

PROSPECTOR

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE BARSTOW



Semper



Fidelis



Vol. 1, No. 3

February 23, 2012



Marine of the Quarter
Working to become a better Marine

Relief and Appointment
Sergeants major celebrate time honored tradition

New ROICC for MCLB
is a well-traveled mustang



Photo By Pfc. Victoria Fairchild

Lance Cpl. Austin Swesey hands out miniature flags to the elementary students at Helendale Elementary School, in Helendale, Calif. The school invited the Fleet Support Division Marines Color Guard to present the colors during the playing of the National Anthem on Friday, Feb. 17, 2012 for their weekly spirit day, held every Friday.

On The Cover:

Sergeants Major Richard Charron (left) and Donovan G. White Jr. (center) stand on Sorenson Field during the relief and appointment ceremony, Feb. 10. The passing of the noncommissioned officer sword is a time honored tradition to symbolize the passing of command to the new sergeant major.

Public Affairs Staff

Public Affairs Officer: Rob L. Jackson
 Public Affairs Specialist: Keith Hayes
 Public Affairs Chief: Gunnery Sgt. Reina Barnett
 Press Chief: Sgt. Shannon E. Yount
 Prospector Editor: Lance Cpl. Dominic A. Smarra
 Combat Correspondent: Cpl. Thomas A. Bricker
 Combat Correspondent: Pfc. Victoria Fairchild



Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California
 Colonel Daniel P. Ermer, Commanding Officer
 Sgt. Maj. Richard Charron

The editorial content of this magazine is prepared, edited and provided by the Public Affairs Office of Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California. Mailing address: Commanding Officer, Attn: Public Affairs, Box 110130, Barstow, CA 92311-5050. The Public Affairs Office is located in Building 204. Phones: (760) 577-6430, 577-6450, 577-6451, FAX 577-6350, DSN prefix 282. This magazine is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of **THE PROSPECTOR** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Marine Corps.

On the web

Website:

<http://www.marines.mil/unit/mclbbarstow/pages/default.aspx>

Follow us on:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Marine-Corps-Logistics-Base-MCLB-Barstow/116845431679314>

http://www.twitter.com/#!/MCLB_Barstow





Photo by Keith Hayes

(Left) Brothers Colton and Liam Sheehy-Perry and Alicia Coursey each wielded an electronic “pen” to digitally scrawl in color on the new Smart Board installed at the newly opened multipurpose room in Building 375 aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow Feb. 10. For further information, please contact Julie Wilbanks (760) 577-6675.

Contents



News Briefs 4



Respect through Diversity 8 & 9



Just doing my job 5



ROICC 10



Relief & Appointment 6&7



Chaplain's corner 11

Teen Tech Week

Listen up, local teens! The MCLB Barstow library will celebrate the annual Teen Tech Week March 5-10, 2012. We'll join thousands of other libraries and schools across the country who are celebrating this year's theme, "Geek Out @ your library®." Teen Tech Week is a national initiative of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) aimed at teens, their parents, educators and other concerned adults. The purpose of the initiative is to ensure that teens are competent and ethical users of technology, especially the types offered through libraries. Teen Tech Week encourages teens to take advantage of the technology at libraries for education and recreation, and to recognize that librarians are qualified, trusted professionals who can help them achieve greater digital literacy.

For more information contact the library at (760) 577-6395 or email: librarybarstow@usmc-mccs.org.

Going Green

At <http://www.capetown.gov.za> the water conservation experts recommend

not letting a faucet run unnecessarily. Take short showers instead of bathing. Re-use bath water, known as gray water, for the garden. Fix dripping faucets and leaking pipes. Put a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank and wait half an hour to see if there is a leak. Fill a plastic 2-liter soft drink bottle with water or sand and place in the toilet cistern to reduce the amount of water per flush. Wash cars with a bucket instead of a hose. Wash only full loads in the washing machine or dishwasher.

Department of State Travel Warning for Mexico

The rising number of kidnappings and disappearances through Mexico is of particular concern. U.S. citizens have fallen victim to TCO activity, including homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, carjacking and highway robbery. Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. U.S. government personnel and their families are prohibited from person travel to all areas described as "defer non-essential travel" and when travel for official purposes is essential it is conducted with extensive security precautions.

Energy Tip

Washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or warm water for just two loads a week can save \$34 per year. This is another Green Energy Tip from your MCLB Energy Team.

Tax Tip

The time for taking care of certain tax matters can be postponed. The deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes, filing claims for refund, and taking other actions with the IRS is automatically extended for qualifying members of the military. Military personnel serving aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow who need help preparing their tax returns can contact the Staff Judge Advocate's office at 577-6874.

Today in U.S.M.C. history

Feb 23, 1945: Five Marines and a Navy corpsman raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima.

Welcome Home Heroes

Come help welcome home some of our elite fighting force, March 1, at the Maj. Gen. James L. Day Conference Center at 4:30 p.m. For more information, call 577-6408.

Married and Loving It

A new series called "Married and Loving It" will be held in February and March. Class 1, Feb.28 is "Communication: Words to live by"; Class 2, March 6 is "Madly in Love"; Class 3, March 13 is "Finances: Freedom or Fiasco"; Class 4, March 20 is "Conflict: For Better or For Worse?" and the series will wrap up with Class 5, March 27 "Marriage...A Daily Affair." All classes are held at the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow Chapel fellowship hall from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. For more information, call 577-6533.

Desert Lanes Bowling Center

Ninety...yes ninety days of bowling! January 1 through March 30, all youth bowlers 14 and younger get one free game per day/ per youth Wednesday-Friday. Customer appreciation day Friday and Saturday; 50/50 special 50-cent hotdogs,

50-cent soda, 50-cent game per person per game and 50-cent shoe rentals. Beat the clock Sundays: come in with your family or friends on Sunday before 1 p.m. and pay \$1 a game per person. Don't forget lunchtime specials every day from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. bowl as many games as you can for only \$4. Crazy Wednesdays: come in and bowl three games all day long for \$5 (shoe rental included). Party packages are also available. For more information, call 577-6264.

Massage Therapy is back

Massage therapy is back at Semper Fit Gym Bldg.44. Swedish, trigger point, injury, Russian sports, structural integration, cranial sacral, reflexology, shiatsu or mix/blend, by appointment only. Call Paul Ruvalcaba at 477-7183 for pricing and more information.

Victim Advocate Program

A presentation on victim advocacy services offered by Marine and Family Services takes place March 20, at 10:30

a.m. in McTureous Hall classroom, Bldg. 218. The discussion will show how VAs represent the interests of all victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. Emphasis is on VA information and services. Contact Michelle Lawing, Victim Advocate, for more information at Marine and Family Programs Division at 577-6533 or stop by Bldg 129.

MCLB Barstow Military Family Scholarship.

Military spouses and dependents at MCLB Barstow who have applied to Park University within the last year can apply for this scholarship for 15 free credit hours. Applicants will need three letters of recommendation and official transcripts. Stop by the Park University office in Bldg. 218 for a complete list of requirements and an application packet. Deadline is April 1. For more information contact, (760) 256-8811.

STAY IN THE LOOP!

Visit www.mccsbarstow.com or pick up a Quarterly Connection Magazine at any of your MCCS facilities.



Joanna Droegemeier, a program assistant at the Child Development Center aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow laughs with Jacob Flores outside the CDC Jan. 20. While not at the CDC, Droegemeier, a Barstow, Calif. native, is a student full time at California State University-Fullerton as an elementary education major.

“ I WISH MORE PEOPLE
WOULD SEE THE WORLD THE
WAY THESE KIDS DO.

THEY NEVER WORRY

ABOUT A THING. ”

-Joanna Droegemeier

Cal U student cares for children, creates friendly environment for base Child Development Center

**Story and photo by
Cpl. Thomas A. Bricker
Combat Correspondent**

In the early stages of human development, a child’s mind is often described as a sponge, growing with every bit of habit and knowledge it absorbs.

To ensure the children of the Child Development Center aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif., are cared for properly and carefully, one employee utilizes her knowledge to enhance the well-being of the kids.

Joanna Droegemeier, a program assistant with the CDC on base enjoys caring for children, a job she, one day, hopes to make a career.

Droegemeier, who’s been with the CDC since May 2010, is a full-time student at

California State University-Fullerton and balances her time between attending classes for her major in elementary education and caring for the children at the center.

The 22-year old CDC worker involves herself with many aspects of the children’s lives at the CDC. She helps with art projects, teaches sports and incorporates several educational tools such as an electronic smart board during “power hour,” a time in which the children work on homework.

“My favorite part about my job has to be the school-aged kids. They make me laugh in so many ways,” she explained. “I wish more people would see the world the way these kids do. They never worry about a thing,” she added.

Droegemeier attributes her love of her job to the children she takes care of.

“I love taking care of these kids; almost everything about it is fun for me,”

Droegemeier explained. “And every day is different. They’re always making my day,” she added.

It seems fit for Droegemeier to care for children on a military installation being a military child herself. She explained that she comes from a military family and has lived in places to include Kentucky, Wisconsin, and Germany. She finally settled in Barstow at the age of 10 after her father received orders to National Training Center Fort Irwin.

Droegemeier hopes to continue her ties with the military by teaching on a military installation. Along with her current aspirations to teach elementary students, she plans to continue her own education and obtain a master’s degree.

At the end of the day, two things are apparent: she cares for the children she tends to at the base CDC and loves doing it. **5**



Sergeant Major Donovan G. White Jr. (left) passes the noncommissioned officer sword to Col. Daniel P. Ermer, commanding officer, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, during the relief and appointment ceremony, Feb. 10.



Sergeants Major Richard Charron (left) and Donovan G. White Jr. (center) stand in front of the commanding officer of Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Col. Daniel P. Ermer during the relief and appointment ceremony, Feb. 10.

Sergeant major retires, passes torch

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Dominic A. Smarra
Combat Correspondent

Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow received a new sergeant major in a relief and appointment ceremony at Sorensen Field, Feb. 10. Sgt. Maj. Donovan G. White Jr. of Winter Haven, Fla., relinquished his post as MCLB's sergeant major to Sgt. Maj. Richard Charron, a native of Hackensack, N.J.

At the relief and appointment ceremony, Col. Daniel P. Ermer, base commanding officer, spoke of White's many accomplishments, among them, his three successful tours on the drill field and multiple combat tours.

White also welcomed the new sergeant major and expressed his confidence in Charron's abilities as the new senior enlisted Marine aboard the base. He also thanked the Marines, sailors and civilian Marines for making his time aboard MCLB memorable.



Sergeant Major Donovan G. White Jr. (center) stands in front of Col. Daniel P. Ermer, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, and Sgt. Maj. Richard Charron, base sergeant major, after receiving the Legion of Merit, Feb. 10.

The new sergeant major expressed excitement as he spoke about MCLB Barstow and told the audience what he expected from the tenants aboard the base.

"I am extremely motivated to be here," explained Charron. "MCLB Barstow has a very deep, rich history within our Corps and it is an honor to be [a] part of that legacy."

Charron said he is looking forward to serving as the base sergeant major and working with the Marines and sailors. He hopes to maintain the base's "One Team, One Fight" mentality and continue to be at the ready for whatever our country and Corps requires from us. He also emphasized that MCLB Barstow is a family and explained that we should support each other to the fullest degree, regardless of our military affiliation... Marines, sailors, soldiers or civilian Marines.

Charron made clear the role that MCLB Barstow is about to take on in the Marine Corps. He explained that with the expected draw down and pulling out of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in the near future, all of the tactical assets that we have been utilizing since Operation Iraqi Freedom are going to have to come home and begin re-distribution.

"In our Corps, timing is everything and with this next chapter approaching in our history, Barstow will be center stage," explained Charron. "Eyes are always upon us, but we are about to get much more attention. I love being where the action is and Barstow has become just that place." 7

"EYES ARE ALWAYS UPON US, BUT WE ARE ABOUT TO GET MUCH MORE ATTENTION. I LOVE BEING WHERE THE ACTION IS AND BARSTOW HAS BECOME JUST THAT PLACE."

-Sgt. Maj. Richard Charron



Sergeant Major Richard Charron talks to the crowd after assuming the position of base sergeant major, Feb. 10. Charron expressed his excitement as he spoke about Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow and told the audience what he expected from the tenants aboard the base.

Retired Marine earns respect through diversity

By Pfc. Victoria Fairchild
Combat Correspondent

Regardless of his skin color, Frank Marlowe's parents taught him to strive to always do his best and try to be better than those around him.

"My parents always encouraged us to go for what we wanted," said Marlowe, a retired Marine and a heavy mobile equipment mechanic inspector aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

February is recognized throughout our nation as Black History Month, and as Marlowe looks back on his life and time in the Corps, he reflects on societal

"On my first day, I was smiling and the drill instructors were quick to put me back into my place," he said. "I had two black drill instructors and one white drill instructor; I don't think anybody was treated differently, unless they were a screw-up."

Marlowe said he wasn't exposed to racism until his first duty station at Camp Lejeune, N. C., where riots were rampant and local establishments became off-limits for black Marines due to the segregation taking place in the city.

"We spent a lot of time on base," said Marlowe. "(I remember) the command trying to squash a lot of the racist things (happening on) base and in the nearby towns."

Marlowe recalled one particular incident, while on the firing range, where a fellow Marine belittled Marlowe based on his skin color. Looking back, Marlowe was im-

with his self-control. always surprised that shoot him," said the Alto, Calif. native. "If going for the bigger

prize in the Marine Corps, you just bit the bullet back then when something like that happened."

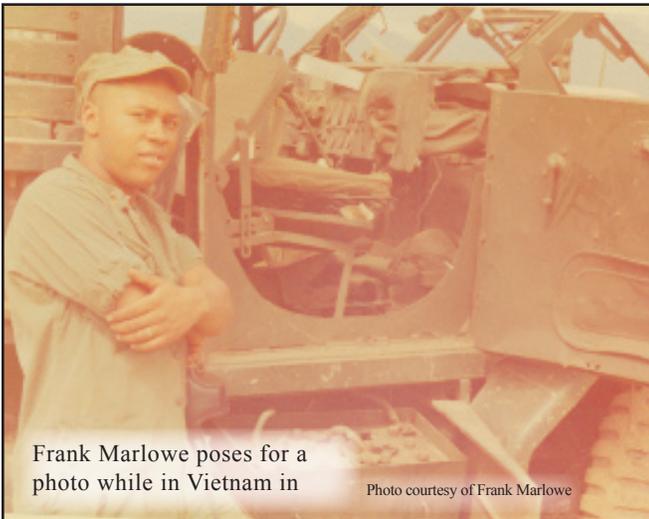
Two years after joining the Corps, and stationed in Okinawa, Japan, Marlowe, like many other Americans, was dismayed to learn that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated. The news tore through the military like shock-wave, leaving some service members feeling uneasy.

"You could definitely feel the tension in the air," he said. "Even overseas, it was very clear that everyone was affected by the incident."

"I find it important to recognize Black History Month because of the simple fact that we have history. So much can be lost if you don't look back on it and realize how much information is out there with our culture," he explained.

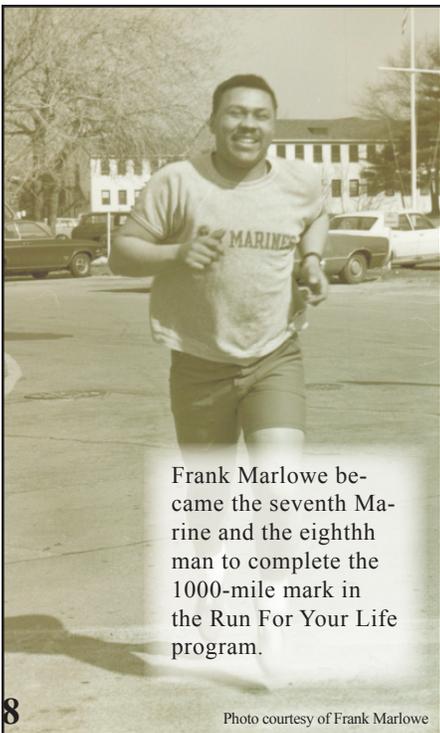
Although Marlowe recognizes the challenges we went through not only as a nation, but as a military institution, he acknowledges the hard work of those who came before him. The Montford Point Marines were instrumental in changing racial equality in the Marine Corps. These Marines fought for their country, while simultaneously fighting for equal opportunities.

Marlowe said he sees Black History Month as something to be remembered,



Frank Marlowe poses for a photo while in Vietnam in

Photo courtesy of Frank Marlowe



Frank Marlowe became the seventh Marine and the eighth man to complete the 1000-mile mark in the Run For Your Life program.

Photo courtesy of Frank Marlowe



Then, senior drill instructor Gunnery Sgt. Frank Marlowe, addresses his platoon during a training exercise.

Photo courtesy of Frank Marlowe



Frank Marlowe, a retired Master Gunnery Sgt. and Palo Alto, Calif. native, inspects a vehicle before it is shipped, checking for any faults. The heavy mobile equipment mechanic inspector retired from the Marine Corps after 26 years of dedicated service.

Photo by Pfc. Victoria Fairchild

but not something to be taken out of context. “I want to be called an American; it doesn’t always have to be about what color you are, it doesn’t matter to me. I’m an American and I’m proud to have served the Marine Corps and accomplished what I have.”

MCLB Barstow offers easy tax filing for Marines

By Pfc. Victoria Fairchild
Combat Correspondent

In 1913, the United States government began charging federal taxes on Americans. By 1921, the average citizen was not only paying taxes on their household income, but their land as well. Available aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow is the Staff Judge Advocate’s office where they prepare and file taxes free of charge for active duty Marines, sailors, retirees and their dependents.

For those who are qualified to have their taxes done on base for free, all that’s required are the tax forms and an appointment with the SJA office.

“We take the hassle out of going off base to have your taxes prepared and filed,” said Laurie Himebaugh, a paralegal specialist at the SJA. “All you

need to do is bring in your social security card, last year’s and this year’s W-2 forms, and any receipts that you collected over the year for medical or travel expenses.”

Himebaugh said service members can also expect to receive additional deductions if they’ve deployed in the last year or have moved from another base.

“We have quite a few people come in with their receipts from moving across the country or having to pay for medical expenses out-of-pocket,” said Himebaugh, a Denver, Colo. native. “We are able to have their deployment paychecks be tax-free and we also have deductions for gas, hotel and mileage expenses [during a move].”

“I love my job, I really enjoy helping the Marines out and it’s something I like to do, crunching numbers,” said Himebaugh.

Service members and retirees can expect their returns within a week from filing if everything is entered into the system correctly. Filing taxes is a much more efficient and speedier way to see your return.

“It should only take a couple more days for me to get my returns,” said Cpl. Jimmy Cryan, an administration clerk aboard MCLB Barstow. “It was pretty easy to file my taxes too. I just needed to bring in the usual paper work that I got online and they did the rest



Courtesy photo by <http://taxsoftware.com>

for me. I’ve been going to the SJA office to do my taxes for the past two years. It saved me time and it was nice that it was free.”

In addition to free tax-filing services aboard the base, some service members are exempt from paying state taxes. Twenty-six states are tax-exempt for military pay.

“It’s nice to not have to pay income taxes because I’m in the military,” said Sgt. Sarah Faleris, a Lindenwold, N.J. native and the postal chief aboard MCLB Barstow. “There’s more money in my pocket now for my daughter.”

Himebaugh said, people always end up putting their taxes off, if you need an extension, come in and it’s easy to do that too.

“We just need to get things taken care of sooner rather than later so it’s less to worry about,” she said.

The last day to file taxes in this year is Apr. 17. For more information, please contact Laurie Himebaugh at the SJA office at (760) 577-6878. **9**



Courtesy photo by <http://taxsoftware.com>

New ROICC for MCLB Barstow is well-traveled mustang

By Keith Hayes
Public Affairs Specialist

The newest Navy officer aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow joined the service in part to become a U.S. citizen, and also to see the world.

"Like the ads say it's not just a job but an adventure," said Lt. Cmdr. Raymond H. Oviedo, the new Resident Officer in Charge of Construction aboard the base.

The native of Baguio City, Philippines, came from a middle-class family.

"...my dad was a teacher and my mom's a (certified public accountant), but that's by Third World standards," Oviedo pointed out.

"The Philippines had an allotment of 200 people who could join the U.S. military a year," Oviedo said

He enlisted in the Navy Feb. 14, 1992, and completed his boot camp training in Orlando, Fla.

Then for the next nine years he toured, among other places, the Army's Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., to continue his training in his chosen Navy Enlisted Classification of engineering aide.

"I already had my civil engineering degree from Saint Louis University in Baguio City before I enlisted in the Navy in the Philippines," Oviedo said.

"In 2011, I attended (the University of Nevada, Las Vegas) and graduated last summer with a Master's in civil engineering."

Throughout his career, Oviedo has also been stationed at San Diego, Port Hueneme, Calif., Camp Pendleton, South Korea, and deployed to Guam, Puerto Rico, Okinawa, Japan, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Haiti, Kuwait, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

After nine years as an enlisted man, the petty officer first class decided he wanted to be an officer.

"Part of your requirement to get commissioned as a Naval officer is to get citizenship.

"I applied for (Officer Candidate School) in 2000. The opportunity was there and I determined there was something better for me, so I went for it," Oviedo said.

It was at OCS training in Pensacola, Fla., that he met a Marine who would re-enter his life 11 years later.

"My (OCS) drill instructor was actually then-Gunnery Sgt. (Donovan) White, former sergeant major of MCLB Barstow. I believe I was in his last class before he got transferred somewhere else," the ROICC said.

Being stationed at MCLB Barstow has created a situation for Oviedo's wife and four children that is pretty common for many who choose the military life.

"I'm a geographic bachelor, because my family is in Long Beach," he said. "I go home on the weekends to see them."

Oviedo believes joining the Navy has been one of the best decisions he has ever made because of what it has taught him.

"Organization, hard work, appreciation of my skills, ability to work with a team, professionalism and just being a living testament that if you want something badly enough you just have to aim for it and you can achieve it. It's a matter of believing in yourself and doing it," Oviedo said.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Dominic A. Smarra

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE
Barstow, California
Proudly Presents the

**BATTLE COLOR
CEREMONY**

Monday March 5, 2012
At Noon on
Sorensen Field

For information, call the
Public Affairs Office at
760-577-6430

FEATURING THE WORLD FAMOUS

**DRUM & BUGLE CORPS,
SILENT DRILL TEAM
AND
COLOR GUARD**

FROM HISTORIC
MARINE BARRACKS,
WASHINGTON D.C.



Everyone is invited to attend with supervisor approval.

Motivated adjutant clerk claims prestigious quarterly title

By Cpl. Thomas A. Bricker
Combat Correspondent

Upon checking into his first duty station as a young Marine, one might find himself full of anxiety and fearing the unknown. This wasn't the case however, for one young devil dog who recently received accolades mere months after joining the ranks at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

During his first three months aboard MCLB Barstow, Pfc. Christopher Foster, an adjutant clerk with Headquarters Battalion, wasted no time in overcoming these fears to claim the illustrious title of Marine of the Quarter for Oct-Dec 2011.

"Honestly, I was completely surprised when I found out I was being nominated for this award," explained Foster, the 19-year old native of Dublin, Ohio. "I like to do what is asked of me to the best of my ability but I didn't know that was going to get me to this," he added, referring to his award.

Foster claimed his title humbly and said it could have gone to anyone who works hard. Receiving a title such as this showed him how well he's performing his job in the eyes of his superiors, he added.

It's not just Foster's senior Marines who've noticed his work ethic. Foster's co-worker uses his drive to produce quality work as well.

"Foster motivates me to be a better Marine," explained Pfc. Luis Castro, an adjutant clerk with HqBn. He helps by demonstrating a consistent work ethic in the office, Castro added.

Having more experience and having served longer in the Marine Corps helped Foster become more knowledgeable on technical aspects of the job. Although they're the same rank, Castro gladly acknowledges Foster's role as a mentor to him.

"Foster had a short amount of



Official File Photo

time to learn everything before his mentor left and I got here. He got straight to work and did it without any problem so now he helps me when I have any questions," the Carolina, Puerto Rico native said.

Foster's staff noncommissioned officer also holds him in high regards. His words about the MOQ's work as an adjutant clerk were nothing short of confident recognition.

"I had no doubt Foster was going to take the title," said Gunnery Sgt. Yrimeo Reynoso, the adjutant chief aboard base. "I'm kind of surprised he didn't make it further on the Marine Corps Installations West board," he added.

Reynoso finds the friendly rivalry between Foster and Castro to be rewarding for the two young Marines.

"I like having the two compete. Foster challenges Castro to take his work as an adjutant clerk further. It's good to have them push one another and help each other become better Marines," the 33-year old Los Angeles native added.

"I hope winning this award shows other Marines it's possible to win this award regardless of how long you've been here. It's an honor to win this award to show myself and others that hard work pays off," he concluded.

Chaplain's Corner

Where real life begins

By Lt. Benjamin
Warner
Base Chaplain



This week marks the beginning of the Lent season. If you're unfamiliar, Lent covers the 40 days leading up to the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (erroneously called Easter). In my own faith journey, I have been a part of churches that recognize Lent, but have also been a part of churches that do not

formally do so. In fact, I've known people who have commented on my personal observances of Lent with a nearly derisive, "But that's a Catholic thing." Their ignorance notwithstanding, Lent is so much more than a Catholic (or Presbyterian or Lutheran or Methodist) thing. The basic idea behind this season is that it's a preparation to encounter God in the significant event of the resurrection. Thus, the believer observes a time of self-sacrifice as a reminder of their own sin compared with God's goodness in redemption. It lasts forty days to mirror Jesus' own fast of forty days (Matthew 4:1-11).

One of the most significant memories I have about Lent comes from just about five years back. I was pastor of a church in a small town in Kansas. Some of my friends attended a small Baptist church in the neighboring town. Their pastor was making a special emphasis to recognize the historic value of Lenten celebrations. One of the long-time attendees was a woman in her early forties who directed the children's ministry. Just a week or so before Resurrection Sunday, this lady had a heart attack and died. Needless to say, everyone was shocked. During her funeral service, the pastor read an email she had sent the night she died. It was regarding this observance of Lent—something she had never encountered in her life. Her comment was that the major thing she had learned was that there has to be death before there could be life.

Many people were shocked by her statement, and the seemingly unusual timing. Does it even make sense—that there has to be death before there can be life? I mean, usually things work in reverse—when life runs out, then there's death. Yet, Jesus makes this claim Himself. *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it"* (Matthew 16:24-25). There is a counter-intuition present throughout the Christian life: power through weakness, the first going last, things of that nature. This counter-intuition is what is prevalent in the Lent season. That in giving up of some things, things of more and different value will be found. Culturally, we don't understand this, as we are taught that we need more—of everything. Don't like yourself? Buy more stuff. Don't have a boy/girlfriend? Wear more of our product and you will. On and on I could go. The point is that we need to decide what the life we desire for ourselves is, and what is the *actual* way to find it?

For the Christian tradition, Lent has always said that the life that is worth living begins with sacrifice: both sacrifice as abstaining from certain things (even for a season), and sacrifice as giving of certain things (service and resources to others). Where does real life begin for you? More importantly—what are you doing to realize that in your daily activities? Real life isn't for the future, it's waiting now.

