

# THE CONTINENTAL MARINE

MAGAZINE

JULY/AUG/SEPT 2008



## *Drawn to perfection*

- > *Their combat load includes paints & brushes; watercolors & pencils*
- > *Grunts training through artists' eyes*

## **Inside:**

- > 2/25 Marines train for battle in California
- > 3/25 Marines visit Georgia for Operation Immediate Response 2008
- > 1/23 Marines head to Ghana for bi-lateral infantry tactics training

- > Stay Reserve! Here's a comprehensive look at how and why to keep the uniform on
- > New program gives OIF/OEF vets an outdoor outlet for their combat stress

**I**t seems as though this quarter has flown by in the blink of an eye!

In this edition of the Continental Marine Magazine, we finish up our coverage of the summer exercise season.

Two of our highly trained, highly motivated combat correspondents deployed to the Republic of Georgia and returned just before hostilities broke out there.

In this edition, we have quite an array of stories from our embedded correspondent with 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, as they prepared for their deployment to Iraq. Our next edition should feature stories about the battalion from Iraq as they were putting feet down as we went to press.

The Reserve force is in need of qualified Marines, both enlisted and officer. We have an article that explains some of the benefits prior service Marines can reap from the Reserves.

We also look at an outdoor program geared toward helping wounded OIF and OEF veterans deal with the stresses of returning to “normal life.”

I hope you enjoy this edition of your magazine.

Semper Fi,  
Sgt. G. S. Thomas  
Editor, Continental Marine Magazine

## Mea Culpa

**Correction:** In the previous edition, we incorrectly captioned the photograph of the band on the bottom of page 5. The photograph was taken during pre-game warm ups before a New Orleans Saints/St. Louis Rams football game and not during the actual half-time performance.

## COVER SHOT



A Marine from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, operates a Multifunction Agile Remote Control Robot to investigate a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) during a training exercise at Camp Wilson at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 5. (Artwork by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Fay)

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A Marine from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, kicks in the door of a house to enter and clear with his fire team in Combat Town at Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 19. (Photo by Capt. Paul L. Greenberg)

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## Anderson relieves Ashley as 4th MAW's top enlisted

Sgt. Maj. Paul K. Anderson relieved Sgt. Maj. Bradley M. Ashley as the sergeant major for 4th Marine Aircraft Wing during a ceremony Sept. 10 aboard Naval Support Activity New Orleans on the West Bank.

Anderson comes to 4th MAW after serving as the station sergeant major for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. His previous assignments include: Marine Security Guard duty at the American Embassies in Belgium, Morocco and Nassau, Bahamas; Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 451 at MCAS Beaufort, S.C.; Inspector-Instructor staff, Marine Wing Support Squadron 474, MWSG-47, 4th MAW, in Johnston, Penn.; and 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Birmingham, Ala.

Ashley retired from the Corps after 29 years of faithful and professional service.



## “President’s Own” national tour dates announced

“The President’s Own” United States Marine Band tours each year from the beginning of October until early November. The tour lasts approximately 31 days, during which the band performs in roughly 29 cities.

The tradition of the Marine Band tour began in 1891 under 17th Director John Philip Sousa.

“The President’s Own” United States Marine Band has roughly 160 members, including five officers, a drum major and assistant drum major, roughly 130 musicians, 22 full-time professionals working in administration, library, music production, operations, public affairs, recording, stage managing, and supply and 13 Marines from the Fleet Marine Force who work with administration, supply, and the stage managers.

All dates, locations, and times are subject to change. For more information, you can go to <http://www.marineband.usmc.mil/>



## Reserve Marine develops life-saving device

Sgt. Jason Cox, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, earned a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal in July 2008 for his work on countering improvised explosive devices. With his science background, Cox recognized that infrared spectroscopy could be useful in detecting and identifying improvised explosive devices from a 250-meter distance. Cox researched a device which allows the military to image triggering systems for roadside bombs. These triggers are almost impossible to see with the naked eye or current imaging techniques.

Coming up with the idea was a combination of luck and optimization, according to Cox, who recognized the utility of infrared imaging.

Together with his fellow Marines, they shared ideas, and, ultimately, created a system that allowed detection of victim-initiated IEDs.

“I’m proud that I could contribute to a device that will ultimately save lives,” Cox said.

## Marines awarded for contributions to Asian Pacific American awareness

Two Marines were among nine service members awarded the Federal Asian Pacific American Council Military Meritorious Service Award during a luncheon at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge June 26.

1st Lt. Monica J. Moon and Staff Sgt. Tom S. Woo were both recognized for their distinguished military service and significant contributions to the advancement of Asian Pacific Americans during the ceremony.

Woo was awarded for his volunteer work while serving under the Marine Corps Mobilization Command. An active member in the Chinese American community in Rochester, N.Y., he helped coordinate the Chinese New Year celebration there.

Moon was recognized for her service as the adjutant and equal opportunity officer of Headquarters and Support Battalion at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., from June 2005 to March 2007. During this time, she participated in the first cultural heritage day for the base, introducing the people of surrounding Jacksonville to cultural diversity and awareness.



# Marine Forces Reserve Band



The Marine Forces Reserve Band practices at Naval Air Station/ Joint Reserve Base Forth Worth while evacuated due to Hurricane Gustav Sept. 3.

Photos by Master Sgt. Michael Q. Retana

Over the past three months, the band performed for or supported more than 25 civilian and military events.

From July 21-25, the band officer, enlisted conductor, and one musician took part in a conducting symposium hosted at Florida International University. This opportunity for training in the area of conducting and ensemble directorship greatly enhanced the unit leaders' capabilities.

Aug. 9 saw the ceremonial band supporting the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing change of command in New Orleans.

Two days later, the ceremonial band performed for the 138th Congress of Correction at the Ernest N. Morial convention center in downtown New Orleans.

The brass quintet traveled to Chagrin Falls, Ohio, for an Aug. 19 performance for a post office naming ceremony. The post office was named for a fallen Marine who was from the area.

The band evacuated New Orleans Aug. 30, in response to Hurricane Gustav. With more than 50 vehicles and 80 Marines, family members, and pets, the band maintained 100 percent accountability for all personnel and gear during the movement to Fort Worth, Texas, and the return to New Orleans. During the week-long evolution in Fort Worth, the band continued to march, taking part in numerous rehearsals for future ceremonies.



# Woods and camping safety for the whole family

LIFELINES SERVICES NETWORK

A family camping trip can be an enjoyable experience with a little preparation. Knowing everyone's limits, taking the time to plan ahead, and packing the right items will help your adventure come off without a hitch. Here are the down-and-dirty basics of woods and camping safety.

## Planning Ahead

If you're not skilled in the outdoors, begin your adventures by taking day trips. But even then be aware of camping safety issues, such as bug bites and stings; plants that may cause rashes and allergic reactions; exposure to heat, wind, water, and cold; and getting lost.

Once families feel comfortable with their camping skills, they may want to plan a few days or a week in a wilderness park. But first, gather information from park rangers, read guide books about the terrain and weather, and talk with campers who've been there.

## Common Camping Dangers

One common mistake made by camping families is not being ready for seasonal transitions regarding proper clothing and equipment. Storms blow in and out during all seasons, and there can be sudden shifts in temperatures in spring and fall, particularly on high mountains. Precipitation and wind lead to rapid cooling, especially when temperatures drop at nightfall.

Excessive heat can be a problem for young children, whose sweat glands are not fully developed until adolescence. On hot days, hike in the cooler mornings and evenings. During the day, spend time in shaded areas. Wear skin protection whenever you or your kids are exposed to the sun, including hats, sunscreen, and cotton clothes.

Another common problem is getting lost. Teach your kids how to recognize landmarks at the campsite and on hikes. While hiking, encourage them to turn around and look at the trail to familiarize themselves with their surroundings. Teach them to remain where they are and stay calm if they are lost. Kids should wear whistles (whistles can be heard farther away than the human voice) and know the universal help signal of three blows or loud sounds. Try to take your cell phone along in case you can get a signal.

Before your trip, look for a local class or go online to find out more about map reading and finding directions. For wilderness trekking, always carry a topographical map and compass.

## Proper Clothing

To protect against sudden temperature and weather changes, wear multi-layered clothing made of polyester, polypropylene, and wool. Layers of clothing — such as tank tops, long-sleeved shirts, and sweaters —

will allow you to reduce or increase clothing as needed. To protect against rain and wind, bring breathable, lightweight waterproof jackets and pants.

All family members need comfortable hiking shoes to prevent blistering. When hiking, tuck pant cuffs into socks and boots to protect against ticks. Kids should wear brightly colored clothes to increase visibility. Caps or hats will help guard against the sun and protect against insects.

## Setting Up a Campsite

Natural hazards such as forest fires and fallen trees are less likely to be encountered at campgrounds that can be accessed by cars. But other dangers lurk, such as broken glass, discarded needles, and other hazardous trash.

Scout the area before setting up a tent. In wilderness areas, look for signs of animal and insect use; for example, yellowjacket wasps build their nests in the ground. If berries are plentiful at a site, bears may forage for food there.

To build a firepit, look for a clearing and previous firepits. During fire-hazard periods and dry seasons, use portable stoves rather than campfires.

## Drinking the Water

Assume that all wilderness streams and creeks are potentially contaminated water sources due to domestic and wild animals. *Giardia lamblia*, a common parasitic contaminant, can cause nausea, bloating, gas, stomach cramps, and explosive diarrhea leading to dehydration.

If you are unable to bring bottled water with you on your trip or your supply runs out, iodine is an inexpensive and easy way to purify water (you can buy iodine tablets that dissolve in the water). You'll need to check the expiration date before using. You can also use water filters. Boiling is an excellent method for purifying water, but takes a lot of time, energy, and resources; also, appropriate boiling times are uncertain because boiling points vary according to elevation.

## Food Supplies and Foraging

Plan your meals according to how many days you will be on a trip, and then bring extra food. Pack plenty of portable foods, such as granola bars, packaged trail mix, breads, peanut butter, fruit, and other camping-friendly foods. You can even purchase dehydrated meals that only require the addition of water. It's best to leave foraging for berries to the animals because it's easy to mistake toxic berries for edible ones that can make someone pretty sick and ruin the entire trip.

## Plants and Insects

Common plants to be wary of are poison oak, sumac, and ivy. Show your kids pictures of these plants before your trip, and if in doubt, avoid touching any unknown plants. Dress your kids in long-sleeved shirts and pants to protect

the skin from exposure to plants that may cause allergic reactions. You can apply protective products before hiking that will act as a barrier against the oils of the plants. Any area that comes in contact with a poisonous plant should be washed immediately with cool water to help remove the oil that causes the allergic reaction. Calamine lotion or hydrocortisone cream (1 percent) may help to stop the itching that's common with poison ivy.

Antihistamines taken by mouth are effective for allergic reactions or itchy rashes — from contact with poison ivy to mosquito bites to bee and wasp stings. Use citronella-based products to repel insects and put it on clothing instead of skin whenever possible. Repellents containing DEET also can be used. Choose a repellent that contains no more than 10 percent to 30 percent DEET; in higher concentrations, the chemical (which is absorbed through the skin) can be toxic. Be sure to follow the directions on the label. DEET-containing products should only be used on children older than 2 years.

Another camping concern is ticks, which can carry several types of infections, including Lyme disease. Check your kids at the end of each day for ticks. Examine places where ticks like to hide, like behind the ears, in the scalp, under the arms, and in the groin area. Be aware of the typical rash seen in some patients with Lyme disease — a red ring that may grow to about 2 inches in diameter around the bite appearing about a week after the tick bite.

## Protecting Against Animals

Teach kids that animals in the wild are strong and agile, and will defend themselves and their young if threatened. Children should not approach wild animals, even small ones, and should never feed them. Don't leave kids unsupervised — small children, especially, are vulnerable. Instruct them to stay calm and call loudly for help if they encounter a wild animal.

Always ask the park rangers about wild animals in your wilderness park. Keep the campsite free of food odors and do not bring food into tents. Pack food in your cars overnight; if you're going on a long camping trip, pack food in resealable plastic bags and animal-resistant containers.

## What to Pack

Essentials for every camping trip include:

- map of the area
- compass
- flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs
- extra food
- extra clothing, including rain gear
- sunglasses and sunscreen
- pocketknife
- folding saw
- matches in waterproof container
- candle or fire starter
- adequate supply of clean drinking water

- appropriate insect repellents

Other necessary items include: full water bottles for hikes; a waterproof and lightweight tent; ground insulation for sleeping; a blanket for emergencies; signaling device such as a whistle, mirror, pocket flare, walkie-talkie or cell phone; duct tape; and 50 to 100 feet of nylon rope.

Bring a first-aid kit that includes:

- adhesive and butterfly bandages
- self-adhesive roller bandages
- sterile gauze pads
- a cold pack
- splinting materials
- large wound dressings
- blister dressings
- nonadhesive dressings
- cloth-based adhesive tape
- elastic bandages
- non-latex gloves
- large plastic bag
- safety pins
- scissors
- tweezers and needles (to remove splinters or ticks)
- topical antibiotic cream
- oral antihistamine
- medications for pain or fever
- hydrocortisone cream (1%)
- alcohol pads

In addition, bring a liquid antiseptic soap to clean wounds. Don't forget extra protective dressings for severe arm or leg blisters. Knowing how to make a splint in case of injury is also useful and can be learned in first-aid classes.

## Camping Emergency Basics

In the case of an emergency, the most important thing to do is to remain calm. During an emergency, families need to decide together on the best plan of action, examining the resources available. Before your trip, notify friends and families of your destination and time of return. And sign up at park registers before and after wilderness treks.

If your kids have whistles and were instructed to wait in a sheltered area if they get lost, you should be able to find them more readily. If you bring a cell phone, make sure it's charged.

Always stay on the safe side when setting boundaries for family camping. The more remote your location, the more care you should take in choosing your activities. Survey campsites for riverbanks and cliffs. Check out climbing trees for dead branches and moss, both of which cause falls.

Properly preparing for camping lets the whole family enjoy the great outdoors safely. □

# Immediate Response begins in Georgia

LANCE CPL. EDWARD H. CURRIE III  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

**VAZIANI TRAINING BASE, Georgia** – Marines are used to training in foreign climates, preparing themselves for any situation, but for one group of grunts, the training will not only be for their unit but also for a new ally in the war on terrorism.

Marines from 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, left Cleveland July 10, for the Country of Georgia and Operation Immediate Response, in which American forces helped train the Georgian Armed Forces.

“Our primary hope,” said Lt. Col. Minter Ralston IV, Inspector-Instructor, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, “is to establish a strong bond with the Georgian army, train them proficiently and work in a safe training environment all while having a good cultural exchange.”

This exercise is part of what Marine Forces Europe refers to as a Theater Security Cooperation, which puts countries together to make Marines and other services more

proficient and familiar with each other’s operations.

“This is a great experience for everyone on both sides in which we can learn from each other all while becoming more proficient at our jobs,” said Pfc. Nate T. Robinson, a 20-year-old rifleman from Columbus, Ohio, who works at a gym when not training for future deployments. “It’s important to reach out to other cultures and exchange training programs all while building familiarity with each other before working together in a combat zone.”

Georgia has already committed troops to Iraq, so it is important that they are as proficient as possible, said Ralston.

Though it’s his first time in Georgia, Cpl. Raymond A. Jackson, a personnel clerk with Headquarters and Service Company, said he’s looking forward the experience.

Every Marine needs training to be proficient at their job and it’s no different for the Georgian army,” said Jackson. “It will be great to refresh our skills together and get a taste of each others cultures at the same time.” □



The joint-service, multi-national color guard, consisting of two Marines, four U.S. soldiers, and two Georgian soldiers, posted the colors during the opening ceremony for Immediate Response 2008 July 15.

Lance Cpl. Edward H. Currie III

# 3/25's junior Marines tell their stories

CPL. JOHNATHAN D. HERRING  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**VAZIANI TRAINING BASE, Georgia** – If the non-commissioned officers run the Marine Corps, it's the lance corporals and below who make the Marine Corps. They are the ones who execute the orders given from the commanding officer on down.

The junior Marines of 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, here for Operation Immediate Response 2008, prove that it's they who are the backbone of the Marine Corps, and each one has a story to tell.

Pvt. Jason W. Hobson, a rifleman with 3/25, joined the Marine Corps this year to get some adventure and help provide better for his wife and their young son.

"In the drywall business, you're either real busy or there is no work at all," said Hobson. "This helps balance out not being able to work sometimes. I also want to join the police department one day, and I knew being a Marine would better my chances."

Hobson checked into his unit one week before deploying to the country of Georgia.

"It was a bit of a surprise," Hobson said. "I wasn't quite prepared. But being here I can see that the sacrifices being made are worth it. We are helping the Georgians learn how to be better infantry soldiers."

Pfc. Andrew N. Deeb, another rifleman with 3/25, who is also on his annual training exercise, said he joined the Marines for the excitement.

"I wanted to do something exciting with my life instead of sitting around and doing nothing," Deeb said. "I always wanted to do this, and it's pretty motivating now knowing that I am a Marine. I'm also trying to get into the Columbus police force to add even more excitement to my life. Every day is something different."

There have always been many different reasons for Marines to join the Corps, and although excitement and



Cpl. Johnathan D. Herring

Pvt. Jason W. Hobson loads ammunition during Operation Immediate Response in the Country of Georgia July 17.

adventure are among the top reasons, so are structure and discipline. Pfc. Chris J. McConnell joined for both excitement and structure.

McConnell joined right out of high school. He is registered for the fall semester at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. Other than excitement, he also had ulterior motives.

"I joined because I didn't know what I wanted to do except stay out of trouble," McConnell said. "I really needed to get some discipline, but mainly I joined for the excitement. I was going to go active duty, but I wanted to go to college. After college, I may consider transferring into active duty, maybe as an officer. I'm only 19, so I have plenty of time to think about what I want to do."

Pfc. Brandon Schmitt joined the Marine Corps for structure. The 21-year-old 3/25 rifleman from Cincinnati is also a security systems installation technician working for his father. He is married and has a daughter who turned one just a few days after he got here.

"I waited until I graduated in 2006, went into the Delayed Entry Program and waited to go to recruit training so that I could be there for the birth of my daughter," said Schmitt. "I basically joined to build a structure for my family, to better myself and to better my family. I didn't join just for myself; I joined for my fiancé and to be a better role model for my daughter."

No matter what their reasons for joining the Corps, they all share a lot of common incentives. Whether it is just for the excitement and the adventure of seeing new places, or for the structure and discipline Marines are renowned for, they all got something out of becoming Marines. □

After the initial introductions at the Tsavkisi hospice for Homeless Children near Tbilisi, Georgia, the children warmed up to the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment. The leathernecks were there to bring furniture, supplies, toys and candy to the children and got the opportunity to play with them.



Cpl. Johnathan D. Herring

## 3/25 Marines pitch in at Georgian orphanage

CPL JOHNATHAN D. HERRING  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

**VAZIANI TRAINING BASE, Georgia** – In a continuation of their humanitarian efforts, Marines with 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, along with soldiers from the Georgian Army’s 4th Infantry Brigade, spent the day with local children at the Tsavkisi Hospice for Homeless Children near Tbilisi, July 25, as a part of Operation Immediate Response 2008.

Ten Marines and two Georgian army soldiers tackled the opportunity to take a day off from training to play with the underprivileged children.

The day began with a meet and greet between the Marines, Georgian Soldiers and the children. Though shy at first, the children quickly warmed up to the warriors, and it wasn’t long before they were all playing soccer in the back yard.

“We could judge by their smiling faces that the children are happy to see the Marines and soldiers,” said David Janashvili, the director of the home. “They really enjoyed their company.”

The children laughed with joy as the Marines played with them on the playground which was donated by the

city. From kicking the ball around to swinging on the swing set, both the Marines and youngsters had a good time.

“I teach outdoor education to children at the YMCA in Oregonia, Ohio,” said Lance Cpl. Dustin Eubank, a rifleman with Co. L, 3/25. “Working with kids and teaching them different things is a life-changing experience. By us being here, it gives these kids a chance to see some of what Americans are all about.”

Prior to the visit, Marines and soldiers took up a collection of money from their fellow warriors. With this generous donation they were able to purchase furniture, toys, books and educational materials for the home.

“The table and furniture was necessary,” said Janashvili. “The children can see how much the soldiers and Marines care for them, not just by the furniture and toys but by them just being here and spending time with them.”

A second trip to the orphanage is scheduled sometime in the near future, and the children say they look forward to the visit.

“I really enjoyed playing with the Marines,” said Anna, an 8 year-old girl living here. “We had a lot of fun. God bless all of the Marines and soldiers. I hope they can come back soon.” □

# Marines improve Peruvian school, clinic

CAPT. DAVID TOMIYAMA  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**AYACUCHO, Peru** – When children in Yanamilla, Peru, returned to school or visited the doctor, they walked into a brand new schoolhouse and medical clinic - courtesy of the U.S. Marines.

Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadron 472 Detachments (-) out of Willow Grove, Pa., Alpha out of Wyoming, Pa., and Bravo out of Chicopee, Mass., completed a schoolhouse in San Jose and medical clinic in Yanamilla, in the Ayacucho region, as part of New Horizons - Peru 2008.

Since June 1, more than 150 Marines have worked on the clinic and schoolhouse. In what was supposed to take two and a half months to complete, the Marines are scheduled to finish their projects two weeks early.

“We projected the construction to be a lot longer but since it’s moving rapidly, it means good teamwork from everybody to get it done,” said Staff Sgt. Anton Rozbora, Task Force New Horizons project manager for the San Jose and Yanamilla sites.

Once completed, the school will have two classrooms, a library, latrines and electricity. The medical clinic will have five patient rooms, a storage room, a lobby, a restroom with running water, doctor’s quarters, windows, fluorescent lights, ceiling fans, and electricity.

Although it was not part of their original plans, the Marines took it upon themselves to build an outside retaining wall to provide long-term stability for the clinic.

“A retaining wall will give better drainage, especially during the rainy season; it will control all the water coming down from the mountainside and guide it around the clinic,” said Rozbora.

Local contractors laid a concrete slab as foundations for the two buildings in May. By early June, the MWSS 472 began building the infrastructure with concrete blocks and reinforced them with vertical rebar for structural integrity.

The locals around Yanamilla are excited about the construction of these vital facilities.

Add to the fact that interacting with the Peruvian locals breaks down cultural barriers.

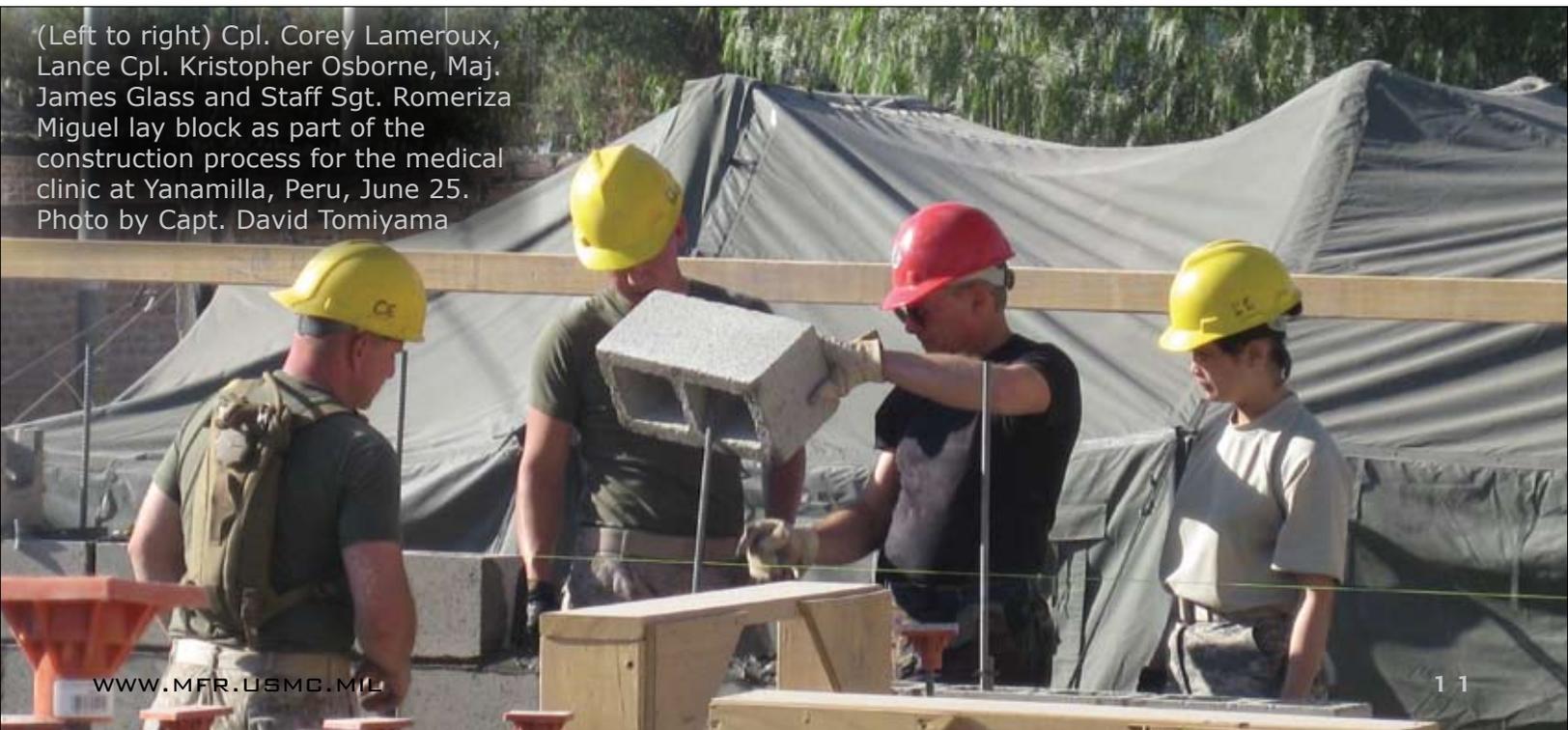
“We love interacting with the locals that live around the job sites and learning a little bit about their culture; the country is beautiful and the people have been very thankful and welcoming,” said Cpl. Kathleen Ruscio, a combat engineer. “We enjoy being in a different country, helping those that are less fortunate.”

The experience the MWSS-472 Marines are gaining through New Horizons as part of their annual training cannot be duplicated back in the states.

“It’s real training, its good training,” said Rozbora. “I’m teaching them how to do my job and they walk away with something they didn’t know before. I’m not only helping the local population. I’m also helping my Marines by teaching them.”

For MWSS-472, this is not the first time they have participated in New Horizons, having supported the 2006 mission in Honduras. However, this New Horizons project has offered an even better experience. □

(Left to right) Cpl. Corey Lameroux, Lance Cpl. Kristopher Osborne, Maj. James Glass and Staff Sgt. Romeriza Miguel lay block as part of the construction process for the medical clinic at Yanamilla, Peru, June 25. Photo by Capt. David Tomiyama



# ‘The Wizard’ shares counterinsurgency

PFC. JERRY MURPHY

REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 1

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**CAMP HABBANIYAH, Iraq** – More than 36 years ago, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jim M. Roussell, the assistant intelligence officer for 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, was deployed to Thailand in support of the war in Vietnam.

Today, Roussell is walking the streets of Iraq with an abundance of combat experience and more than enough understanding of counterinsurgency to pass on to Marines in his battalion.

Deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for the third time, he remains humble when it comes to his service saying, “I’m here for these young guys who have embraced the concepts we have taught them very well – to try to teach them everything I know.”

Throughout his nearly 38 years of service in the Marine Corps Reserve, Roussell, nicknamed “The Wizard” because of his wealth of knowledge, has held many job titles.

After enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1970 with an open contract, Roussell was assigned the military occupational specialty of musician. Upon completion of his first enlistment, he re-signed as an infantryman where he stayed through the rank of master sergeant before becoming a warrant officer in the intelligence field.

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Roussell served as the commanding officer of Headquarters and Service Company, 2nd Bn., 24th Marines.

He also served as a tactical intelligence officer with 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, in Fallujah, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

Roussell said his experience in the intelligence led him to volunteer for the current deployment to assist a fellow reserve battalion in the fight against

I would say that there is about a 70 percent similarity between street gangs and terrorists.

CWO 5 Jim M. Roussell,  
assistant intelligence officer, 2nd Battalion, 24th  
Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1

# ency knowledge with 2/24 Marines



Cpl. Stephen McGinnis

Chief Warrant Officer 5 James Roussell (standing third from left), a 56-year-old tactical intelligence officer with 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, stands with a group of Marines during his last deployment to Iraq in 2007.

terrorism in Fallujah.

Like most Marines in the battalion, Roussell is a reservist mobilized in support of the war. Back in Chicago he has made a second career with the city police department, where he is a lieutenant.

Roussell compares the tactics he and the Marines he serves with here use to those he uses in the police force.

“I would say that there is about a 70 percent similarity between street gangs and terrorists,” said the 57-year-old. “Insurgents try to hide amongst the population; so do gang members. The real difference is that street gangs are motivated by profit. In the insurgency, there is no profit but a whole lot more violence. So we are almost dealing with the same thing, just more violence (here).”

Many Marines throughout the battalion said they have benefitted from Roussell’s knowledge pertaining to the

Marine Corps and counterinsurgency tactics.

“Chief Warrant Officer Roussell’s comprehension on how insurgents and criminals think and function is astonishing,” said Cpl. Andy Behnfeldt, the targeting noncommissioned officer for 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines. “He has probably forgotten more about intelligence and counterinsurgency than most people will ever know.”

Regardless of his own accomplishments and experience, Roussell credits the Marines in the battalion who are living among the Iraqi people everyday to provide over watch in hopes of a safer tomorrow.

“Our guys are out there living with the local people, experiencing the same things they are,” he said. “They’re out there interacting with the people and building relationships with the children. They’re the ones who deserve the credit.” □

A simulated improvised explosive device detonates at a vehicle control point set up by Company F Marines during "Hyper-Realistic Training" at Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 18.



Capt. Paul L. Greenberg

## Realistic training preps MFR Marines for Iraq

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

**CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** – Reserve Marines from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment acclimated themselves to the desert heat here June 18-20 in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Iraq.

The company conducted "Hyper-Realistic Squad-Level Field Training" for their pre-deployment training program.

The exercise focused on patrolling and familiarization with Iraqi culture. Each aspect of the training began in the classroom and moved into practical application exercises.

Role players speaking Arabic added a sense of realism to the scenarios. Marines also heard the traditional Arabic call to prayer or Iraqi music on a loudspeaker every afternoon. The realism was further enhanced by the thundering impact of artillery rounds from another range several miles away.

"Utilizing role players and battlefield effects, this training will provide an environment that ensures Marines can operate in combat under extremely stressful conditions," said 1st Sgt. Dennis J. Schager, the company's first sergeant. "This training is also an evaluation tool that

will show us areas where we can improve,"

Schager, a New York State Trooper of 10 years, is going back for his second tour in Iraq with the battalion. He added that not only will the training enhance the Marines' urban warfighting abilities, but it will also refine small unit leadership skills.

"It's a big change to go from our civilian careers or college, leaving behind family and friends," said Schager. "But regardless of which component we come from, we are all Marines and know we have a job to do. The Marines are working hard, day after day, to learn all they can. This will, in turn, provide our company with skills to do our job proficiently, effectively and professionally."

The training kicked off June 18, with a two-hour Iraqi Arabic class, taught by Kelvin Garvanne, a civilian instructor fluent in the language. Marines learned common greetings and key phrases in Arabic, such as: "Welcome," "Can I please come inside?" "We can work together," and "Do you have electricity?"

The Marines practiced repeating phrases aloud and scribbled down phonetic pronunciations in their notebooks.

"You have to find ways to build the Iraqis' trust, to gain

their confidence so that you can help create stability,” Garvanne told the Marines.

After initial classroom instruction, each platoon spent one day on foot patrol, one day doing mounted vehicle patrolling and a third on raids, cordons and house-to-house searches.

Col. Mark A. Smith, the 4th Marine Division officer in charge of training, has supervised Marine units going through this phase of pre-deployment preparation for the past two years.

“The challenge of the current war is asymmetric,” asserted Smith. “Marines default to what they know when they’re confronted with these situations. We prepare them to function with a law enforcement mentality while retaining the Marine warrior ethos.”

Over the four-mile patrolling route, Marines from 1st Platoon scoured the roadside for simulated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), reacted to explosions and set up a vehicle control point, where they encountered Iraqi civilian role players in suburban utility vehicles.

As one group of Iraqi civilians distracted Marines at the control point with uncooperative behavior, a pick-up truck quietly approached. Within minutes, flames shot out of the bed of the truck as a simulated IED was detonated.

“This training kick-starts their brains and makes it easier to react when the time comes,” said Angel Barcenas, a Marine gunnery sergeant who was medically retired in March due to injuries sustained in Iraq.

Barcenas now works at Camp Pendleton as a civilian contractor and helps facilitate the vehicle control point segment of training.

“I wish I had this training before I went over,” said Barcenas, who lost both legs from the knees down in a 2006 IED attack.

Drawing on his experience in Iraq in 2004-2005, Sgt. Maj. Griff Lippencott, a Reserve Marine with 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, was the primary instructor.

“It gives Marines the fundamentals of clearing a house and teaches them to focus on what they need to do in combat,” said Lippencott, a 12-year veteran police officer from Naperville, Ill. “The live fire teaches them to function under stress. The [Special Effects Small Arms Marking System] rounds add a definite sense of realism.”

Squads took turns entering and clearing houses of civilian role players, all native-born Iraqis. One of the biggest challenges for the Marines was distinguishing innocent civilians from armed insurgent fighters.

“It’s the first time they’ve all been operating as a unit with role players in an unknown situation,” explained Capt. Darren Wallace, 3rd Platoon’s commander. “They’re really

beginning to mesh as a platoon.”

Marines went through various scenarios in the town, which was constructed to resemble an Iraqi village. They began by doing “knocks and searches,” utilizing the skills they learned in the previous day’s language and culture class and with the help of an Iraqi interpreter.

As the exercise progressed, the Marines took fire from insurgents and had to kick in doors and apprehend suspects, the entire time communicating over the din of shrieking role players and Arabic music playing over the speakers.

“When you get hit with a sim round, it’s a total reality check,” said Pfc. Kyle Samuels, a 19-year-old rifleman who was mobilized to augment 2nd Battalion for the deployment.

On the opposite side of the urban training site, 2nd Platoon conducted a dismounted patrolling exercise. This was designed to teach platoon-level security patrol techniques and counterinsurgency operations.

“We try to teach the Marines to be polite, how to show respect to Iraqi women and how to act well in Iraq. We try to show them that not all Iraqi people are bad, that we are peaceful, educated people who just want a better life,” said Ali Alaesawi, a 42-year-old role player. “We try to teach them so that they can come home safely.”

A six-year veteran of the Iraqi Army, Alaesawi fled the country after a failed uprising against Saddam Hussein in 1991. Claiming political asylum, he moved to the U.S. in 1997, after spending six years in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia.

Back on the streets of Combat Town, 2nd Platoon moved through the streets and buildings, practicing their Arabic with the role players and exchanging blank round fire with insurgents.

“Intermixing with the locals gives the Marines stress inoculation,” said Gunnery Sgt. Lee K. Kyle, one of the lead instructors.

“This type of realistic training opens the Marines’ eyes to how truly difficult the mission is. It gives the Marines a lot of things to work on over the next two months so that their tour in Iraq will be safe and successful,” said Maj. Thomas Armas, the Company F Commander. Armas has worked for the U.S. Secret Service since 1999. This will be his third tour in Iraq.

The battalion’s Mojave Viper is slated for the entire month of August. Shortly afterward, the Marines are scheduled to deploy to Iraq for seven months. □

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# Combat artists paint Reserve

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif.** – There are hundreds of thousands of Marines spread across hundreds of occupational specialties, yet only two of them are combat artists.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Fay and Sgt. Kristopher Battles travel around the world photographing, sketching and painting Marines and Sailors in action.

They both traveled here Aug. 3, from their home base at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., to historically document in sketches and watercolor paintings the first two weeks of “Mojave Viper,” a requisite pre-deployment training evolution for 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment.

“We want to capture, in art, the unique experience of fellow Reserve Marines training at Mojave Viper,” said Fay. “Through our eyes, we want to get as close as possible to the realness of what is happening - the sweat, suffering, boredom and



Reserve Marines from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, bound into the town of “Ridwaniyah,” a live-fire urban warfare training facility in a remote section of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., on Aug. 14. (Official USMC artwork by Sgt. Kristopher Battles)

# ve battalion's portrait

adrenaline. In an era of digital imagery, our art is slowed vision. There is depth to it. The viewer can see that the artist was there and get an idea of how the subjects were feeling.”

Fay's Marine Corps career has spanned 33 years, during which time he has worked as a mortarman, bookkeeper, a CH-46 avionics technician, crew chief, and as a recruiter. Though he had been sketching and studying art most of his life, he didn't become a combat artist until January 2000.

“It was the fall of '97, and I'd been out (of the Marine Corps) a few years,” Fay said. “I was walking by an art gallery in Fredericksburg, Va., and I recognized the paintings in the window as the original work of Lt. Col. Donna Neary, a Reserve Marine and combat artist for more than 20 years. I went in, met her, and discussed Marine Corps combat art. She asked to see some of my work, so I walked three blocks back to my apartment to get my sketchbook, which included pieces I'd done during [Operation] Desert Shield in Oman and in Mogadishu, Somalia. She asked me if I would be interested in coming back in as a combat artist. It sounded like a good idea.”

At the age of 47, Fay re-entered the Corps on a two-year contract as a mobilized Individual Ready Reservist and has been drawing and painting non-stop ever since.

The Reserve Marines of 2/25 received Fay with a sense of both awe and fascination as he and Battles sat in the 110-degree heat sketching the troops during their training.

“With a reserve unit like this, the level of knowledge about art and the questions I received tells me that they fully appreciate what we're trying to do,” explained Fay.

The artists rotated through the companies and followed the Marines in the brutal combined arms assault courses located in a remote region of the Mojave Desert.

They slept in the field, ate Meals-Ready-to-Eat, and worked feverishly in the Quonset Huts back at Camp Wilson, creating watercolors in the stifling mid-day heat and spraying them with fixative to keep out the dirt and grit.

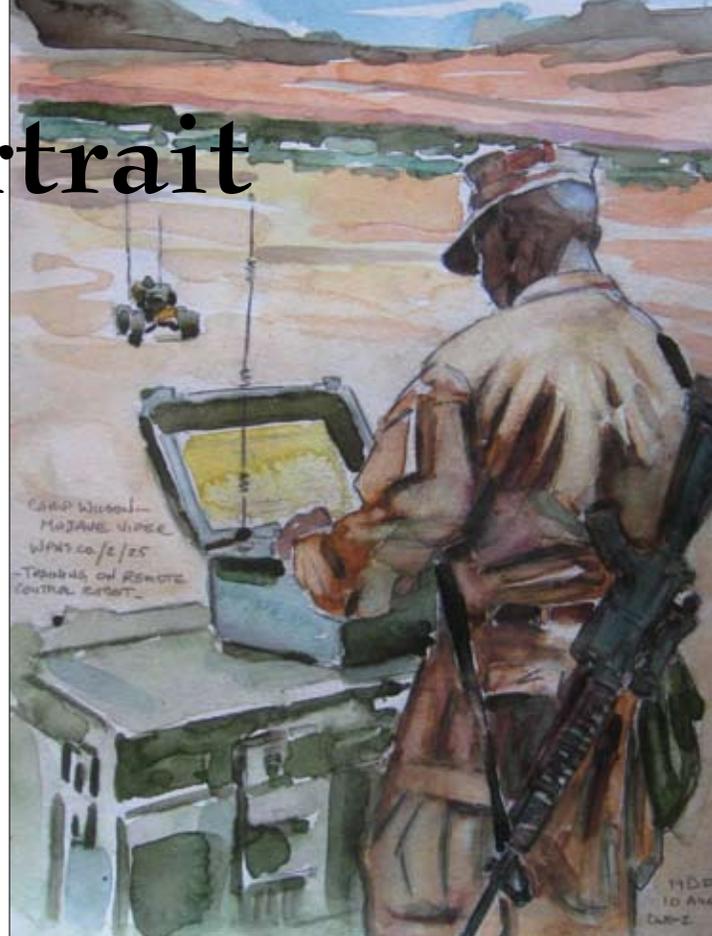
They returned to the National Museum of the Marine Corps Aug. 18 to register these new pieces in the artwork collection there and for future use at exhibitions in museums throughout America.

“It was totally unexpected. I just saw a guy writing in a notebook, and then he tapped me on my shoulder and showed me the sketch. I thought he did a good job,” said Lance Cpl. Nicholas A. Gleason of Marathon, N.Y., a Fox Company Marine who is a life-long sketch artist himself.

In addition to documenting the troops in action, Fay also taught a tactical sketching class for the Scout-Sniper platoon of 2/25 Aug. 11.

Cpl. Tim Barber, who has been with the platoon since May 2007, is a graphic designer from Montclair, N.J., in his civilian career. Barber said that the class was definitely beneficial for him professionally, both as a Marine sniper and an artist.

“It helped me hone my skills,” said Barber. “I didn't expect to get to do



Official USMC artwork by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Fay  
A Marine from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, practices operating a Multifunction Agile Remote Control Robot to investigate a suspected improvised explosive device during a training exercise at Camp Wilson aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 10.

Encumbered by more than 50 pounds of flak vest and Kevlar, Sgt. Kristopher Battles (bottom, right), a combat artist based at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, sketches the Marines of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, during a live-fire combined arms assault course at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 8.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Fay

anything like this. As far as application, a picture is worth a thousand words. When you can accurately depict a battle space in combat and relay that information back to higher [headquarters], that is where you really make your money.”

The snipers have cameras and powerful lenses to take photos during scouting and reconnaissance operations, but Barber explained that sketching is a vital tool which all snipers should have.

“It really brings things back to fundamentals,” added Barber. “If you don’t have that foundation of observing and recording information, you can’t fully utilize the new technology.”

As the battalion is nearly three months into their pre-deployment training program here, the series of grueling live-fire ranges in the oppressive summer heat has left many

of the battalion’s Marines exhausted, both physically and mentally.

“I think the sketching breaks the routine of training for the Marines, especially when they’re out here going non-stop from range to range,” said Fay. “Sgt. Battles and I are blessed that we can do something like this full-time. Not many artists get paid for their work. We do. We are able to go out every day and do something we have a passion for.”

One day in the future, the Marines of 2/25 may be able to take their children and grandchildren to the National Museum of the Marine Corps to see images of them in the Mojave Desert in 2008, training for deployment in support of the Global War on Terror.

“What we are creating here with our sketches and paintings is not just art,” emphasized Fay. “It is artifacts.” □

Lt. Cmdr. Kobena Arthur, the chaplain for 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, conducts a field service at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 10. (Official USMC artwork by Sgt. Kristopher Battles)



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Lance Cpl. Corey Blodgett

Jamaica native Lance Cpl. Kevin Wint (center), a supply administration Marine with Headquarters and Service Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, signs papers making him a U.S. citizen during an Aug. 18 naturalization ceremony held at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

# Reserve Marines become U.S. citizens

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

**TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif.** – A group of 14 Reserve Marines from 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, set out from desert camps and forward operating bases at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center here Aug. 18 for the base staff judge advocate’s office to take an oral exam administered by agents from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service.

The Marines were natives of countries throughout the world and spoke many different languages in addition to English, but their goal was the same - pass the test and become naturalized U.S. citizens.

Despite the fact that they had been training hard in the desert heat for more than three months, they still found time to study the information they’d been provided.

“This says a lot for their character,” said Lt. Col. Geoff Rollins, the 2/25 battalion commander. “These guys came here to America, and they haven’t asked for anything. Instead, they volunteered to serve in the Marine Corps. I’m very proud of them in that they’ve not only worked hard all summer to prepare for deployment, but they’ve constructively used the little time they had off to study for this exam.”

The questions required the candidates to learn basic information about the U.S. Constitution, how the three branches of U.S. government work together, the way in

which elections are conducted, the length of terms of public office and key leaders in U.S. history, such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Patrick Henry.

Normally, immigrants to the U.S. must wait a period of five years before they are eligible to apply for naturalization and take the exam. For those who serve honorably on active duty in the U.S. military, however, they are eligible to apply within a year under provisions in Section 329 of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. This also applies to military reservists when they are mobilized on active duty orders.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13269 of July 2002, however, all personnel on active duty can now file immediately for citizenship.

“I’m nervous and excited at the same time,” said Pfc. Miguel E. Portillo Melendez, a battalion warehouse supply clerk. “It’s a very good opportunity to become somebody important in this country”

The Marines of 2/25 had a short celebration and photo session, then headed back out to the field to continue with their training.

“My unit has been very flexible to enable me to get this done,” said Cpl. Taj A. Green, an automotive mechanic with Headquarters and Service Company, 2/25. “I joined the reserves because I wanted to serve, but I wanted to live my life and have a civilian career as a law enforcement officer as well. The Marine Corps said they were looking for a few good men, and I believe I’m one of them.” □

# Transition team trains abo

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG

MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** – Marines from 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, completed a four-day tactical shooting course at Range 111 here Aug. 1, in preparation for their upcoming military transition team (MiTT) mission in Iraq.

Over the course of the advanced combat marksmanship skills training, the Marines practiced shooting their rifles and pistols from various firing positions in full combat load, which included more than 60 pounds of personal protective equipment, weapons and ammunition.

Under the tutelage of experienced civilian marksmanship instructors, all former U.S. military staff non-commissioned officers from special operations, the students shot while both stationary and moving, learning how to operate fluidly in their gear in the mid-day heat.

The course was similar to the standard Marine Corps Combat Marksmanship Program with some modifications to better prepare the students for specific urban warfare scenarios.

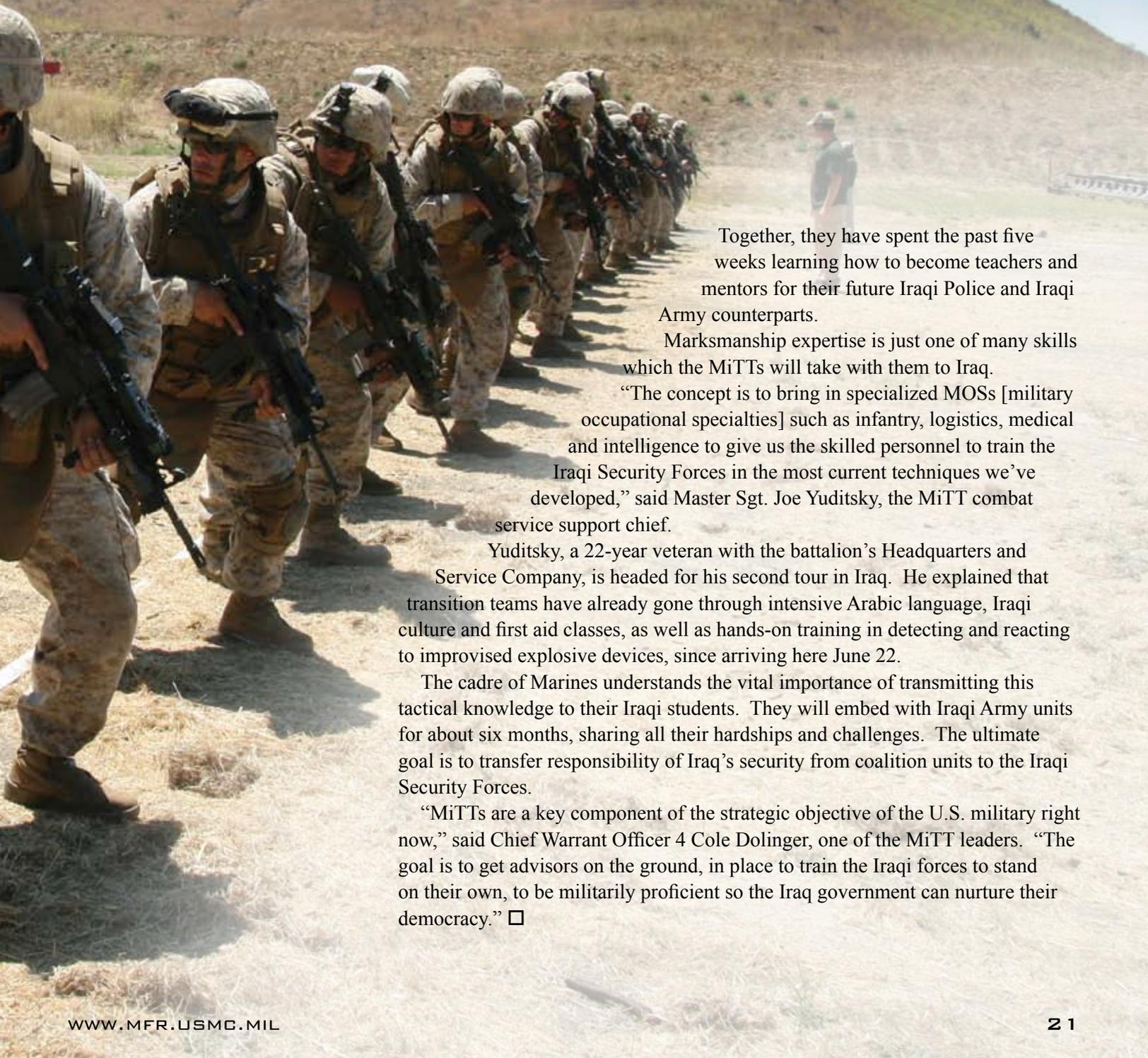
“This is the best shooting practice I’ve had in my eight years in the Marine Corps,” said Sgt. Kristoffer Borch, a Marine from Weapons Company, 2/25. “The instructors are all top-notch, former spec-ops guys. We’re getting training from the experts.”

The battalion’s two teams are comprised of about 30 Marines and Sailors. Many were hand-selected from companies throughout the battalion, while others are augments from active duty Marine Corps units and the Individual Ready Reserve.



# Board Camp Pendleton

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Together, they have spent the past five weeks learning how to become teachers and mentors for their future Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army counterparts.

Marksmanship expertise is just one of many skills which the MiTTs will take with them to Iraq.

“The concept is to bring in specialized MOSs [military occupational specialties] such as infantry, logistics, medical and intelligence to give us the skilled personnel to train the Iraqi Security Forces in the most current techniques we’ve developed,” said Master Sgt. Joe Yuditsky, the MiTT combat service support chief.

Yuditsky, a 22-year veteran with the battalion’s Headquarters and Service Company, is headed for his second tour in Iraq. He explained that transition teams have already gone through intensive Arabic language, Iraqi culture and first aid classes, as well as hands-on training in detecting and reacting to improvised explosive devices, since arriving here June 22.

The cadre of Marines understands the vital importance of transmitting this tactical knowledge to their Iraqi students. They will embed with Iraqi Army units for about six months, sharing all their hardships and challenges. The ultimate goal is to transfer responsibility of Iraq’s security from coalition units to the Iraqi Security Forces.

“MiTTs are a key component of the strategic objective of the U.S. military right now,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Cole Dolinger, one of the MiTT leaders. “The goal is to get advisors on the ground, in place to train the Iraqi forces to stand on their own, to be militarily proficient so the Iraq government can nurture their democracy.” □

# Weapons Company Marines rehearse quick response drills

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG  
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif.** – Marines from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, spent July 17 training at a forward operating base here as part of a battalion-level field exercise.

The purpose of the four-day exercise was to immerse the Marines in an environment which approximates what they will see in Iraq, with each of the battalion's four companies at separate FOBs, geographically dispersed over several square miles outside a military operations in urban terrain [MOUT] training facility.

Capt. Jonathan Frangakis, the platoon commander for 4th Mobile Assault Platoon, explained that the days preceding the exercise gave the company an opportunity to operate independently in a realistic desert environment.

"We get to work out some of our own kinks first, and can then do the battalion-level exercise," said Frangakis, who left active duty in 2006 after serving two tours in Afghanistan and was involuntarily mobilized out of the Individual Ready Reserve for this deployment.

Most of July 17 was spent conducting quick reactionary force rehearsals. This entailed loading up the Humvees and speeding off toward the nearby MOUT town to engage a simulated enemy force.

"It's not something you work on a lot unless you're out somewhere like here, and it's a mission at task," said Frangakis. "Right now we're just walking through things, identifying masking terrain (land features such as hills and berms which block observation) and getting comfortable working in the environment."

Getting comfortable was not easy in the spartan conditions. The Marines slept on cots in open tents with dirt floors, as mid-day temperatures reached 108 degrees. The only chow on the menu was Meals-Ready-to-Eat. Sleep was also sporadic.

Around the clock, the company's four MAPs each took their turn in four-hour rotations as the "two-minute QRF." This team waited in a tent next to their vehicles for a



Capt. Paul L. Greenberg

Lance Cpl. Graham Ferro (left) and Cpl. Doug Osberg from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, scan the desert terrain, guarding their forward operating base during a battalion-level exercise at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., July 17.

mission to be announced. On order, they had two minutes to run to their vehicles, load up in full combat gear, start up the engines and be on their way out the front gate of their FOB. Simultaneously, the MAP on perimeter security rushed to their assigned guard posts inside the wire.

"QRF is tough," said Frangakis. "You have a lot of down time, and then you have to react. We got saddled up and out the gate in one minute and twenty-seven seconds. It's a validation of the things we rehearse. It's good to see them execute it."

At the end of this exercise, the battalion's Marines will receive a one-week leave period to say good-bye to their families and friends.

They will return to Twentynine Palms by the end of July for Mojave Viper, an intensive, month-long training evolution here. This will be the battalion's final assessment of combat readiness before deploying to Iraq for seven months. □

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# MAG-41 gains aircraft, squadron colors following MAG-42 decommissioning

SGT. BETH ZIMMERMAN STILL  
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 41

**NAVAL AIR STATION-JOINT RESERVE BASE FORT WORTH, Texas** – Fort Worth, Texas-based Marine Aircraft Group 41 on June 24 received two fixed-wing aircraft and the squadron colors of a cadred unit following the June 21 decommissioning of its Atlanta-based higher headquarters.

The transition followed the June 21 decommissioning of MAG-42, which was based at Naval Air Station Atlanta. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission tapped NAS Atlanta for closure and its assets for realignment in 2005. According to Lt. Col. David Pohlman, a plans officer with 4th Marine Aircraft Wing in New Orleans, MAG-42 was decommissioned as part of the Marine Aviation Transition Plan, which works to redistribute aviation assets throughout the Corps in concert with BRAC closures and realignments.

Two of MAG-42's units, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 774 and Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 773, were transferred from Atlanta to MAG-49 at NAS Willow Grove, Penn. The squadron colors for Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 142 were cased and transferred to Fort Worth with two of the squadron's F/A-18 Hornets. According to Pohlman, the Marines of Fort Worth-based VMFA-112 will fly the Hornets as their own. Meanwhile, VMFA-142's colors will remain cased at MAG-41 while the squadron is administratively shut down.

"Down on the flight line, there's no difference between being decommissioned and cadred," Pohlman said. However, "a cadred unit is more likely to come back, with the same or different aircraft," he said. "The Marine Corps has the intention of bringing back VMFA-142, they just don't know when."

Other units throughout the Corps received aircraft from VMFA-142 as well. However, the unit colors were specifically transferred to MAG-41, Pohlman said.

Within 4th MAW, "MAG-41 is the fixed-wing MAG, and MAG-49 is primarily a rotary-wing MAG, even though there are bits and pieces of others," Pohlman said. Hence, the reason the helicopters went to Willow Grove and the Hornet squadron colors ended up in Fort Worth. Basically, "they're trying to keep apples with apples." □



Petty Officer 2nd Class D. Keith Simmons

A plane captain from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 112 directs the pilot of one of the two F/A-18 Hornets Marine Aircraft Group 41 received from VMFA-142 on June 24. The squadron colors of the VMFA-142 "Gators" were cased and transitioned to MAG-41 following the June 21 decommissioning of Atlanta-based MAG-42.



Michael Brands

Matt "Doc" Payton on the ropes course.

# Program gives OEF vets out

LANCE CPL. MARY A. STAES

MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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**MARINE FORCES RESERVE, New Orleans** – A new program available to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom is designed to relieve some of the stress endured during deployment and reintegrate warriors back into life at home.

Outward Bound is a world-wide program that offers outdoor wilderness courses. In April, it announced a new program that will use grants from the Military Family Outdoors Initiative to fully sponsor up to 1,500 OIF and OEF veterans to participate in classes designed specifically for returning veterans.

“Everything is paid for in these courses,” said Meg Ryan, program manager for Outward Bounds’ veterans program. “Even all the equipment is provided for them.”

Activities including backpacking, canoeing, and even dog sledding are available to students, and Outward Bound helps applicants choose which course is right for them. Most classes last about two weeks, but the veterans program features classes that last five days so that even active duty service members who have participated in OIF and OEF can attend.



# OIF and door outlet

The courses emphasize teamwork and development as part of the healing process.

“One of the benefits is a personal growth experience,” said Ryan. “They share that experience with other veterans on the course, and it brings them together. Everyone shares that, and when they come back, they have each other to look to.”

Although some may be hesitant to sleep out under the stars, service members who have participated in a course say there is nothing to worry about.

“It’s not like having to listen to your staff non-commissioned officers yell at you,” said Matt Payton, a former Navy corpsman who deployed to Iraq in 2005. “It’s really mellow, and gives you time to separate yourself from stress at home. I’d definitely recommend it to people coming back from deployment. It doesn’t matter whether you went to Iraq or Afghanistan, when you come home, stress levels are so high. It helped hone in on team skills and was relaxing.”

Many people have already taken the course in groups, said Ryan. Units can create their own course with Outward Bound, and the program can also make a contract with a facility that has activities for veterans who are seriously injured if they are not able to participate in outdoor activities.

To receive enrollment material or ask about the Outward Bound Veterans Program, call 1-888-837-5211 ext. 2374. □



Michael Brands

Kyle Stozek climbs Turtle Rock near Buena Vista, Colo.

Staff Sgt. Andres E. Garza, Co. C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, spots target hits with Lance Cpl. Mensah Evans, a Ghanaian infantry soldier assigned to the Ghanaian Army's 6th Battalion based in Tomale, Ghana, during exercise Shared Accord 2008 at Daboya Camp Training Area, Ghana, June 16.



Master Sgt. Donald E. Preston

# Reserve Marines travel to Ghana for bi-lateral training

MASTER SGT. DONALD E. PRESTON  
MARINE FORCES EUROPE

**DABOYA CAMP TRAINING AREA, Ghana** – More than 300 Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, and 150 members of the Ghana Army have completed a two-week training event here June 26, during exercise Shared Accord 08.

The Shared Accord exercise provided a bi-lateral training opportunity focused on individual and crew served weapons proficiency and small unit training tactics, techniques and procedures as well as company and battalion level staff training in order to assist Ghana's capacity to conduct coalition operations. In turn, the Ghanaian military personnel provided instruction to the Marines in jungle survival training at the Jungle Warfare School in Achiasse.

Arriving in Accra, on the southern coast of Ghana, the Houston-based reserve unit of Marines and sailors traveled more than 11 hours to the northern region of the country to the camp here, approximately 25 miles west of Tomale. Military training this far north in Ghana is an unusual event.

"Military exercises normally take place down south. It is rare to have this kind of activity this far north," said Lt. Col. Jeffery R. Eberwein, Shared Accord 2008 exercise action officer, assigned to U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Europe. "While being this far north comes with numerous logistical challenges this was the perfect place to be. The Africa Command has been very helpful in supporting the various aspects and challenges associated with making this exercise happen."

For some, the deployment as a whole was a new experience. Especially for 19-year-old Shreveport, La., resident Pfc. Danthony M. Williams, assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment. Temporarily leaving his civilian job in Shreveport, Williams was now face-to-face with the people of another continent learning about their culture and military while building friendships.

"This is my first deployment," Williams said. "I came into the Marine Corps to see the world and while I am here I hope to become more diverse and learn as much as I can."

For those on subsequent deployments, the benefits and importance of working and being familiar with partner nations was reinforced. On his second deployment to Africa, Lance Cpl. Jacob B. Trevil, Company C, 1st

Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment and a Corpus Christi, Texas resident, knows the importance first hand.

“I served with a provisional security company in Djibouti and I can’t tell you enough how important it is to know how other militaries operate when you need to work with them,” Trevil said. “This has definitely been beneficial. We now know what to expect from them and they are more familiar with how we work.”

During the training, U.S. and Ghanaian soldiers were inter-mixed while participating in non-lethal weapons training, martial arts training and patrols using paint ball guns to add a bit of reality to the training.

“Using paint ball gun adds reality to the patrol because you need to know how to react as a unit if something like that were to happen,” said Lance Cpl. Michael Martinez, Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines. “The reaction can take you by surprise and is much different than most people expect.”

The response to the bilateral training opportunity drew a positive response from the Ghanaian soldiers as well. In some cases the benefits of the training will continue after the Marines depart.

“This is the first time I have trained with the Americans,”

said Lance Cpl. Mensah Evans, Ghanaian infantry soldier of the 6th Battalion, based in Tomale. “I have learned a lot about the sighting of the rifle. I am very fortunate and what I learn here I will take back to my unit to teach other soldiers.”

In addition to the training, the Marines assisted with security and the processing of thousands of patients during numerous Medical Capability Programs taking place in conjunction with the exercise. Ghanaians in the villages surrounding the training camp benefited from limited medical, dental and optical examinations and care as well as the de-worming of thousands of goats and cattle.

“It has been fun to see the differences between the ways we do training and how they do it,” said Pfc. Erik S. Romero, Company K, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment. “During the humanitarian assistance medical project it was like a joint effort with them. We had to really work together to make sure things ran smoothly so the most people could be seen.”

Completing the jungle survival training in southern Ghana the Marines and sailors returned home with a better understanding of the Ghanaian military, the country’s people and their culture.

“Shared Accord 08 gave us the opportunity to strengthen our ties of friendship, understanding and mutual cooperation with the Ghanaian Armed Forces and citizens,” Eberwein said. “It also provided us with the perfect platform to provide first-class medical, dental and veterinarian services to some of the local communities here in Ghana. These are very important concerns for Africa Command, serving both long; and short term goals.” □



Master Sgt. Donald E. Preston

Sgt. Israel Maldonado, Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, shows a Ghanaian infantry soldier how to adjust his rifle sights during exercise Shared Accord 2008 at Daboya Camp Training Area, Ghana, June 16. Maldonado, a reservist and Weslaco, Texas resident, was one of almost 300 Marines participating in the exercise that focused not only on infantry training, but supported various humanitarian assistance projects benefiting thousands of Ghanaians and their animals.

# MobCom's Single Marine Program strikes partnership with local hospice

MAJ. WINSTON JIMENEZ

MARINE CORPS MOBILIZATION COMMAND

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – The Marine Corps Mobilization Command's Single Marine Program and Heartland Hospice of Kansas City conducted their first visit to a veteran as part of a partnership they started in June providing support to veterans receiving hospice care.

Staff Sgt. Deuntae Preston, MOBCOM Single Marine Program lead; Cpl. Adam Austin, Single Marine Program treasurer; and Stacy Higgins, volunteer coordinator of Heartland Hospice of Kansas City, held the first visit June 23, in the home of 83-year-old Army Cpl. Bernabe "Bernie" Aguilera, a World War II veteran, former Prisoner of War and a resident of Independence, Mo., receiving hospice care from Heartland Hospice.

Hospice care offers a broad range of services with goals for treatment that are concrete: relief from suffering, treatment of pain and other distressing symptoms, psychological and spiritual care and a support system to help the individual live as actively as possible.

Marines do not treat patients but support the veteran with basic household chores, errands, and like the first visit, companionship engaging in conversation with a fellow veteran.

"Each member of the interdisciplinary team brings a skill set to the table," Said Higgins. "The philosophy of Heartland Hospice is to meet the patient where they are. Who better to be a listening ear for our veterans than those who serve and defend our country today?"

Statistics show 54,000 American veterans die each month and account for one quarter of all U.S. deaths. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, World War II veterans were once 16 million strong, and now, they are dying at a rate of more than 1,000 a day. They now number a mere 2.5 million.

"It's our job and duty to serve and help the Veterans that have served before us," said Preston. "We now have 14 volunteers for the hospice program, and the numbers continue to grow."

The Mobilization Command's Single Marine Program was started to provide young single Marines with alternatives to the usual risky behaviors most young adults engage in. Partnerships with Heartland Hospice and other



Maj. Winston Jimenez

From left to right, Staff Sgt. Deuntae Preston, Single Marine Program president and program lead; Cpl. Adam Austin, SMP treasurer; and Bernie Aguilera take time from a visit to smile for the camera.

worthwhile programs provide Marines with a fulfilling alternative to attend during their free time.

"I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with MOBCOM," said Higgins. "Staff Sergeant Preston has been very open to the program and has helped to ensure that we continued to move forward."

Nearly 9,000 veterans were treated in designated hospice beds at VA facilities in 2007 with thousands of other veterans referred to community hospices to receive in-home care.

"Thank you," said Aguilera. "Thank you very much for visiting with me." □

# Employers nominated for U.S. government's highest employer award

KIMBERLY J. SUNDS

ESGR

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The Department of Defense annually honors up to 15 employers with the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. This is the U.S. government's highest recognition given to employers who provide outstanding support to their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve and their families. The open nomination season for the 2008 Freedom Award closed on Jan. 21 with 2,199 nominations received from across the country, which represented a 97 percent increase in nominations from previous years.

All employers, both large and small, are encouraged to support their employees' commitment to military service. Assistance can range from continuation of health care benefits to enable a service member's family to see their physician to an act of kindness such as offering to cut the lawn for a deployed member's spouse. And while all employer support is exemplary, employers who go above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act to assist their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve deserve special recognition.

One such company that was nominated this year for the Freedom Award is semiconductor company Xandex, Inc., a small business consisting of less than 100 employees.

Xandex employee and United States Marine Corps Reserve Maj. Theodore Wong nominated his employer for the Freedom Award stating that although the company is small, their support is tremendous. Wong has experienced this generosity first hand, as he has dedicated approximately 65 percent of the last six years to the military, which, in turn, meant so has Xandex.

"All during these periods and throughout my extensions, my employer remained flexible, supported the military in its constant changes and supplemented my salary by paying the difference I was losing while serving on active duty," said Wong.

Beyond providing full pay to service members for periods of military service greater than 12 months, Xandex also provides continuation of all benefits including health and dental care to the families left behind during

deployments. This extra assistance provided piece of mind to Wong and his fiancé as she did not qualify for military family benefits since they were not married prior to his deployment. Xandex even went as far as buying Wong a tri-band cell phone which allowed him to call from overseas back home, at the expense of Xandex. "This type of support was good to rely on when a call home was needed to boost morale," said Wong.

While not all employers are able to provide the financial benefits listed above, there are other gestures they can make to support their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve.

Every month, Xandex sent care packages filled with toiletries, food, magazines and movies to Wong's unit. Perhaps more importantly, these packages contained photos and personal notes expressing support from Wong's colleagues.

These simple gestures and reminders of home make all the difference to our citizen-warriors thousands of miles away from their loved ones.

Recently, the Marine Corps Times named Wong as the Marine of the Year for 2007, citing his extraordinary commitment to mentoring elementary children, maintaining a letter-writing campaign for deployed troops, and visiting those recovering from traumatic brain injuries at the local Department of Veteran Affairs hospital. Wong credits his ability to keep up with his extensive community involvement because of the flexible hours offered by Xandex.

The 2008 Freedom Award recipients will be honored at a black-tie gala ceremony at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 18.

For more information about the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award please visit [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil), the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Web site at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil), or call the national committee at (800) 336-4590. ESGR is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 whose mission is to gain and maintain employer support for National Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflicts through mediation. □

# The Reserves need you (and you may need the Reserves)

LT. COL. ROGER S. GALBRAITH

MARINE FORCES RESERVE

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The Global War on Terror is ongoing with no clear end in sight. You've just completed a few or several years of active duty and you still have Iraqi sand coming out from your ears. Why stay in the Reserves? If you decide to stay in the Reserves, how do you get into a Reserve unit? How do you retire?

## Why stay in the Reserves?

The two best reasons for staying in the Reserves are keeping your ties with Marines and the Marine Corps and the financial benefits.

The best part about the Marine Corps is the Marines. There is not another group of 200,000+ persons anywhere in the world as connected to each other and their heritage as we are. Where else can an 80-year old talk to a 22-year old like they are brothers who grew up together. In a sense, they did grow up together, one in World War II and the other in Iraqi Freedom. Staying in the Marine Corps Reserves keeps your connection to Marines and allows you to build on your common experiences together.

Believe it or not, joining the Marine Corps Reserves can be financially rewarding, and retiring from the Reserves can be a cornerstone of your retirement planning. Reserve Marines are paid anywhere from a few hundred to one thousand dollars a drill weekend. That's good pay for doing something you love, but the real benefits come further down the road. The larger financial benefit comes if you qualify for retirement and when you receive your benefits at 60 years old.

The Marine Corps Reserve has got to be the only job where you get paid more in retirement, than you are paid while actually working the job. It is not uncommon for an enlisted Marine to be paid a few hundred dollars a month for serving in the Reserves but then get paid several hundred a month and receive full military retiree benefits. The main difference between the active duty retirement and Reserve retirement is the paycheck and benefits do not start until age 60 for Reserves, instead of the day after you leave the service like active duty retirees.

Full military benefits (including medical benefits) are an increasingly valuable package. As Americans get healthier and live longer, the age to receive Medicare benefits has gone up. Now, retirees must wait until 67 years of age to receive a government health insurance benefit. If you

receive a military Reserve retirement, you will be eligible for retiree medical/health benefits at age 60; which turns out to be a significant financial benefit compared to buying health insurance for you and dependents at that age.

## How do you get into a Reserve unit?

All roads to a Reserve unit lead through a Prior Service Recruiter. Just like their title describes, these are recruiters who are stationed throughout the United States, looking for recently discharged Marines to fill certain vacancies in nearby Reserve units. But don't hold your breath for their phone call. If you are, for example, an infantry Marine, and you return to your hometown of Newport News, Va., you may not be called by a Prior Service Recruiter, because the Newport News unit is a supply unit. In fact, there is not an infantry unit around for hundreds of miles. What are you to do?

The interesting point about a Marine Corps Reserve career is that it is a mix of the Corps' needs, the needs of the Marine, and just plain geography. If you are an infantry Marine and your hometown unit is a supply unit, they would still love to have you. The experience and leadership a prior service Marine brings to a Reserve unit is invaluable.

To manage your career and be competitive for promotion and technically useful to the unit, you will have to be trained in a new MOS and then have your primary MOS changed. Many MOS's can be awarded through a combination of on-the-job-training and command approval.

However, if your new MOS is more technical, the Reserve unit will want to send you to the active duty MOS school for your training in the new field. The best time to go to training is obviously right when you get off active duty.

Your uniforms still fit, you may still be job-hunting for a civilian job, and a few months of a Marine Corps school may not be a big interruption.

The management of your Marine Corps Reserve career is much more up to you than up to the Corps. Unlike active duty, you will not get new sets of orders every two to three years for a new unit. In fact, many Reserve Marines stay for 10 or more years in the same units, assuming new duties as they gain experience and rank.

Staying in the same unit may be great for remembering the way to your drill center, but career counselors will tell you that showing you can succeed in different units and duties will typically impress a board more than being

**The Marine Corps Reserve  
has got to be the only job  
where you get paid more  
in retirement, than you are  
paid while actually working  
the job.**

Lt. Col. Roger S. Galbraith,  
Marine Forces Reserve

successful with the same unit and same Marines your whole career. That is doubly true for officers who are encouraged and in company commander and unit OIC billets, forced, to move units every two to three years. Unlike active duty, you are not given a new unit automatically, you have to find one.

There are two essential tools to finding a new billet/unit: the phone and the Internet. The Marine On-Line Web site has a tool called Reserve Duty On-Line. This tool is a searchable database of billet vacancies which may show a nearby fit for your MOS and rank. Even if you can't find a direct fit, but a close fit, it is worth a phone call. Many Reserve billets can be filled "one up/one down" in terms of rank (for example, a major may fill a captain's billet). In addition, MOS requirements may not be hard and fast depending on your qualifications and even civilian experience. That's where the second tool comes in: the telephone.

There is no substitute for talking to the Marines at the Reserve unit you are interested in joining. Only through talking can they get to know you and your experiences, and you can ask questions about the billet you are interested in and can ask questions about any other vacancies or upcoming vacancies they may have. In this manner, looking for your next Reserve unit/billet is much like looking for a civilian job without the difficulties of pay negotiations.

### **How do you retire?**

So you are bought in, you are in the Reserves after a few years on active duty because you want to stay with Marines and reap the benefits of a Reserve retirement, so how do you retire?

The short answer is: the same as active duty. Get your 20 years, and you can retire, but that simple statement deserves explanation. Time in the Reserves is measured in satisfactory years. A sat year is one in which the Reservist

accrues 50 or more retirement points (or credits in some documents). A retirement point is for no better explanation a unit of service. A Reservist receives one retirement point for each four hours of Reserve drill duty. On a typical two-day Reserve drill weekend, the reservist will receive four retirement points. For periods of active duty, the Reservist receives one retirement point per day. Your active duty time will count at the rate of one point per day (365 points per year) toward retirement. So if you have a few years of active duty under your belt, it would be a shame to throw those points away when they could boost a Reserve retirement.

You are eligible for retirement when you accrue 20 sat years. Your retired pay will be based on a comparison to a fictitious Marine who joined the service the same day you did, got promoted the same as you, and has been on active duty the same time you've been in the Corps. For example, in your 20-year Reserve career you may have accrued 2,500 points. In 20 years your make-believe active duty counterpart has accrued 7,300 points. Your retirement will be the ratio of your points to your counterpart's points, or roughly 34 percent of your active duty counterpart's retirement.

The Marine Corps Reserves needs a constant stream of prior service Marines to fill the ranks of NCOs and officers to provide leadership, experience and technical knowledge that Reserve service can only duplicate so well. Affiliation with the Marine Corps Reserves is not merely a one-way street of giving to the Corps; the financial and retirement benefits you will receive in return for your service can add up to be quite lucrative over a multi-year career that culminates in qualifying for a military retirement.

Start your Marine Corps Reserve career, go to [www.mfr.usmc.mil](http://www.mfr.usmc.mil) for information. Call 1-800-234-3940, to speak to a Prior Service Recruiter. □

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