

FLIGHT JACKET

3RD MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

MCAS MIRAMAR



MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, CALIF.

JULY 2013

MARINES LEAD CHARGE DURING DAWN BLITZ



Multi-national exercise takes over southern California





◀ MV-22B Ospreys with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing wait to take off to take a battalion of Marines to 29 Palms during Dawn Blitz 2013, June 21. Exercises like Dawn Blitz 2013 provide realistic relevant training necessary for effective global crisis response expected of the Navy and Marine Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth)

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ON THE COVER:

MV-22B Ospreys with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing wait to take off to transport a battalion of Marines to 29 Palms during Exercise Dawn Blitz, June 21. Exercises like Dawn Blitz 2013 provide realistic relevant training necessary for effective global crisis response expected of the Navy and Marine Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth)



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3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

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◀ Then Sgt. Jonathan Ferguson, a drill instructor with Bravo Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., poses for a photo in early 2006. During his time as a drill instructor, now Gunnery Sgt. Ferguson trained recruits and set the bar high for both his fellow drill instructors and his recruits.

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MCAS Miramar landfill provides renewable energy

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

SAN DIEGO – Marines and local community leaders highlighted the anniversary of the first use of the Miramar Landfill's methane-powered generators at the Miramar Landfill, San Diego, June 7.


The generators began producing energy for the air station June 14, 2012 by collecting methane gas and converting it into energy, while boosting eco-friendly consumption of energy and lowering the air station's dependence on San Diego's power grid.

"Today marks the one year anniversary of the partnership between Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego and Fortistar® to provide renewable energy for the installation at the landfill," said Col. John Farnam, MCAS Miramar commanding officer. "It's great that these sources of energy are coming along and it's just the right thing to do for the environment

and San Diego that we be able to support our own energy needs. It's a good feeling."

Not only does Farnam feel good about the air station's stance on renewable energy, officials with the San Diego Environmental Services do as well.

"This is a prime example of what can happen when different agencies come together on a project," said Mario Sierra, deputy director of Environmental Services, San Diego. "We think this is the best of all worlds. Not only [is the air station] lighting the load on the grid system, it is self sustaining, and this is ideally what we would like to do with our other facilities as well."

With the air station leading the way for self-sustaining energy, Farnam hopes to reach the ultimate goal of complete renewable energy within the next couple of years. 



A. A gas pump keeps methane from pooling in one area for too long at the Miramar Landfill, San Diego, June 3. When methane gas collects it can become a hazard, so these lines help disperse the highly flammable gas and deter mishaps.

B. Trucks dump refuse at the Miramar Landfill, San Diego, June 3. Fans suck the methane gases leaking from decomposing waste into pipes to be made into renewable energy for the air station.



C. A high voltage sign warns passersby to keep clear of this area at the Miramar Landfill, San Diego, June 3. The landfill is used to collect methane gas, which is converted into renewable energy for the air station.



D. A generator turns methane-powered fan-blade rotations into energy at the Miramar Landfill, San Diego Calif., June 3. The landfill is used to collect methane gas, which is converted into renewable energy for the air station.



E. A pump system pushes methane gas into fans from underground lines scattered throughout the Miramar Landfill, San Diego, June 3. These pumps push methane gas to power generators, which send eco-friendly energy to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

New Element in Combat Training

Story and photo by Cpl. Ali Azimi

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. - Since their arrival at the Combat Center in early May, MAG-11 has provided support for an integrated training exercise for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 and Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314. The exercise provided a vigorous training opportunity and updated approach to aviation training.

In past exercises, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group acted as a notional higher headquarters for the squadrons. MAG-11 played this role directly.

This arrangement provided better training for both the MAG-11 Marines as well as the squadrons, said Maj. Mark Bortnem, operations officer, MAG-11. All of the air combat element units received some extra training at the same level of skill as they would deployed.

The MAG-11 Marines operated out of the ACE Compound as they would while in-country. Working from tents at the combat operations center, they briefed pilots before and after flights to provide and gather the latest

intelligence. They also monitored the aircraft and communications with TTECG, which allowed them to support the pilots with real-time adjustments to tactics, as it would be done in the constantly changing battlefield.

They scheduled the battle rhythm - the daily assigned missions, the support functions, the intelligence picture and managed the pace of operations.

Their ability to monitor and calculate the weather conditions of the harsh Twentynine Palms desert environment also became an invaluable factor to pilots.

"We canceled some flight due to visibility," said Capt. Mike Harper, UH-1Y Huey pilot, HMLA-369. "It was disappointing to the ground guys because if you look straight up you can see blue sky but you couldn't see in the Hueys."

It is unclear if this will become a permanent part of the predeployment training exercises. However the addition of the command control element at ACE compound for ITX 3-13 sets precedence for future aviation-based training operations at the Combat Center.



A CH-53E with Marine Aircraft Group 11 sits on the tarmac at the Air Combat Element Compound Center's Camp Wilson to provide support for multiple units undergoing Integrated Training Exercise 3-13. The exercise provided a vigorous training opportunity and updated approach to aviation ITX training.

‘Combat Bowling’

3rd MAW commanding
general unveils leadership
initiative



Story and photos by Sgt. Lisa Tourtelot

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - When Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, challenged his Marines to come up with a game of "combat bowling," few hit the pin, so to speak.

Busby officially unveiled his "combat bowling" - the committed and engaged leadership initiative - at briefs aboard Marine Corps Air Stations Miramar and Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 3. "Combat bowling" is Busby's term for nontraditional leadership roles to encourage more Marines to think outside the box.

The committed and engaged leadership initiative is a plan to empower noncommissioned officers throughout the aircraft wing with an increased leadership role, as well as to solidify the leadership foundation throughout 3rd MAW.

Busby explained that "combat bowling" is an effort to encourage Marines at all levels to come up with new, creative ways to lead.

"The power comes from the ideas of the people within our organization," explained Busby. "The junior Marines are the idea factories."

"We are men and women of action," said Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro, the 3rd MAW sergeant major. "Not just on the 14th of September, but every single day."

Spadaro referred with pride to the Marines who put down last year's attack on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, and explained that same initiative and courage can be applied to stateside life, as well.

Rethinking traditional leadership roles and giving more responsibility to noncommissioned officers will help the aircraft wing tackle issues like sexual assault, alcohol-related incidents and suicide.

"These are the things we can help fix," Spadaro said.

The committed and engaged leadership training itself targets four subjects: the lead-

"We are men and women of action"-

Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro, 3rd MAW sergeant major



Marines with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing learn about the committed and engaged leadership initiative aboard Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 3.

ership foundation, the expectations of each leadership tier, leadership themes and specific actions to reach engagement goals.

"I think that a lot of these things have been said for a long time," said Cpl. Cherish Hillman, an administrative specialist with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 and Clarksville, Tenn., native. "It encourages me to continue fighting the good fight. Every day is a battle and it's very frustrating. It makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing."

Marines like Hillman and Staff Sgt. Eric Summers, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with Marine Wing Support Squadron 372 and Poplar Bluff, Mo., native, both explained that they intend to take the day's leadership lessons back to their own Marines.

"It's time to sit down, assess and have a group discussion on how to implement this," said Summers. He explained that because his shop is mostly fellow staff noncommissioned officers and sergeants, their job will be to apply the lessons to meet their own needs as a shop and set the example for the other Marines in their squadron.

"It's a good starting place to get everybody back on the same page, moving toward a common goal," said Summers.

Over the next several weeks, Busby and Spadaro will travel to 3rd MAW units across southern California and Arizona to ensure that all 18,000 aircraft wing Marines receive the committed and engaged leadership training. Additionally, company-grade officers and staff sergeants will attend leadership symposiums and 3rd MAW will soon mandate two-day training events for Marines upon their promotion to corporal or sergeant.

As the briefs continue throughout the month, Marines like Summers and Hillman will have to come up with their own unique "combat bowling" approaches to engaged leadership.



A photograph of several Marines in camouflage uniforms and helmets, working together to raise the American flag on a tall pole. The flag is partially visible at the top left, showing the stripes. The background is a clear blue sky.

Morning colors ceremony honors Flag Day

Story by Cpl. Maxwell Pennington
and photos by Cpl. Kevin Crist

Third Marine Aircraft Wing noncommissioned officers stepped up to yet another task this month. Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general, called upon the small unit leaders to honor the nation's flag during a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19.

Sgt. Julio Vega-Flores, an avionics supervisor with Marine Aircraft Group 16 and a Las Vegas native, took the reins in organizing, planning and leading the ceremony. This was all part of the Wing's committed and engaged leadership initiative, which aims to empower NCOs with tasks they normally would not perform.

The ceremony featured American traditions such as the National Anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance and several past forms of the nation's flag. There was also a reenactment of Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima, recapturing the iconic 1945 photo by Joe Rosenthal.

Vega-Flores completed several tasks to ensure the American flag was honored flawlessly. These included creating a program, logistic arrangements and coordination for platoons of Marines to perform military drills.

The event was a perfect example of what happens when you give an NCO a task and say "I need you to do this," explained Vega-Flores.

Third MAW sergeants will continue to host commemorative morning colors ceremonies each month, increasing their wealth of experience and knowledge.





A. Sgt. Julio Vega-Flores, an avionics supervisor with Marine Aircraft Group 16 and a Las Vegas native, speaks to Marines during a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. Vega-Flores was chosen as the reviewing officer of the ceremony in support of the commanding general's committed and engaged leadership initiative.

B. Marines prepare to raise the American flag at a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. The ceremony was part of the the committed and engaged leadership initiative, which aims to empower noncommissioned officers with tasks they normally would not perform.



C. A Marine carries an American flag during a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. The ceremony was part of the the committed and engaged leadership initiative, which aims to empower noncommissioned officers with tasks they normally would not perform.

D. Marines carry American flags during a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. The ceremony was part of the the committed and engaged leadership initiative, which aims to empower noncommissioned officers with tasks they normally would not perform.



E. Marines prepare to raise the American flag during a morning colors ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 19. The ceremony was part of the committed and engaged leadership initiative, which aims to empower noncommissioned officers with tasks they normally would not perform.



Click here to watch the video

NEVER GIVE IN

ROAD TO CROSSFIT REGIONAL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. CHRISTOPHER JOHNS



Gunnery Sgt. Randall "Jay" Johnson, an ordnance staff noncommissioned officer with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 "Black Knights," received quite a surprise when he was invited to the CrossFit Games Asia Regional in Seoul, South Korea, where he competed against 47 other athletes from around the world.

From May 31 to June 2, Johnson competed against the world's finest CrossFit contenders where every pound, every second and every work out tested their

skills, the depths of their capabilities and how far they could push themselves.

Johnson finished 25th out of 48 other CrossFit competitors.

Just three short years ago, while on recruiting duty, Johnson hadn't even thought about doing CrossFit to begin with, much less competing half-way around the world.

When a Marine he recruited invited Johnson to a CrossFit workout, the Hereford, Texas, native's life was forever changed.



COURTESY PHOTO

▲Gunnery Sgt. Randall "Jay" Johnson, an ordnance staff noncommissioned officer with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 "Black Knights" and a Hereford, Texas, native, competes in an event at the CrossFit Games Asia Regional in Seoul, South Korea, May 31. (Photo provided by Gunnery Sgt. Randall Johnson.)

"He kept asking and asking me and I never would go with him," said Johnson. "One Friday night, he tricked me into going with him and I got broken-off pretty well and I just signed up right then and there. The rest is history."

Now, he passes his love of the CrossFit lifestyle on to his own Marines.

"During this last deployment, we ran a (body composition program) using our work out routines," said Johnson. "Soon we had people who weren't on the program coming to work out with us. It was great for morale, and it gave us a break from the monotony of the daily routine."

Staff Sgt. Bryan Tackett, an ordnance staff NCO with the Black Knights and a Cortland, Ohio, native, was one of the Marines who began doing CrossFit during the deployment. He thinks highly of the CrossFit Marine and his lifestyle.

"[Gunnery Sgt.] Johnson is a great teacher and mentor," said Tackett. "Others would show up and word would spread until we had about 50 Marines out there with us. We had pilots, crews, privates first class to lieutenant colonels out sweating and working out with us. It was awesome."

During Johnson's deployment to Bahrain, he and some of his friends entered to compete in the CrossFit Open – for no other reason than to see



▲Gunnery Sgt. Randall "Jay" Johnson, an ordnance staff noncommissioned officer with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 "Black Knights" and a Hereford, Texas, native, lifts more than 200 pounds over his head during a CrossFit workout aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 1.

Gunery Sgt. Randall “Jay” Johnson, an ordnance staff noncommissioned officer with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 “Black Knights” and a Hereford, Texas, native, exercises during a CrossFit workout aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 1. Johnson competed against 47 other athletes in the CrossFit Games Asia Regional, placing 25th in the competition.



Click here to watch the video



how far they had come.

“We didn’t really have any expectations for it,” said Johnson. “Since I began, my improvement is leaps and bounds from where I was. To put things in perspective, in the CrossFit Asia Regional Open about 1,300 people competed. I finished in the top 48. I feel like three years ago I might have finished around the 1,300 mark.”

With the open competition behind him, Johnson found a new chance to see how much he had improved.

He received a great opportunity to test himself by competing against some of the best in the world in Seoul, South Korea.

“We were ecstatic when we found out he had been invited to compete again,” said Tack-

ett. “He is such a humble person though, so you would never know he was competing in a huge competition in another part of the world. He just isn’t the type to brag.”

From the very beginning, Johnson’s focus was on training and improving himself, now he had something to work toward.

“At first, I didn’t think too much of it,” said Johnson. “Then when I got home and told the family readiness officer, some of the other Marines I work with and my family and friends, everyone was just so stoked for me. I think everyone else was happier for me in the beginning than I was - which kind of turned me around and made me a little bit more anxious about it. It made me realize how big of a deal this really was.”

To prepare for the competition, Johnson would work out twice a day and maintained a nutritious diet - not a drastic change from his typical routine.

“I would say that I still pushed myself as hard as I could at every work out,” said Johnson. “I trained the same every day for about an hour to an hour and a half, keep eating simple foods. Meats, nuts, veggies and fruits - I don’t eat anything processed.”

Johnson found support from his Marines, friends and family, but there is one special person who helps him push through his limitations.

“My daughter is probably my biggest fan,” said Johnson. “She pushes me pretty hard. She wants to do CrossFit, asks me to work out with her when I’m home, or when she comes here

and wants to participate with me. She’s 11 years old, but she pushes me more than anything.”

During the competition, groups of his Marines cheered him on from wherever they were at the time, doing whatever they could to track his progress.

“[Our unit] was in [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center] Twentynine Palms during the competition,” said Tackett. “So when we had access to internet we would watch the streams or look at his statistics to see how he was doing. We couldn’t have been more proud.”

Whether Johnson is competing in CrossFit Games or just working out on his own, he will continue to work on improving himself and others through doing what he loves - being a Marine, and teaching others CrossFit.



OSPREY MAKES HISTORIC LANDING

Story by Sgt. James Mecure



AT SEA - The U.S. Marines made their first landing with an MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor helicopter aboard a Japanese Ship, June 14, 2013.

The landing is significant because it provides another avenue of approach during any future humanitarian and disaster relief operations in the region.

As part of ongoing Exercise Dawn Blitz 2013, the Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 demonstrated the abilities of the MV-22B aircraft aboard Japanese Maritime Defense Forces ship JS Hyuga

(DDG-181) for the first time off of the Southern California coast.

"The Osprey landing here is a historic event," said Marine Brig. Gen. John Broadmeadow, commanding general 1st MEB. "The Japanese Army and Navy are working together with the U.S. Marine Corps from a coalition standpoint and because of this exercise we can showcase the interoperability of the MV-22 and the Japanese ships."

MV-22 Osprey aircraft commanded by Lt. Col. Bradley J. Harms, flew from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar along with Brig. Gen.

Broadmeadow and Japanese leaders from the Japanese Self Defense Forces and landed aboard the JS Shimokita and JS Hyuga.

After landing, Japanese crew members showed how the MV-22B assist in a humanitarian and disaster relief scenario, where a simulated casualty and supplies was taken off the aircraft aboard the ship. U.S. Navy and Marines conducted familiarization training with Japanese crews in preparation of the landings, June 3-11.

Pilots who landed the MV-22B on the JS Hyuga discussed the significance of the aircraft's

capability that can be used to respond to missions across the range of military operations, including disasters and humanitarian relief in the future.

"This is a great opportunity for our countries to familiarize ourselves with this aircraft and demonstrates an important way to move forward with how we can utilize it in the future," said Maj. Eric Sandberg, one of the pilots for the historic flight.

More than 5,000 total forces from the U.S., Canada, Japan and New Zealand participated in the third iteration Dawn Blitz June 11-28.



A. An MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 sits folded below deck aboard the JS Hyuga during exercise Dawn Blitz, June 14. Dawn Blitz demonstrates the unique capabilities of the Marine Corps and Navy to rapidly respond to contingencies in coordination with our coalition partners. (Photo by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth)

B. An MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 sits aboard the JS Hyuga during exercise Dawn Blitz, June 14. Exercises like Dawn Blitz 2013 provide realistic relevant training necessary for effective global crisis response expected of the American Navy and Marine Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth)

C. An MV-22B Osprey from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 prepares to land aboard the JS Shimokita during Dawn Blitz June 14. Exercises like Dawn Blitz 2013 provide realistic training necessary for effective global crisis response expected of the Navy and Marine Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Isaac Lamberth)

Japanese General gets hands on the Osprey

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

Japanese Lt. Gen. Koichi Isobe, the vice chief of the joint staff with Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, received an inside look at the MV-22B Osprey aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 18.

As part of Exercise Dawn Blitz 2013 initiative between the United States, Japan and other allies, the Japanese general paid a visit to the air station to become more familiar with the versatile aircraft.

"[The lieutenant general] was very intelligent and receptive to the information we presented him with today," said Lt. Col. Bradley Harms, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 commanding officer, and tour guide for the air station's visitors. "He really wanted to learn about this aircraft."

During his tour of the installation, Isobe visited simulators for the Osprey. He and his aides took turns behind the controls of the practice craft Marines use to train.

The group from Japan seemed very excited to receive this opportunity. However, the fun didn't stop there.

"You can talk about the abilities of this aircraft all day and you can even fly a simulator, but you might not truly understand what this aircraft can do until you are actually in one," said Harms.

Harms offered information and answered Isobe's questions about the Osprey during the tour, and felt a great deal of pride in the job.

"It's an honor for me to be a part of this," said Harms. "I really appreciate the opportunity to work with these men and sharing my knowledge with them."

After their visit to the air station, Isobe and his aides will return to Japan with a better understanding of the MV-22B's capabilities and having fostered better understanding about the Marine Corps' capabilities as America's force in readiness.

Japanese Lt. Gen. Koichi Isobe, the vice chief of the joint staff with Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, (A.) receives a brief about the MV-22B Osprey, (B.) tours the aircraft's simulator, (C.) peers into an Osprey's cockpit, (D.) watches the pilots start one up, (E.) and prepares to board one aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 18. During his tour aboard the air station, Isobe received classes about the Osprey's capabilities and flew the simulated aircraft.





HAVE OSPREY, WILL TRAVEL

3RD MAW LIFTS 2/1 TO 29 PALMS

Thirteen MV-22B Ospreys with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 wait to take off to transport Marines with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms during Exercise Dawn Blitz 2013, June 21. Exercise Dawn Blitz demonstrates the unique capabilities of the Marine Corps and Navy to rapidly respond to contingencies in

Photo by: Sgt. Isaac Lamberth



A MV-22 Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 is lowered into the hull of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Helicopter destroyer JS Hyuga (DDG 181) as part of Exercise Dawn Blitz off the coast of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 14. Dawn Blitz 2013 is a multinational amphibious exercise off the Southern California coast that refocuses Navy and Marine Corps and coalition forces in their ability to conduct complex amphibious operations essential for global crisis response across the range of military operations.

INTO THE MAW

OSPREY LANDS ON JAPANESE SHIP AND MAKES HISTORY

FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS

OSPREY MAKES HISTORIC LANDING

A MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 sits aboard the JS Shimokita after landing on it during Exercise Dawn Blitz, June 14. Exercise Dawn Blitz demonstrates the unique capabilities of the Marine Corps and Navy to rapidly respond to contingencies in coordination with our coalition partners.



Drill field to Air field

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Christopher Johns

Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Ferguson, director of Corporal's Course and a Dayton, Ohio, native, listens to questions from corporals during a brief aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 7.

After two years of community college and working for UPS Inc., Jonathan Ferguson desired something greater; a challenge beyond the norm.

The challenge: joining the United States Marine Corps.

"I knew it was time for something bigger," said Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Ferguson, the Corporal's Course director aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and a Dayton, Ohio, native. "I wanted to get out of Ohio and the Marine Corps was a sure bet for travel and adventure."

Traveling is exactly what he did. Over the past 12 years, Ferguson has been a part of four different commands across the nation. Each of these commands exposed him to different aspects of the Corps' capabilities.

He spent his first five years as a motor transportation mechanic with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Division, aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

As a sergeant, Ferguson volunteered to become a drill instructor. After graduating drill instructor school he joined Bravo Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Ferguson believed in his ability to teach the newest generations of Marines, not only from his formal training, but from his experiences as well.

"Being in an infantry battalion, I was able to hone my skills in a sense of leadership and other intangibles that most other Marines can't get anywhere else," said Ferguson. "Yes, I was accustomed to working on trucks, but I was also accustomed to dealing with Marines and being in an authoritative role with responsibilities."

The newly indoctrinated drill instructor saw the chance to grow in his own abilities and make a difference in the Marine Corps.

"A lot of drill instructors will tell you that they were one of the best in their unit, 'water-walkers,' if you will," said Ferguson. "When you get to drill instructor school you realize that you're surrounded by the top 10 percent of the Marine Corps. When I went, there was no hit list for it. You wanted to be down there. To go there as a young sergeant

and to be surrounded by so many driven sergeants and staff [non-commissioned officers] made me want to rise to the occasion."

Serving aboard the depot taught him

high level."

During his tour as a drill instructor he helped train, mentor and induct eight platoons, approximately 590 Marines, into the Marine Corps.



Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Ferguson, the Corporal's Course director aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and a Dayton, Ohio, native, performs pre-combat checks with his Marines while on deployment in the province of Helmand, Afghanistan, Oct. 7, 2011. Ferguson initially joined the Marine Corps to get out of Ohio, and has since had the chance to travel abroad to different states and countries. (Photo provided by Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan Ferguson.)

that he had to be first, he had to be better and that his recruits had to be better than the others.

"Ferguson and I were drill instructors together from 2005 to 2008," said 1st Sgt. Damien Coan, company first sergeant for India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, MCRD San Diego. "He was an excellent drill instructor and one that I tried to keep up with while we wore 'green belts.' He was one of those drill instructors who set the bar high and kept everyone, drill instructors and recruits, performing at a

Throughout long days and nights, relentless screaming and the constant rigors of recruit training; Ferguson saw the reasoning behind it all.

"As you begin to progress through the billets from fourth hat up, you start to truly understand why it takes so many hours," said Ferguson. "You begin to take ownership of that platoon and you realize that you're playing a pivotal role in mentoring these young men in their lives. You want to be a part of that, you don't want to be

at home, you don't want to be away from them, because you only have them for 90 days and you don't want to cheat them of that experience."

It isn't about the drill instructor; it's about the recruit, explained Ferguson.

"Every so often I come across one of them or get an e-mail and it's powerful," said Ferguson. "When I was a staff sergeant with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, I ran into one of my former recruits. He was a sergeant, and he told me that he wanted to be a drill instructor and that he still remembered what I taught him. That has a powerful effect."

After a brief time with Combat Logistics Battalion 15, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, out of MCB Camp Pendleton Ferguson came to MCAS Miramar, home of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

"It's been an eye-opener for me," said Ferguson. "I was able to cross the spectrum of all of the big three, from division to group then to the air wing. It was eye opening for me, because this is my first time with an air wing and working in a base unit. So getting to do two-in-one is a different experience for me."

Even though this new experience might seem a little daunting to some, Ferguson welcomes it with open arms.

"I've enjoyed it, this has opened my eyes to a whole different world of how the Marine Corps works and how the [Marine Air-Ground Task Force] comes in to play," said Ferguson. "At the same time, getting to see how Brig Marines, the Provost Marshal's office, administrative Marines and other supporting elements keep the installation running has been a good experience for me as well."

What makes Ferguson a great Marine is not simply being proficient in his duties, but going above and beyond the call of his duties.

"Gunnery Sgt. Ferguson is a great Marine," said Coan. "He is not a Marine from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He is a Marine 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. He is the definition of 'leadership by example,' and he is one of the finest staff NCOs I have had the privilege to serve with. Ferguson has continued to set the finest example for Marines of all ranks to emulate."



“We are here to support You.”

The S-6 transitions to a new way of helping with tech problems

Story and Photo by Sgt. Frances Johnson



For more than a decade, if a Marine had a complication with their computer they would call the Navy Marine Corps Internet help desk and an off-site contractor would help them fix their problem or send someone, possibly one of the S-6 Marines, out to them. This process has been transitioning into a new style and will fully change this coming October.

The help desk as we know it will be taken over by Marines at Camp Pendleton and the S-6 Marines of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar will show up at our desks to help work through any technical issues.

“The next big phase of this change comes with who is going to show up at your desk when you have a problem with your computer,” said Tom Cassidy, the operations officer of Marine Corps Air Stations S-6. “If you have a problem right now you call [NMCI] and one of the civilians that works for them comes on site. We’re beginning to transition to where it won’t be them, it will start being the staff of the six that comes on site to fix your computer.”

Though this seems like a big change, the transition takes place in phases so it won’t be such a dramatic switch for NMCI users.

“For right now [users] will continue to call the NMCI number,” Cassidy stated. “What the Marine Corps is doing smartly, especially here at this region, is rather than say ‘ok light switch is off everybody call here’ we’re going to start bringing in the bases. Even for Miramar we’re going to start with station as a smaller population to utilize the help desk up at Camp Pendleton to start taking that smaller population before we even bring in 3rd MAW.”

Cassidy also explained 3rd MAW might be phased over to the Camp Pendleton help desk in small groups but has yet to define who and when.

“We’re still developing how we’re going to get there. Our job and our goal is a smooth transition for all users.”





peek-a-boo into the life of their parents

◀ A child wears a cranial during Junior Jarhead Day hosted by Marine Aircraft Group 16 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 8. Crew chiefs took the children into an MV-22B Osprey and taught them about their job with the power of imagination.

Hangar walls echoed with little kid laughter as more than 100 children participated in Marine Aircraft Group 16's Junior Jarhead Day aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 8.

Junior Jarhead Day is designed to give the unit's children a taste of the Marine Corps experience.

Marine volunteers led platoons that were split up by age to different stations where they learned about things Marines do every day.

"We got a bunch of kids from all over and they became a unit," said Sgt. Alexander Antonogorgi, a volunteer platoon leader with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 and a Tampa, Fla., native. "It was great to see them interact."


Children got to learn about the MV-22B Osprey and the CH-53E Super Stallion. Children also learned about Aircraft Rescue and Fire-fighting and military working dogs.

Marines showed the platoons how to wear

camouflage paint and took them through a miniature obstacle course. The platoons each tried Meals Ready to Eat and experienced what it's like to see a drill instructor for the first time.

"They got to see what their [mom or] dad does working in the Marine Corps," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Loyd, a parent of a child participating and a Burlington, Calif., native. "I think they had a blast. If you look at the faces of these kids, they're exhausted but still excited."

Spouses and children get to learn while interacting and building friendships which brings the Marine Corps family closer as a whole, explained Antongorgi.

"The biggest thing families should take away is that the Marine Corps is our job, but we don't exclude our families from it," said Loyd. "Families are the most important thing but, you can't include your family if you don't get involved [with your unit]." 



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▼ Sgt. Efrain Melecio, an aviation logistics information management support specialist with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and Chicago native, thanks Maj. Gen. Steven Busby, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general, with a sergeant's coin aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 21. Busby congratulated the sergeant for his selection to the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program and wished him luck as he sets off for Officer Candidates School in the summer and the University of Arizona in the fall.



▲ Sgt. Efrain Melecio, an aviation logistics information management support specialist with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and Chicago native, prepares to leave his shop aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 21. Melecio hopes to positively impact more Marines by commissioning as a second lieutenant.

Service Sergeant leaps to officer corps Before Self

Story and Photos by Sgt. Lisa Tourtelot

When shots rang out and flames burst through the Afghan sky over Camp Bastion last September, many things changed for many people.

Marines who thought they might never see combat from their flight line roles as fuel specialists, mechanics, information technology specialists, engineers and myriad support jobs suddenly found themselves under attack and engaging the enemy.

Sgt. Efrain Melecio, an aviation logistics information management support specialist, then with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 (Forward), was walking out of the showers after a long day at work when he and his fellow Marines saw the attack.

"It was the biggest flame I've ever seen in my life," said the Chicago native. "We had a lot of Marines who were involved in combat. Seeing the affect it had on them, I wanted to one day be able to help somebody who is going through something like that."

Although he had regularly taken college courses throughout his six years in the Marine Corps, Melecio found a new commitment to higher education following the attack.

"I want to help people who suffer from (post-traumatic stress disorder)," said Melecio.

This summer, Melecio will be embroiled in a different kind of battle as he attends Officer Candidates



▲ Sgt. Efrain Melecio, an aviation logistics information management support specialist with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and Chicago native, takes a study break aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 21. Melecio has been attending college courses throughout his six years in the Marine Corps and will be starting at the University of Arizona in the fall to pursue a commission as a second lieutenant.



School before starting college full-time at the University of Arizona, where he plans to major in psychology.

Maj. Gen. Steven Busby and Sgt. Maj. Anthony Spadaro, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general and sergeant major, respectively, stopped by Melecio's shop with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., May 21, to congratulate the sergeant on his selection to the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program and wish him luck before he leaves.

Luck, however, may be a little unnecessary for the crisp, professional young Marine.

"I strive to accomplish as much as possible all the time," said Melecio while he organized study materials from yet another college course. "I don't like sitting still and feeling like I'm not working toward something. I constantly feel the need to set new goals and obtain those goals."

Melecio's goals now focus on helping as many Marines as possible, embodying the committed and engaged leadership ideal of service before self.

"One of the biggest reasons I decided to do (the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program) was because I want to lead and serve Marines," he said. "I love my job and I love working with Marines and I love getting hands on, but what draws my interest in earning a commission in the Marine Corps is being able to still work with Marines and having an increased level of responsibility."

The next four years will present new challenges for Melecio as he adapts to student life, but his experiences may give him added

wisdom both as a student and, hopefully, a second lieutenant.

"I'm hoping to bring with me everything I've learned being a noncommissioned officer - leadership skills, the discipline that comes along with being enlisted personnel," said Melecio. "I've learned a lot the past six years and I want to be able to share that with others and apply that as I move forward."

This story is part of an ongoing series highlighting the committed and engaged leaders within 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.





None Left Behind

Story and photos by Sgt. Lisa Tourtelot

“If engaged leadership was the norm and everyone was involved, how low would the number of suicides go?” asked Sgt. Jesse Conger, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing ground training chief.

Conger took two of his junior Marines outside his office aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 11, for a quick mentorship session. He knows they’re sports fans and he uses the topic to ease them into more serious conversations.

“I just want to talk to them,” said Conger. “I’ve done it enough that they know it’s genuine. They talk to me.”

Earlier this year, Maj. Gen. Ste-

ven Busby, the 3rd MAW commanding general, set a goal: to have all 18,000 aircraft wing Marines complete their suicide prevention training before the goal date set by the Marine Corps. As the ground training chief for the entire wing, the responsibility fell to Conger.

“When we started on that Thursday, we didn’t have any unit that was more than 30% complete,” the Concord, Calif., native explained.

By the next week, Conger had trained or arranged the training of more than 100 Never Leave a Marine Behind suicide prevention instructors for 3rd MAW. He explained that now the entire aircraft wing is almost 100 percent complete. Completion of this annual training is not required until December.

Meeting and exceeding mission



Sgt. Jesse Conger, the ground training chief with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and Concord, Calif., native, mentors two of his Marines during an impromptu session aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 11. Conger oversaw the training of nearly 100 Never Leave a Marine Behind suicide prevention training instructors in less than a week.

Sgt. Jesse Conger, the ground training chief with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and Concord, Calif., native, shares a laugh with two of his junior Marines aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 11. Conger explained that he makes daily efforts to stay involved and engaged with his Marines.



Sgt. Jesse Conger, the ground training chief with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and Concord, Calif., native, mentors two of his Marines during an impromptu session aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 11. Earlier this year, Conger set out to ensure that all 18,000 3rd MAW Marines completed their yearly Never Leave a Marine Behind suicide prevention training.

requirements is nothing new to Conger. However, in 2000, Conger was performing religious missionary work in Romania.

"I grew up doing it," he explained. "The Marine Corps is the mission now."

Older than his peers, Conger was in Romania when the terrorist attacks of 9/11 happened. He explained that he was hit hard not only by the events, but by his inability to help his fellow Americans.

After completing his mission work, Conger eventually enlisted in 2004 as a rescue swimmer.

"The most important lesson I learned as a missionary is to open my mouth," Conger said. "It is difficult to tell someone else how to live or correct someone, to get rejected a lot. A lot a lot," he laughed.

Conger takes little credit for his role in training so many Marines in such a short time, and instead focuses on the need for such training.

"It's a huge issue to any human being who has ever lost a loved one to suicide. It's got to stop," said Conger. "Why? What's going on in your life that's not being taken care of by leadership that you feel like you need to end your life?"

After returning from his last tour to Afghanistan, Conger found out a close friend of his had ended her own life while on deployment.

"I would have done anything to prevent it, and I would do anything with anyone else in the future to prevent that," he said. Having spent years dealing with the

challenges of missionary work, training rescue swimmers and four deployments, Conger believes that leadership is a critical issue in the Marine Corps.

"Leadership isn't a born trait in people, it's something that is practiced and honed," said Conger. "It's a skill that's made. Being a good mentor is being an engaged leader."

Conger explained that committed and engaged leadership across the board could replace all suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention, equal opportunity and myriad training intended to engage Marines on specific topics.

"When you're engaged, you're going to [do the right thing] every time," he said, gesturing emphatically. "My first staff ser-

geant said to me that if you do the right thing every time you can't ever be wrong."

The two younger Marines Conger had been counseling remain relaxed and open, laughing about inside jokes. At the end of their session, he shuffled them back inside to finish the work day.

"Know their needs, their values," said Conger, whose rapport with his Marines speaks for itself. "Have a relationship with them professional enough that you can come to work and be engaged and outside of work you're still engaged with that Marine. It's 24/7."

Conger's question remains the same: if the Marine Corps had more committed and engaged leaders, how many tragedies could Marines prevent?



Conserving today means a better tomorrow

Story and photos by Cpl. Melissa Wenger

Fifty years ago, no one gave a second thought to buckling up, but now it's the first thing that many of us do when getting into a vehicle. The leadership of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. hopes that one day, individuals aboard the station will give the same thought to turning off lights, shutting down computers, and taking other steps to conserve energy.

"What we're trying to do here is change

the behavior of the Marines at Miramar and make it so that everyone is thinking of those things," said Mick Wasco, the station energy program manager. "What I'm envisioning and working toward is all the tenant Marines and station Marines [being able to] feel like they're on a green installation."

MCAS Miramar was part of the energy over-consumption problem, but is now quickly working toward being part of the solution.

"Ninety-seven percent of the power on base was called brown power and it came from gas or coal-fired power plants out in town," said Col. John P. Farnam, station commanding officer. "Typically, that's how we get our energy here in the United States."

The Secretary of the Navy set an energy goal in 2010 stating that by 2020, 50 percent of the energy used by military installations will be renewable. MCAS Miramar is gearing

up to leave that benchmark in the dust with the generating power from Miramar's landfill.

"The methane project brings me about 50 percent of my energy on the base now," said Farnam. "Last year, [the landfill] gave us 25,000 megawatt-hours, which are the equivalent to about 101 railroad cars full of coal or just over two million gallons of gas that we would've used to run power plants to give us that electricity. So it makes a giant difference.



We expect power for the next several decades at a minimum from that landfill.”

The Miramar landfill is the main contributor to a solution for powering the installation, which is slated for completion in 2017.

“The microgrid project is what’s going to give us the ability ... to power the part of the base that needs to be powered should we have a brown out or should we lose power due to fires or earthquakes or something like that,” said Farnam.

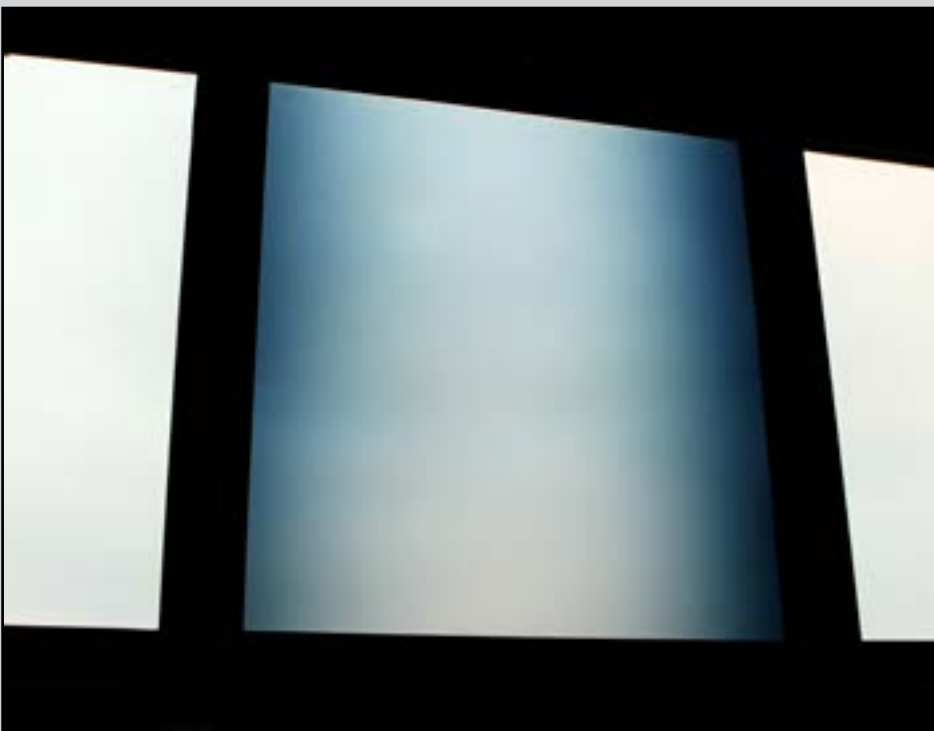
Currently, the installation is a part of the San Diego power grid.

“If the grid goes down, we go down with it,” said Farnam. “Should there be problems outside with the overall power grid, I can disconnect Miramar from that, use the renewable power source that we have from the landfill and keep the lights on here at Miramar.”

Other projects contributing to Miramar’s green energy conservation initiative include the installation of a new technology at building 6311, the station’s Public Works Division.

View Incorporated manufactures electrochromic windows coated in a special film.

“What the coating allows us to do is through an electronic control system, control the glass from 60 percent visible light transmission ... down to four percent visible light transmission,” said James Fox, project manager for



An electrochromic window is beginning the transition process at building 6311 aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 6. The windows can transition between four and 60 percent light transmission, allowing for cooler air during sunny days and illumination during overcast ones.

“Conserving energy saves money and puts more equipment on the battlefield,” - Mick Wasco

View Inc. “Part of the control system knows the latitude and longitude of this building and the time of year so exactly where the sun is at in the sky and the windows will respond appropriately.”

In other words, the windows tint automatically, allowing tenants to keep the interior cool while having the comfort of being able to see outside.

“The main goal is to reduce the cooling costs primarily by about 15 to 25 percent for any normal building” said Fox. “Those are the energy savings we expect to see here at [building] 6311. After we get done, it should cut the cooling costs by about 20 percent of what it takes to cool this building.”

Concentrated solar panels have cropped up as well to supplement the station’s conservation efforts.

“The concentrated term refers to a mirrored system that reflects light from multiple angles onto a small piece of solar panel and generates far more electricity than just regular light hitting the panel,” said Wasco. “The panels are on full tilt and full rotation and have light sensors on them that follow the sun throughout the day in order to get the most power out of the system.”

Another system that maximizes the output of solar energy has been installed at the bachelor’s enlisted quarters’ laundry facility aboard MCAS Miramar.

“We use solar thermal panels to heat the water before it goes into the boiler and that makes it so that the boiler doesn’t have to use as much energy to heat the water,” said Wasco. “It was one of the most successful projects that we’ve done because it was just a very holistic solution for that building that saves a large percentage of energy for that building.”

Miramar is also privy to participating in different experimental technologies that have already been awarded a contract.

“One [technology is] a battery storage microgrid application, which means that we take our solar panels that are behind our building and we hook them up to a battery, and that battery will be charged from the solar electricity,” said Wasco. “Then, that battery will be turned around and used as backup storage for that building. When the power goes out, that building will be able to sustain itself for at least 72 hours.”

According to Wasco, the energy program boils down to being a more efficient instillation, preventing waste, but still living in comfort and productivity.

“None of our goals include having any less capability,” he said. “The effort is really focused on keeping the same capability and mission readiness we’ve always had, but just eliminating waste. As we all know, conserving energy saves money and puts more equipment on the battlefield and whatever else we need to meet the mission.”



The bachelor enlisted quarters’ laundry facility makes use of solar panels to heat water aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 7. This project is considered one of the most successful individual building projects for energy conservation on the station and serves as a model for other conservation projects.