Montford Point Camp. I was the sergeant major of Montford Point Camp when we disbanded it. I was the one to disband it. So I can say unequivocally that I was there from alpha to omega, from the beginning to the end.

"Got out of the service in 1969 after completing a tour in Vietnam. In fact, I was in all three wars. I was in World War II, but I didn't get a chance to see any action there, because I was still at Montford Point Camp. I didn't get the chance to really get exposure until I went to Korea in 1950. Being assigned over there, I was a sergeant major of the 11th Marines for a period of about a month or two months when a senior white master sergeant came over and relieved me. Because, at that time, I guess blacks hadn't excelled to be senior. I ended up being the first sergeant of three [artillery] batteries."

"In 1952, I headed to Korea," said McNair. "I got transferred to Weapons Company, 2/7. I had a heavy machine gun section. March 1953 I was selected along with another staff sergeant to go to an outpost known as Vegas. The Chinese wanted the high ground and the Marines were determined they were going to hold it. So they sent the heavy machine gun section out there to keep the

light on. My captain called me in and explained to me, 'At some point, your outpost is probably going to be overrun.' We wasn't prepared for ... it was probably a reinforced company, attacking the outpost. They lit the skies up and started charging up the mountain. It was a matter of keeping fire going, which we did. March 26, 1953, the outpost was overrun. Finally, after five assaults, we had taken the outpost back. It was hell on wheels for three days going. Afterwards, our captain advised the Marine Corps that he only had 43 of his company's original Marines. The rest were all replacements.

"Later on, they brought a young lieutenant over and he was my platoon leader. So the first sergeant calls me in and he was going to introduce us. 'Staff Sgt. McNair, this is your new platoon leader.' I politely gets up and reach out to shake hands. He looks at me and says, 'Your hand will never touch mine.' The first sergeant went off. He turned the desk over and there's so much roaming going on that the captain comes in. He wants to know what in the world's going on. (First sergeant) says, 'I just introduced the lieutenant to Sgt. "Mac," but he, you know,'" said McNair, lifting both hands in gesture. "The captain looked at him and he said, 'Well, he won't be around long.' I never seen my platoon leader anymore after that. This is just life. These things happen in life."

"In Vietnam, I was the first sergeant of 1/9, the 9th Marines," said Kidd. "That was the 'Walking Dead.' Everybody got wiped out. I got wiped out once, but I never did get hit. My buddy went over, MacDowell. He and I went over together, and he wasn't there but a month before he lost his leg, because he was out sweeping and I was out sweeping. That is, trying to find the Vietcong. We was up at the DMZ (demilitarized zone). They was supposed to rotate me after six months, but they said they didn't have nobody to replace me. So I had to stay up there another six months being shot at *every day*. Just lucky. I went through there and Tet was hit about a week after. So I stayed up on the frontlines for the whole 13 months. Lucky. Didn't get a scratch. But came back and said, 'I know one thing for certain: I will not stay in the Marine Corps any longer.' I had did 26 years when I came back."

"I can't speak for the Marine Corps now, but since I've been with this organization (the Montford Point Marine Association) I've seen advancement in the Marine Corps," commented Woods proudly. "Now everything is on an equal base. You see black officers, ranked from the top down. And this wasn't possible before Montford Point. So I guess we did a little history making."

"To get the Congressional Gold Medal, I'd say it may be a little overdue, but we got it," smiled Kidd brightly. "And I'm proud of that."

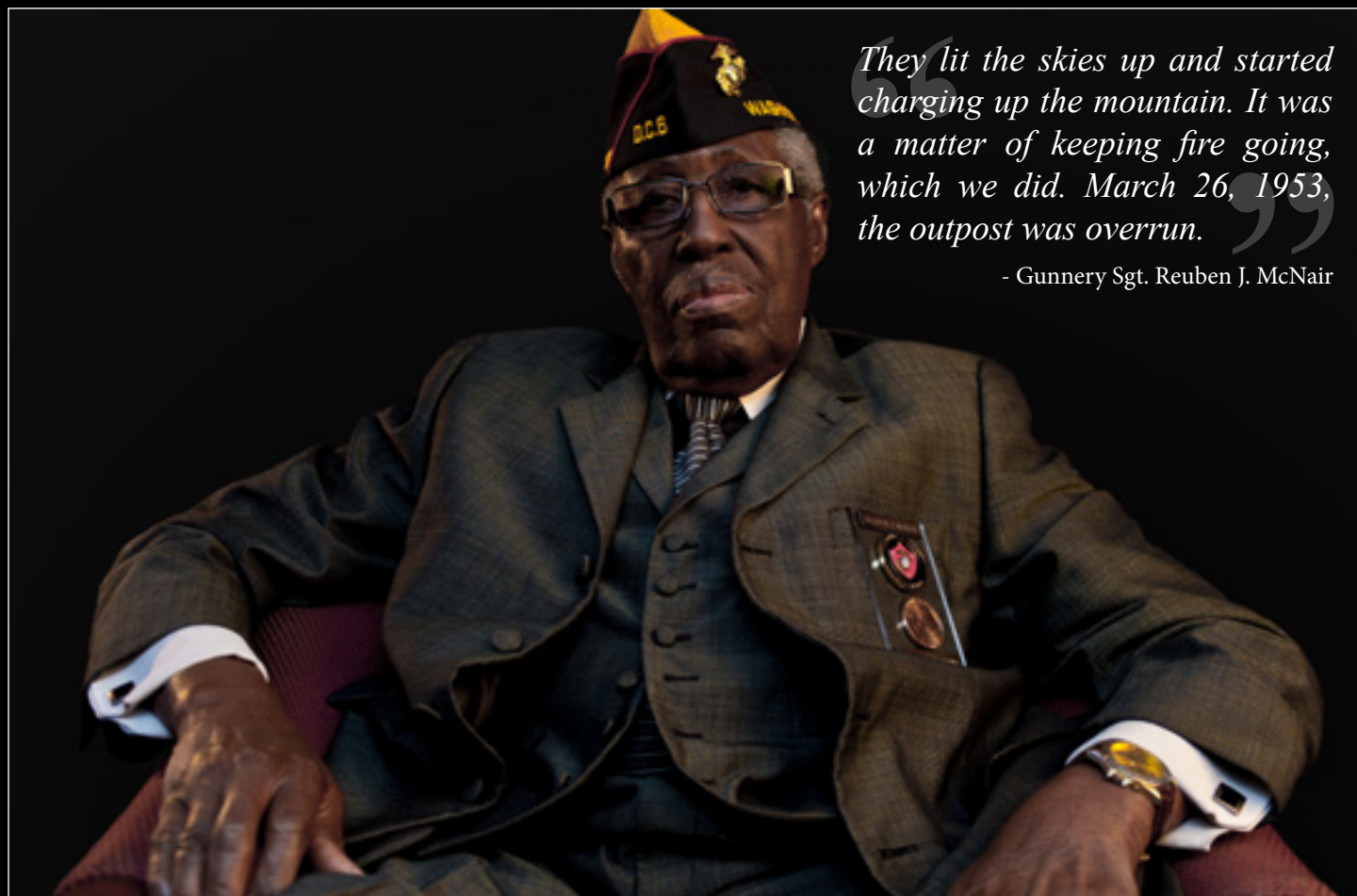
"I tell you, if we had a commandant in the Marine Corps back in those days like we have today, we would have had a complete different outlook," thought McNair of Gen. James F. Amos, the Corps' current commandant.

"I personally didn't do anything to bolster this, so I don't brag about it," said Woods meekly. "I'm proud, but I don't boast about it. We didn't do this individually. It took that 22,000 that went



Early in their history, promotions for Montford Point Marines were often less frequent. Due to a lack of noncommissioned officers and staff NCOs, junior Marines such as Pfc. Willie J. Woods would sometimes be given the responsibilities of ranks several positions higher than their own. While stationed in Guam, Woods was tasked with the supervision of a group of Japanese prisoners of war from WWII. In this position, Woods assumed charge of 17 of his fellow privates and privates first class.

through Montford Point. It took that 22,000 together. That's why there's one Gold Medal and the rest of them are bronze. The rest of them are replicas. *We* are replicas of platoon one. Platoon one was really the heroes."



They lit the skies up and started charging up the mountain. It was a matter of keeping fire going, which we did. March 26, 1953, the outpost was overrun.

- Gunnery Sgt. Reuben J. McNair

Originally, most black Marines were kept away from combat zones. The few who were actively in World War II, even crack shots like Gunnery Sgt. Reuben McNair, were used as ammunition handlers and extra hands to evacuate casualties. The black Marines were kept in support positions and many of them would never see combat and fight for their country. The few Montford Point Marines who did, would not actively fight until Korea.



LIVE LIFE OUTSIDE

Escaping the four walls of the Barracks

As a child, Bryan Stebbing was always being told to get out of the house by his mother. The kid rarely stayed indoors while growing up in rural Wyoming. If he wasn't climbing, he was biking, or mountain boarding, which is like snowboarding without the snow. Stebbing didn't care as long as he was outside and his body holds more than one scar that tells tales of his childhood adventures.

But like every child, Stebbing had to grow up, but it didn't mean his adventures had to end. After funding for college dried up, Stebbing enlisted in the Marine Corps as an infantryman, but committed himself to earning a college degree while serving and in December he will complete his associate's degree. Fate struck and Marine Barracks Washington became his first duty station, but even the 100-plus degree summers of the district couldn't keep the Marine Corps' organizational colors bearer inside.

The sun beats on D.C. residents as the streets are mostly empty from the heat, but one man furiously peddles his light blue and white mountain bike through the city. Sweat beads on his brow as his sunglasses fog from the heat and humidity. He eyes a hill off in the distance and builds to ramming speed in preparation of the ensuing battle.

He attacks the hill with everything he can muster, his pace slowing but never stopping as he creeps further and further up the incline.

"When I ride my bike, it's

almost like I can be separated from the city," Stebbing said. "I can challenge the hills and get a great workout without somebody stopping me."

His drenched shirt hangs away from his body as he climbs out of the seat and begins pumping every ounce of energy into the peddles. With each stroke he tears himself free from the physical confines of the concrete jungle and the mental trappings of the city before summiting the crest.

"There are bike trails in Rock Creek Park that allow me to challenge myself and offers long winding unbroken trails," explained the off-road cyclist. "It takes me back to my bike rides as a child in Wyoming."

Moving from the vast countryside of Wyoming to the city blocks of the district, Stebbing faced a new challenge to his off duty-habits.

"There are so many people in the district," laughed the outdoor enthusiast. "I try to ride my bike to some trails and it takes me twice as long as it should because I'm constantly trying not to hit anyone."

For as long as he can remember, every waking moment possible was spent outside in an ever-present battle to entertain himself.

"There wasn't much to do in Wyoming except be outside," explained Stebbing. "We didn't even have a police station there, but there was a library. So it was either read or play, and I chose the latter."

As he's grown older Stebbing is reading more, evidenced by the eclectic collection of spy novels, Viking tales and conspiracy books lining his barracks room bookshelf.

In addition to reading, Stebbing

spends his free time lapping up D.C. culture by catching performances at the Kennedy Center's opera and concert hall and theaters and perusing the exhibits at the Smithsonian museums. He's made a priority of seeking out the city's uniquely inside-the-Beltway experiences.

"I enjoy having fun, I don't care if it's riding a bike, hanging out with friends or reading a new book I'm all about life's little things," said Stebbing. "One fun thing to do in D.C. is go out and experience the unique culture of our nation's capitol."

On any given weekend Stebbing and his friends can be found in Voguish attire sampling the menus at some of the districts trendier establishments in Adams Morgan, Dupont Circle and Georgetown.

Stebbing refers to these days out on the town as "Suit-up Saturdays." His fashionable threads completed with a silk tie and his Colt .45 lapel pin.

"We suit-up because it allows us to look nice, allows us to blend in with the D.C. culture and it's ironic. How many twenty-something Marines, who like to blow things up and play in the mud, wear a suit and go out to dinner for no real reason?" explained Stebbing. "My dad gave me the Colt .45 lapel pin as a joke when I bought a suit. He said it would ward off would-be robbers."

While he enjoys his off time, one of the most important parts of Stebbing's life is being a Marine and a professional. During his time at the Barracks, Stebbing dedicated himself to perfecting his craft and rose through the ranks to meritoriously earn the rank of corporal and the honor of carrying the



Cpl. Bryan Stebbing, Marine Corps color bearer, belays his climbing partner at the Annapolis Rocks in Maryland Sept. 9.

Marine Corps battle color. He has also grown into a leader, commonly going out of his way to ensure the well being of his junior Marines.

"Cpl. Stebbing has been instrumental to my growth as a Marine," said Lance Cpl. Alvaro Hernandez, color guard supernumerary. "He has taken time away from his personal life to ensure that I am doing everything I have to do to be ready for the next rank."

Stebbing's easy going and upbeat personality is on full display while he surfs YouTube attempting to master trailer-park kung fu or with his true passion — climbing. Even as a young boy, he has always found a way to climb anything and everything in sight.

"Ever since my dad took me to the Mall of America at the age of 5 and I climbed my first rock wall, I've been hooked," he explained. "There is

something special about rock climbing. Every route is a new challenge waiting to be conquered. It's me against the wall, and I win ... most of the time."

Around the district there are several rock-climbing gyms. On quite a few weeknights Stebbing can be found there, perfecting his technique and working on his grip strength.

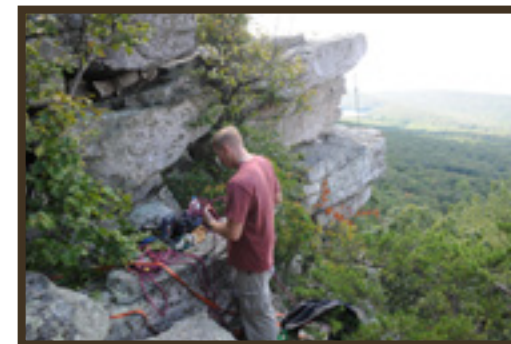
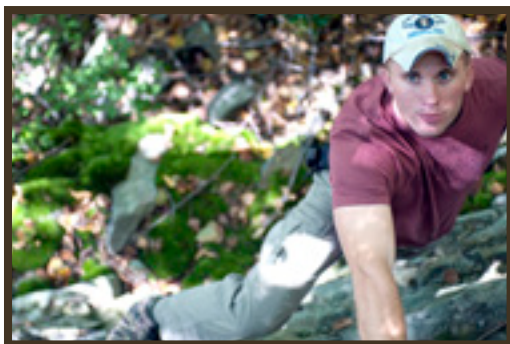
Grip strength is essential to any good climber. As the difficulty of routes increase, the grips on the wall get smaller, rounder and smoother.

The young devil dog approaches the wall as his chalk bag hangs daintily from his hip. He is about to attempt one of the hardest routes in the gym. He looks up at the wall while giving his hands a light dusting and then begins his ascent to the top. Slowly, Stebbing maneuvers higher and higher, with great care and skill.

Approximately three holds from the top, the unthinkable happens. Stebbing's taxed body can take no more and he slips off the wall, falling to the mat below.

"I try my best at everything I do, but sometimes you eat the bear and other times the bear eats you," said Stebbing. "How you react shows your true character."

Everyday Stebbing goes to work at the oldest post of the Corps and performs his duties with honor, but after hours he ensures that he takes what the district has to offer and runs with it. He spends his time training Marines to be better than himself while pursuing his own personal desires. He was planted in a concrete jungle but never let it keep him from the outdoors that he loves so much.





Company B Marines sit down and figure out their coordinates before starting a land navigation course during a company field training exercise at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Aug. 15. The exercise consisted of land navigation, negotiating an obstacle course while wearing a flak jacket and helmet, completing a 5-mile endurance course with scattered obstacles, and weapons assembly and disassembly with machine guns, pistols, and rifles.

FIELD DAY

COMPANY B SPENDS THE DAY
SHARPENING BASIC FIELD SKILLS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. MONDO LESCAUD



It was one of those nights in Company B's barracks building at Marine Barracks Washington Aug. 14. Some of the Marines slept well, while others barely shut their eyes.

Most of the young warfighters have been to the field many times after serving at the Corps' oldest post for more than a year, but the Marines with limited field experience didn't know how their infantry skills would to be tested the next day.

Lance Cpl. Asim Arain, second platoon, Co. B ceremonial marcher, had his gear neatly packed and his teeth brushed while most of his peers were still counting sheep. As reveille sounded and the Marines put on their worn-out uniforms, three buses pulled up to the Barracks

to haul Arain and the rest of the company. Their destination was Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

"I was pretty anxious to get out there and get back to my infantry roots," said the always-confident Arain. "A lot of the guys have been out a million times, but I haven't."

After a safety and instructional brief, the Marines broke down into groups of four.

Arain was placed in his usual fire team, with his soft-spoken leader, Lance Cpl. Samuel Johnson, in front. Also in the team, ready for their orders, stood Lance Cpl. Brian Herrera, and the newest addition, Pfc. Nathan White.

These four Marines have been working together since shortly after Arain checked into the Barracks in December 2011. Their trust in each other's skills and abilities was set in stone much like their friendship long ago. This came in handy when they started the first stage of the day's timed, four-part training exercise.

Their first challenge, designed to test their knowledge and teamwork, was a land navigation course though the thick, Quantico forest.

Johnson readily took the helm. He figured out their course,

and led the team with a compass, occasionally glancing at the map to check their route.

"He and Arain pretty much stayed close and worked together as one," explained White. "While Herrera and I spread out and kept our eyes open for our targets."

They dashed through the trees and up and down hills to their first target, a small red box marked with a yellow letter. However, the route to the next target was not an easy one.

At the bottom of a steep hill, Johnson stopped the team and gave them some good and bad news.

"The good news is our box is only about 100 yards away. The bad news is we have to scale that wall or risk losing a lot more time by staying along this creek," he said, in a very open-for-suggestion manner.

After a quick evaluation, Johnson started climbing, followed by Herrera, White, and finally, Arain. As they slowly climbed the dangerous rock wall, thinking and assessing each hand and foot placement, rocks that Johnson and Herrera loosened started to fall, one of them barely missing Arain.

They soon all got up and recorded their second box.

Johnson explained to his team on the way to the next event that they were not doing well overall, and they needed to make up time.

Most of the teams got through the next event, an obstacle course, fairly quickly, but not Arain and the boys. They didn't expend all of their energy hurdling over the logs and walls, and climbing up ropes and down metal poles.

"Our strategy was to make good time on the O-course but not break ourselves off before the E-course," said Herrera. "I thought it was a bad idea at first, but I guess it worked out in our favor because I didn't even realize it at the time, but we passed a lot of teams on the E-course."

They were in the top six out of 18 teams to finish the long, grueling and physically-demanding endurance course, which entailed more than five miles of running through forest with challenging obstacles scattered throughout.

The teams were then timed in disassembling an M9 pistol, M16 A4 service rifle, M249 squad automatic weapon, and M240B medium machine gun, and putting them back together. Arain's team did well, finishing in the top five.

Moments after the teams finished, and the scores were compiled and calculated, the winning team was announced. It wasn't Arain and his team.

"I'm proud of the team that won," said Johnson. "But I know my team left everything we had out here, so I can't ask for anything more."

The fire team all said they enjoyed the strenuous training and look forward to more unit field exercises in the future.

"We're going to sleep well tonight," said Johnson. "We deserve it."



Marines with Company B jump over a log during the obstacle course portion of a company exercise.



Lance Cpl. Asim Arain, second platoon, Company B ceremonial marcher, climbs up a steep slope during the land navigation part of a company training exercise.

First *Marching*

STORY BY CPL. DENGRIER BAEZ



On any given Friday evening from April through August, the lights shine bright on the Marines standing tall on the Barracks' historic grounds. During a few select nights this summer, the spotlight shined brighter on the newest of the parade commanders, searing her name in history.

In June of this year when Maj.

Sarah B. Armstrong stepped onto the parade field she became the Barracks' first-ever female parade commander joining a long line of female Marine trailblazers that have left an indelible impression upon the Corps. But being a pioneer is something she didn't foresee.

"No one knows what to expect when you get here," said Armstrong. "I never thought I would have been the first of something. It's an honor to be out there and sort of represent, not just females but the Marine Corps in general."

Young memories of playing with a sword that belonged to her father, a Marine officer who served from 1969-1972, was one of the earliest indications of what Armstrong was to become.

In 2000, Armstrong decided to follow in her father's footsteps by joining the Corps, earning a commission later that same year.

On a daily basis, she not only serves as the adjutant for the Barracks, but

also has the distinction of being a member of the Barracks marching staff. The two marching staffs are each comprised of a select group of three officers and two staff noncommissioned officers.

"I marched with one staff twice and once with the other staff, so I got to spend time with everybody," said the native of Greensburg, Pa., about the two teams of marchers. "There's so many pictures and stuff of the different parades from many



“Whether it’s marching funerals or Friday evening parades, you should go for it...”



Armstrong marched her first Friday Evening Parade as parade commander June 15. She got a chance to meet the guest of honor, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, after the ceremony.



During the July 13th Friday Evening Parade, Armstrong had the opportunity to march once again as parade commander not only for the visitors that filled the stands but also for the commander of every branch of the American armed forces.



moons ago and they look shockingly similar to what we do now. Just knowing that you’re doing what so many people have done before you and just continuing that tradition... it’s pretty amazing.”

Her road leading to the historic grounds of the Barracks was long, earning Armstrong experience on the drill field and in the operational force. At the well-known Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., she would be exposed to drill by filling marching billets.

“When I got to [Parris Island], officers weren’t really marching the graduations, but that changed,” said Armstrong. “I didn’t march as a series commander, but that changed when I became a company commander because all the officers started to march.”

According to Armstrong, 75 percent of the graduations on the island were events that officers had to march. Being a female company commander, she graduated newly basic-trained Marines every six to eight weeks with two-week practices in between.

“When you’re a female company commander, you have two series on different points of the cycles graduating,” explained Armstrong. “With two-week practices leading up to each graduation that meant a lot of time on the parade field marching.”

Leaving the island and resting her sword in 2006, Armstrong was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., until September 2009 where she deployed to Iraq with Marine Aircraft Group 26, from January to July that same year. Upon her return she was assigned to the 1st Marine Logistics Group, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., from September 2009 to June 2011, where she deployed to Afghanistan for a year, before arriving at the Barracks in June 2011.

The seasoned marcher would try out for a spot on the Barracks parade staff shortly after her arrival. To those that observed, her drill-field experience was evident. She readily met the meticulous marching standards of the Barracks and received the approval of her fellow Barracks Marines. Little did she know that she would be drawing her sword, once again, sooner than she expected.

“They made me the backup parade commander, but I really didn’t know what that meant,” said Armstrong about her selection. “It was nerve-racking. Everyone made fun of me after the fact because they watched my legs literally shake for the entire hour and a half of the parade. I couldn’t physically stop my legs from shaking the whole time I was standing there.”

Armstrong got through the nerve-racking moments of her first parade to successfully be the first female to command infantry troops during such an event here. Given the opportunity to march two more occasions and leaving the jitters behind, she shined under the Friday night lights.

“A lot of it comes from practicing the sequence so much that you just know, okay this is what’s next, this is what’s next,” said Armstrong. “I’d like to march again next year because now that I’ve had a taste of it, I think it’s fun. Marching is physically demanding, but it’s a good time.”

Armstrong also believes that every Marine stationed here should take advantage of the uniqueness of this post.

“I think if you’re going to be at the Barracks, you should want to march somehow,” said Armstrong. “Whether it’s marching funerals or Friday evening parades, you should go for it.”

The elite marcher also said she believes that it’s not just the marching that makes performances at this post unique. It’s a combination of all the elements that make Barracks’ guests experiences here special.

“The hosting element is important too,” said Armstrong. “If you can march for a season and host for a season, that’s a great way to see a little bit of everything here at the Barracks. Everyone should experience everything if they can.”

Besides looking forward to marching again next parade season, Armstrong is also looking into other areas of her career, expressing interest in serving in another major support command in a G-1 section.

The Barracks continues to serve as the stage for great moments in Marine Corps history. From marching to hosting, Barracks’ Marines like Armstrong will continue to uphold and carry on the traditions that make our Corps unique and special.



MARCHER PROFILE



NAME:
SARAH ARMSTRONG

HOMETOWN:
GREENSBURG, PA.

RANK:
MAJOR

HEIGHT:
72 INCHES

AGE:
34

CURRENT BILLET:
MBW ADJUTANT AND
PARADE COMMANDER

TIME IN SERVICE:
12 YEARS

FIRST DUTY STATION:
G-1 ADJUTANT, 3RD
FORCE SERVICE SUPPORT
GROUP, OKINAWA, JAPAN

PREVIOUS MARCHING EXPERIENCE:
MCRD PARRIS ISLAND,
S.C.: SERIES COMMANDER
FOR 15 MONTHS, REGI-
MENTAL ADJUTANT FOR
NINE MONTHS AND COM-
PANY COMMANDER FOR
ONE YEAR

EDUCATION:
BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE FROM
ELIZABETHTOWN
COLLEGE, AND MASTER’S
DEGREE IN JUSTICE
ADMINISTRATION -
NORWICH UNIVERSITY

HOBBIES:
BAKING



The U.S. Marine Drum & Bugle Corps prepares to march to the parade field during a Battle Color Ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., July 25.



The D&B march to the parade field during a BCD ceremony in Annapolis, Md., July 25.



Lance Cpl. Sean Breheny, member of the SDP, practices before the start of a BCD ceremony in Annapolis, Md., July 25.



Naval Academy students applaud the SDP during a BCD ceremony, July 25.



Capt. Edward Hubbard, BCD commander, and Lance Cpl. Clayton Caley, BCD guide, salute during a BCD ceremony in Yarmouth, Mass., July 11.

The U.S. Marine Corps Battle Color Detachment traveled around the country this summer, spreading the Corps' spirit across America.

Composed of "the Commandant's Own" U.S. Marine Drum & Bugle Corps, the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and Color Guard, the BCD travels to various locations and



The U.S. Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon marches to their rehearsal area before the start of a BCD ceremony in Annapolis, Md., July 25.

performs their unique routine.

Upon the Marines' arrival to each city or town, American flags seem to wave a little prouder in the wind. Elderly citizens, men, women and children expel a celebratory vibe, as if everyone is in the middle of a festival, even before the visiting Marines shed their khakis and collared shirts and don their tailored dress uniforms.

Their rehearsals alone attract a crowd. "I don't think we mean to put on a little side show," said Cpl. Carlton Williams, SDP rifle inspector. "We just try to prepare our respective teams as much as possible. But I love it; it shows us that people are really excited and anxious to see us."

The musical notes soon become harmonized and the jumbled practice formations align into precision drill formations as the khaki pants and collared shirts become white trousers, and blue and red coats.

"I've never seen them before," said Peter Goutzunois, retired Marine and spectator of a BCD ceremony in July. "It was really impressive."

The D&B plays a variety of songs during their marching concerts, but always end them with "The Stars and

Stripes Forever." Following the musical performance, the SDP wows the audience with their routine, performed without verbal cadence or commands. And finally, the color guard marches out, bearing the national ensign and the official battle color of the Marine Corps.

Their routine, along with the patriotic sounds of our national anthem, brings the crowd to its feet.

After Staff Sgt. Joshua Miles, BCD announcer, broadcasts, "Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the ceremony," children and veterans jovially rush the field, followed by the rest of the crowd, to meet and greet their entertainers. Some have their shirts and posters signed while others reminisce and share stories about the old days in the Corps.

"I love meeting new people," said Lance Cpl. Garrett Troutner, SDP member. "We all love the appreciation we feel from the people, especially because our performance is still searing fresh in their minds. I feel like we just gave them a life-long memory."

And then it's back to the Barracks for the Marines, to prepare for their next event, which usually is no more than a

day or two away.

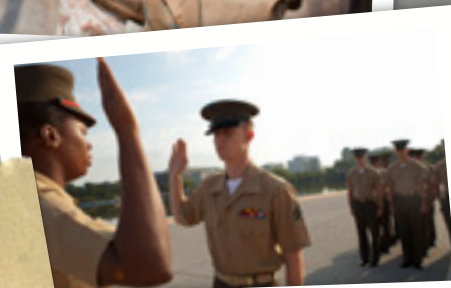
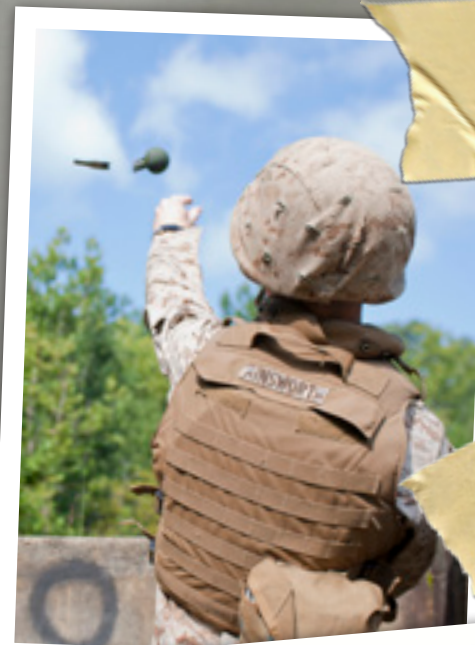
In recent months, the BCD has performed with the Eiffel tower as a backdrop in Paris, a stone's throw away from Heinz Field in Pittsburgh, Yarmouth, Mass., and at the hallowed grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. The performances are amongst the Marines' many other commitments including their regular duties, two parades per week, annual training and ongoing practices.

"They were created to take what we do here on Friday evenings, condense it, and take it on the road," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Kevin Buckles, D&B drum major. "The people see the show with the precise execution. So when the show is over, and they meet us, usually they're really surprised that we're just normal people like them. That's actually my favorite part, meeting the people."

Barracks units have been wowing crowds since the ceremony was created decades ago. Americans' pride and morale have been boosted through the thousands of ceremonies the Marines conduct in the small towns and big cities, across the country and the world.



Around Barracks



TACTICAL 2 Practical

You can wear personal bags in uniform now, but what kind should you get?

STORY BY SGT. AUSTIN HAZARD

Day packs, assault packs, MOLLE packs and ILBE packs. Whatever your means, Marines always need something to carry their gear. Off duty, it's a matter of convenience, whether the issue is carry-on baggage for a flight, a small bag for a short road trip or just everyday use. The trick is finding a balance and killing two birds with one stone, made simpler by the Corps' new policy on backpacks.

There are a number of options for your search, many well-known to Marines, such as BLACKHAWK!, Camelbak, Eagle and Spec-Ops. Some of these tactical bags can be a little pricey, so it's important to know what you want and what you need.

With the new regulations, you can wear personal coyote, green, black and Marine pattern backpacks in uniform. I prefer tan or coyote brown, but black may be more practical for personal use.

Out of the different bags I've owned, tested and seen, there's one feature I think should be essential to any Marine – a built-in water source.

Fortunately, most tactical gear makers offer bags with bladders. If that's what you want, I recommend you get such a bag with at least water resistant compartments, as these bladders can sometimes leak. This feature can also be a tactical choice, since we, as Marines, are an amphibious force and keeping your gear dry might save your life.

Adjustability and ergonomics should be placed alongside any built-in hydration system. For how much we use our gear, it can be critical that your bag fits you properly and comfortably, or can be adjusted to do so. Most of these bags have several straps to modify their wear, but it's important to make sure they modify it the way you need. There are also bags with padded, cushioned or foam back support to prevent injury or strain. Considering the sometimes awkward and bulky loads Marines try to stuff in their bags, a comfortable and supportive design is a must for me.

Compartmentalization can be important, too. I prefer to have multiple pockets and sections to keep organized. Some Marines might prefer to cram everything into one compartment for expediency and convenience,

but I'd rather not dig through everything and unpack the entire bag to get at the one item I need at the bottom. By the time we complete boot camp, I think we've all gone through that more than enough. I like being able to have quick and easy access to most of my gear while still having the bag fully packed. Not too many bags are good about this, though. Most simply have one or two large sections and a pocket up front, which isn't enough for me.

I've found that BLACKHAWK!'s Titan backpack is very good for space and organization, as well as waterproofing. But each manufacturer has similar variants of the same styles. The key is determining what you want. The choices are simple, but I recommend you don't just pick the first inexpensive tactical bag you find.

You might find a \$30 backpack that looks good to go, but odds are it won't last you a deployment and you may find it doesn't even have all the features you'd like. More often than not, you get what you pay for with tactical gear. Do your due diligence and ensure your dollars are well spent.



The Marine Corps has authorized personal bags to be worn in uniform as long as they are coyote brown (tan), green or olive drab, black, Marine Corps patterned, or a combination of those. The regulation also states that the bag cannot be eccentric or have an overlarge logo or brand name. For more specific guidelines, see Marine Administrative Message 695/11.

COMPANY B MARINES CARRY THE FLAG-DRAPE REMAINS OF ONE OF FOUR AMERICANS KILLED IN AN EMBASSY ATTACK IN BENGHAZI, LIBYA. THE SEPT. 14 DIGNIFIED TRANSFER CEREMONY AT JOINT BASE ANDREWS, MD., INCLUDED NOTABLE ATTENDEES SUCH AS PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON, SEN. JOHN MCCAIN AND GEN. JOSEPH F. DUNFORD JR., ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS.



PHOTO BY CPL. MONDO LESCAUD

