

# ConMar

WINTER 2003

VOL. 27, NO. 3

THE CONTINENTAL MARINE MAGAZINE



## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

*The fight continues...*

*When it's time to transition...*  
*You've got skills,*  
*You've got experience,*  
*and you've got*  
**Friends**

Get connected with  
the Marine-friendly  
network in your  
hometown.



[www.MarineForLife.com](http://www.MarineForLife.com)

## ON PAGE...

### 6 • VILLAGE RAID •

2/25 leads raids through Al Hasisirah, Iraq, to recover stolen vehicles.

### 8 • PRECIOUS CARGO •

VMGR-234 gives an injured Iraqi boy an unforgettable ride.

### 14 • DESTINATION: CARIBBEAN •

2/24 trains in Curacao with Dutch Marines during Dutch BILAT 2003.

### 20 • COLD WAR REUNION •

Wisconsin and Florida Marines train with Russian Naval Infantry during BALTOPS '03.

### 24 • PHIL IT UP •

1/25 heads to the Philippines for bilateral training during Talon Vision FY 04.

### 26 • AFRICAN CRUISE •

3/23 helps test-drive new high-speed naval vessel in Ghana.

### 30 • DJIBOUTI TURNOVER •

Reserve Marines hand over reigns to II MEF.

### 32 • URBAN ASSUALT •

2/24 kicks in some doors during annual training.

**THIS PAGE:** AH-1 Cobras from HMLA-773 land in Afghanistan for up to a one-year deployment. Photo by Col. Anthony G. Crutchfield.

## COVERS

**FRONT:** A KC-130 from VMGR-234 dispenses anti-missile flares during a flight over Iraq. Photo by Lance Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams

**BACK:** The sun sets over 1/25's "tent city" at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines during Talon Vision FY 04. Photo by Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs.

### MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Lt. Gen. Dennis M. McCarthy  
Commander

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Col. John J. Harvey  
Director

Mr. Allen R. Foucha  
Deputy Director

Gunnery Sgt. Keith V. Desbois  
Public Affairs Chief

### CONTINENTAL MARINE

Capt. Patrick B. Kerr  
Media Officer

Sgt. Jennifer M. Antoine  
Media Chief / Editor

Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs  
Editor / Correspondent

Sgt. Rob Henderson  
Correspondent

Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi  
Correspondent

Cpl. Damian McGee  
Correspondent

Cpl. Lana D. Waters  
Correspondent

"Continental Marine" (USPS 013357) is published quarterly by the Public Affairs Office, Marine Forces Reserve, 4400 Dauphine Street, New Orleans, LA 70146-5400. This Department of Defense magazine is an authorized, unofficial publication for members of the military services. Contents of "Continental Marine" are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps. This publication is produced commercially in accordance with the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps publications and printing regulations with government appropriated funds. Visit "Continental Marine" online at <http://www.mfr.usmc.mil>. Editorial staff may be reached at (504) 678-4179. Periodicals postage paid at New Orleans, LA 70113, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to: Public Affairs Office, Marine Forces Reserve, 4400 Dauphine Street, New Orleans, LA 70146-5400.



# A Porthole View



## *The latest Reserve news*

### **Servicemembers Civil Relief Act**

Recently, the House passed and sent to the President the rewrite of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940. Renamed the "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act", the revised act includes new benefits available to Reserve Marines.

### **Home Depot's "Project Home Front"**

The Home Depot, through its volunteer program "Project Home Front," is providing up to \$1,000 for home repairs to families whose military sponsors are deployed. Families can fill out the application on Home Depot's Web site at: [www.projecthomefront.org](http://www.projecthomefront.org).

### **MORDT Program**

After a two-year stand down, the Mobilization Operational Readiness Deployment Test (MORDT) program is once again emerging as an important, pre-mobilization tool among Marine Forces Reserve units.

The purpose of this program is to ensure units are fully prepared to mobilize and deploy and intends to meet this goal by conducting several unannounced inspections per month.

### **TRICARE**

When on military duty, Reserve Component (RC) members are covered for any injury, illness or disease incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. This includes traveling directly to or from the place where they perform military duty. When ordered to active duty for more than 30 consecutive days, RC members have comprehensive health care coverage under TRICARE. For more information check [www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve).

### **Military Family Tax Relief Act**

Reserve Marines are now eligible for new tax relief benefits after President Bush recently signed the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003.

### **Naval Institute Essay Contest**

For more than 130 years, the Naval Institute has served as an open forum to advance the understanding of sea power and other issues critical to national security. The institute has two contests coming up with a deadline of Feb. 1. For more information, check [www.usni.org](http://www.usni.org).

### **Savings Deposit Program**

Servicemembers returning from OIF/OEF who are no longer eligible to participate in the Savings Deposit Program should go to their servicing Disbursing Office to stop the allotment and request funds withdrawal by making a written request.

### **U.S. Small Business Administration**

If you are a member of the National Guard or Reserves and either own a small business or are employed by one, your business may be eligible for help from the U.S. Small Business Administration. For more information check [www.sba.gov/vets](http://www.sba.gov/vets).

### **Reserve commissary benefits**

The Department of Defense announced that with the President's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, members of the Guard and Reserve will have unlimited commissary benefits. For more information check [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com).

### **Individual Protective Equipment and Individual Combat Clothing Equipment**

Marine Forces Reserve is committed to providing the best available IPE and ICCE to deployed Marines and sailors. Those going into harm's way will be outfitted with the most current, service-fielded, state of the art IPE and ICCE.

For more information on these and other reserve issues, check [www.mfr.usmc.mil](http://www.mfr.usmc.mil).

# MAG-42 Marine sings for Toys or Tots

CPL. LANA WATERS

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**NAVAL AIR STATION, Atlanta** – With only weeks until Christmas, Santa’s little helpers scurried around the large warehouse sorting toys and making sure all was in order for the “big night.” Despite the hustle and bustle, one of the workers noticed a small boy, clothes all tattered and worn, peering through a window with wonder and amazement at all the toys. The helper couldn’t help but wonder if this child would receive any toys on Christmas morning.

In the months that followed, Santa’s friend, a United States Marine working for Toys For Tots, couldn’t forget that small boy and decided to write a song to help him and others like him.

“I wrote it about three months after Christmas,” said Cpl. Dustin L. Wilkes, flight equipment technician, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 773, Marine Aircraft Group 42.

In the song “One Toy at a Time,” Wilkes references Toys for Tots several times and how they help by giving toys to needy children. While still in it’s early stages, Wilkes decided to contact the foundation and play it for them.



Randy Lovely

Cpl. Dustin L. Wilkes sings “One Toy at a Time,” a song he wrote and recorded, at the Georgia state Toys for Tots kickoff in Augusta.

“I called up the Toys for Tots coordinator and played the song for her on my guitar. She loved it,” said Wilkes.

Soon afterward, Wilkes was flown to California to record “One Toy at a Time”, and it became the theme song for the 2003 Marine Forces Reserve Toys For Tots campaign.

“All the proceeds from the sale of the CD’s will go to buy a toy for Toys For

Tots,” said Wilkes, who sells copies of the song at different events he plays in the Atlanta area, including opening for T. Graham Brown and playing at the capital for the governor of Georgia. He also made appearances on local television and radio shows.

The song gained popularity in the Atlanta area and may soon be gaining momentum all over the United States, with possible appearances on national television shows. But even with all of the extra support coming in from the sale of “One Toy at a Time,” the Atlanta Toys for Toys warehouse is still struggling for support.

“By putting the song out there with the message of music, it will hopefully bring more awareness for this charity,” said Wilkes. “We’re selling many copies at all the events we go to, but we are still having problems meeting our goals.”

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the song, or to find out more about donating to Toys For Tots, can log onto the Atlanta Toys For Tots website at [www.toys4totsatlanta.com](http://www.toys4totsatlanta.com). To find a Toys For Tots coordinator near you, log on to [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org).



Randy Lovely

Cpl. Dustin L. Wilkes performs “One Toy at a Time” on “Good Morning Atlanta”, Nov. 11.

# Fox Co. raids Al Hasisirah

SGT. ROB HENDERSON

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office



Sgt. Rob Henderson

**ABOVE:** Norwich, N.Y., native Sgt. Robert L. Cable, police liaison, Task Force Finest, 2/25, helps a suspected car thief to his feet during a raid on Al Hasisirah, Iraq.

**RIGHT:** An Iraqi villager in Al Hasisirah watches Marines raid the town looking for stolen vehicles May 15, 2003.

**AL HASISIRAH, Iraq** – Reserve Marines from Fox Co., 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, in conjunction with the An Nasiriya Police Department, raided the village of Al Hasisirah, 14 miles outside An Nasiriya to recover stolen vehicles for the An Nasiriya City Council.

“There were several reports of armed men from this town and another town nearby stealing cars from the city government,” said Ballston Spa, N.J., native Maj. Christopher J. Douglas, commanding officer, Fox Co. “We came out today to recover those vehicles and show a presence in this area.”

During the four hour, house-to-house raid, Fox Co. Marines and the Iraqi policemen recovered two stolen vehicles, arrested two men in conjunction with the theft and confiscated 17 cases of illegal ammunition hidden in the town.

“The operation today was successful because we recovered some

of the vehicles. We also showed we could bring a large presence into an area, conduct an operation and leave peacefully,” said Douglas.

The reason behind showing a presence in the outlying areas of An Nasiriya is to deter would-be thieves from entering the city to loot and steal.

“Basically, we knew it was important to make an impression on these people,” said Queens, N.Y., native Cpl. Johan P. Peralta, field radio operator, Fox Co. “We definitely did that today, and if there are any thieves here who saw us, maybe they’ll think twice about stealing from the city again.”

Along with approximately 130 Marines from Fox Co., the raid party also included several interpreters, Marines from Task Force Finest, a task force of 2/25 Marines dedicated to getting the An Nasiriya Police back on its feet, and several Navy corpsmen. Having translators on



Sgt. Rob Henderson

# to recover stolen vehicles

hand gave the Fox Co. Marines an insight into what the Iraqi people want from U.S. forces still in Iraq.

“The villagers here are happy, because we freed them from Saddam,” said Pottstown, Penn., native Cpl. Ghazi M. Ladab, interpreter, Fox Co. “They say they want help from us forming a democratic government, and then they want us to go home. They also warned that if we leave before a government is established, there will be a great civil war.”

While Fox Co. conducted the raid in Al Hasisirah, Golf Co. raided another village, Sayhid Dakhil, approximately six miles north. Its mission was parallel to Fox Co.’s mission: recover stolen vehicles and show a presence in the village. Golf Co. captured one vehicle and two suspected thieves.

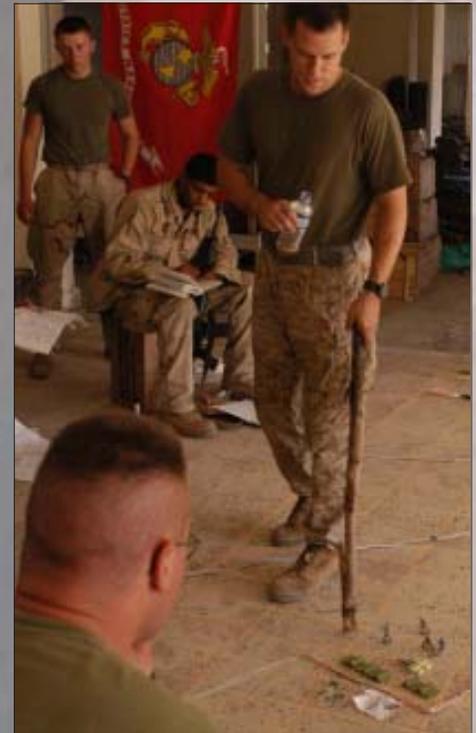
“These small towns were relatively unaffected by the war,” said Yonkers, N.Y., native Maj. Walter

D. Powers, raid commander and battalion operations officer, 2/25. “The villagers haven’t seen the Marines, and we sent the clear message that we’re here and we’re helping the police restore law and order in Dhiqar province.”

The biggest challenge of the raid was operating in full gear in 112-degree weather, according to Powers. Even with the heat, the Marines of both companies were successful, and the battalion suffered no casualties.

The 2/25 Marines continued to support police operations in and around An Nasiriya as long as they were operating in the area. The primary purpose for their support was to restore regional stability, according to Powers.

**BELOW: Fox Co. Marines push a recovered vehicle to free it from dried mud. The raid on Al Hasisirah, Iraq, yielded three stolen vehicles and 17 cases of illegal ammunition.**



Sgt. Rob Henderson

**High Bridge, N.J., native Maj. Tim E. Shanahan, executive officer, Fox Co., 2/25, shows his platoon leaders a diagram of Al Hasisirah, Iraq, during the pre-raid brief at the company's command post.**



Sgt. Rob Henderson

# VMGR-234 reunites boy with family

CPL. DAMIAN MCGEE

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office



Cpl. Damian McGee

Carried by his uncle, Mustafa Jasim carries with him a bag of goodies given to him by U.S. Marines and Sailors who assisted with his recovery.

**AL KUT, Iraq** — While in Iraq, Marines from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) – 234 usually picked up Marines and cargo on a daily basis, but their most memorable flight gave an Iraqi child the trip of a lifetime.

The Marines' day began with their normal "Lone Star Route", which involved transportation of personnel and cargo to various locations throughout the Marine Corps' area of responsibility. The flight took on a different mission, however, when seven-year-old Mustafa Jasim stepped aboard anticipating a ride home.

"For the most part, you have an idea of what you're going to pick up throughout the day," said Sgt. Donald Whittom, a crewman on the flight. "At the same time, there is always something that surprises us. This was one of the more pleasant surprises."

Apparently, the child was one of a group of children excited to see Marines enter their town near Al Kut. During their excitement, the children rushed one of the vehicles and Jasim was pushed, causing his leg to be caught under the tire of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle. The Marines immediately evacuated Jasim to a medical facility set up by 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines, who were providing humanitarian and security assistance to Al Kut and its surrounding areas at the time.

"It looked pretty bad," said an unidentified Marine who escorted Jasim home. "All the Marines were worried that the boy might not walk again."

After being treated in Al Kut, Jasim's first flight came when he was transported further south to a larger medical facility in Talil, Iraq. It was here that the boy made a full recovery and was able to walk again.

As the ambulance met the plane on the runway, an ecstatic boy, carried by his uncle, emerged with a trash bag full of gifts he had received from the Americans while recovering. Everything from coloring books to candy weighed down the proud little boy.

"He doesn't speak any English," said his escort, "but watching his eyes light up when he received all of these gifts was thanks enough for every Marine and Sailor involved in his recovery."

VMGR-234 flew the "Lone Star Route" every two days as part of Phase IV of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The missions never got monotonous because of these types of events.

"It's on rare occasions that our missions turn out like this one did," said Lt. Col. Ray Descheneaux, KC-130 pilot and one of the pilots who flew Jasim home. "However, it's always rewarding to know we were able to assist in the process of reuniting this little boy with his family, and most importantly that when he returned home, he was able to run and play with the rest of his friends."

# Marines help rebuild fundamentals of learning

SGT. ROB HENDERSON

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**AN NASIRIYA, Iraq** — Children fortunate enough to be born in America have the right to be educated at a public school, where books are provided and the bathrooms are equipped with toilets and sinks.

The children of An Nasiriya, Iraq, on the other hand, have no such luxuries. Under Saddam Hussein's former regime, the state of their schools became so dilapidated that they could no longer receive a proper education.

Twenty-six Marines from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, helped reconstruct three schools here so the children can continue an education disrupted by war and years of oppression.

"After the war, the schools in this area were looted of nearly everything," said Queens, N.Y., native, Sgt. Terrance D. James, Weapons Co., squad leader and project leader for the schools. "They were stripped of everything from doors to plumbing to the glass in their windows."

Most of the Marines' efforts were concentrated on the El Gadisiyatan Middle School where they were able to obtain blackboards, fans, several lights, doors with knobs and locks

for each room, record books for the school's staff and other miscellaneous supplies for the students.

"We're in the process right now of trying to acquire plumbing for the building so the children will have a place to use the bathroom during the school day," said James.

At the Lel Hooria High School, the Marines painted over murals containing pro-Ba'ath messages that Saddam Hussein required every high school to display. According to Lynbrook, N.Y., native, Sgt. Timothy E. Ledwith, assaultman with Weapons Co., one message read, "We are all warriors for Saddam, and we must train ourselves to carry out his fight."

According to Capt. Nguyen K. Tsan, field auditing officer for 2/25, the battalion spent \$60,000 on refurbishing schools all over the Dhiqar Province. The efforts were not in vain; projects like this help win the hearts of an entire generation of Iraqis.

"These projects at the schools are bringing us a closer relationship with the Iraqis," said James. "We're showing the Iraqi kids - who grew up brainwashed that Americans were evil - that we are concerned with their education and well-being."

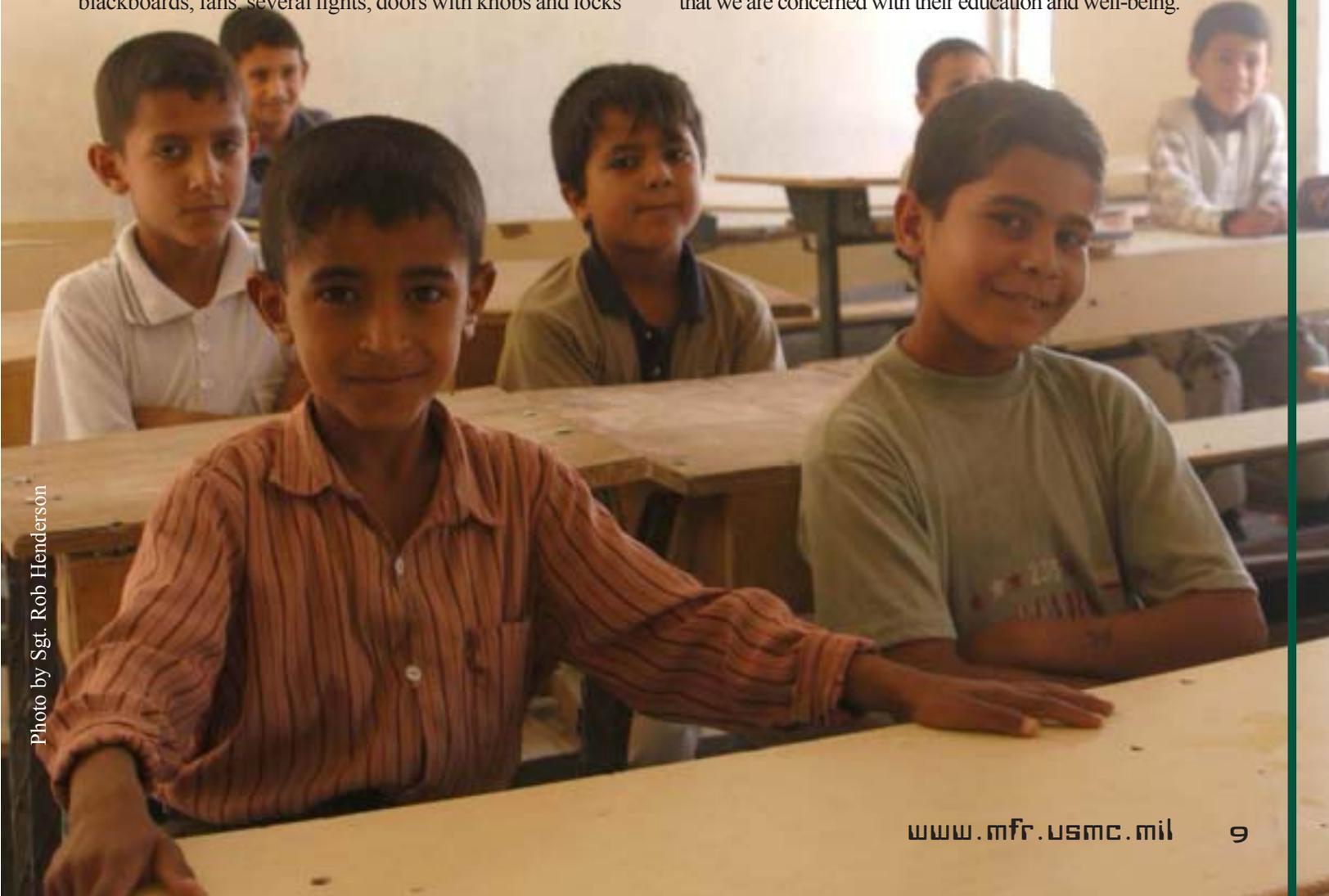


Photo by Sgt. Rob Henderson



## SNIPERS KEEP THEIR GUARD UP

Lance Cpl. Andrew Z. Williams

**A Marine from the surveillance and target acquisition platoon uses the scope of an M40-A3 sniper rifle to ensure that a passing Iraqi is not carrying a surface to air ground missile.**

**CPL. DAMIAN MCGEE**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**AL HUSAYNIYAH, Iraq** — “Shots fired! Shots fired!” Those were the words that reverberated from a hand-held radio as Marines drove through a small town outside of Blair Airfield in Al Kut, Iraq.

The Marines, a scout sniper team with 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines, were leading a convoy of civil affairs and combat camera Marines when the shots rang out. The Marines gave the call and all four vehicles turned down the road toward the shots.

“As soon as we heard the shots, we thought there was a possibility someone was engaging on innocent civilians,” said Staff Sgt. Vincent J. Heller, platoon sergeant, surveillance and target acquisition platoon. “We didn’t know exactly what we were going to do because we didn’t know what the situation was. However, if we’d found someone firing on us or civilians, we would have done what it took to prevent the situation and engage if necessary.”

The situation became more complicated when the road led to a dead end, and the Marines were suddenly surrounded by Iraqi citizens coming to pay their respects.

“Some of the people were already out, but they congregated more in the streets when the Marines arrived,” said Leicester, Vt., native, Gunnery Sgt. Heidi Schuerger, civil affairs non-commissioned officer, 4th Civil Affairs Group. “It definitely makes the situation more difficult. The more people on the street, the more things there are to distract the Marines who are trying to accomplish their mission.”

With all the Marines standing guard and scanning the area, the feeling of danger filled the Marines with an immediate sense of urgency.

“Once you’re in a situation like that, your adrenaline begins pumping, and it takes control,” said Memphis native Sgt. Kevin L. Young, a rifleman with Kilo Company. “When this happens Marines have to make sure they stay calm and focused. We all want to contain situations as much as possible, and none of us want to make matters

worse in this type of scenario.”

One such incident occurred as one of the snipers scanned the area through the scope of his M40-A3 sniper rifle. While checking the numerous berms surrounding the neighborhood, a man was spotted standing next to his bicycle with what appeared to be a surface-to-air missile launcher. After realizing it was nothing more than a big pipe, the Marines and translators informed the man that, for his safety, he should move off the berm.

“When we approach a situation we have to take every precaution possible when we’re looking for possible threats,” Heller said. “For the most part, the children will yell when they see us if there’s a bad guy close to them, but I still have to remind my guys to maintain the discipline of knowing when to fire and when not to fire.”

As the situation calmed down, the civil affairs Marines and translators began talking to the members of the town to discover what had actually occurred. What started as a possible threat to the Marines in the convoy, turned out to be celebratory fire from a wedding party, an event that happens frequently in Iraq.

“Celebratory fire is somewhat common, and most of it is for weddings,” Schuerger said. “The dangers of it are clear with incidents that have occurred, but it’s part of their custom and it may be hard to stop it.”

Through proper force protection and mediation, the situation quickly de-escalated, and the Marines left the area wishing the best for the wedding party.

“Every Marine here must have some restraint, but it is a difficult thing to do,” Schuerger said. “We’re at a point where we’re more comfortable with the local Iraqi people, but we still must be aware and the Marines know that.”

“If an accident happens, there is no compensation for the loss of a life, but going to them reinforces the fact that we’re here to help them,” Schuerger said. “When there’s a misunderstanding, it’s important to take the time to ease people’s minds. They’ll remember that.”



Cpl. Damian McGee

**CPL. DAMIAN MCGEE**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**BABYLON, Iraq** — Bringing down the regime of Saddam Hussein was the primary mission of all U.S. servicemembers positioned in and around Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, a group of Marines took some extra time before completing their tour in southwest Asia to enjoy one of the deposed leader's few contributions to the preservation of Iraqi culture.

Marines from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines out of Memphis, Tenn., and 4th Civil Affairs Group of Washington D.C. took a tour of an ancient city whose history dates back to biblical days.

"This was one of the more meaningful parts of my entire time here," said Oxford, Miss. native Cpl. Paul D. Garner, a machine gunner with 3/23. "It's amazing how much history is here. It felt good to be able to see a part of this country, not as a war zone, but as a place of holiness and age-old purpose."

The city, originally constructed in 628 B.C., and repaired under Saddam's regime in 1976, caused

## 3/23, 4TH CAG TOUR BIBLICAL CITY OF BABYLON

mixed feelings among the Marines, as well as the Iraqi translator who accompanied the Marines.

"It's nice to be able to see this place and know what it really looked like back then," said Ali, an Iraqi translator who took the tour with the Marines. "The only problem is that if you want to show something the way it was, you should not add more to it. If these are ruins then let them stay ruined...that is part of the history."

The tour, which took nearly two hours, went over the historical aspects of the construction, as well as the artwork still visible on the sides of the walls.

"The things we've seen here are absolutely amazing to say the least," Garner said. "By looking at the art and construction here, you can only imagine how intelligent or inspired these people had to be when they built this place."

The Marines and translator were not the only ones excited about the experience. The tour guide, a native of Iraq, was also happy the Marines were able to take part in Iraq's

cultural heritage.

"I'm glad the Americans are coming to see this," said the Iraqi tour guide who said she has been doing tours for ten years. "I've been doing these tours for a long time and I just now get to show Americans this holy land. It's good because I think it will explain a lot of the culture they're seeing here."

"Saddam's regime and the people still trying to harm Americans are a small group of people in our country. Most of the people here are very nice and very religious, and it goes back to the things they're seeing here."

The tour was made possible by 4th CAG and was a great way for the Marines to get away from the hectic life they've lived for nearly a year.

"It's important for Marines to get out and do things that involve the community and the local people," said Gunnery Sgt. Heidi Schuerger, staff non-commissioned officer in charge, 4th CAG. "I hope this tour helped them to realize how rich this country's history is, and how these people are just that - people."



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

Steel resurrected from Ground Zero at the World Trade Center site is melted and cast in the mold of a bow-stem, the foremost section of the hull of a ship.

**CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**AMITE, La.** – The memories of the Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> tragedies of 2001 took on a new shape Sept. 9 at Amite Foundry and Machine Inc., here.

Steel from Ground Zero at the World Trade Center site was resurrected to become the leading piece of the *USS New York* Landing Platform Dock (LPD) 21, the fifth of 12 new San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships to be built by Northrop Grumman Ship Systems for the Navy-Marine Corps Team.

“This piece of steel has been washed by the tears of Americans and hardened by the millions of prayers around the world,” said Dr. Philip A. Dur, president, Northrop Grumman. “It is our hope that we can bring strength and victory to this steel and to the whole of LPD-21 *USS New York*.”

The structural steel, which came in a beam approximately 20 feet long and weighing between 20 and 30 tons, was extricated from a landfill on Staten Island where the World Trade Center wreckage was stored. It is believed to have been part of the south tower, the second to be hit by a

jetliner hijacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001, but the first to collapse.

The steel was trucked south to Amite, La., where it was chopped and sized to fit in a cauldron, then heated to 2,850 degrees Fahrenheit and melted down. The molten steel was cast in the mold of a bow-stem, the foremost section of the hull on the water line that slices through the water.

“The spirit and traditions of service and sacrifice that have made our nation great have been rekindled in the ashes of the World Trade Center and will be poured strong and resolute in the steel we pour here today,” said U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Philip Balisle, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command.

The *USS New York*, the fifth ship in more than a 200 year legacy to share its title, earned its namesake during a ceremony held Sept. 7, 2002, aboard the *USS Intrepid* Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York Harbor by the Honorable Gordon England, former Secretary of the Navy. It is named in honor of the state, the city and the victims of Sept. 11, 2001.

“This new class of ships will project American power to the far corners of the Earth and support the cause of

freedom well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” said England. The *USS New York* will play an important role in our Navy’s future and will be a fitting tribute to the people of the Empire State.”

The 684-foot-long ship is capable of carrying a Navy crew of 363 and 699 Marines. The ship will be used to transport and land Marines, their equipment and supplies by embarked air cushions, conventional landing craft or amphibious vehicles. It will be augmented by helicopters or vertical take off and landing aircraft in amphibious assault special operations or expeditionary warfare missions. The *USS New York* is scheduled for active duty in 2007.

“Whenever this ship sails, the spirit and memory of the men and women who lost their lives that day, will go with it,” said the Honorable Hansford T. Johnson, acting Secretary of the Navy. “The *USS New York* will not be a monument of tragedy. It will be a symbol of our strength and ability to rebuild and come back stronger than ever.”



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Workers at the Amite Foundry and Machine Inc., melt steel taken from Ground Zero to be used for the bow-stem of the *USS New York*.**

## LPD-17 joins Navy-Marine Corps Team

CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**AVONDALE, La.** – General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, assisted in welcoming the much-anticipated *USS San Antonio*, Landing Platform Dock (LPD) 17, to the Navy-Marine Corps Team during a christening ceremony here July 19.

“We are christening today the most advanced amphibious ship ever built,” said Hagee.

The LPD is the first of 12 new amphibious transport dock ships built by Northrop Grumman Corporation’s Ship Systems sector here. The new class is tasked with transforming America’s expeditionary-warfare force.

“It is the first of a ship class that will take our Navy-Marine Corps Team, as well as the nation, far into the 21st century,” said Hagee.

The ship’s primary mission is to embark, transport and land elements of a force in an array of expeditionary and Special Operations Capable missions. The San Antonio class will functionally replace four current amphibious ship classes. An increased 25,000 square feet of vehicle storage space and a substantial cargo/ammunition carrying capacity, make it a key element of future Amphibious Ready Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, or joint task forces.

“We are bringing all of our synergies and technologies to bear on the San Antonio, including information technology, electronic systems, integrated systems, composite materials, and manufacturing and engineering support,” said Ronald D. Sugar,



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Gen. Hagee welcomes the LPD-17 as the newest ship to the Navy-Marine Corps Team.**

chief executive officer and president, Northrop Grumman Corporation.

The LPD-17 is the first U.S. Navy ship named in honor of San Antonio, Texas, and is sponsored by the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison, United States Senator, State of Texas. Hutchison, the first woman elected to represent Texas in the U.S. Senate, had the honor of christening the *USS San Antonio* by breaking a bottle of Texas sparkling wine across its bow.

“The spirit, the gloried past, and the stubborn courage of the Alamo will sail inside San Antonio and every ship in the class,” said Hutchison.

The *USS San Antonio* is currently more than 75 percent complete, and scheduled to be commissioned for duty in 2005. It will be home-ported in Norfolk, Va.

“*San Antonio* is a 21st century expeditionary warship because she will enable the Navy-Marine Corps Team to realize the potential of transformational technology, weapon systems, and operational concepts,” said Hagee. “*San Antonio* represents the culmination of many years of development. Her origins trace back to the Sailors and Marines who have valiantly served our nation since 1775.”

# Dutch Bilateral Exchange 2003

Sgt. Ryan G. Norgart, 2nd section leader, 1st Plt, Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 24th Marines, 4th MarDiv, leads his 10-man team out of the

**CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**CURACAO, Netherlands Antilles** – Reserve Marines with 1st Platoon, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division, Des Moines, Iowa, hit the beaches of Curacao June 9 where they met up with 1st Platoon, 31st Infantry Company of the

Royal Netherlands Marine Corps. The 48-man platoon came to this small island in the Caribbean to kick off an amphibious training exercise with their Dutch Marine counterparts for Dutch Bilateral Exchange 2003.

“It’s a different challenge for

them (2/24 Marines),” said Capt. David M. Chiodo, weapons platoon commander, Echo Co. “We are more Midwest Marines. We don’t see the ocean at all.”

Before tackling the waves of the Caribbean, the Marines focused on water survivability at the Naval Base Parera swimming pool here. They performed water-maneuverability drills and practiced recovering drowning Marines while swimming in utilities.

“It was challenging,” said Lance Cpl. Jason A. Danner, rifleman, Echo Co. “It was a continuous effort without rest, definitely a test of endurance.”

The training evolution went above sea level as well, allowing the Marines to take in some sights while rappelling from a 120-foot cliff.

“Being from the Midwest, I have never done this before,” said Lance Cpl. Jacob K. Shirbroun, machine gunner, Echo Co. “It’s good training, and it’s a blast.”

After completing their initial amphibious training, the Marines



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

Marines perform team-rowing exercises and capsizing/recovery drills aboard rubber reconnaissance crafts in the crystal blue waters of the Caribbean .



## *Dutch Marines give 2/24 the Royal Treatment*

Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**choppy surf back onto land where they continue with a beach march.**

stepped off on a beach march that took them through mud, thorn bushes and cacti, then embarked on three miles of rigorous rowing followed by an additional four miles of trudging through the surf.

“This is an opportunity to try new things and to motivate the younger Marines,” said Sgt. Eric M. Graham, squad leader, Echo Co. “Our true colors will show when we work more with tactical ground movements. That’s our bread and butter.”

After a competitive run with the Dutch Marines, the Marines dried off in the sun during the 24-hour field training exercise held on the drier region of the island. There, they applied their land navigational skills while conducting squad movements and rushes, rescuing hostages from an enemy stronghold in the day and overrunning the enemy headquarters with a surprise attack during a night raid.

“I always like training with the Marines,” said Royal Netherlands Marine Sgt. Maj. Avert Van Alphen, 31st Infantry Co. “We learn a lot from each other.”



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Marines position themselves behind a mound of dirt and rocks while planning an attack route onto an enemy stronghold during a simulated combat evolution.**

The Marines topped the exercise with sniper training and learning how to clear a building, applying the methods taught. They also got a chance to fire the Glock 17 pistol and the M-16A1 service rifle, both standard issue weapons for the Dutch Marines.

“They put in the hard work and it paid off,” said Chiodo. “There are a lot of similarities in their Marine Corps and our Marine Corps. The Marine Corps in general have the same core - Semper Fidelis - they showed that all the way.”

# Marines tackle Caribbean obstacle course

CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS  
Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**CURACAO, Netherlands Antilles** – Dutch Marines from 1st Platoon, 31st Infantry Company, Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, played host to Reserve Marines from 1st Platoon, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division, Des Moines, Iowa, as training for the Dutch Bilateral Exchange 2003 began here June 9.

A highlight of the exercise was the Nassau Run, an annual competition between local organizations and military



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Capt. Matthew A. Peterson, officer in charge, 2/24, dangles five feet over water as he slides along the 120-foot rope connecting him back to land.**



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Reserve Marines with Team Alpha run as a team while participating in the annual Nassau Run which brings the Marines to the summit of Fort Nassau (background).**

members, which takes participants through an obstacle course and up the summit of Fort Nassau.

The eight-man teams met in boots and utilities at the base and began the race with eight laps in an 80-foot long pool. After completing the swim, the teams continued on a two-mile dash to the foot of the hill outside the gates of the base.

There, they collected four 20-liter containers and lugged them up a very steep 1,300-foot hill. Once they reached the peak, they proceeded to harness up and rappel approximately 130-feet back to the bottom. When everyone hit the deck, they had another 500-yard sprint to go before reaching the combat rubber reconnaissance crafts awaiting them on the shoreline.

“The rappel proved harder than I assumed with all the wind,” said Sgt. Eric M. Graham, squad leader, E Co. “The rope had too much tension and it made it difficult to descend.”

Once everyone was in the boats, they rowed the 600-yard course until they reached a cement station about 120 feet from the coastline. From atop the station, the men made their way back to land via a rope that stretched about five feet over the water.

“The rope gave me some trouble,” said Sgt. Ryan G. Norgart, section leader, E Co. “I got turned over early and had to inch my way to the end.”

Their last challenge was a five-round shooting exercise with the Glock 17 (the standard pistol for the Dutch Marines). Additional points were awarded for hitting the bulls-eye. When everyone was done shooting, they crossed the finish line together.

“We were impressed with how well the (U.S.) Marines did,” said 1st Lt. Ruben Vreeswijk, platoon commander, 31st Infantry Co. “I never trained with them before and I am looking forward for the next opportunity.”

# MCROA transforms to accept enlisted Marines

**CPL. LANA D. WATERS**  
Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**NEW ORLEANS, La.** – Transformation was the theme behind this year’s Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association national conference as MCROA became MCRA, the Marine Corps Reserve Association. The change was made to include enlisted Marines into the organization.

“The issues the Marine Corps Reserve faces are not rank specific, they are for all Reserve Marines. However, there was no organization for enlisted reserve matters,” said Col. Kevin P. Hart, president of MCRA. “This will give the reserves a unified voice.”

Although the announcement was made at the convention, the decision to change MCROA started last year.

“A proposal was made to the board of directors last summer to become MCRA,” said Hart. “It was approved by a vote of 10-to-1 and was finalized a couple of weeks ago.”

Marine reserve officers originally established MCROA in 1926 to further the interests of the country and to preserve national security. Now, 77 years later, not only has the name changed, the policy has as well.

According to the association’s by-laws, the new policy for MCRA will be to foster the advancement of the professional skills of all Reserve Marines; to promote the interest of all Reserve Marines in the United States Marine Corps and the

interest of the United States Marine Corps in its Reserve Marines; to act as a legislative advocate for the Marine Corps Reserve; to represent and assist individual members; and, at all times, to promote the interests of the United States Marine Corps in the broadest and most liberal manner to the end that it may best advance the welfare of and serve to preserve the security of the United States.

Now that MCRA has been officially established, new obstacles lie ahead for current members and leaders.

“We are about to offer something to the enlisted Marines and many of them have no idea what is coming,” said Thomas P. Green, Deputy Director, MCRA. “It’s a matter of getting the word out.”

Green proposes using the association’s website and their magazine, *The Word*, to round up more members and to let them know what MCRA is all about.

“We’ll see our main initial interest from the career ranks,” said Green. “The biggest challenge will be to get junior Marines to join.”

If interested in joining or learning more about MCRA, check their website at [www.mcrassn.org](http://www.mcrassn.org) and click on the membership link or contact Thomas P. Green at 703-630-3772.

## Best Buy makes big donation to Toys for Tots

**SGT. JENNIFER M. ANTOINE**  
Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**MINNEAPOLIS** – For the 7th straight year, the Best Buy Corporation has contributed generously to the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program, donating more than \$800,000 to the foundation in the last three years alone.

The Marine Forces Reserve Band, New Orleans, helped the employees of Best Buy headquarters here kick off this year’s drive recently by performing a concert of holiday and patriotic tunes.

“This year, we wanted to do more,” said Stacy Hanley, senior manager of Best Buy Community Relations.

Before the concert began, Al

Lenzmeier, president of Best Buy Company, Inc., presented Gunnery Sgt. Ronaldo Y. Dinogan, Toys for Tots Coordinator, Marine Wing Support Squadron 471 here, a check for \$350,000.

“We donated \$350,000 to the foundation and have collection barrels at each of our 600 stores nationwide,” said Lenzmeier.

According to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, children between the ages of 12 and 15 are sometimes overlooked.

“There is always a shortage of gifts for teens, so we developed and are the sole supporters of the Toys for Tots/Toys for Teens program where gifts for older children are emphasized,” said Hanley. “They are the main demographic age

group for us, and we feel it is important to ensure they can enjoy the holiday spirit as well.”

Gifts such as CDs, DVDs and small electronic games are a popular option for the teen-age group, said Hanley.

In addition to the money donated by the Best Buy Corporation, this is the first year Best Buy customers were given the option to donate \$5, \$10, or \$25 to Toys for Tots at the cash registers of local stores.

“We are excited about this because as of December 1, we have already received more than \$100,000 that we will be giving to the foundation from our customers.”

Best Buy ran the in-store donation campaign through January 3.



***"Reserve units are no longer part-time warriors. While in Iraq, you couldn't tell the difference between active duty and Reserve Marines unless you asked."***

*Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps*

Photo illustration by Sgt. Jennifer M. Antoine

## Senior-enlisted Marine praises reserve community during visit

**SGT. JENNIFER M. ANTOINE**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**MARINE FORCES RESERVE, New Orleans** – The Marine Corps’ top enlisted leader completed a six-day tour of Marine Corps bases by praising the Marines here Sept. 26, for the outstanding support provided by the Marines in the reserve community and thanking all those Reserve Marines who answered the call of duty.

“I have been on the road since Sunday, and I have to say that I saved the best for last,” said Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. “I would like to thank you for the outstanding job you all do getting the reserve units ready to go to combat.”

The Commandant of the Marine Corps and Estrada are stressing the idea of the Marine Corps being a “total force,” where the reserve units train as hard and are as well-equipped as the active-duty component.

“The reserve force we have now is very well trained,” said Estrada. “They performed as well as their active duty counterparts. Reserve



Sgt. Jennifer M. Antoine

**Sgt. Maj. Estrada talks during lunch with Marines from MAG-42 and 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines while touring the units’ facilities.**

units are no longer part-time warriors. While in Iraq, you couldn’t tell the difference between active duty and Reserve Marines unless you asked.”

More than half of the Reserve Marine force was activated for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and while the war is in a new phase and most Marines have come home, the possibility the Marines will return to help as part of the overall force rotation is very real, added Estrada.

Estrada also said the focus of the Marine Corps in the future must be on warfighting excellence. It has to maintain its edge and continue to look for ways to improve its ability to fight and win battles, said Estrada.

In addition to speaking about the Corps’ role in combat, Estrada also

spoke about the MV-22 Osprey and the Corps’ tradition of naval history.

“The Marine Corps must project sustained combat power from the sea, which is what we are all about,” said Estrada. “The Osprey will be a big part of what we do from the sea.”

Estrada also touched on other issues such as the importance of quality of life for Marines and their families, leadership among the ranks, and safety.

Estrada finished his time with the Marines by answering questions and listening to Marines’ concerns, including everything from the role of women in reserve combat units to the new tattoo debate.

After his short visit at MFR, Estrada had lunch and spent the afternoon with the Marines from Marine Air Craft Group 42 and 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines, both stationed at Naval Support Activity, Joint Reserve Base, Belle Chasse, La.

“No longer are the reserve units weekend warriors, but part of a complete team,” said Estrada. “I have seen a complete change in appreciation and function of the reserve units since I first enlisted in the Corps.”



Sgt. Jennifer M. Antoine

**Estrada chooses an informal setting while addressing NCOs and below.**

# BALTOPS '03

*Former Cold War adversaries storm the beach in Poland*



Sgt. Michael Mullane

**3rd Platoon, Fox Co., 2nd Bn., 24th Marines, conducts an amphibious landing with joint forces in Ustka, Poland.**

## **CAPT. PATRICK KERR**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**USTKA, Poland** – Even though the Cold War has officially been over for years now, the events that transpired here during Baltic Operations 03 (BALTOPS), an annual military exercise held in the Baltic region of Northern Europe, still managed to turn a lot of heads. Not only were U.S. forces heartily welcomed in this former satellite of the now-defunct Soviet regime, but they also conducted joint exercises with militaries that were once their sworn enemy.

The real story, however, occurred when the Marines stormed the beach in an amphibious landing with the Russian Naval Infantry, the Russian equivalent to the Marine Corps. This was a landmark operation between the two forces involved.

For the Marines of 3rd Platoon, Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, based in Milwaukee, Wis., and a small detachment from 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) out of West Palm Beach, Fla., working side-by-side with their former nemeses was the

thrill of a lifetime. Any grudges that may have existed before the encounter quickly vanished as the two teams, along with the Polish and the Lithuanians, established a close bond that enabled them to flawlessly execute the landing. While there were challenges, especially with the language barrier, the Marines found their new allies to be more than capable partners.

“It was so exciting coming off the ship seeing all these other nations performing with us, helicopters flying,” said Lance Cpl. Brad Schaefer, 22, machine gunner, 3rd platoon. “Just the whole part of everyone hitting the beach and seeing how hard they train living up to their reputation and us living up to ours.”

Each unit had a separate mission: while members of 3rd Plt. actually loaded up on Polish ships and hit the shore in Russian landing craft, Marines from 4th ANGLICO inserted near the beach the night before to coordinate air support. Rehearsals between the forces involved were essential to the success of the mission.

When verbal communication didn't seem to work, hand-and-arm signals proved to be the most effective way to talk to each other.

"It was an awesome experience just to be there with the different cultures," said Lance Cpl. Nicholas Hudgins, 3rd Plt. "I had an American squad of machine guns and 13 Lithuanians. When we rushed the beach, it was all hand-and-arm signals, and it worked out phenomenally."

Because of the high-profile nature of the exercise, many distinguished visitors were waiting on the beach to watch everything unfold. During the first wave, the hatch to the Russian landing craft got stuck and stalled the disembarkation by a few minutes.

The next wave, an oil tank burst and shot the slimy black substance on the Marines as they were about to

get off the boat. Judging by the enthusiastic reaction from the VIPs, however, the landing couldn't have gone smoother.

Although the Marines from ANGLICO didn't anticipate any live-fire training during BALTOPS, they were fortunate enough to link up with the Polish Air Force conducting live-fire target practice early in the exercise. Their experience with the Polish air assets helped things run even more smoothly during the amphibious landing.

"Anybody who watched that (the amphibious landing) probably got a little choked up," said Lt. Col. Tim Dunn, executive officer, 4th ANGLICO. "What we were watching were U.S. Marines, with Russian and Lithuanian Marines landing on Polish territory – all part of the Warsaw Pact. When in 1989, we were pointing our weapons at each other."

## Marines take in culture, history

**LANCE CPL. JOHN CIESIENSKY**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**BORNHOLM ISLAND, Denmark** — When Reserve Marines participate in annual training overseas, not only do they get to hone their military skills, but they also get a chance to learn more about the global community.

The Marines of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, Milwaukee, Wis., and 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, West Palm Beach, Fla., received such an opportunity June 7 - 20 while participating in the Baltic Operations exercise (BALTOPS), on Bornholm Island, Denmark.

"Hopefully, the thing they gained most won't have anything to do with military training," said 27-year-old Staff Sgt. William Stewart, platoon sergeant, 3rd platoon. "Hopefully, what they take away from it is, whether it's Russians or Danes, people are people with the same wants and needs."

After spending two weeks

training with foreign troops, 23-year-old Cpl. Joseph Dutton, ground radio technician, said, "I really liked going to Poland and getting to train with the Russians. It was a new experience."

The company also got a chance to interact with the foreign troops outside of the training area.

"The Danes were incredibly friendly people and very professional. They're good to go," said 21-year-old Racine, Wis., native Lance Cpl. Daniel Wyatt.

When the Marines got a day of liberty, they jumped at the chance to leave the base and explore the beautiful countryside around them. For some, it was their first time overseas.

"In Gudjem, I had some of their smoked salmon, and it was phenomenal," said Lt. Col. Geoffrey Doyle, commanding officer, Fox Co.

Many of the Marines opted to take a tour of the island and see some of its historical sites. The

highlight was a castle built almost 1,000 years ago overlooking the Baltic Sea.

"There's a lot of stuff—the sites, the heritage, the history behind this country like the different forces coming here during World War II. That's why I wanted to take the tour," said 20-year-old Milwaukee native Lance Cpl. Patrick Huwiler, Fox Co.

As much as the Marines enjoyed the tour and learning Bornholm's history, the Danish soldiers were just as pleased to see them interested in their national heritage and just as eager to meet new people.

Twenty six-year-old Copenhagen, Denmark, native Pvt. Thomas Hansen, infantryman, 2nd LOPESK (light recon squadron), Rønne, added, "It's fun to meet some other people, some other nationalities. I feel like if you're American or you're from India, people are people."

# 1/25 provides 24/7 security

CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS  
 Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**CAMP COBRA, Zamboanga, Philippines** – “We sleep safely at night only because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us.”

These words commonly seen on t-shirts sold by local villagers are a perfect assessment of the job performed daily by the Marine Security Element here.

Reserve Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines now currently attached to 4th Marine Regiment, make up what is the MSE of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTF-P) located on Edwin Andrews Air Base here.

“Anywhere a terrorist organization is trying to inflict harm, it’s necessary to have solid security for a mission to be accomplished,” said Maj. Ro T. Milanette, commanding officer, MSE. “The JSOTF-P has a particular mission to accomplish and we keep them secure so they can focus on their goal at hand.”

As of Oct. 30, 2002, the Republic of the Philippines was declared an imminent danger zone with a high terrorist and criminal threat. The mission of the JSOTF-P is to conduct military operations in the Philippines in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The JSOTF-P advises the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) whose combined tasks are to conduct operations/intelligence fusion, humanitarian assistance, and provide continued coordination for security assistance.

“The MSE plays a crucial role here on the facility and the base,” said Sgt. Ken J. Murphy, sergeant of the guard, MSE. “Security is paramount. It is a pivotal point in a

mission.”

Zamboanga is a potentially inviting target for terrorists. As a consequence, the threat to U.S. Forces, AFP and their efforts are not underestimated. In the three months since Bravo Co. has taken the role as MSE, there have been no incidents that have conflicted with the JSOTF-P mission.

“We added numerous measures at various levels that helped sustain the mission’s success,” said Murphy. “For three months non-stop, the Marines had a rigorous work schedule but were dedicated to their job. They really wanted to do the best they could, and it showed throughout the unit.”

According to Milanette, Bravo Co. implemented new security measures that have hardened the facility against terrorist action. They also integrated the AFP into more of their operations in order to strengthen the relationship between the forces.

“The unit we relieved improved the system for us, and now we improved the system for the next unit,” said 1st Sgt. Gary A. Hubbard, company first sergeant, MSE. “That’s how Marines are. We do the best jobs we can as one big team throughout the world.”



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Although located within the walls of Edwin Andrews Air Force Base, the Marine Security Element allows no area of Camp Cobra to become a soft target.**

Photo by Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

# MASS-6 participates in 3-day SULE exercise

**SGT. RICHARD J. KULLECK**

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

**MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif.** – Patrolling with packs for 10.2 miles, surviving on minimal sleep and rationing one Meal Ready-to-Eat package for two days was not the typical reserve weekend for Marines of Marine Air Support Squadron 6 (MASS-6). With possible deployments coming up during the first of the year, MASS-6 wanted their Marines to be prepared.

From Dec. 5-7, a Small Unit Leadership Evaluation (SULE) and Direct Air Support Center (DASC) here was the focus of the MASS-6 three-day exercise on East Miramar.

"The first part of the exercise was to get gear ready to deploy," said Staff Sgt. Christine M. Hopkins, air support operations operator. "It was a long day getting everything packed up for the SULE and DASC operations."

Upon arrival, the Marines stood up the DASC and were ready for operation. Marines loaded their gear onto vehicles and were dropped off at one of nine checkpoints.

"The Small Unit Leadership Evaluation, SULE, is an evaluation on the squad leader taking charge and leading their Marines," said Hopkins.

"The exercise is to prepare Marines for actual combat," said Cpl. Albert V. Romero, motor transport mechanic, MASS-6, and station five instructor on Marine Corps history. "We received information from the Marines that came back from Operation Iraqi Freedom, and they pointed out that Marines were



Sgt. Richard J. Kulleck

**Lance Cpl. Edward L. Goldman, motor transport mechanic and Lance Cpl. Mike D. Galvan, maintenance management specialist, receive a message from their squad sent over a PRC-13 as Cpl. Mitzi S. Marter, embarked, writes it down.**

lacking in experience due to lack of realistic training."

The squads traveled from each location practicing weapons handling, squad tactics, patrolling, Marine Corps knowledge, and detaining enemy prisoners of war, to name a few.

"Overall this was a motivating day, I think doing this squad exercise brought our group closer together," said Lance Cpl. Carl F. Fenzel, motor transport mechanic, MASS-6. "It let everyone know that we will always be there for each other."

Following the SULE, the Marines operated the DASC for the next 9 hours. The mission of the DASC was to simulate the process of immediate air support requests, coordinate aircraft employment with other supporting arms and manage terminal control assets.

Each station event was conducted for 30 minutes before the squad continued on the 10.2 mile patrol.

Its mission also entailed support for ground combat and combat service support forces, and control assigned manned and unmanned aircraft transiting through the DASC operation airspace throughout the night.

Perimeter security was conducted during the DASC operation. Shifts were taken manning .50-caliber and M-240G machine guns around the base camp.

"It was a pretty good evolution, I think we learned some good things," said Fenzel. "There are skills that we need to practice more often because there are things we don't know. The more we practice the better we will be as a force to go over to Iraq or wherever we are needed to do what we have to do."



Sgt. Richard J. Kulleck

**Third squad point man Lance Cpl. Michael K. Esquivel, motor transport driver, MASS-6, hikes under simulated gas attack during the Small Unit Leadership Evaluation.**

# Talon Vision

**CPL. RYAN J. SKAGGS**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

## **MOUNT BAKA, Philippines –**

Training received here by Marine mortar men participating in Talon Vision 2004 not only left a huge impact on the ground but also resulted in a strengthened relationship between U.S. and Philippine Marines.

Reserve Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, currently attached to 4th Marine Regiment, shared valuable knowledge on the gun line with their Philippine counterparts, who in turn offered their experience from the frontline.

"Most of the Filipino Marines here are combat veterans who fought terrorists in Mindanao," said Sgt. Jeff P. Richardson, section leader, 81 mm Mortar Platoon, Weapons Co. "We are learning as much from their experience as they are learning from our technical skills."

According to Gunnery Sgt. Forrest A. Marsh, platoon sergeant, 81s Plt., the 81 mm mortars maximize the potency of any infantry unit by providing the capability to extend past the forward edge of the battle line.

The goal of this two-pronged training evolution was to improve and maintain the interoperability and combat readiness with the current weapons systems used by both Marine forces.

"They are asking the kinds of questions that someone would ask who wants to improve," said Marsh, a native of South Weymouth, Mass. "We are showing them our procedures and they are showing us their business."

In addition to mortar training, the Reserve Marines maintained a



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

**Reserve Marines fire off an 81 mm mortar round capable of traveling a distance of three miles.**

**A Filipino Marine holds a 81 mm mortar round at 'half-load' as he stands-by for the command to fire.**

defensive posture and performed patrolling tactics, a skill many Filipino Marines are familiar with from their own experiences in the Global War on Terrorism.

"The Filipino Marines taught us a lot on patrolling," said Lance Cpl. Richard D. Bouvier, mortarman, 81s Plt., and Smithfield, R.I., native. "We were able to learn some of the ropes of our 0311 brothers."

According to Marsh, the knowledge the Filipino Marines brought to the

training will also improve the junior Marines' skills.

"I got to work with different Marines in a different atmosphere on the gun-line," said Lance Cpl. Jesse D. Bean, mortarman, 81s Plt., and Cape Cod, Mass., native. "This was the best field-operation I have been on."

This exercise and other exercises, were part of the six-month Unit Deployment Program 1/25 participated in during 2003. The battalion was activated in January, and was demobilized in December.

# on EY 04

## 1/25 cross-trains

## with Philippine counterparts

### FORT MAGSAYSAY, Republic of the Philippines –

The key to man's survival in extreme environments is determined by his ability to adapt to his surroundings. With the proper level of knowledge, and no shortage of willpower, the mental and physical obstacles encountered can readily be overcome.

Reserve Marines based out of Topsham, Maine, with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, now currently attached to 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan, learned a lesson in jungle life through Filipino eyes with the Philippine Marines during Talon Vision 2004 here. Talon Vision '04 is a bilateral training exercise designed to improve and maintain the interoperability, combat readiness and professional relationship between the U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces.

"I am part of a service in the world when missions take you to areas where the only way to live is to know how to survive," said Philippine Army Master Sgt. Romeo Alfonso, sergeant major of Division Training Unit. "I want to provide the Marines with the working knowledge so as to fully understand the different factors, methods and techniques in jungle survival."

The Marines were given a crash course in how to use

every living thing found in the jungle as another instrument of survival. The thick jungle vegetation, for instance, not only provides a precious safe-haven from the extreme heat and humidity, but may also offer a source of medication and nutrients.

Bamboo sticks, vines and many other forms of plant life supply resourceful utensils in capturing and cooking the next meal of the day. The abundance of animal life further offers countless options for the hungry jungle occupant in need of some sustenance.

"We being U.S. Marines, it seems like we are provided an unlimited source of items for survival – they aren't," said Lance Cpl. Sangty Mam, assault man, Alpha Co. "They are forced to provide for themselves. It opened my horizon to jungle survival skills."

According to Maj. Ed A. Kinsella, company commander, Alpha Co., the knowledge exchanged helped to strengthen the solidarity of the Marines who represent two countries with a long history of friendship.

"They are eager to learn from us, but they have pride in their skills and are eager to show us," said Kinsella, a native of Natick, Mass. "The chance for us to relate with and learn from the Philippine Marines was very beneficial as well as the camaraderie built during training."



Cpl. Ryan J. Skaggs

## 3/23 cross-trains with West African military during WATC '04

MAJ. TIMOTHY P. KEEFE

WATC '04 Public Affairs Office

**CASABLANCA, Morocco** – The crew of High Speed Vessel 2 Swift completed the final phase of West African Training Cruise 2004 off the coast here Dec. 2, training alongside the Moroccan Navy frigate HASSAN II.

“It was good to be able to operate with a different Navy,” said Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Morrison, executive officer of the Swift. “I enjoyed doing all the amphibious work that we did a lot. To me that was a lot of fun, and we learned a lot doing that, but it was nice to do standard shipboard navy-to-navy training.”

The exercise kicked off Nov. 3 in South Africa, where the crew of the Swift conducted air operations with a South African Oryx helicopter.

The majority of Marines embarked the Swift in Accra, Ghana, where they had been conducting live-fire training and field exercises alongside the Ghanaian military several days prior to the ship's arrival. The Marines, primarily from 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, were conducting their annual active-duty training.

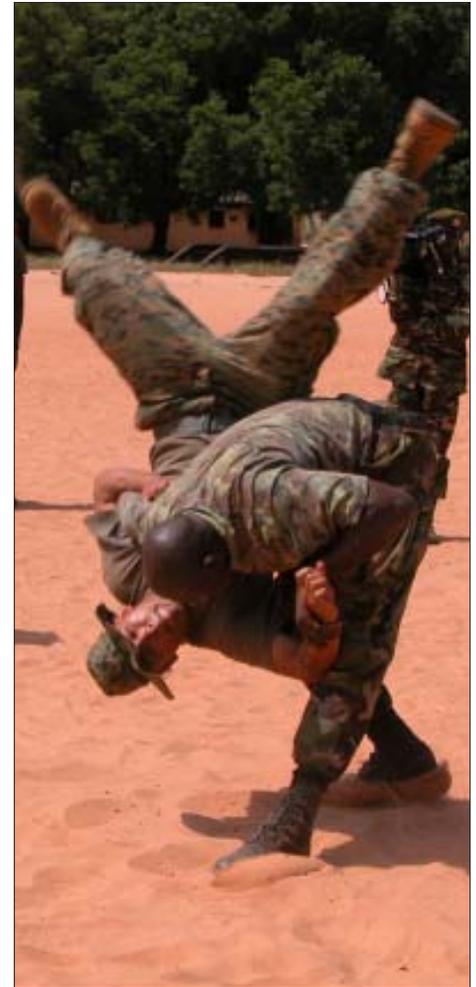
“It's important to get our Marines in real-world situations. The tempo picked up in everything we did, from operations in the field to convoys,” said 1st Sgt. Darren Cook, senior enlisted advisor of Marine Forces WATC '04.

While the primary intent of the overall exercise was to enhance security cooperation between the U.S. and host nation participants, it also provided the opportunity to experiment with cutting edge equipment and concepts.

To that end, a team of analysts from the Marine Corps' Warfighting Lab was present for the majority of the exercise to see how well the ship performed. The continued studies are aimed at honing the ship into what will become a viable military platform.

“We hadn't done riverine operations or an amphibious raid. That was a big draw for us to come to WATC, because riverine operations is one of the missions that we're hoping the HSV will be used for,” said Capt. Michele Kane, HSV project officer.

From Ghana, the WATC forces moved up the west coast of Africa to Banjul, The Gambia, and Dakar,



Sgt. Michael Hjelmstad

**A Gambian soldier demonstrates a throw he learned during a short Marine Corps Martial Arts Program overview.**

Senegal. When training was complete in Dakar, the Marine forces disembarked the Swift and returned to the U.S.

“This is a more real situation, more like what the active duty forces normally do,” Cook said. “They go on floats. They face the challenges of communicating with a host nation military. During WATC, we faced real deployment issues, just like a real deployment.”

Casablanca was the final stop for the month-long exercise, which was a series of bilateral training and engagement opportunities for U.S. sailors and Marines and their counterparts in South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, The Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Morocco.



Sgt. Michael Hjelmstad

**Cameroonian Naval Infantrymen transfer from the HSV-2 Swift into vessels from Small Craft Company to conduct a beach landing exercise.**

# NYNM supports College-bound Reserves

**CPL. MATTHEW J. APPRENDI**  
Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**JERICHO, N.Y.** – From providing security during the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks to aiding in recovery efforts during natural disasters in New York, the New York Naval Militia (NYNM) stands ready for the “Governor’s call.”

Originally formed in 1898, the NYNM is comprised of 95 percent Marine and Naval reserves. Once the Reserve elects to be a member, he swears an oath to the governor to be called upon in the event of an emergency within the state.

By taking on this additional duty, the Reserve member is entitled to more than just the honor of serving his state.

Benefits include tuition assistance; up to \$1,700 per semester for eight semesters of undergraduate education at universities throughout the State of New York. In this year alone, the Militia has awarded 134 scholarships to Marine Reserves for the Fall 2003 semester.

“The great part about the scholarship is the GI Bill is not even used, reserves can save that for later, or use for book costs,” said Senior Chief Adrienne Daniels, education service officer, NYNM, Albany, N.Y. “So far we haven’t hit a point to deny a scholarship,” Daniels added.

Since the scholarship’s inception in 1996, approximately 1500 semesters for Marine Reserves, who are members of the NYNM, have been approved. Nearly \$1.6 million has gone toward paying more than 200 Marine reserves to continue higher education.

“We like to think of ourselves as the third hat in the reserves,” Daniels said.

Daniels explained the traditional reserve has the duty to his country while maintaining a civilian life. Being a part of the NYNM, however, adds an additional “hat,” making the reserve also part of the state guard.

Marine reserve unit Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Regiment, currently has 35 Marines involved with the Militia, 35 of whom answered the call during 9/11. They went on to answer their “country’s call” for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“We were not forced to be a part of the militia, it’s what we wanted to do. The scholarship is a great incentive for Marines to complete their Bachelor’s Degree. All states should look into forming a Naval Militia,” said Staff Sgt. Paul M. Kelsey, platoon sergeant, 2/25, who has already benefited from two semesters from the scholarship program.

## OIF Veterans run USMC Marathon

**ARMY SPC. LISA TROTTER**  
Operation Tribute to Freedom

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) is the seventh largest marathon in the United States and the 13th largest in the world, but that wasn’t why Marine Lt. Col. Clarke D. Clodfelder took on the challenge of running the 26.2-mile race.

“I am looking forward to getting together with all of the friends that I made (and trained with) during the war,” said Clodfelder, redeployed from Kuwait in September.

Clodfelder, an 18-year Marine Corps veteran, is the operations officer, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR-234), Ft. Worth, Texas. Clodfelder’s squadron deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) on February 1, 2003.

While in Iraq, he somehow found time to

organize a training group and prepare his squadron for a marathon. “I was planning on putting a training group together this year, and then we ended up deploying to the Persian Gulf,” said Clodfelder.

When Clodfelder began his training group, it included only three friends from his squadron. Then three swelled to a dozen, then twenty, then more than sixty.

“It was a great thing to do over there to relieve stress, get in shape, and it was a fun social time as well,” said Clodfelder.

The group used an Olympic training program, running all together, sometimes in the morning, other times in the afternoon. “By summer, we were running at 4 a.m. to beat the heat in Kuwait,” said Clodfelder.

This year’s race included 23,884 entrants, ranging in age from 14 to 83, with 12,550 first-time marathon runners, from 36 different countries and every state.

## Instructors Wanted

The Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) is seeking instructors to teach English, History, Math and Science for the 2004 summer prep school session which will run from June 3 - Aug. 6 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

MECEP Prep is staffed by Marine Corps Reserve Officers with secondary or post-secondary teaching experience. Interested candidates should contact: Lt. Col. Michael I. Moffett at [mmoffett@nhctc.edu](mailto:mmoffett@nhctc.edu) or (603) 271-7736.

# MACS-23 hone their communication skills

CPL. MATTHEW J. APPRENDI

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**GULFPORT, Miss.** – Marine Air Control Squadron-23 kicked off their two-week annual training coined Joint Command Identification Exercise here Aug. 6.

Approximately 70 Reserve Marines from the Aurora, Colo., based unit, are honing their skills as the “guides” of military aircraft. Their responsibilities include monitoring and communicating with aircraft. Whether aiding in a safe landing or ordering an air strike against enemy forces, all communication from the ground to the air passes through these leathernecks.

During the training evolution, the Marines are monitoring and communicating with military aircraft from New Orleans to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., where the other detachment from the squadron is operating in support of the exercise.

“I’ve visited both sites - they’re doing an outstanding job. They’re all very motivated to perform their mission,” said Maj. Stephen Beck, site coordinator for the squadron.

Expeditionary by nature, the squadron has the capability of deploying its Marines as well as its equipment to any region in the world to set up combat flight operations.

“All we need is the transportation, we can position ourselves anywhere,” said Cpl. Adam Cussen, air control operator.

The backbone of their equipment consists of two Tactical Air Operation Modules (TAOM). Self-contained and air tight; these modules provide the Marines with all the tools necessary to complete their mission.

“Everything we need to control aircraft is located in one box (TAOM),” said Capt. Thomas C. Sweatman, operations officer, from Chicago.

“Within a half a day, we are set up and ready to control



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

**Cpl. Benjamin Winkellar monitors and speaks to military aircraft inside a Tactical Air Operation Module.**

aircraft,” said Lance Cpl. Jared Patterson, systems configuration coordinator, a native of Denver.

Each module contains four workstations where the operators can view and communicate with air traffic in their region of responsibility. The screen displays information relayed from ground and air-based radar containing the course, speed and the type of any given aircraft.

“We know the ultimate capabilities of our aircraft to complete missions,” said Cpl. Justin Sylva, crew chief of the Sector Air Defense Facility (SADF).

Sylva operates out of the command center, the SADF, of the squadron. This building is directly linked to the TAOM’s. Only one TAOM is needed to accomplish the mission, however, the squadron uses three when performing real-world operations. If one or two are destroyed, the squadron is still mission capable.

From these ground stations, the Marines are able to distinguish between friend and foe. Once enemy aircraft is identified on the monitors, the Marines determine where they should deploy Marine aircraft to intercept or coordinate anti-aircraft missile systems to successfully counter any attack.

The exercise is a time for reserves to enhance their skills and build a working relationship with other services who have the same mission, according to Beck. By accomplishing this, services enhance their procedures and hopefully reduce the possibility of fratricide.

“That’s the ultimate goal of our nation since friendly-fire incidents started,” Beck said. “We have to continue to test and develop procedures to end blue-on-blue casualties.”

Beck looks forward to next year’s AT, and all the new innovations the field has developed to counter fratricide in real-world conflicts.



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

**Marines from MACS-23 set up an antenna for their annual training at the JCIDEX.**

# Bulk Fuel's Ultimate Mud Run

Photos by  
SGT. LYDIA REYES



· Eight hundred and fifty runners participated in the 7th annual Ultimate Challenge Mud run on Oct. 11. The race is the official kick-off for Detachment 2, Bulk Fuel Company A, 6th Engineer Support Battalion's, Toys for Tots fundraiser in Bakersfield, Calif.



· Racers traverse eight feet in the air across a 25-foot canal of muddy water called Tenaru River. Crossing.



· Competitors finish the Hue City mud obstacle on all fours.



· Face painting and a free children's race for kids between 4-12 were also part of the activities.



· Runners cross final obstacle of the Ultimate Challenge Mud Run.



· The double bar is an obstacle racers need to overcome in both the team and individual categories.

# MARCENT Djibouti Reserve

CPL. MATTHEW J. APPRENDI

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti** – After successfully wrapping up more than six months of deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Command Logistics Element, Marine Central Command passed its control here to the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force.

The beginning stages of the transition between the two forces started July 20.

The following units and other individual augmentees make up the CLE: Approximately 300 activated Marines and sailors from 4th Force Service Support Group, New Orleans, La.; Military Police Detachment, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Belle Chasse, La.; and Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Grand Rapids, Mich.

The CLE took over base operations Jan. 26 providing a “safe haven” for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa to complete their mission of detecting, deterring and defeating transnational terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The

region is comprised of Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Yemen, the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and coastal waters of the Indian Ocean.

“Overall, it’s been a good experience. I can go home now and know I’ve done my part in the Global War on Terrorism,” said Marine Sgt. Christian B. Tomey, wire chief, CLE, a mobilized Reserve from his Greensboro, N.C., based unit.

As managers of the camp, it was the CLE’s responsibility to ensure Camp Lemonier was capable of supporting additional personnel upon CJTF-HOA’s transition ashore from their flagship USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC-20) and the arrival of new units. During CLE’s tenure, the camp has increased from approximately 1,200 to 1,800 personnel.

They accomplished this by renovating the 88-acre former French Foreign Legion post that the U.S. leases from the Djiboutian government. Those renovations, to include constructing additional living quarters, work areas and communication lines before the mid-May transition, turned Camp Lemonier into the CJTF’s expeditionary headquarters.

“To our present date, a lot of good things have been completed by the CLE. We will maintain that high level of situational awareness and continue increasing our force

**Left: A Djiboutian family awaits medical treatment at the village of Damerdjog during a Medical Civil Affairs Action.**

**Below: Sergeant Charles W. Hannah, G-4, MFR, engages a target at a live-fire range.**



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

# Force transitions with II MEF



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

**Two High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles from Alpha Co., 1/24, Grand Rapids, Mich., return to Camp Lemonnier after a patrol.**

protection capabilities,” said Col. Michael R. Pannell, who took command of the CLE from Col. Mario LaPaix July 15.

On a day-to-day basis, the CLE provided a variety of specialties which included logistical, communication, medical and security of the base as well as a civil affairs section to support coalition members aboard the camp and outlying villages in Djibouti.

Since day one, the CLE’s Civil Affairs section was at the forefront of completing civil-military operations, according to Army Sgt. 1st Class Steven Ruscitto, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the CLE’s Civil Affairs section. They coordinated Medical Civil Action Programs, delivered vital supplies and completed numerous construction projects in villages throughout Djibouti.

“From the beginning, we completed our mission of building a strong relationship with our neighbors

(Djiboutians),” Ruscitto said. “I attribute our success to all the servicemembers here who supported us in our civil affairs projects.”

In the beginning, this was achieved with only three civil affairs soldiers and servicemembers who volunteered their time before a composite company from 478th Civil Affairs joined CJTF-HOA in April.

“I firmly believe in building a strong relationship with Djibouti and its people,” said LaPaix. “By completing this, you win over their hearts and minds. Thanks to the government of Djibouti and to its people for the partnership and support as we prosecute the Global War on Terrorism.”

LaPaix explained that task force and host nation interaction resulted in much more than a friendship. It built an unwavering support for the U.S.’s presence here to destroy terrorist cells in the region. Through civil operations, the CLE has gained the trust of villages across the Republic of Djibouti.

CLE spearheaded projects in Damerdjog, Douda and Chabelle - to name a few - which resulted in the remodeling of medical clinics, schools, constructed food storage facilities and irrigation systems. Throughout the week, CLE members delivered wood and food to village inhabitants.

“It’s been a team effort all around, everybody realized what had to be done to complete our mission. Our success derives from our small unit levels,” said Marine Lt. Col. Robert A. Knief, executive officer of the CLE.

The CLE has also built a working relationship with the host nation of Djibouti by hiring more than 800 local workers to support construction projects and aid in daily operations such as laundry and cleaning services

aboard the camp.

Along with civil-military operations, the CLE provides force protection for Camp Lemonnier and CJTF-HOA.

CLE’s force protection developed patented security measures that supplied the CJTF with a “safety blanket” to complete their mission. They did this by using their unit’s assets, as well as building a working relationship with French and Djiboutian military, which resulted in enhanced security measures for the base.

“Force protection’s insight and Company A’s diligence protected our (task force) interests,” LaPaix said.

The CLE has laid the foundation for the new force to continue improving and building the coalition’s presence to destroy terrorism in the region and continue to fortify an even stronger relationship with local inhabitants, LaPaix said.



Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

**Corporals Hannah M. Cowart, Daniel Whitt and Christopher Lowe paint a food storage facility for a Djiboutian village during a humanitarian mission.**

# MOUT TRAINING

## INDIA Company 3rd Battalion, 24 Marines

CPL. DAMIAN MCGEE

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

**FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.** – Marines train to fight in any clime or place. Increasingly, the fight has moved into towns and cities where innocent people reside, and the enemy can blend in with the urban environment.

Marines of India Company, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines, along with the rest of their battalion, came here during their two-week annual training to improve their fighting skills used in Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) operations.

“Everyone knows there is still guerilla warfare,” said Nashville, Tenn., native, Lance Cpl. James C. Perry, a basic infantryman with India Co. “But, what many fail to realize is that so many battles today are taking place in people’s backyards.”

MOUT training involves Marines fighting in an area comprised of schools, churches, and buildings resembling apartments. The terrain is uncertain and can cause numerous casualties.

“This is by far the scariest type of environment to go in,” said Cpl. Brad McCormick, team leader, India Co. “There are so many variables in these types of operations, and you never really know what’s around the corner waiting for you.”

Although the casualty rate for MOUT operations is considerably higher than other combat environments, Marines are trained to leave the butterflies at the door and move without fear.

“When you enter a building you have to be ready for anything,” said Lance Cpl. Brian T. Faulkner, a Franklin, Tenn., native, who serves as a team leader with India Co. “You have no choice but to rely on your training and the communication from the Marines around you. The only real time to feel nervous is before you start. Once everything gets going and adrenaline kicks in, there is no time for hesitation.”

While the training is better than ever, the real challenges emerge when the fight begins.

“The first thing every Marine has to deal with is controlling himself,” Faulkner said. “The second is that there are never enough people. The larger the



Cpl. Damian McGee

**Marines practice room sweeping techniques during the unit’s annual training that took place at Fort Campbell, Ky.**

buildings we’re responsible for clearing, the more spread out we become, and if anything was to happen to one of the Marines, that simply drops our numbers even more.”

Fully aware of everything that’s happening in the world right now, the Marines realize the importance of

---

**“This is by far the scariest type of environment to go in.”** Cpl. Brad McCormick

---

this type of training. Through it all, they maintain their focus.

“I can never say what I would or wouldn’t do if placed in a situation where we had to put this training into action,” according to Perry. “What I do know is that no matter how hard you train, you’re not going to catch everything, and it’s because of this that we trust the men flanking us on all sides. This type of training or a similar real world operation could not be accomplished without the trust of that Marine on your left, right, front and back.”

# STAAAND Up .....2 Minutes .....Check Stat line

*4th Recon Bn.*

*Alaska Marines*

Cpl. Damian McGee

Marines from 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, along with Singapore forces, jump from a CH-47E after fog lifted from the area.

**CPL. DAMIAN MCGEE**

Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office

## **FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. –**

The morning fog lingered in the drop zone. The Marines, soldiers and Singaporean helicopter pilots were unsure if their training would even take place.

The Marines from Echo Company, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, traveled all the way from Alaska for this opportunity. They were here for their annual two-week training and didn't like the idea of having their evolution cancelled due to the thick Kentucky fog. Every

moment counted.

Finally, the fog broke.

“At first we didn't know if we were going to jump at all,” said Lance Cpl. Donovan R. Ketzler, field radio operator, Echo Co., who was about to jump from a helicopter for the first time. “Not only is it unique to train with the Army and another country, but we're also getting more than one jump in a day which doesn't happen often.”

For most of the Marines and soldiers, the experience simply reaf-

firmed what they had already learned through previous experiences.

“During these types of operations you see that things really are the same between the services,” said Army Sgt. Francisco Portillo, instructor, Air Assault School. “There are minor things that are different, but for the most part we see that at anytime there's a need for us to perform a mission together we would have no problems.”

The Americans were not the only ones to learn from the experience. Members of the Singapore Air Force, who were supporting the training, valued the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with their American counterparts.

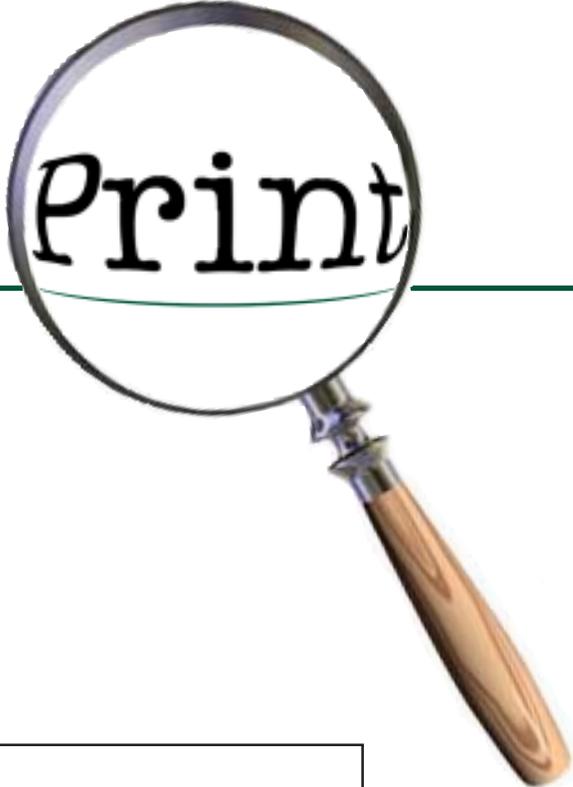
“It seems that every unit or service has its own standard operating procedure (SOP),” said Capt. Keng Huna, Singapore Air Force. “By training with these various groups, we're able to learn things that will assist us in refining our own SOPs. We hope that continually doing that will help us to continue flying as efficiently and safely as possible.”



Cpl. Damian McGee

Marines from Echo Co. load the aircraft and prepare for their first jump.

# The Fine Print



*A closer look at MARADMINs and ALMARs in order to help Marines gain a clearer understanding of the issues that impact the Reserve community.*

## **MARADMIN 507/03**

The following MFR units are approved for the Presidential Unit Citation:

*3rd and 4th Civil Affairs Group  
3rd and 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company  
2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines  
3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines  
2nd Battalion, 25th Marines  
Truck Company, 4th Marine Division  
4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion  
4th Combat Engineer Battalion  
Company C, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion  
8th Tank Battalion  
4th FSSG Forward West  
6th Engineer Support Battalion  
6th Motor Transportation Battalion  
VMGR-234, Det.*

## **MARADMIN 508/03**

*The Competition-in-Arms Program provides the Marine Corps with skilled and experienced marksmen and instructors necessary to support a productive marksmanship training program. The objective of the program is to enhance combat marksmanship proficiency within the Marine Corps.*

## **ALMAR 562/03**

*The National Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Policy Boards are seeking recommendations for improvement of several key issues facing Reserve Marines. The board meets twice annually to recommend policy changes that will enhance Reserve capabilities, improve retention and remove barriers for Reserves.*

## **MARADMIN 312/03**

*Legislation signed by President Bush on November 11, 2003, authorized an increase in the amount death gratuity paid to the beneficiary of a deceased servicemember from \$6,000 to \$12,000. The new rate is retroactive to September 11, 2001. For more information see MARADMIN 528/03 dated November 19, 2003.*



### MARADMIN 396/02

**Effective immediately, all job opportunities for Reserve Marines will be advertised through the Reserve Duty Online (RDOL) system accessible with a Marine Online (MOL) account**

“ALL RESERVE DUTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOW CONSOLIDATED UNDER A SINGLE WEBSITE WHICH IS CALLED RESERVE DUTY ONLINE (RDOL) AND IS ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THE MARINE ONLINE (MOL) WEBSITE. RDOL ALLOWS MARINES TO SEARCH FOR RESERVE BILLET OPENINGS (BOTH UNIT AND IMA), ACTIVE DUTY SPECIAL WORK (ADSW) AND RESERVE COUNTERPART TRAINING (RCT) OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO SUBMIT ELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS FOR THESE DUTIES. SEARCHES CAN BE CONDUCTED BY STATE, MOS OR DISTANCE. ADDITIONALLY, RDOL ALLOWS MARINES TO IDENTIFY THEIR PERIODS OF AVAILABILITY FOR ADSW OR RCT.”

The Reserve Duty OnLine (RDOL) is a tool that provides Active Duty and Reserve Marines the ability to search and apply for available Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR), Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMA), and Active Duty Special Work (ADSW) billets. While any Marine in the Reserve Component can use RDOL, access is restricted to those Active Component Marines that are within 6 months of their expiration of active service (EAS) date. In addition to its billet search capability, RDOL also provides efficient application processing capabilities for Prior Service Recruiters, as well as oversight capabilities to SMCR unit commanders and IMA Operational Sponsors.

