

SPECIAL EDITION

3RD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

MCAS MIRAMAR



FLIGHT

JACKET

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, CALIF.

APRIL 2013



HONORING WOMEN IN THE CORPS



In the ‘hot seat’ with Sgt. Maj. Dunbar

Sgt. Maj. Donna Dunbar, sergeant major of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Training Squadron 303, opens up about her past as a drill instructor and the path that led to her achieving the highest enlisted rank in the Marine Corps.

Click to view full story

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MAG-16 throws desert tantrum

More than 100 Marines and 27 aircraft from Marine Aircraft Group 16 conducted a training exercise in the desert of El Centro, Calif., March 14.

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Miramar commanding officer hosts town hall meeting

Col. John Farnam, commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, discussed local issues during a meeting at the Bob Hope theater, March 7.

Click to view full story

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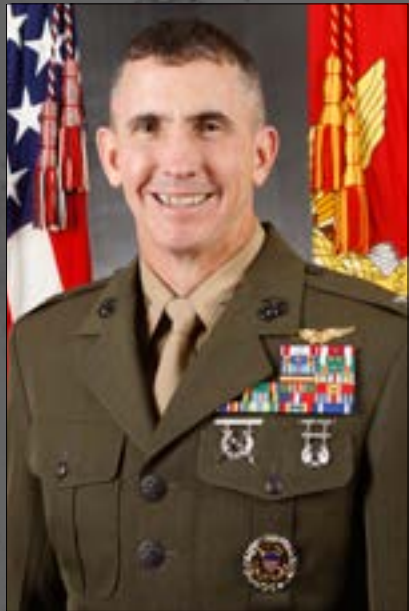
ON THE COVER:
Female Marines aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar gather on the flight line in honor of Woman’s History Month. (Photo by Cpl. Melissa Wenger.)



Stay up-to-date with the latest news happening at Miramar and with 3rd MAW.



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



Col. John P. Farnam
Commanding Officer
MCAS Miramar

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Sgt. Steffany Ismaili, an aviation electrician with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, conducts sword manual during a morning colors ceremony, in honor of Women’s History Month, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 18. The sergeant served to symbolize women in the Marine Corps.



**3RD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING
CELEBRATES
WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH**



Sgt. Leah Stewart, with Marine Aircraft Logistics Squadron 11, the reviewing officer of the formation, and a Louisville, Ky., native, spoke during a morning colors ceremony, in honor of Women's History Month, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March. 18. She spoke about the first female Marine, Opha Mae Johnson, and honored women Marines that paved the way for women Marines today.

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

Since 1918, when the first female Marines enlisted into the Marine Corps, women have transcended obstacles and paved the way for new Marines today.

To honor the history of women Marines and Women's History Month, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing held a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 18.

Sergeants took charge as part of the commanding general of 3rd MAW, Maj. Gen. Steven Busby's, Committed and Engaged Leadership Initiative. The Committed and Engaged Leadership Initiative is a campaign to empower non-commissioned officers to fine-tune their leadership skills to better the 3rd MAW.

"We ask people a very unfair question," said Busby. "Who is the V.I.P. of 3rd MAW? Sometimes they say me or sergeant major, and I say 'no, it's the sergeant of Marines.' We decided to let a sergeant lead and plan morning colors."

The ceremony also consisted of platoon sergeants and a reviewing officer who were all females. A female sergeant also wore the dress blue uniform and performed sword manual to symbolize all women Marines as they are today.

"I was honored to be the here," said Sgt. Leah Stewart, an F/A-18 equipment tester with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and the reviewing officer of the formation. "It will help me in my career and progress in the Marine Corps. I am looking forward to seeing other [sergeants] do what I did today."

As part of the ceremony, the guest of honor was Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas, the director of Manpower Management Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps, and the first woman in the Marine Corps to command a recruiting station. She is also the most senior woman Marine currently in the Marine Corps.

"We are continuing the legacy every single day," said Sgt. Stewart, a Louisville, Ky., native. "I hope the women Marines take what I said and continue this great legacy of women who are Marines first."



A detail of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Band plays during a morning colors ceremony, in honor of Women's History Month, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 18. The detail is composed of all non-commissioned officers as part of a Committed and Engaged Leadership Initiative.



Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas, the director of Manpower Management Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps, and the first woman in the Marine Corps to command a recruiting station, spoke during a morning colors ceremony, in honor of Women's History Month, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March. 18. Salinas was the guest of honor at the event.

THE WOMEN ABOARD MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR

FEMALE MARINES FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OPHA
MAE JOHNSON, WHO BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN TO
ENLIST IN THE CORPS ON AUGUST 13, 1918.



Lance Cpl. Brittane "Woody" Woodard

Job title and unit: Administrative specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

Join Date: Aug. 8, 2011

Age: 20

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: "I love to [physically train]. Doing it with a bunch of other Marines that push you harder than you think you can go."

Aspirations: "I hope I can do [Marine Security Guard] training. I just want to be stationed somewhere in Europe. I don't care where as long as it's in Europe."

Advice: "Don't ever be scared to try something new and be spontaneous; Leave no regrets."

Cpl. Jessica "Cambeezy" Huerta

Job title and unit: Ordnance Technician with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466

Join Date: Oct. 26, 2009

Age: 24

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: "I would say my favorite thing about being a Marine is the knowledge that I've gained. I've become self-sufficient, a good leader, a better mother and not to mention the pride I have in being called a Marine."

Aspirations: "As far as my dreams, goals, and aspirations, well I would have to say to leave an imprint. Hopefully everything I've done and will do will have a positive role for the next generations of marines and Americans we fight so hard for."

Advice: "Life's short, so live it to the fullest!"



Lance Cpl. Kelli "Don Sexton" Sexton

Job title and unit: Airframes mechanic with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465

Join Date: Dec. 13, 2010

Age: 21

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: "Getting to meet new people because I come from a small town so in the Marine Corps I get the opportunity to meet many new people."

Aspirations: "I want to be a veterinarian."

Advice: "You can't polish a turd."



Sgt. Yaritza “P” Perez

Job title and unit: Bulk Fuel Specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

Join Date: Sept. 7, 1999

Age: 31

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I really like being part of a greater cause, America’s Shock Troops. I feel like I’m being a good role model for my daughter and for my family.”

Aspirations: “I’d like to own my own business and become an entrepreneur. I want to financially be able to take care of my family and travel the world.”

Advice: “Make an impact and be able to influence at least one person to become a better person.”

Cpl. Dayna “Shake’n’Bake” Baker

Job title and unit: Aviation Electrician with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466

Join Date: Oct. 26, 2009

Age: 27

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I like the different and new experiences in the Marine Corps. Before I was a Marine, I lived on my own until I was 23, and it’s just a different experience in life.”

Aspirations: “I want to finish my Bachelors, which is in Psychology, and then I’m going to be going into my Masters in social work and eventually I want to be a social worker for an adoption agency.”

Advice: “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”



Cpl. Josefina “Josey” Cisneros

Job title and unit: Administrative specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

Join Date: July 26, 2010

Age: 21

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I love the challenge. I love pushing myself and seeing how far I can push myself. I love that constant challenge.”

Aspirations: “If I stay in, I plan on going warrant officer.”

Advice: “Know yourself and seek self-improvement.”

Lance Cpl. Natalia “Nat” Hominger

Job title and unit: Administrative specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

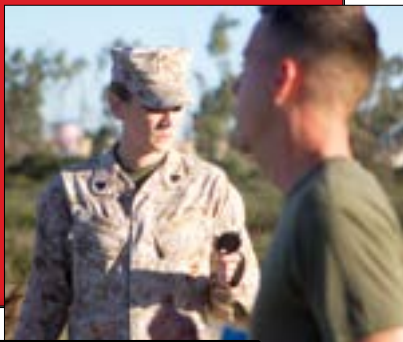
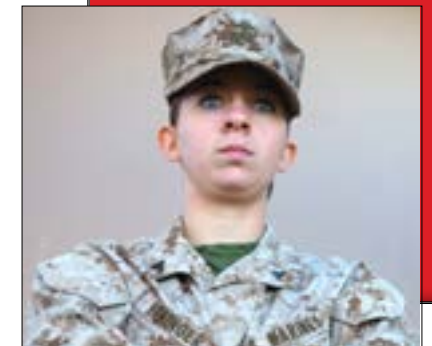
Join Date: Jan. 3, 2011

Age: 20

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I love the camaraderie. In a regular job, the people you work with are just that. But, in the Marine Corps the people you work with are like your family. We hang out on our off time and sometimes even take time from work to have a barbeque or [physically train] and it really helps morale.”

Aspirations: “I am not sure if I will re-enlist. However, I can see myself staying in for a full 20 years.”

Advice: “Go with your heart. If someone tells you different, you could be missing out.”



Sgt. Courtney “Corky” Hotovec

Job title and unit: Training noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

Join Date: Sept. 13, 2004

Age: 27

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I think my favoring thing is the camaraderie. Being around Marines is the best thing in the world. I couldn’t ask for anything better than that.”

Aspirations: “Well, I plan on staying in and retiring from the Marine Corps. If not, I’ll get out and go to the Department of Corrections.”

Advice: “Don’t regret anything and take life as it comes at you.”



Lance Cpl. Rebekah “Hasty” Hastings

Job title and unit: specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron

Join Date: Dec. 13, 2010

Age: 23

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “I like the family feeling, because my shop is extremely close and it’s nice having that support with my family being so far away. They treat my kids like their kids.”

Aspirations: “I went to culinary school for two years before I joined, so when I get out I plan on opening a restaurant or bakery.”

Advice: “God only gives you the challenges that he knows you are strong enough to handle.”



Lance Cpl. Abbie “Sketh” Skethway

Job title and unit: Aviation technician with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462

Join Date: Jan. 4, 2011

Age: 21

Favorite thing about being a Marine and why: “My favorite thing is working on the aircraft because it’s a great thing to see them fly.”

Aspirations: “I want to continue my education and get a degree.”

Advice: “Live every day to the fullest.”

Video created by Cpl. Kevin Crist



[Click to watch video](#)



Sgt. Maj. Bonnie L. Skinner, the sergeant major of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and a Quincy, Mass., native, puts her combat wings on her service alpha uniform in her office aboard MCAS Miramar, Calif., March 15. Skinner has earned more than 19 medals in her 27 years of service.



▲ Sgt. Maj. Bonnie L. Skinner, the sergeant major of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and a Quincy, Mass., native, holds the sergeant's major sword of office in her office aboard MCAS Miramar, Calif., March 15. The sword gets passed down from one sergeant major to the next.



► Sgt. Maj. Bonnie L. Skinner, the sergeant major of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and a Quincy, Mass., native, plays with Cpl. Molly, her dog, in her office aboard MCAS Miramar, Calif., March 15. Skinner adopted Molly while she was stationed in Hawaii.

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

MCAS Miramar sergeant major reflects

An eight-year-old girl looks at her father and knows she wants to be just like him, a United States Marine. Now, that same girl is the sergeant major of an installation, in charge of more than 15,000 Marines and sailors. Sgt. Maj. Bonnie L. Skinner, the sergeant major of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and a Quincy, Mass., native, worked hard to reach where she is now.

With her father being a former Marine and police officer, she grew up learning about the Corps.

"The group I was around was nothing but Marines and police officers who were former Marines," said Skinner. "Every time that I was at a function or around them of course the 'Marines' Hymn' played. They would stand at attention so I would stand at attention."

Anxious to join, she began to make contact with a recruiter when she was only 16 years old. Back then, there was no delayed entry program but the recruiters kept in contact with her and her family over the next two years, explained Skinner.

In 1985, Skinner left for recruit training and her family knew she was going to have a hard time with the drill instructors.

"As a teenager she was a little bit of a handful," said Ginni Skinner, mother of Bonnie Skinner and a Carver, Mass., native. "She never liked being told what to do."

Skinner always looks for the opportunity to lead and that is why every time she moves up she is looking for added responsibilities, explained Ginni Skinner.

Even to this day, Skinner remembers what she felt when she received her eagle, globe and anchor, which was one of

her proudest accomplishments.

"I felt 10 feet tall. I felt bullet proof," said Skinner.

Over the next 27 years, she traveled the world and served at numerous commands.

Some of her favorite moments included her time with 2nd Marine Division, the Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 "Lucky Red Lions" and her time as a Drill Instructor, added Skinner.

"I'm very partial to 2nd Marine Division because I feel they gave me my structure as a young (noncommissioned officer). They did a lot of mentoring; they kind of raised me," said Skinner.

Being one of only 21 women sergeants major in the Marine Corps, her mother sees her daughter as a role model for young women.

"I believe she has helped many young women through all her accomplishments and has opened (opportunities) for them. I think that's a wonderful thing," said Ginni Skinner.

Sgt. Maj. Skinner proves that hard work and determination are the keys to success and hopes to pass this advice to Marines everywhere.

"Don't let anything ever get in your way. Period. Whatever your goals are, you have to go out and accomplish them. All you need to do is continue to reach for what you want," said Skinner.

With all her achievements in the Corps, Skinner embodies the leader many young Marines strive to be. In July, Skinner will reach her 28 year mark in the Marine Corps and she does not see an end to her adventure any time soon.

In the 'hot seat' with Sgt. Maj. Dunbar



HMLAT-303 sergeant major sets leadership standards

Story and photos by
Sgt. Steven Posy

Since the first woman enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1918, women Marines have illuminated the ranks with diversity, dignity and reverence. One particular Marine's larger-than-life personality has facilitated her progress to the highest echelon of the Corps' enlisted rank structure, and shines brighter than the stars on her own chevrons.

A long walk down a narrow, dimly-lit hallway leads to a small red bench with the words "SGTMAJ'S HOT SEAT" painted in bright yellow letters. For Marines who find themselves sitting there, it may feel somewhat intimidating, but what they should feel is opportunity.

This bench sits outside the office of Sgt. Maj. Donna Dunbar, the sergeant major of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Training Squadron 303, and a District of Columbia native.

The opportunity to speak to Dunbar reveals the opportunity to learn her wisdom, lessons of perseverance and dedication. Born in the District of Columbia, Dunbar grew accustomed to the strict regimen of military life as her father served in the United States Army, which contributed to her decision to serve in the armed forces.

"I remember his version of field day on Saturdays when I was growing up," said Dunbar. "I knew I wanted to join the military early on, but did not know that I would end up in the Marine Corps," she explained.

Her upbringing prepared her for military life as she later joined the Air Force ROTC program in high school, but it wasn't until Dunbar visited an armed forces recruiting office that her path to becoming a sergeant major began to take form.

"I was at the Air Force recruiting office, waiting for them to show up, when a Marine Corps recruiter snatched me up," said Dunbar. "Then low and behold, I found myself at Marine Corps recruit training."

Dunbar enlisted in 1989, and as a young private first class she described herself as motivated and ambitious, but did not know at the time that she would one day earn the rank of sergeant major.

"I took my career in steps, always looking to advance to the next level," she explained.

Dunbar meritoriously worked her way up to the rank of sergeant, but considered leaving the Marine Corps. It was at the rank of sergeant she experienced a life-altering incident, which reshaped her career and redefined her understanding of leadership.

A tragic shooting of two lieutenant colonels in 1996 left one of them dead and the other clinging to life in the arms of Dunbar. Lt. Col. Thomas Heffner, Dunbar's commanding officer at the time, lay shot in the chest by a .45 caliber round, asking her to give his family his last regards. Dunbar refused, and told her commander that he was going to survive.

"I told him - you're going to be ok, and you will be able to tell them yourself, sir," said Dunbar.

A few weeks after the shooting, Dunbar was outside at a training field, about to take her yearly physical fitness test with the rest of her unit, when she surprisingly saw Heffner walking toward the unit.

"I was shocked," she said. "He was supposed to be recovering, but he wasn't in the hospital or with his family - he was with us, his Marines. I couldn't believe it."

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Sgt. Maj. Donna Dunbar adjusts a sergeant major sword displayed on the wall of her office March 20. Her 24-year career has facilitated her progress to the highest echelon in the Corps' enlisted rank structure.



-Continued from page 13-

We were so important to him that he felt the need to see us. It opened my eyes to what leadership really is." She explained.

Following the inspiring visit from her CO, Dunbar decided to remain a Marine, re-enlisted and followed her passion to become a drill instructor.

"My time in the drill field really taught me how to segue leadership into inspiration," said Dunbar.

One Marine in particular, who was one of Dunbar's former recruits, is now a member of her squadron 10 years later and describes how her experience with Dunbar has come full-circle.

"As a senior drill instructor, she was a fireball," said Staff Sgt. Kimberly McNew, and aviation ordnance technician with HMLAT-303. Working for her 10 years later is awesome, and re-affirms that everything I learned from her at recruit training and all the work she put in, helped me get to where I am today as a staff NCO. She makes me want to re-enlist."


Dunbar's time as a drill instructor influenced and inspired many, and she continues to do so as a sergeant major today. For McNew, and many others, Dunbar is more than just a Marine to look up to - she is someone who can be counted on when seeking guidance on any level.

"Sergeant Major Dunbar is someone who can guide you in life," explained McNew. "She is who to go to, whether for personal reasons or mentorship as a Marine, she makes herself available and gives you more than you can ask for. As a female, and more so as a Marine, she sets the standard that others should follow," said McNew.

In Nov of 2012, Dunbar was promoted to sergeant major and June 14, 2012 assumed the duties of the sergeant major of HMLAT-303.

"Sergeant Major Dunbar is an extremely valuable member of the squadron," said LtCol Robert Morgan, the commanding officer of HMLAT-303. "She brings tremendous insight to a range of issues and is an impact player on the command team. Her diverse background in the Marine Corps, and impeccable record of performance, makes her an example for all Marines."

Dunbar's 24-year career has carried with it great influence, inspiration and exemplifies what it means to be a leader. Her charisma shines brightly when she speaks and her words carry with them many lessons to those who hear them.

For any Marine who finds themselves sitting on the "SGTMAJ's HOT SEAT," an opportunity to learn something valuable about life may be sitting there with them. 

EYE OPENER

SEATTLE-BASED LEADERSHIP VISITS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MARINE BASES

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Michelle Piehl

The Marine Corps Executive Forum, in conjunction with Marine Week Seattle, visited Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 7.

The visit marked the inaugural West Coast MCEF, explained Capt. Maureen Dooley, the Marine Week Public Affairs Officer with Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, D.C. The forum is a Commandant of the Marine Corps initiative to educate civilian leadership to a greater knowledge of Marine Corps operational capabilities, as well as current and future initiatives.



Capt. Michael Miklos, an Instructor Pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, discusses the F/A-18 with Jeff Bakke, the vice president of business operations at Volt Workforce Solutions, March 7.

During the visit to the Miramar air station, executives, government workers and community leaders from the Seattle region began their visit with an interactive brief with the Commanding General of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Maj. Gen. Steven Busby.

“Marines are always ready, always alert,” Busby said to the leaders. “The Navy/Marine Corps team provides options for you and your leaders.”

Busby expanded upon this thought by giving the leaders a brief overview of the Marine Corps tactical capabilities at home and abroad.

The Marine Corps, he explained, is a middle-weight force, enabling Marines to spring into action quickly, all the while maintaining the solid structure to be a force in readiness. This versatile capability of the Marine Corps

can be attributed to the powerful Marine



Air Ground Task Force structure, he continued. The MAGTF is a scalable task force consisting of a command element, a ground combat element, an aviation combat element, and combat service support element. This unique structure optimizes the Corps for self-sustainment and readiness.

“The Marine Corps provides you and the nation a bridge between heavy combat forces, like that of the Army, and the light environment of special operations,” Busby told the leaders.

While highlighting the uniqueness of the Marine Corps, Busby detailed the war fighter’s readiness.

“Any Marine that you ask, ‘what sets you apart from others,’ first and foremost, they will say they are Marine riflemen first,” said Busby. “We believe in the individual Marine. That is at the heart of who we are. We significantly empower Marines at all levels. We’re fantastic mentors because we push things down to the lowest level and expect them to lead.”

Following the brief with the commanding general and a short presentation on energy conservation efforts aboard the air station,

◀ Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, speaks with Peter Philips, the president of Philips Publishing Group, March 7. Philips participated in the Marine Corps Executive Forum, a program designed to establish working relationships between Marines and senior leaders from Seattle.

▶ Members of the West Coast Marine Executive Forum take a closer look at an F/A-18 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 7.

▶ The leaders involved with the West Coast Marine Executive Forum gather for a photo aboard Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, Calif., March 7.



the Seattle leadership traveled to the flight line for a hands-on tour of an AH-1Z Viper, MV-22B Osprey and F/A-18 Hornet.

Although Seattle has a large military presence, most of the leadership had little to no contact with the Marine Corps prior to the event.

“Our city wants to roll out the red carpet for the Marines’ visit in August [for Marine Week Seattle],” said Dick Reed, the assistant chief of the Seattle Police Department. “I think it’s really important for the citizens of Seattle and the region to understand the people that wear the uniforms and serve their country.”

Reed was not alone in his enthusiasm for the executive forum, and the upcoming Marine Week Seattle.

“This is a real treat to show who we are,” said Busby of the overall experience. “The [leaders] I’ve talked to are appreciative. That’s the return we are looking for; so they know who we are, what we are and how we do it.”

Following their time aboard the air station, the forum traveled North and wrapped up the day exploring the ground-side capability of the Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Marine Week Seattle is slated for Aug. 5-11, 2013. For more information, visit: <http://community.marines.mil/community/marineweekseattle>. 🇺🇸





USNS Montford Point

new ship takes on legacy, leads new class of Navy ships

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

SAN DIEGO – The United States Navy presented its first mobile landing platform, the USNS Montford Point named after the first 20,000 African-American Marines trained at Camp Montford Point, Jacksonville, N.C., in 1942, during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard, in San Diego, March 2.

Christened by Jackie Bolden, wife of retired Maj. Gen. Charles Bolden, a former Marine general, astronaut and cur-

rent NASA Administrator, the USNS

Montford Point will serve as a 785-foot mobile pier, reducing American forces' dependency on foreign ports. The ship provides 25,000 square feet of space to house vehicles, equipment and 380,000 gallons of fuel, according to the Navy.

More than 30 original Montford Point Marines attended the ceremony along with Gen. James F. Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, the president of General Dynamics NASSCO, and several San Diego officials. All shared their insights to commemorate the occasion.

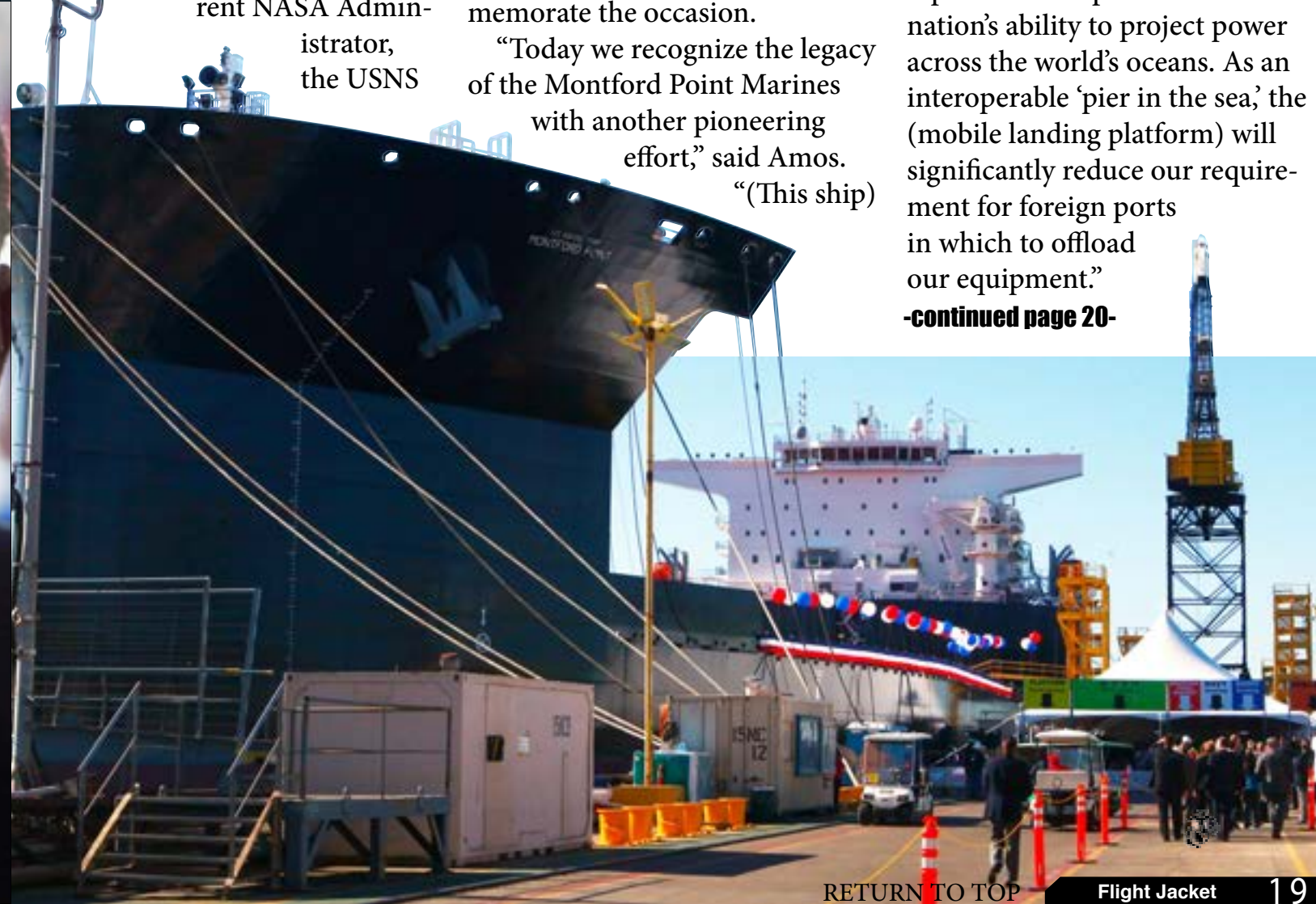
"Today we recognize the legacy of the Montford Point Marines with another pioneering effort," said Amos. "(This ship)



Col. John P. Farnam, commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., speaks with guests at the christening of the USNS Montford Point at General Dynamics NASSCO Shipyard, March 2. The ceremony honored the 20,000 black Marines who trained aboard Camp Montford Point, N.C., in the 1940s.

represents a leap ahead in our nation's ability to project power across the world's oceans. As an interoperable 'pier in the sea,' the (mobile landing platform) will significantly reduce our requirement for foreign ports in which to offload our equipment."

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The ship will be able to support aviation combat element needs as well ground unit vehicle needs while forward deployed.

“The (mobile landing platform) will further enable the Navy and Marine Corps team’s ability to remain both a forward-deployed hedge force against uncertainty and the partner of choice for many of our allies around the world,” said Amos. “The groundbreaking capability inherent in this ship is unmatched and is a ‘game-changer’ in the concept of pre-positioned forces and equipment.”

In honor of the Montford Point Marines, this vessel was named after the well-earned access for blacks into the Marine Corps. The USNS Montford Point will allow Marines and naval forces access to almost anywhere within reach of the ocean via aircraft or landing craft.

After honoring the Montford Point Marines, who paved the way for African-Americans in the services, one of these Marines had an important message of his own to give.

“If I could say one thing to the Marines and sailors who will serve aboard this ship it’s this,” said retired Sgt. Maj. James Moore, the chaplain for his local Montford Point Marines chapter, “they have inherited a great legacy – the legacy of Montford Point Marine ... by virtue of the ship’s name, I know they will do great things to uphold the images of the Marine Corps and Navy and also our freedom.” 🇺🇸

Video by Cpl. Max Pennington



▲ **CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO**

A.

A Montford Point Association member salutes a color guard as it marches on the colors during the national anthem at the christening of the USNS Montford Point, March 2. The ship is the Navy’s first mobile landing platform, and was named to honor the 20,000 black Marines who trained aboard Camp Montford Point, N.C., in the 1940s.

B.

Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, looks over the crowd during the christening ceremony for the USNS Montford Point at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, March 2. The newest addition to the Navy’s fleet will allow aircraft, like the ones Busby oversees in 3rd MAW, extended mobility to locations throughout the world by sea, enhancing the Navy and Marine Corps team’s the ability to remain both a forward-deployed hedge force against uncertainty and the partner of choice for many of America’s allies around the world.

C.

Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, motivates Marines before the christening of the USNS Montford Point at General Dynamics NASSCO Shipyard, March 2.

Scan the code to learn more about the Montford Point Marines.



Gen. James F. Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, wears a Montford Point Association hat as he speaks during the christening ceremony of the USNS Montford Point at the General Dynamics NASSCO Shipyard, March 2.





Heavy Haulers mess night makes NCOs closer

A Marine stands at the position of attention and, at the top of his lungs, requests to speak. Outside of recruit training this may seem a bit out of the ordinary, but it is a typical scene for Marines attending a mess night.

Corporals and sergeants with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 “Heavy Haulers” attended a non-commissioned officer mess night at the Officer’s Club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8.

Heavy Hauler non-commissioned officers used the night to come closer together.

“It shows the Marine Corps is a family - it’s not just you,” said Cpl. Daitoine Austin, operations non-commissioned officer in charge with HMH-462 and a Cleveland native. “It’s a time to relax and have fun and (the Marine Corps) is not all about work.”

Mess nights are a custom of a dinner with unique rules that date back to English mess nights in the 1800s.

“The rules are you’re not supposed to speak unless you request permission through the vice president and speaking without permission can lead

to a fine of however much you want to, our limit was twenty dollars and/or drinking from the rum punch,” said Austin.

The night is full of traditions which include playing jokes on fellow Marines.

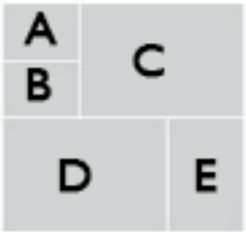
In one tradition, the president tastes a very spicy and disgusting piece of beef and has to claim that the meal is suitable for everyone before anyone can eat the main course, explained Austin.

“They spiced it up too much and it burned my throat,” said Sgt Jorge A. Pineda, the president of the mess night and a Puerto Rico native. “They really got me.”

Another tradition of the night is having a guest of honor sit at the head table with the president of the mess and that was Lt. Col. Robert Fanning, the commanding officer of HMH-462.

“I enjoyed having the (commanding officer) there. He is someone we look up to and he had good knowledge to pass on how to be better leaders for our squadron,” said Pineda.

Fanning used the night to show his appreciation for the NCOs who work hard to keep the squadron running smoothly.



A. Cpl. David Zamora, an airframe mechanic with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 and a Santa Clara, Calif., native, collects fines during a non-commissioned officer mess night at the officer’s club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8. Fines are one of the punishments that can be issued if the rules of the mess night are broken.

B. Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 shout and cheer during a non-commissioned officer mess night at the officer’s club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8. Marines carried out the traditions of the mess night including shouting “say it ain’t so” when a rule of the night is broken.

D. Cpl. Rico Marles, avionics collateral duty inspector with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 and a Monroe, La., native, laughs during a non-commissioned officer mess night at the officer’s club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8.

C. Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 drink the rum punch during a non-commissioned officer mess night at the officer’s club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8.

E. Cpl. Daitoine Austin, operations non-commissioned officer in charge with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 and a Cleveland native, drinks to a toast during a non-commissioned officer mess night at the officer’s club aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8.



DETACHMENT

— VISITS MCAS Miramar —

Every year, Marines of the Battle Color Detachment travel in every climate and place across the globe to perform for hundreds and thousands of spectators. These valiant men and women represent the best of America, and they personify the proud spirit of our nation.

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza

“We show (the public) what the Marine Corps is all about and it’s a great experience.”

-Lance Cpl. Anthony Smith, a Marine with the Silent Drill Platoon.

Dozens of spectators watched in awe as a hand-picked lineup of Marines wearing crisp dress blues demonstrated the precision, discipline and skill required to execute drill movements flawlessly, using rifles fixed with bayonets, without a single verbal command given.

The Battle Colors Detachment of the Commandant’s Drum and Bugle Corps and Marine Corps Silent Drill Team performed here March 14.

Before the silent drill performance, “The Commandant’s Own” Drum and Bugle Corps wooed onlookers as they took the field wearing their distinguished red coats and white trousers - boasting their astonishing musical skills.

-continued page 28-



Above: A Marine color guard with the Battle Colors Detachment perform during a Battle Colors Ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 14.

Top right: Marines with the Silent Drill Platoon perform during a Battle Colors Ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 14.



Marines with the “The Commandant’s Own” Drum and Bugle Corps play during a battle colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 14.

Top: Marines with “The Commandant’s Own” prepare to play music during a Battle Colors Ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 14. Bottom: Marines with the Silent Drill Platoon perform during a Battle Colors Ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 14.



Video by Lance Cpl. Melissa Eschenbrenner



[CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

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“They bring back a piece of America that seems to get lost and the music (of the band) brings in the patriotism. It’s fantastic,” said Col. John P. Farnam.

After The Commandant’s Own performance, the Silent Drill Team quietly marched onto the field, with the occasional loud clap of their rifles echoing as they twirled their weapons in unison, demonstrating their flawless drill skills.

Marines, sailors and family members applauded and were astounded by the precise movement of the platoon.

“Those guys are unbelievable and I can’t get enough,” said Farnam.


Close order drill originated on the battlefield, but serves in different capacities today. The Marine Corps has used drill movements to teach discipline, order precise

unit movement, develop response to orders and teach leaders how to assert proper commands.

The team presents the Marine Corps’ image to the public and they see the precision and motivation of the Marines, explained Farnam.

With a reputation of perfection throughout the world, the silent drill platoon reminds onlookers of the proud esprit de corps found in Marines serving all around the globe.

“We show (the public) what the Marine Corps is all about and it’s a great experience,” said Lance Cpl. Anthony Smith, a Marine with the Silent Drill Platoon.

Marines of the Battle Colors Detachment met with spectators after the show and left all who saw the performance an unforgettable sight. 

WOLFPACK SHOWS OFF HEAVY HAUL PROWESS

Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, “Wolfpack,” 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, took to the air Feb. 28 to perform a training evolution aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., where pilots, crew, and a helicopter support team practiced external lifts with a CH-53E Super Stallion.

External lifts allow HMH-466 to quickly get large cargo to their “customers” without having to land the

helicopter.

“We have a max capacity of 36,000 pounds that we can lift,” said 1st Lt. Devin O’Neal, a pilot with HMH-466 and a Stafford, Va., native. “In combat, we can move anything from beans and bullets to band-aids externally across the battlefield.”

For training purposes, landing support specialists attached a 6,200-pound load to a single-point sling suspended from the belly of the Super Stallion.

“We were just picking up steel I-beams today, but the object you’re picking up is not really the big deal, it’s the weight of it and how aero-

dynamically it flies,” said O’Neal. “Today, we were training just to do precision hovering over a load to

allow the Marines underneath, the HST, to hook up the load.”

The crew chiefs observe the conditions at the front and tail ends of the aircraft to warn pilots, who have a limited range of vision from the cockpit.

“We fly a 100-foot helicopter and when we pick up the external load, it’s approximately 25 feet behind where we sit, so we really can’t see the load once we fly over it,” said O’Neal. “Our eyes are the crew chiefs. The communication between us and the crew chiefs is really vital and we couldn’t pick up the load without them.”

As for the pilots and crew chiefs, they only make it look easy.

▲ A CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, “Wolfpack,” 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, practices external lifts aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Feb. 28.



▲ A helicopter support team prepares to board a CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, “Wolfpack,” 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. Feb. 28. The HST will coordinate and oversee the suspension of a load from the underside of the Super Stallion during external lift training.

“It’s actually pretty strenuous for us,” said O’Neal. “Flying up at 3,000 feet straight and level isn’t really tasking on the pilot or on the crew because once the helicopter is in flight, it’ll generally fly on its own. With something like this, the crew is very, very involved. They have to be eyes out 100 percent of the time. For us up front, it’s a lot of small movements and adjustments.”

The Marines inside the aircraft aren’t the only ones feeling the pressure during an exercise like this; underneath the CH-53E can often be hazardous to the HST.

“When a bird goes up and it shifts left, right, forward or back it’s going to pick the load up at the same time,” said Lance Cpl. Anthony Scott, landing support specialist and an Indianapolis native. “It’s going to drag the load toward whichever way it goes, and you don’t know if the hooks will malfunction... and it could drop the load.”

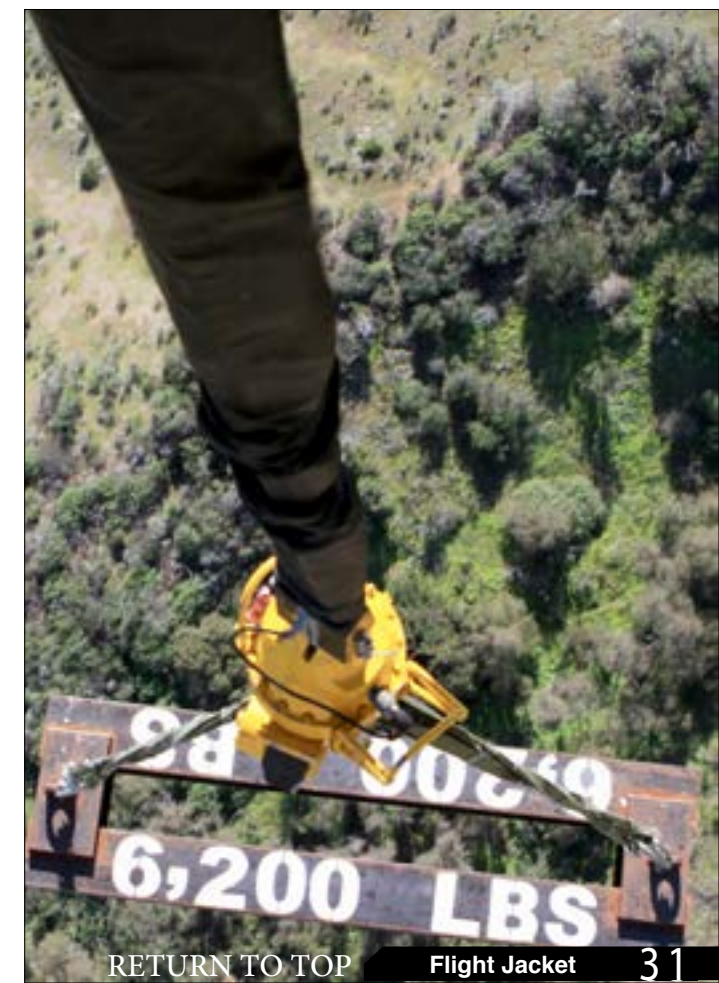
This training not only helped the HST Marines go through the motions that will keep them safe beneath the helicopters, but placed vital experience under the belts of the pilots and crew chiefs, Scott explained.

“[The squadron] was tasked about once a week in Afghanistan to move something externally from one forward operating base to another,” said O’Neal, referring to the squadron’s deployment last year. “It won’t necessarily be our daily mission, but if it does pop up, we need to have all our pilots and crew proficient and able to do that mission when it arises.”



▲ Crew chiefs with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, “Wolfpack,” 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, look out of the “hell hole” of a CH-53E Super Stallion during external lift training aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Feb. 28. Sgt. Robert Hagstrom (right), a Burbank, Calif., native, and Cpl. Zan Combs (left), an Anchorage, Alaska, native, are monitoring the sway of a suspended load and the distance the helicopter is hovering above the load.

▼ A 6,200-pound I-beam is suspended from the underside of a CH-53E Super Stallion with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, “Wolfpack,” 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, during external lift training aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Feb. 28.



-16



throws

Desert Tantrum

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns



Twenty-seven aircraft, 105 Marines and days of planning allowed Marine Aircraft Group 16 to facilitate a training exercise called Operation Desert Tantrum in the desert outside El Centro, Calif., March 14.

The MAG-16 operation involved 27 aircraft including 12 MV-22B Ospreys, 10 CH-53E Super Stallions, two UH-1Y Venoms, two AH-1W Super Cobras and a KC-130J Super Hercules setting up a forward area refueling point to simulate setting up a real FARP in combat.

Ospreys left Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., to transport infantry Marines with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, to the desert for the first phase of the operation – seizing a landing zone for 27 aircraft.

“We clear the potential site of any threats, such as improvised explosive devices and enemy forces,” said 1st Lt. Edward Miller, the executive officer of India Co., 3rd Bn, 1st Marines, and a Wood Dale, Ill., native. “Afterward, we provide security for the aircraft, both those providing fuel and those being refueled, so they can get in and out as quickly as possible.

Center: Lance Cpl. Antonio Guzman, a CH-53E Super Stallion crew chief with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 and a Los Angeles native, untangles a fuel line at a forward area refueling point during Operation Desert Tantrum outside of El Centro, Calif., March, 14. Crew chiefs like Guzman set up refueling points for aircraft conducting training to refuel close to the training site rather than cutting training short to return to base.



The security we provide allows aircraft to stay in the field longer without having to return to the forward operating base to refuel, giving us crucial support.”

This crucial support could be anything from providing ground vehicles fuel, and carrying supplies to aerial combat support and casualty evacuations.

Once the infantry Marines swept the area and secured the site, CH-53E Super Stallions entered the zone to land so crew chiefs could set up a FARP.

The Super Stallions delivered 5,000 gallons of fuel for AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1Y Venoms with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369.

This refueling allowed HMLA-369 to carry out training while their usual refueling zone was occupied.

Crew chiefs packed up the site after refueling the Super Cobras and Venoms, then performed aerial refueling training of their own with a KC-130J Super Hercules from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352.

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Right: A UH-1Y Venom, top, and AH-1W Super Cobra, bottom, both with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, land at a forward area refueling point during Operation Desert Tantrum outside of El Centro, Calif., March, 14. The exercise allowed HMLA-369 to carry out crucial training while their usual refueling zone was taken.



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With all training completed, the first wave of the exercise returned to MCAS Miramar.

An exercise of this scope provides experience to pilots, crews and commanders.

“The planning that goes into this, the mindset and the drills we perform, will prepare us for when we get to do this in a (combat environment),” said Col. Patrick Gramuglia, the MAG-16 commanding officer.

Maj. Scott Trent, the MAG-16 executive officer and a West Hartford, Conn., native, expressed a sense of pride in his unit’s ability to prepare and execute this rare training in such a short amount of time.

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◀ CH-53E Super Stallions with Marine Aircraft Group 16 fly over the desert during Operation Desert Tantrum outside of El Centro, Calif., March, 14. The group brought together 27 aircraft to support the training exercise, giving crew chiefs and pilots much needed experience.



▲▶ A CH-53E Super Stallion cools down at a forward area refueling point as MV-22 Ospreys fly in the distance during Operation Desert Tantrum outside of El Centro, Calif., March, 14. Marine Aircraft Group 16 brought together 27 aircraft in support of this training exercise to provide the most realistic training possible to prepare for future use in combat.





▲ An MV-22B Osprey soars above the clouds during Operation Desert Tantrum, in the desert outside of El Centro, Calif., March 14. For this training exercise, 27 aircraft flew the skies of Southern Calif., performing missions much like those performed in combat zones.

▼ Marines with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, search a potential forward area refueling point during Operation Desert Tantrum, a Marine Aircraft Group 16 training exercise, in the outside of El Centro, Calif., March 14.



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“We haven’t done an exercise of this size in more than three years,” explained Trent. “All of our squadrons’ weapons and tactics instructors had nothing but a shell of a plan that I gave them, and four days to plan this exercise. They went at the task I presented them and made it possible for Desert Tantrum to happen. I couldn’t be more proud of the professionalism of the (instructors) who made this mission executable and safe.”



MIRAMAR COMMANDING OFFICER HOLDS TOWN HALL MEETING

Story and photo by Cpl. Melissa Wenger



Col. John Farnam, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, held a Town Hall Meeting at the Bob Hope Theatre here, Mar. 7. Col. Farnam addressed current affairs, the future of the air station and addressed concerns raised by members of the MCAS Miramar community.

The station commanding officer held a town hall meeting at the Bob Hope Theatre, aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 7.

Col. John P. Farnam, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, addressed topics ranging from current construction projects to wait times at the base gates through a brief presentation followed by an open floor for questions and comments.

Many expressed concerns about the financial transformations the military is currently undertaking.

The commanding officer began by accounting for the fluctuation in gas prices and proposed his intent to the Miramar community.

Farnam assured that he would work to keep gas prices as low as possible.

“We’re trying to keep the gas price at something reasonable and give you a place on base to get the best-priced gas you can get,” Farnam explained.

Also, he explained why customers have seen reduced hours at the Barn Fitness Center, fewer group exercise classes and a nominal fee charged to dependents and retirees for various fitness services.

“Last fiscal year, we had to make some changes in the Semper Fit program,” he said.

The money was re-allocated from the Semper Fit program, to family wellness and behavioral programs, so it wasn’t lost within the Marine Corps Community Services.

On a positive note, Farnam introduced a child supervision option available to eligible families and offered through MCCS.

“The Marine Corps saw a gap there, and now we have a child care subsidy,” said Farnam. “Basically, the Marine Corps is giving you money every month to put your kids in a child care facility out in town and it hopes to offset your cost.”

For those who live on station, Farnam introduced the Resident Energy Conservation Program, which is a new facet in military housing costs that will affect family housing units.

“By 2014, Lincoln Military Housing is going to start charging electric bills to people who surpass certain parameters,” said Farnam.

They will look to regulate prices based off the averages found on consumer’s electric bills.

Farnam also addressed new electronic hand-held scanners used by station gate guards.

The scanners are new tools that improve the security of gate entry procedures onto the installation, he explained.

The commanding officer closed his presentation with an open floor for audience inquiries. Before leaving the Bob Hope Theatre, community members asked questions and offered comments and suggestions where appropriate.

“Just because we’re ending this, doesn’t mean you should stop asking questions,” said Farnam.

He ensured that he will continue to address the station’s concerns and will stay focused on finding solutions to keep Miramar ready to carry out its mission at all times.



FLIGHT LINE WELCOMES **REVAMPED** FOOD COURT

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Melissa Eschenbrenner

Marine Corps Community Services and station Marines held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the re-opening of the flight line food court aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8.

The newly renovated food court is now enhanced with a Subway, Winn Sushi and Ramone's Mexican Barbecue. The food vending stands were also renovated with better equipment.

"The Marines used to enjoy the old food court," said Col. John P. Farnam, the commanding officer of MCAS Miramar. "But now, with some new spots to eat, the food court is full and Marines can have a good lunch and get back to doing what they do best."

The food court, now renovated with new paint, ceilings and lighting, creates a better atmosphere, explained Mary Joe Heath, the director of food and hospitality with MCCA at MCAS Miramar.

The new vendors offered free sushi, tacos and subs to celebrate the opening and showed Marines what they have to offer. Door prizes and a 42-inch television were raffled off during the event courtesy of MCCA.

The food court will return to its usual hours of operation. Marines can now enjoy a good lunch at a location close to work and be back in time to complete the mission at hand.



▲ Subway gave away 500 free submarine sandwiches to celebrate the re-opening of the flight line food court aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., March 8. Subway was one of three new food choices added to the food court.



▲ Col. John P. Farnam, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., cuts a ribbon to signify the re-opening of the flight line food court aboard the air station, March 8. The food court was renovated and welcomed Winn Sushi, Ramone's Mexican Barbecue and Subway.

Pearl Harbor survivor shares experiences during Warriors of the Faith

* The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Chapel hosts 'Warriors of the Faith' monthly. This event includes veterans sharing life experiences from their time in the military. For more information call 858-577-1333.

Video by Lance Cpl. Raquel Barraza



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