



PRO THE SPECTOR

Vol. 4 No. 2

Serving the Marine Corps since 1947
Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif.

January 23, 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

**New Sergeant Major
of the Marine Corps**

**Montgomery V.S.
Post 9/11**

HAZMAT



Parent Advisory Board (PAB) Meeting

Friday, February 6, 2015 | 4:30pm
Bldg. 64



Do you have a child(ren) enrolled in MCLB Barstow Children, Youth and Teen programs? If so, please attend the PAB to hear about upcoming events and share your suggestions for program improvement. We want to hear from you; your opinions matter.



For more information contact the
Child Development Center at
577-6287 or visit MCCSBarstow.com



On The Cover:

Front Cover:

Photo by: Cpl. Norman Eckles

The Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow Fire Department trained for three days at MCLB beginning on Jan. 7, on hazardous materials procedures. MCLB Barstow FD members received detailed instructions on handling chlorine gas leaks in cylinders and on rail cars.

Back Cover:

Photo by: Carlos Guerra

Contractors from Wolverine/Akima aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow prepare an M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank for unloading at the installation rail yard, Jan. 8.



Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California
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On the web

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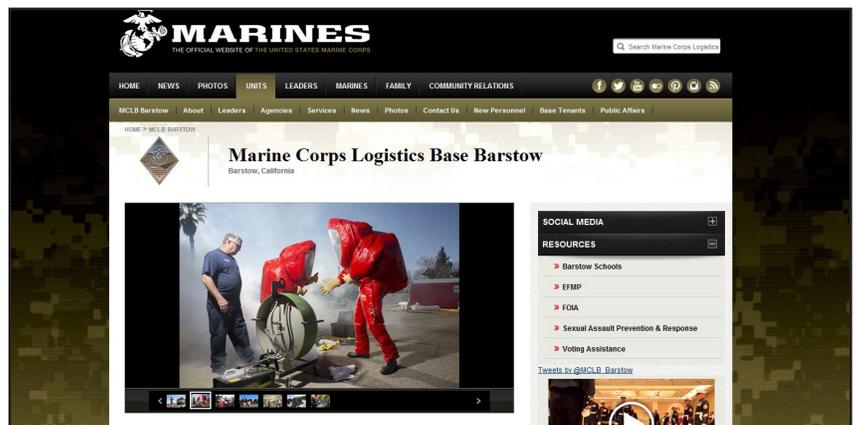




Photo by: Carlos Guerra

Soldiers from the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (1-25th SBCT) out of Ft. Wainwright, Alaska and 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, CO work with contractors from Wolverine/Akima, as well as Chad Hildebrandt, the rail operations supervisor on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, and his crew to unload Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTVs), STRYKERS and M1A1 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) on rail cars at MCLB Barstow, Calif., Jan. 8. MCLB Barstow has the largest rail head in the Department of Defense, acting as the logistical hub for the entire southwest region and has become a joint services force at work on the rail systems here in Barstow by offering other services such as technical advice and on-the-job training to a broad range of cooperators such as the U.S. Army.

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News Briefs

Leave Share Program

The following is a comprehensive list of individuals currently affected by medical emergencies and are in need of leave donations:

Cheryle Magorno

Anyone desiring to donate annual leave under the Leave Sharing Program may do so by obtaining a leave donor application from the Human Resources Office. Ensure completed forms are turned into HRO as well. For more information, contact Michelle Cunningham at 760-577-6915.

Passport to Volunteering

This training will expose volunteers to the fulfilling part of volunteering and give them the necessary skills to ensure they have a successful and rewarding volunteer career. To be held Monday, Jan. 26 at 9 a.m. at the Hobby Shop. For more information contact Marine Corps Family Team Building at (760) 577-6675 or 577-6408.

Town Hall Meeting

There will be an opportunity for those living and working on MCLB to speak with leadership and discuss current topics, Jan. 27, 5 p.m. at the Maj. Gen. James L. Day Conference Center. Drop off any questions in the boxes located at the Desert View Housing community Center or MCFTB offices in Bldg. 15 by Jan. 23. For more information, contact MCFTB at 760-577-6675.

Anger Management

Join Marine and Family Programs for eight anger control tools to learn before it's too late, Tuesdays at 1 P.M., from Jan. 26 to Feb. 24. For more information, contact Marine and Family Programs at 760-577-6533. To register, visit angermanagement2015.eventbrite.com.

Story and Crafts

Library services will be hosting their Story Time and Craft, at Bldg. 17, Jan. 28 at 10 a.m. join us for a great story of *A Full Year of Holidays*. Don't forget to put your birthday on the library calendar. For more information, contact Library Services at 760-577-6395.

Advisory Board

There will be a parent advisory board meeting for those who have children enrolled at the CDC and SAC, Feb. 6 at 4:30 p.m. For more information, contact 760-577-6804.

Play Morning

New Parent Support in conjunction with Marine Corps Family Team Building and Victor Community Support Services invites all active duty and their dependents with children to attend Play Morning every Friday, 9 a.m., at the Desert View Housing Community Center. There will be singing, stories, crafts, and play-time. For more information, contact New Parent Support at 760-577-6533.

Career Resource

If you are looking for employment, check out the weekly employment listing provided by the Career Resource Center at www.mccsbarstow.com/careerresource.html. For employment job search, or resume writing assistance, call the Career Resource Program at 760-577-6533.

Daddy n' Me

Join the dads and kids in your neighborhood for a Pre-Valentine's Day event, Feb. 12, 5:30 p.m. at the Desert View Housing Community Center. There will be a picnic dinner, crafts for mom, and photo creations. To register for this event, visit daddynme2015.eventbrite.com. For more information, call 760-577-6533.

Married, Loving it

Married and Loving it is a series of five classes designed to teach participants how to enjoy sharing their lives together by enhancing their marriage relationship. It will be held every Wednesday of February, 11 a.m. at the Family Services Conference Room.

Energy Tip:

If every gas-heated home were properly caulked and weatherstripped, we'd save enough natural gas each year to heat about 4-million homes.

NEXT SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS ANNOUNCED



Photo by Cpl. Jad Sleiman
Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. announced the selection of Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green as the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Jan. 20, 2015. In this 2011 image, Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green, then serving as the Marine Forces Africa sergeant major, speaks to a group of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force 12 Marines and sailors.

Courtesy of:
Office of Marine Corps Communication
Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON -- The Commandant of the Marine Corps announced Jan. 21 the selection of Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Green as the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

“It gives me great pleasure to name Sgt. Maj. Green as the 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps,” said Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the commandant of the Marine Corps.

“His dynamic leadership is well known throughout the ranks of our Corps. His wide range of experience in both peacetime and combat, and his record of performance make him extraordinarily well-qualified to serve as our senior enlisted leader,” Dunford said.

Green, currently the sergeant major of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), will replace Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, who has held the billet since June 2011.

Barrett is credited with improving Marines’ training, education, compensation, quality of life, bachelor enlisted quarters, on-base housing, and family support programs.

“Sgt. Maj. Barrett has poured his heart and soul into serving Marines, Sailors, and their families,” Dunford said. “He has truly made a positive impact on the combat readiness of our Corps.”

The relief and appointment ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m., Feb. 20, at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia.

The post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps was established in 1957 as the senior enlisted advisor to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the first such post in any of the branches of the United States Armed Forces.

The Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps is selected by the Commandant, and typically serves a four-year term, though his service is at the pleasure of the Commandant.

HAZMAT TRAINING

Story by:
Cindy McIntyre
Editorial Assistant



Photo by: Carlos Guerra



Photo by: Cindy McIntyre



Photo by: Carlos Guerra

The emergency call went out from assistant fire chief Robert Springer.

Two people were trapped and unconscious inside 322 Iwo Jima, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, and an unknown fog filled the rooms. Emergency personnel arrived within minutes.

Instead of rushing inside to rescue the victims, the responders first assessed the hazard. Their training had prepared them for such a situation. Indeed, this scenario is one such exercise, covering four days and two shifts last week at MCLB Barstow.

An entire technology center, first aid station, and decontamination unit were set up within minutes. Two teams were fitted with full-body hazmat suits. The first two-person team went in to rescue survivors and collect and identify hazardous substances. They found a leaking chlorine tank (in reality vaporized glycerin “smoke”) and a vial of white powder on one of the victims.

The HazMatID 360 – a portable, wireless analyzer that identifies chemicals through infrared spectroscopy – recorded the powder as Sevin, a branded insecticide containing the toxin Carbaryl. The second team retrieved one of the dead “victims,” and capped the chlorine tank. All exposed personnel, living and “dead,” took a trip through the decontamination wash.

Three hours later, the exercise was over. Another successful training for the first responders of MCLB Barstow.



Submitted by:
Francis Villeme

Base Education Officer

IS THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL THE RIGHT OPTION?

Sure, the Post-9/11 GI Bill appears to provide the best bang for your buck when it comes to getting your education after the military. But is it really the best choice for everyone? Unless you're prepared to read pages of government literature on benefits and regulations regarding each GI Bill, it really is hard to tell which one benefits you the most. Let's compare:

Post-9/11 GI Bill:

Term: Up to 36 months of eligibility.

Housing Allowance: The housing benefit paid under the Post-9/11 GI Bill is equivalent to the BAH of an E-5 with dependents in the zip code of the school.

Books: Up to \$1,000 stipend per year for books and study materials.

Payments: At a public school, the Post-9/11 GI Bill pays all tuition and fees for an in-state student (assuming 100-percent eligibility). For those attending a private or foreign school, it pays up to \$20,235.02 per academic year. School costs are paid directly to the school; housing and book money is paid to you.

Yellow Ribbon Program: Schools may voluntarily waive a portion of the remaining tuition not already covered and the VA will match that contribution dollar for dollar.

Montgomery GI Bill:

Term: Up to 36 months of eligibility.

Housing Allowance: None

Books: None

Payments: One flat rate (for the 2014-15 school year this is \$1,717 per month, regardless of location or chosen school) is sent to you; you are then required to pay fees to the school.

Yellow Ribbon Program: All costs, fees and tuition exceeding the MGIB payment are the responsibility of the student. No housing allowance, no books, no Yellow Ribbon Program. I already know what you're thinking, but before you go cashing in your Montgomery for the Post-9/11 (remember it's irrevocable!), let me explain when and why you might want to keep it.

1 – You don't plan on going to school full time. One of the biggest caveats with the Post-9/11 GI Bill is your "rate of pursuit". In order to receive all of the benefits listed above, you must enroll and continue to attend at a full-time pace. If you drop to a half-time rate or less for whatever reason, you can say goodbye to your monthly housing allowance. The Montgomery GI Bill, however, allows you to continue to receive the full amount even if you're enrolled at only 50 percent. This is where your math skills are going to come in:

- The Post-9/11 pays all tuition costs, at 50%, which is all you would receive.
- The Montgomery, at 50%, still pays \$1,717.

Once you figure out how much your tuition costs are for only half the amount of classes, whatever is left over is yours.



2 – You're planning on taking only online classes. Another stipulation with the Post-9/11 GI Bill is that you must take one class, per term, on an actual campus. If you don't, you forfeit a portion of your housing allowance, dropping the rate down to a flat \$754.40. If you're using the Montgomery, there is no online vs. campus stipulation. You could take all classes from the comfort of your living room and would continue to receive the \$1,717 each month regardless. (Just remember, you still have to pay tuition costs with the \$1,717.)

3 – You weren't on active duty long enough to receive 100 percent of the GI Bill. If you leave service before you serve 36 months of eligible time on active duty, this could make your GI Bill decision much easier. The Post-9/11 simply prorates your benefits in accordance with the amount of time you did serve. If you're only eligible for 50 percent of the GI Bill, you only receive 50 percent of the benefits. With the Montgomery GI Bill, you actually have the option to pay whatever amount of money you're short due to not serving the full 36 months, and still receive the full MGIB benefits. So if you're only a few bucks short, it would be far more beneficial to pay that than have to pay the other half of your tuition the Post-9/11 wouldn't cover.

4 – You're joining the Guard or Reserve after active duty. This fact is one of the lesser-known, yet slightly complicated – so follow along closely. The GI Bill regulations say that anyone who qualifies for two or more VA education benefits must give up one in order to accept the Post-9/11 GI Bill. (That includes you if you still have the MGIB and are eligible to switch to the Post-9/11.) Here's where it gets tricky. If you join the Guard or Reserve, they have education benefits separate from those earned on active duty (i.e. Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve and/or Reserve Education Assistance Program). So if you come off active duty and are now in the Reserve, your VA education benefits include:

Montgomery GI Bill

Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve

You can "give up" the Reserve GI Bill and keep the other two. In most cases, this process could net you an additional \$14,000 worth of school.

*Be sure these benefits are written in your contracts. If they're not, your eligibility would be in question.

5 – Scholarships and Grants, non-military, education money. Contrary to popular belief, having a GI Bill doesn't prevent you from using other education funding sources. Apply for grants. Apply for scholarships. Additional money from outside sources puts money from your GI Bill in your pocket.

There's one additional instance where using all of your Montgomery GI Bill leaves you eligible to receive one year of Post-9/11 benefits at the 60 percent rate up to/not to exceed 48 months of VA education benefits. This is accomplished by taking advantage of a small loophole in federal regulation wording. However, I personally am not recommending this as a viable option as it runs a high risk of leaving you with debt to repay.

As you're well aware, anything concerning military benefits is always clear (insert insane laughter here). While the research I did gave me a better understanding of the GI Bill differences, there are going to be numerous differences between each veteran and their situation. So do your research and evaluate which choice will be the best for you; you earned it, use it.

MILITARY SPOUSES FIND UNEXPECTED REWARDS VOLUNTEERING

Story and photos by:
Laurie Pearson
Public Affairs Specialist

Military spouses aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif., are experiencing unexpected benefits from hours spent selflessly volunteering for events, programs and activities both on and off base.

"In general, volunteering strengthens the community," said Jennifer Kennedy, wife of Cpl. Joshua Houck, test measurement and diagnostic technician with Fleet Support Division, Production Plant Barstow. Kennedy further explained that people enjoy living someplace with a strong sense of community.

The benefits do not stop there, however. Volunteers are appreciating myriad benefits, themselves.

"I have met some of my best friends through volunteering," said Sarah Koeppel, special projects and purchasing director at Baker Valley Unified School District and wife of Staff Sgt. William Koeppel, career planner with Headquarters Battalion here. Koeppel also credits her volunteer experience for increased skills in networking, public speaking, organization and finance, all of which led to her current position with the school district.

For Jill Kovach, spouse of Staff Sgt. Frank Kovach, training chief and substance abuse control officer at Headquarters Battalion here, friendships and networking are highlights of volunteering. However, one additional noteworthy benefit is the opportunity to make volunteer activities a family affair.

"My sons have also met some great friends because I try to involve them, too," explained Kovach.

In times of separation and adversity, these volunteers echo a similar appreciation for the unique bond which is derived from volunteering and participating in events on base and in the community.

"Everybody wants to be needed . . . to feel like they're contributing," said Julie Wilbanks, director of Marine Corps Family Team Building and Family Readiness Officer of MCLB Barstow.

One example of the importance of and need for volunteer time and effort is the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society and the thrift store supported by that organization here.

"One nice thing about the thrift store is that it is a consistent need. They could be open more hours and more services could be available if there were more bodies to staff it," explained Wilbanks.

Sarah Kirk, volunteer at the thrift store and spouse to



Sarah Kirk, a volunteer, sorts and labels donations made to the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society's thrift store on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Jan. 14. The thrift store is one of many volunteer opportunities aboard MCLB Barstow.

Cpl. William Kirk, a system administrator in communications here, plans to continue her efforts with NMCRS regardless of where they live.

"When you first move, you don't know anyone," Kirk said. "Join something like that and you may find out you do have things in common (with other volunteers) like cooking or video games."

Kirk continued by explaining that volunteering and participating in other activities on base, such as classes or events sponsored by Family Team Building or Family Readiness, gives people the chance to come together, talk and connect.

"People need something to do to keep busy and get to know other people," explained Shirley Wolcott who has acted as the chair of volunteers for NMCRS for more than two years. Her husband, Patrick Wolcott is now twice retired: first from the Air Force and then as a civilian employee at MCLB Barstow.

"They're smart, capable, beautiful women who've followed their husbands and left behind a lot of good jobs and volunteer opportunities," said Wilbanks of the military spouses who volunteer on MCLB Barstow. "By keeping a busy, full life . . . there's no room for the negative things that can otherwise fill a void"

"Keeping busy and having purposeful work prevents me from dwelling on negative life circumstances," Kennedy agreed.

"Sometimes I need that push to get out of the house," said Miriam Hemme, public affairs volunteer and wife of Capt. William Hemme, operations officer at FSD, PPB. "When I volunteer, I feel completely welcome to be here and be involved in whatever is going on and it gets me out of the house easiest."

Hemme can often be found with her canine companion, Samson, whom most consider a volunteer as well.

"Samson volunteers the belly rubbing loves," said Hemme.

"All things may change, but the fact that you have a support team helps with everything," emphasized Koeppel.

When Kovach's husband deployed in 2012, a hurricane toppled a 25-foot tree onto their home and she was able to call on the support network she had developed to help.

Pointing out a new upcoming class, Passport to Volunteering, to be held at the Hobby Shop at 9 a.m., Jan. 26, Wilbanks encourages people to embrace a new opportunity to explore the many benefits of volunteering.

"It's an important part of human nature, to give of yourself," explained Wilbanks. "When you give, you get so much more back"



Shirley Wolcott, acting chair of volunteers for Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, tests batteries on donations made to the thrift store on MCLB Barstow, Jan. 14. She encourages others to experience the myriad benefits of volunteer work.

PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD MCLB BARSTOW? PASS THE TEST AND YOU ARE IN

Story by:
Keith Hayes
Public Affairs Specialist

Everyone who wants to get in to Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow must pass a background check, no exceptions.

Mr. Pedro Ruiz is the services officer for the Security and Emergency Services Department at this installation and is in charge of the pass and identification system which checks all people either visiting the base or applying for long term contractor work here.

Ruiz said all short-term visitors to the base must get a clean bill of health through a driver license check and a "wants and active arrest warrant" review which is conducted on the spot when they apply for access at the Pass and ID building 101.

There are times, said Ruiz, when a person trying to get onto MCLB Barstow has an existing arrest warrant.

"If you come in and you have outstanding warrants, you will be detained on the spot, plain and simple. Then we notify the agency that issued the warrant that we have that person in custody."

Ruiz said the civilian agency will then decide if the person is to be arrested or let go on their own recognizance. "But regardless of whether the person is arrested or released we will not let them on base, no matter what," Ruiz said.

Marine Corps Police Department Deputy Chief William Atkinson said contractors who want to work aboard

base for a longer term must first submit a vetting form through their government sponsor.

"The vetting form consists of the government sponsor's information and the personal data from the person we are going to vet," the deputy chief explained.

Those undergoing the vetting process face a deep scan of their criminal backgrounds, if any, in addition to the driver license and "wants and active arrest warrant" review.

"We deny access to about seven per-

cent of the people who submit a vetting form," Atkinson said.

cent of the people who submit a vetting form," he said. The background check process is on-going. "Personnel who have been granted access to the installation are revetted on a continuous basis through the RapidGate system and the current installation's vetting process. Changes to a criminal history check can result in a person being denied access even if that person has previously passed the background check and has obtained clearance to enter MCLB," Atkinson said.

Police Chief Darwin O'Neal emphasized that the continuous vetting process is critical in ensuring no one is on base who could present a danger to others. He has some very straight forward advice to personnel who want to maintain their entry privileges.

"Be honest when preparing your vetting form because we will find out if anything is misrepresented and keep your background history updated," O'Neal said.

Services officer Ruiz acknowledged that the pass and identification system may be inconvenient at times and slow down the work day for some people trying to get on to MCLB Barstow, but there is a very real need for the process.

"When people come aboard the installation they have to understand that we have a certain standard and that they are required to meet that standard. If they don't, then they can't get in. It's nothing personal, but it's our mission to try and keep the base safe."

MCLB PASS & ID - Building 101

*Visitor and Temporary Passes - Vehicle Decals
Contractor Badges - Rapid Gate Badges
Weapons Registration - Pet Registration*

Hours of Operation

Mon - Thurs: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Closed for lunch 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Fri: 7 a.m. - 12 p.m.

760-577-5449 - 760-577-6457 - 760-577-5448

~ no appointments ~

cent of the people who submit a vetting form," Atkinson said.

Rapid Gate is a relatively new computer-aided system now being used at MCLB Barstow and many other installations.

Atkinson said the handheld RapidGate scanners used by the police officers at the gates of MCLB Barstow store the names of those not allowed to enter the base.

"The debarment list (on the RapidGate scanners) contain the names of those barred from entering the base because of misconduct and those whom

AROUND THE CORPS

A look at the Marine Corps outside of Barstow



Photo by: Lance Cpl. Austine A. Lewis

A UH-1Y Huey, assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365 (Reinforced), 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), takes off from USS Iwo Jima (LPD 7), Jan. 7, 2015, in preparation for a live-fire exercise in the Mediterranean Sea. The 24th MEU and Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group are conducting naval operations in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests in Europe.



Photo by: Sgt. Alicia R. Leaders

Sgt. Danielle V. Beck, anti-tank missileman with Anti-Armor Section, Weapons Company, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, fires an M41A4 Saber missile launcher during a live-fire exercise at Range G-3, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Jan. 14, 2015. Weapons Co. Marines conducted live-fire training in preparation for their upcoming assessment at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.



Photo by: Cpl Dani A. Zunun

Members of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Maritime Raid Force, a detachment from Force Reconnaissance Company, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, prepare to board a simulated enemy vessel during a visit, board, search and seizure exercise aboard a rigid-hulled inflatable boat, Jan. 15, 2015. The MRF conducted the VBSS exercise from the amphibious dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43). The 24th MEU is embarked on the ships of the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group and deployed to maintain regional security in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.



Photo by: Cpl. Paul S. Martinez

Marines with Engineer Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, conduct a patrol during a field training exercise at Engineer Training Area 2 aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Jan. 16, 2015. From October 2014 to July 2015, the GCEITF will conduct individual and collective level skills training in designated ground combat arms occupational specialties in order to facilitate the standards based assessment of the physical performance of Marines in a simulated operating environment performing specific ground combat arms tasks.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Submitted by:

Lt. Heath E. Taylor

Chaplain, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

As we begin this New Year in 2015 many of us will no doubt make New Year's resolutions. We will make lists of goals that we have every intention, at least at the time, of accomplishing throughout the year. In years past, I have used the dawning of a new year to make a fresh start and think hard about what I wanted to accomplish or change in my life over the next 12 months only to revisit the list a few short weeks or months later and become discouraged at my progress or lack thereof.

I remember reading an article years ago that explained the difference between aspirational and realized goals. The article explained that aspirational goals are ones that simply hope or desire to accomplish an intention such as, "lose 20 pounds this year," "begin to eat healthier" or "serve and become more involved in my community." There is nothing wrong with aspirational goals except that they lack a strategic vision and plan associated with them. As a result of a general lack of focus, they're often never fully followed through and achieved. Realized goals on the other hand are ones that begin in the aspirational sphere but then are clearly and strategically thought through until a plan with a laser focus for accomplishment accompanies them. These goals have a clear plan attached to them that serves as a road map with milestones and checkpoints to help guide you along

the way until they are fully accomplished.

As we make physical, professional and organizational goals for the year, we may also look to set some goals that will help us rekindle and pursue our spiritual interests as well. Perhaps your aspirational goal is to get more involved serving in your community.

Rather than allowing the goal to remain in the "good intention" category, resolve to be proactive and schedule a meeting with a leader at your church, synagogue, mosque or local charitable organization and find how you can best volunteer your time and unique talents to serve others. You might also visit your local library or bookstore and join a book club focusing on spiritual interests or self-improvement.

Just as failing to feed your body good nutritional sustenance will eventually result in poor physical health, ignoring and neglecting your spiritual interests and desires will lead to poor spiritual well-being. By being focused and intentional, we can incorporate habits into our recurring routines that feed our spirits and in turn, give us the mental and emotional energy we need to accomplish realized goals in other categories of our lives. So as you go about making and revisiting your New Year resolutions, be sure to think through the planning and execution phases, and include the checkpoints along the way that allow you to turn your "aspirational" goals into "realized" goals. Good luck, and may God enable you to accomplish all that you set out to do in 2015.



