



PASS IN REVIEW

SUMMER 2009



GUEST OF HONOR: PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

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Lance Cpl. Kevin Hurst, 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, prepares to lay rounds down range during infantry weapons training at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., June 17. Photo by Lance Cpl. Johnny Merkley.

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Cover Photo: President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Gen. James T. Conway, 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and his wife, Annette Conway, are introduced to an enthusiastic crowd during the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, July 24. Photo by Cpl. Jacob H. Harrer.

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WHEN THE GRASS LOOKS GREENER

BY LT. JOHN R. LOGAN
CHAPLAIN, USN

There is the temptation to believe that the grass is always greener on the other side.

According to urbandictionary.com, the interpretation of that statement, “refers to the way we tend to look at other people’s lives and other things that we don’t have in general. It comes from the idea of looking at a neighbor’s lawn and seeing it as better looking, healthier and overall greener than your own when in reality you’re just ignoring anything negative about it and downplaying everything positive about your own.”

During my time in the fleet and different duty stations, I have heard some of my Sailors and Marines say, “I wish I was in theater in the fight,” or they may say “why am I stuck here at this particular duty station?” “I can not stand it here.” “I wish I had that particular billet or that person’s MOS.” And the list goes on. I have also heard the complaint, “If only.” If only I were taller, a higher rank, at a different command or had a different MOS.

It has even gone as far as individuals wishing that they were someone else or in another relationship than with who they are currently with or married. This goes to show that sometimes the grass may look greener on the other side. However, you may not be aware of the hidden challenges and issues that it took for that lawn to be so green.

In the New Testament a parable is told of a rich man who gave three of his servants each talents of

money to invest. To one he gave five, another two, and the last servant, one. The first two servants invested their talents and made a 50 percent profit of what they invested. When it was time to settle the accounts, the master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” Matthew 25:14-23. Back in those days, a talent was worth more than a thousand dollars. What are you doing with what God has given you and with where He has placed you?

If you have wrestled with such thoughts, I challenge you to consider three things. First, what are you doing with where you are and what you have at this moment? Second, are you working faithfully at the current duty station or position you are holding? Third, are you taking advantage of the opportunities afforded to you at your current location?

The bottom line is to be content with what you have and where you are and to make the most of what you have. Famed motivational author Robert Collier said, “Start where you are. Distant fields always look greener, but opportunity lies right where you are. Take advantage of every opportunity of service.” 





REGAL TRIBUTE

CAPT. JOHN GREENWOOD, ALPHA COMPANY COMMANDER, AND PFC. MITCHELL JAMES, GUIDON BEARER, EXECUTE EYES RIGHT DURING THE HONOR CEREMONY OF THE BRIGADIER GENERAL SELECT CEREMONY AT MARINE BARRACKS WASHINGTON, JUNE 8.

PHOTO BY CPL. JACOB H. HARRER



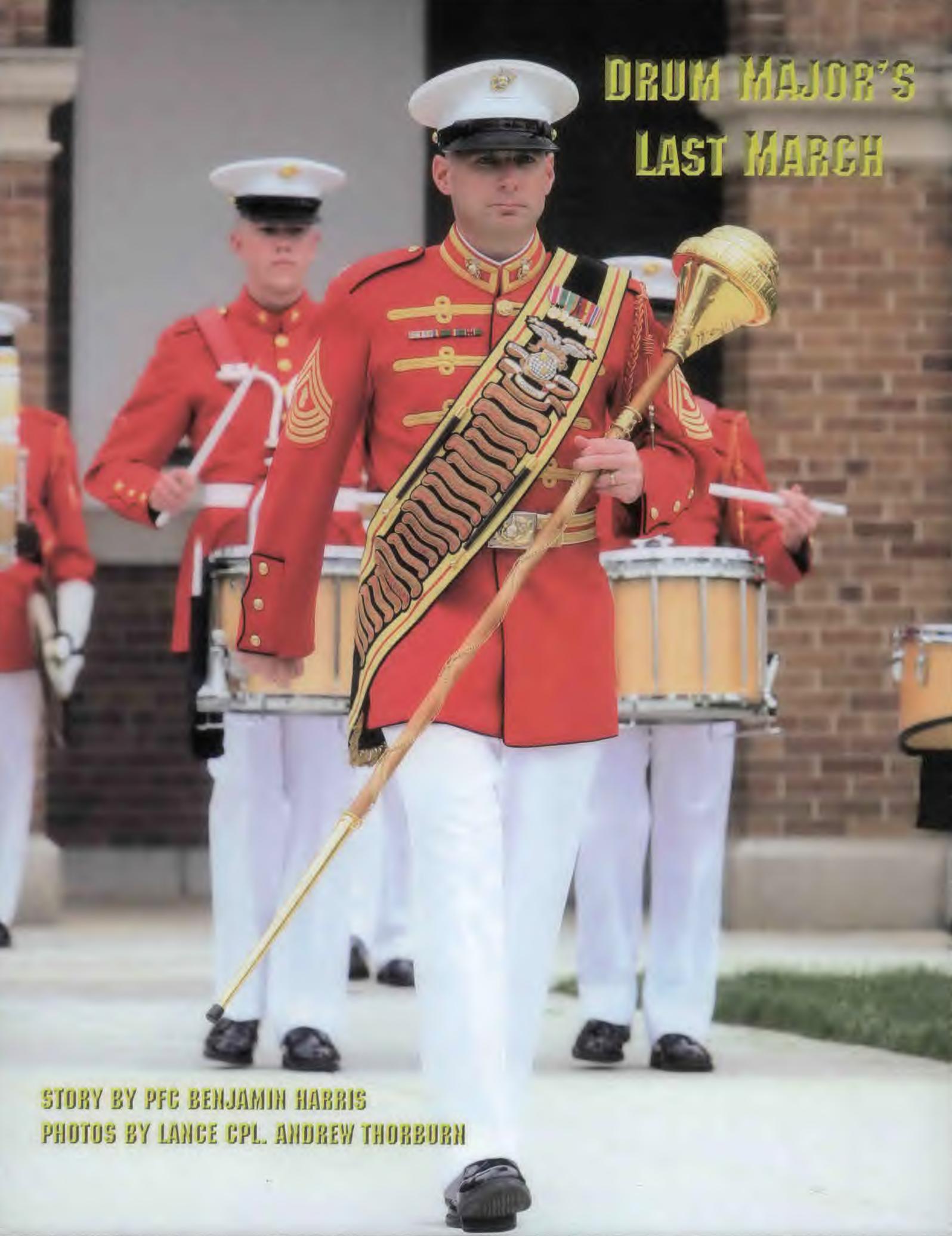
HAIL TO THE CHIEF

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, GEN. JAMES T. CONWAY, 34TH COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, AND OFFICERS FROM MARINE BARRACKS WASHINGTON ENJOY A TOAST TOGETHER IN CENTERHOUSE AFTER THE EVENING PARADE AT THE BARRACKS, JULY 24.

PHOTO BY CPL. JACOB H. HARRER



DRUM MAJOR'S LAST MARCH



STORY BY PFC BENJAMIN HARRIS
PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. ANDREW THORBURN



Master Gunnery Sgt. Mark Miller led the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps in his last performance as the drum major before turning over the position to Master Sgt. Kevin Buckles in a combined relief and appointment and retirement ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, April 30.

The ceremony started with Miller leading the D&B in a rendition of Frank Sinatra's song "I'm Gonna Live, Until I Die," followed by the American classic "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

At the end of the two songs, Miller reported to Lt. Col. Brent Harrison, the commanding officer of the D&B, before officially handing off the drum major mace. Harrison then presented the mace to Buckles, representing the transfer of leadership.

"The Marines you see standing in front of you are a special brand of Marines," said Buckles, addressing the crowd about the D&B.

Buckles then thanked his family for their support as Marines presented them with flowers.

When Buckles finished his remarks, the retirement ceremony for Miller started with the presentation of the Meritorious Service Medal. The citation noted his excellent service during his nine years, two months and more than 1,400 performances as the drum major.

Miller's wife, Theresa, was then presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Col. Andrew Smith, the commanding

officer of Marine Barracks Washington, thanking her for her devotion to her husband and the D&B.

"It's very lucky for me to be surrounded by superstars like Master Gunnery Sergeant Miller and Master Sergeant Buckles," Harrison said.

Harrison joked that at first he was against Miller becoming the drum major because of his height, but after Miller's audition and interview there was no choice about who should fill the position.

Miller ended the ceremony with his own remarks, turning to his Marines who stood behind him, representing the hundreds of Marines who had served under him during his nine years as drum major.

"To the Marines of D&B, I told you this morning how I felt about you," said Miller. "You're the best."

At the end of his remarks, Miller stood next to his wife as Buckles led the D&B in the Marine Corps Hymn. While playing, the band opened to present a walkway down centerwalk. Miller, with his wife in arm, marched solemnly down centerwalk, bringing a close to his 22-year career in the Marine Corps. 



Marines from Alpha Company, Marine Barracks Washington, went to Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., for weapons training, June 17.

Alpha Company is normally an infantry ceremonial marching company that performs for audiences around the world, but they must also maintain their infantry skills in order to stay proficient and prepare themselves for the operating forces.

Alpha Company Marines fired thousands of rounds from both the 240 Bravo machine gun and the 249 Squad Automatic Weapon. Several Marines got the opportunity to fire live explosive rounds from the AT-4 anti-tank rocket launcher.

“I had never fired a live AT-4 before, so I was kind of excited,” said Lance Cpl. Noah West, Headquarters Platoon, Alpha Company, Marine Barracks Washington. “Since I joined the Marine Corps it is the most dangerous thing I’ve ever fired.”

The Marines watched their comrades charge up to the firing line with their AT-4s while suppressive fire was being laid down on the target with two 240 Bravo machine guns. Each Marine with an AT-4 aimed in and launched a rocket at a dummy bunker or tank and ran back into cover.

The Marines had been preparing for this field training exercise for about a month, so the light rain and heavy winds were not about to stop them.

Though all of Alpha Company’s Marines are infantry, they aren’t able to train as much as other

infantry units throughout the Marine Corps. The Marines from Alpha Company are usually seen wearing dress blues and drilling with an M1 Garand rifle in ceremonies.

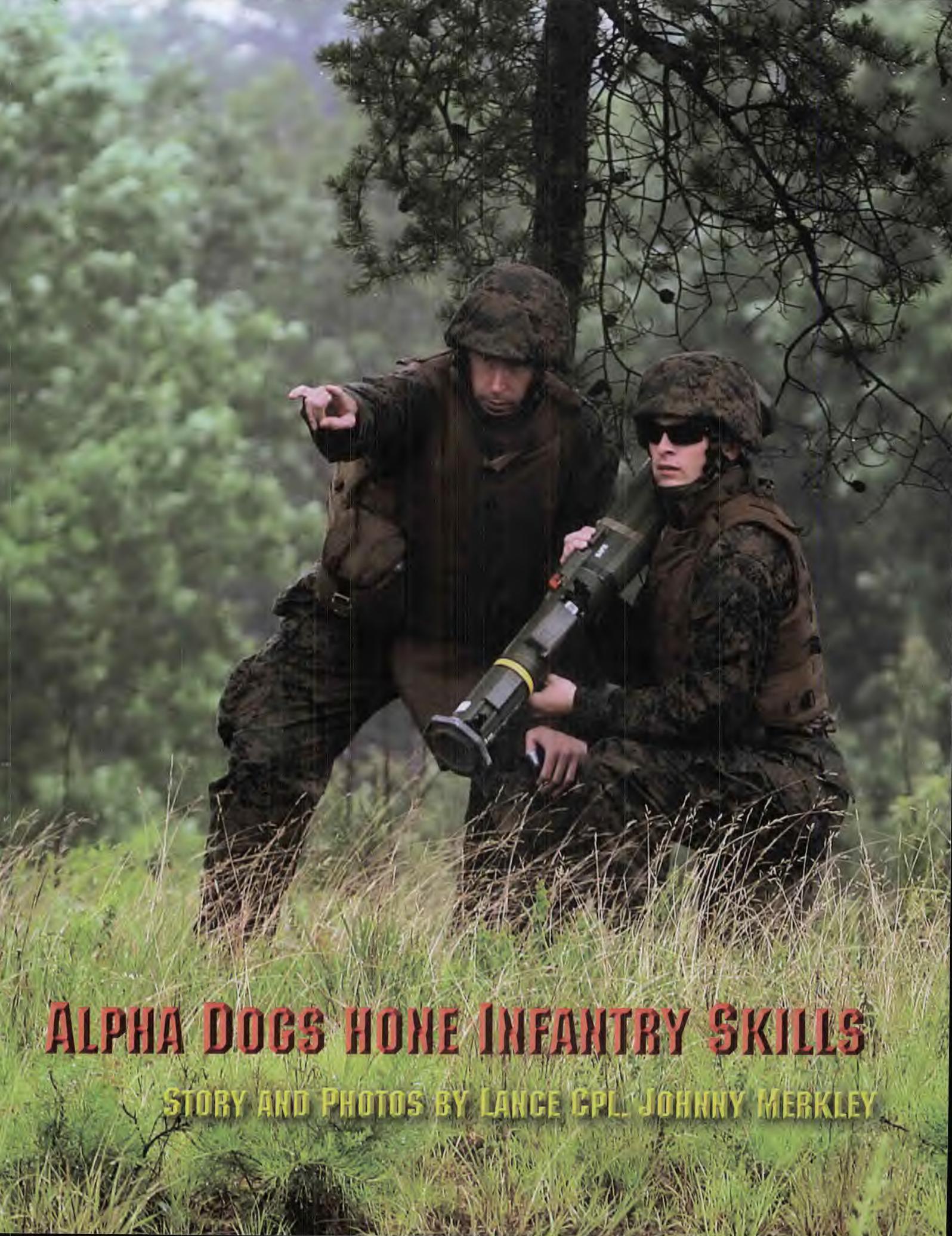
Some of the Marines in Alpha Company hadn’t been out to the field since graduating from the School of Infantry, so many were excited to get back to firing weapons and training for combat.

“It would be valuable to have experience with the SAW, 240, and AT-4 when you go out to the fleet,” said West.

Part of the training included thorough safety briefs and risk management controls. Safety is always a first priority with everything in the Marine Corps.

“It is incredibly important to pay attention when you’re on the range,” said Capt. Patrick Lavoie, Alpha Company executive officer, “it only takes one time for a major accident to occur.”

The training operation was a success, and the Marines received realistic training they can bring with them into the operating forces. For many of the Marines, the training was a welcome break from the parades, and it enabled them to get back to their Marine Corps roots. 🦅



ALPHA DOGS HONE INFANTRY SKILLS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL JOHNNY MERKLEY

BLAST OFF!!!

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL HINTZ, SILENT DRILL PLATOON, FIRES AN AT-4 ANTI-TANK ROCKET LAUNCHER DURING A FIELD EXERCISE AT MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, VA., JUNE 17.

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. JOHNNY MERKLEY







Marines from Bravo Company, Marine Barracks Washington, took a break from their usual routine of marching in order to conduct weapons familiarization training at The Basic School aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., June 11.

United States Marines pride themselves on being a force-in-readiness. At any given time, Marines can deploy anywhere in the world to defend America and respond to crisis. Even during the busy parade season, they still find time to continue their combat training in order to maintain their reputation of always being mission-ready.

"It motivates us and reminds us that we will always be infantry above all else," said Lance Cpl. Nicholas J. Adams, Bravo Company armorer.

Exchanging their dress blues for full personal protective equipment and ditching their M1 Garand rifles for AT-4 anti-tank rocket launchers, Marines got a chance to shoot a weapon they don't normally have an opportunity to shoot.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Christopher J. Easter, Bravo Company gunnery sergeant, the company conducts field training about six times a year, and half of those are required annual training.

The Marines fired more than 300 rounds at targets ranging from 300 to 500 meters away. A few

select Marines got the opportunity to fire high explosive rounds. The massive explosion of the first round got roars from many of the Marines in the company, fueling the excitement of the exercise.

Like with any live fire exercise, safety was first and foremost and included a lengthy weapons handling brief before anyone began firing.

"Coming out here gives the Marines a chance to handle and fire the AT-4 and to learn about the other different types of weapon systems employed by the Marine Corps," said Easter. "It also gives the Marines a break from the normal routine."

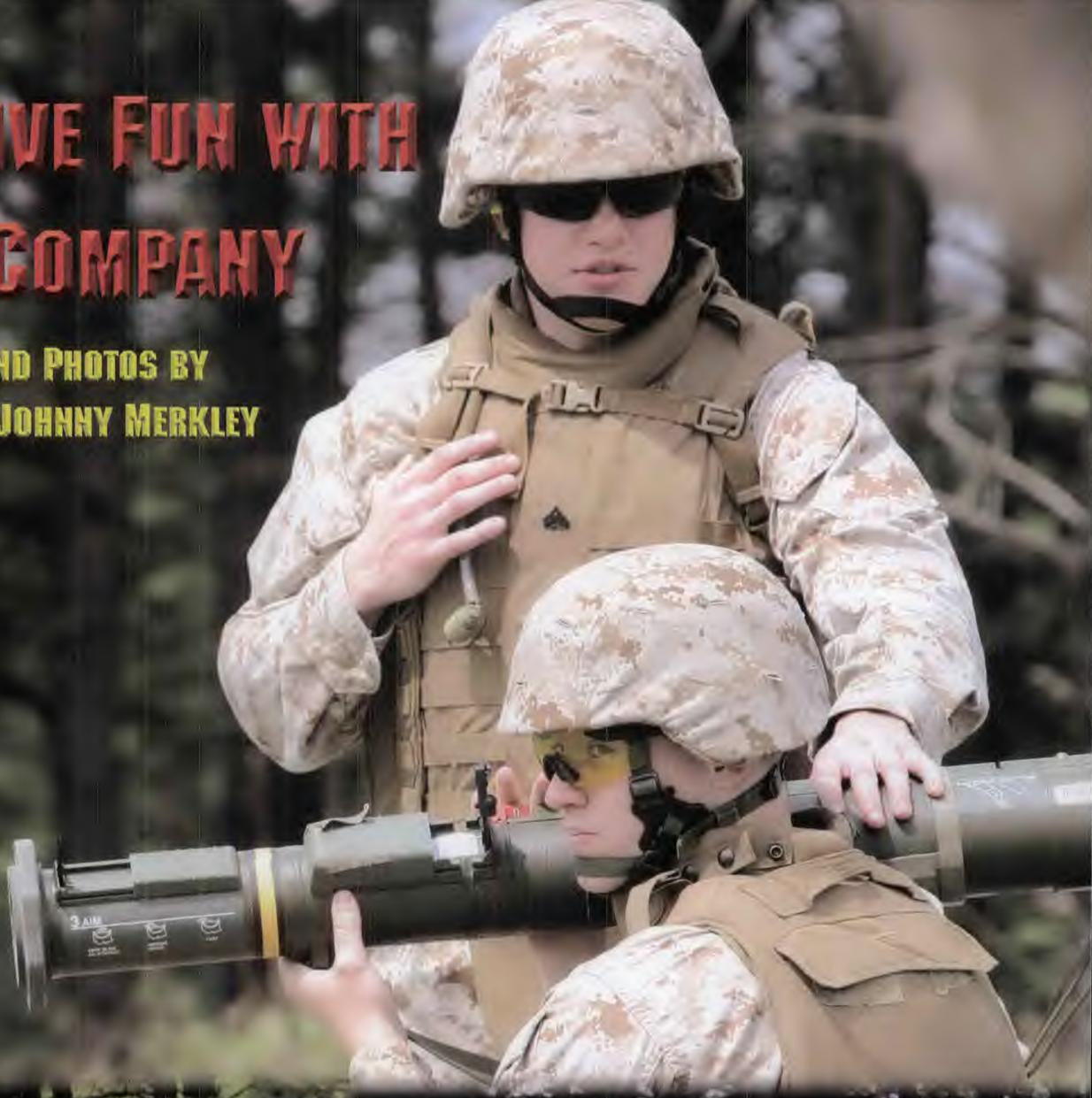
"I think the entire exercise was outstanding," said Cpl. Javier Hinojosa, headquarters platoon. "Practice makes perfect, and field exercises like this must be done to keep up our skills." 



Lance Cpl. Garret Quinn, Body Barrer, prepares to fire the AT-4 as Sgt. Kyle Layman, training non-commissioned officer, spots during a training exercise at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., June 11.

EXPLOSIVE FUN WITH BRAVO COMPANY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. JOHNNY MERKLEY





It's midnight, two hours since the playing of Taps signaling the end of the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington. The sounds of music and drill have been replaced by the noise of a forklift at work, bleachers collapsing, and chairs breaking down. The marchers and musicians have left the parade deck, and the Grounds Section has taken center stage.



Lance Cpl. Joshua Randall assembles a crowd barrier before the start of the parade rehearsal for the Sunset Parade at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., June 30.

In their signature blue trousers and shirts, or Blueberry's as they are known around the Barracks, the Marines move quickly to clear the parade grounds of any equipment used for the ceremony. By the early hours of the morning, there is no trace a parade took place the night before.

The primary mission of the Grounds Section is to maintain the pristine appearance of the Barracks for the Marines and their guests, many of whom are personally invited to the Barracks by general officers such as the Commandant and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, as well as the commanding officer of Marine Barracks Washington, said Lance Cpl. David P. Hollingshead, outside team.

During parade season, the Ground Marines work hard to prepare for and clean up for the dozens of parades and ceremonies hosted weekly, including the Sunset Parade on Tuesdays and the Evening Parade on Fridays. Though there are only 25 Marines in the section to prepare the Barracks for thousands of guests, they always pull together to get the job done.

"Even though the jobs are hard, it's a good feeling knowing you played a roll in making the parade happen," said Hollingshead. "It makes me feel good to hear guests comment about how nice the Barracks looks."

On Thursdays, Grounds Marines begin the set-up routine in preparation of the Evening Parade. Arriving before most Barracks personnel, the routine begins with wiping down each set of chairs and bleachers and watering the plants, as well as an overall cleaning of the Barracks.

GROUNDS SECTION: THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL. JOHNNY MERKLEY
&
CPL. JACOB H. HARRER



Lance Cpl. Antonio Young hauls a new water cooler for guests of the Evening Parade at the Barracks, May 22.



Fridays make for very long days. Alongside Guard Company and Maintenance Section, Grounds Section is among the first to step foot inside the Barracks in the morning and the last to leave at night.

“The hours are long but the job is rewarding,” said Hollingshead.

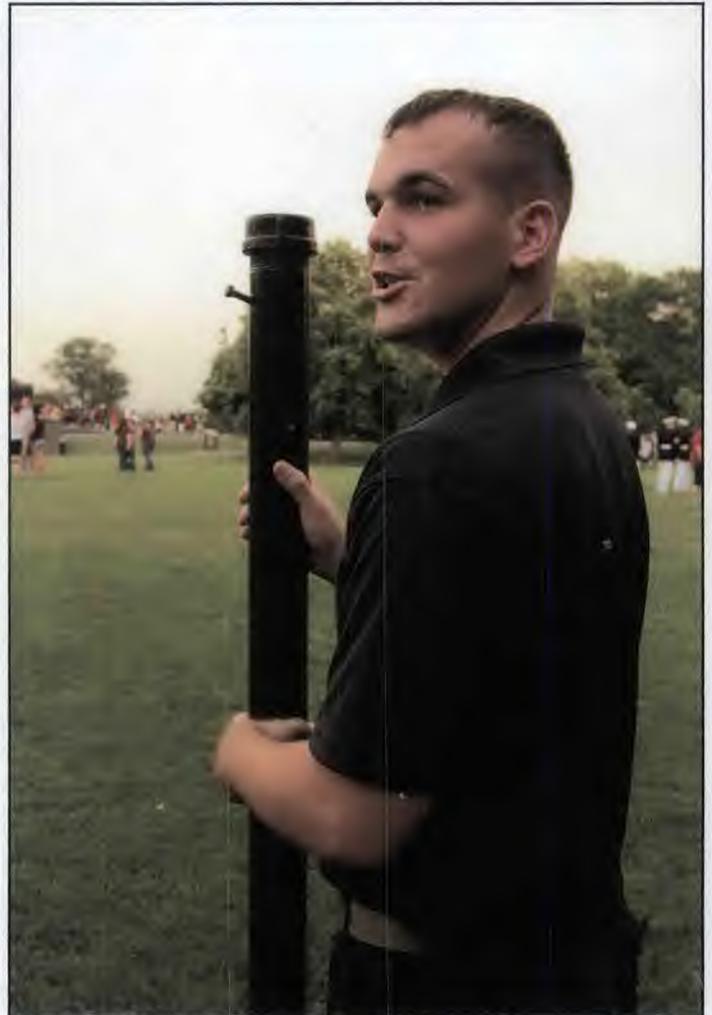
When the Sunset Parades begin in June, the Grounds Section must not only prepare the Barracks grounds each Friday, but they must also prepare for the Sunset Parades at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va.

On Tuesday mornings, Grounds Marines begin a set-up routine much the same as they do for the Evening Parade, but at the memorial.

The Marines must not only prepare for the parade, but they must monitor the parade site to ensure it remains pristine for the parade that evening. They remain on site until all they have put away all equipment, making for another long day.

During the middle of parade season, the hours can add up quickly. However, the Marines use teamwork and camaraderie to stay motivated.

“We work hard, and because we are few, we have a bond, and we rely on each other to accomplish our mission,” said Hollingshead.



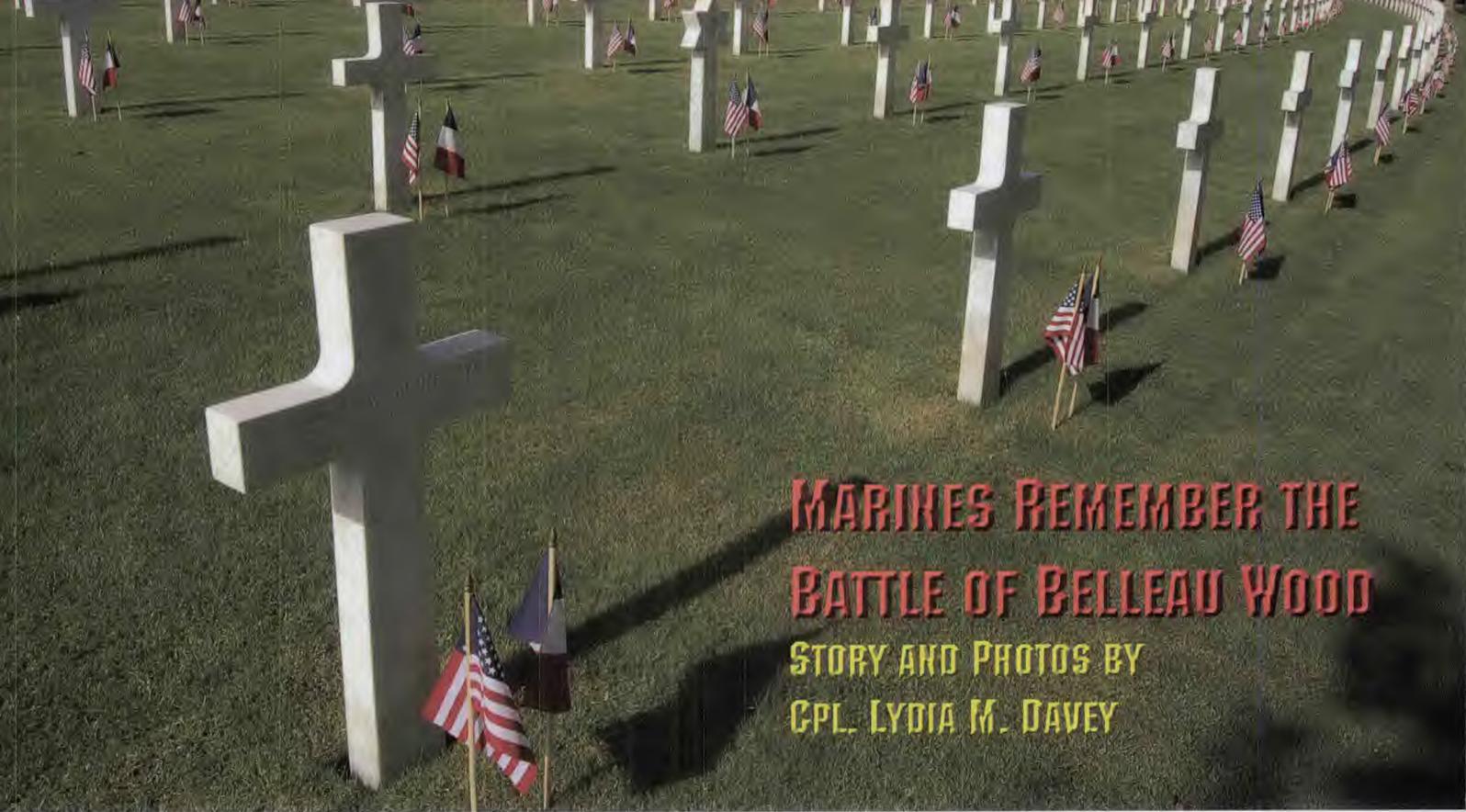
Lance Cpl Brian D. Dennis helps break down equipment after a successful 19-hour workday supporting the Sunset Parade at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., June 2.

Despite the long days, beautifying the Barracks and preparing for the parades, Grounds Marines know that it is their dedication that makes the parades successful. 🦅



Chief Warrant Officer Brian J. Dix, director of the U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, leads the unit onto the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery's parade deck during the 91st Annual Memorial Day ceremony there. Each year, thousands of U.S. and French service members, their families, tourists and locals, gather to honor the memories of the 2,289 World War I Marines and soldiers buried at the cemetery.

More than 300 Marines and sailors from commands throughout Europe and the United States, along with approximately 2,000 French locals, gathered at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, France, for a Memorial Day ceremony, May 24.



MARINES REMEMBER THE BATTLE OF BELLEAU WOOD

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. LYDIA M. DAVEY

The gathering marked the 91st Anniversary of the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood, and was attended by Gen. James F. Amos, 31st Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, and French Brig. Gen. Eric Bonnemaïson, Commandant of the 9th Brigade Legere Blindée de Marine. Each year, thousands come together at the 42.5-acre cemetery to honor the memories of the 2,289 war-dead who are buried.

The ceremony featured remarks by the Mayor of Belleau, Mrs. Monique Benier, along with memorial addresses from both Amos and Bonnemaïson. The laying of wreaths, poetry readings, and performances by the French Army Band, the U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Silent Drill Platoon were also featured.

“Today, let us pay tribute to the men who gave their lives for us and let us be worthy of their legacy,” said Bonnemaïson. “Their sacrifice will not have been in vain if our Army and your Corps maintain this respect for a soldier’s duty which extends up to the supreme sacrifice. In the annals of history, 1,087 Marines proved the friendship that the United States feels for France. We belong to an alliance that is renewed here each year and, in this place in particular, we feel its strength and duration.”

Local nationals, along with service members, their families and tourists, watched the formal cer-

emony before walking into the nearby town of Belleau to attend a reception hosted by Benier. The small, centuries-old town with its spring gardens in full bloom, welcomed U.S. and French service members and their families with open arms and friendly smiles.

“I wanted to attend to experience the opportunity of a lifetime as a proud Marine and American,” said CWO3 Norma Rucobo, Marine Forces East G-1 Assistant Personnel Officer. Rucobo attended the three-day event at her own cost, and said her personal take-away from the experience was “The sense of pride and gratitude expressed by the people of the town, the spectacular sights, and the flyby as the memorial ceremony commenced. This experience was phenomenal. I think every Marine should live such a priceless opportunity.”

During the reception, the group enjoyed Champaign, musical performances by several French groups, and the opportunity to drink from the famed Devil Dog Fountain.

“Everything was perfect,” said Marine Cpl. Alfonso Torres, adjutant clerk for Marine Corps Forces Europe. “I was very excited due to the fact that I was able to visit a place where we were first ever called Devil Dogs!” 

T Tyler T. Toliver is a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, who happens to be a country singer. Toliver brought the crowd to their feet while singing “My Country,” during his opening performance for the country legend Joe Diffie at the Fauquier County Fair in Warrenton, Va, July 18.

Toliver released his first CD titled “My Country” that day at the fair, and after his performance the crowd rushed to purchase his new CD.

Toliver says the song relates to his life more than his other songs and has more of a personal touch to it. In the song, Toliver sings of pickup trucks, pet dogs, prom dates and other symbols of American life. Toliver’s album had plenty of buyers on its debut at the county fair.

Although Toliver’s passion is singing country music, serving his country as a U.S Marine is his first priority.

Toliver is the grounds office non commissioned officer in charge, Headquarter and Service Company, Marine Barracks Washington. He works long hours to ensure the Barracks is presentable for the Evening Parades and pursues his passion as a country singer on his off time.

A Milwaukie native, Toliver enlisted in the Marine Corps on July 29, 2007 as an infantryman, but has been playing the guitar since he was nine years old. While at the School of Infantry, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., he was persuaded by some of the instructors to buy a guitar and continue playing like he had done before he enlisted. Toliver bought a \$150 guitar and picked up where he had left off. Sitting at the beach in San Diego during January 2008, he came across a man who offered him a chance to play in a gig that night at a local bar called Bully’s in La Jolla, Calif. Toliver made \$250 that night.

In October 2008, Toliver recorded a song titled “Live Our Dream” and put it on YouTube. Many of Toliver’s friends saw the video and sent it into the Washington D.C. radio station 98.7 WMZQ, where the song was heard across the United States. From Mississippi to Texas, the song touched thousands of people and received great reviews from the general public.

“I couldn’t believe it at first. I thought my friends had heard some Carry Underwood song,” said Toliver.

When Toliver learned of his friends hearing the song on the radio, he contacted John Jewell, owner and founder of Jewell Tone Records. Jewell, his manager, helped him record a five track album, including the crowd favorite, “Me and You,” which Toliver wrote in the early hours of the morning.

“We all felt like Tyler had something really unique about his voice,” said Jewell. “I’ve had a lot of talented people, but nobody ever on Tyler’s level.”

Since his performance, Toliver is working hard to complete a 12-track album and hopes one day to make it big.

“My goal is to walk out of the Marine Corps and walk into a big record deal,” said Toliver. “My dream as a singer is to headline with a full arena.”

Toliver continues to pursue his dream by constantly writing new music and lyrics for his album. With his talent and motivation, there’s no telling how far he will go. To find out more about Cpl. Tyler Toliver, visit his website at www.tylertoliver.com. 



Cpl. Tyler Toliver performs during a show at the Rice Theater in Warrenton, Va., July 10.

CORPORAL TYLER TOLIVER'S COUNTRY MUSIC DEBUT

STORY BY
LANCE CPL. JOHNNY MERKLEY
PHOTOS BY
SCOTT ZOBEL





ROCKIN' OUT

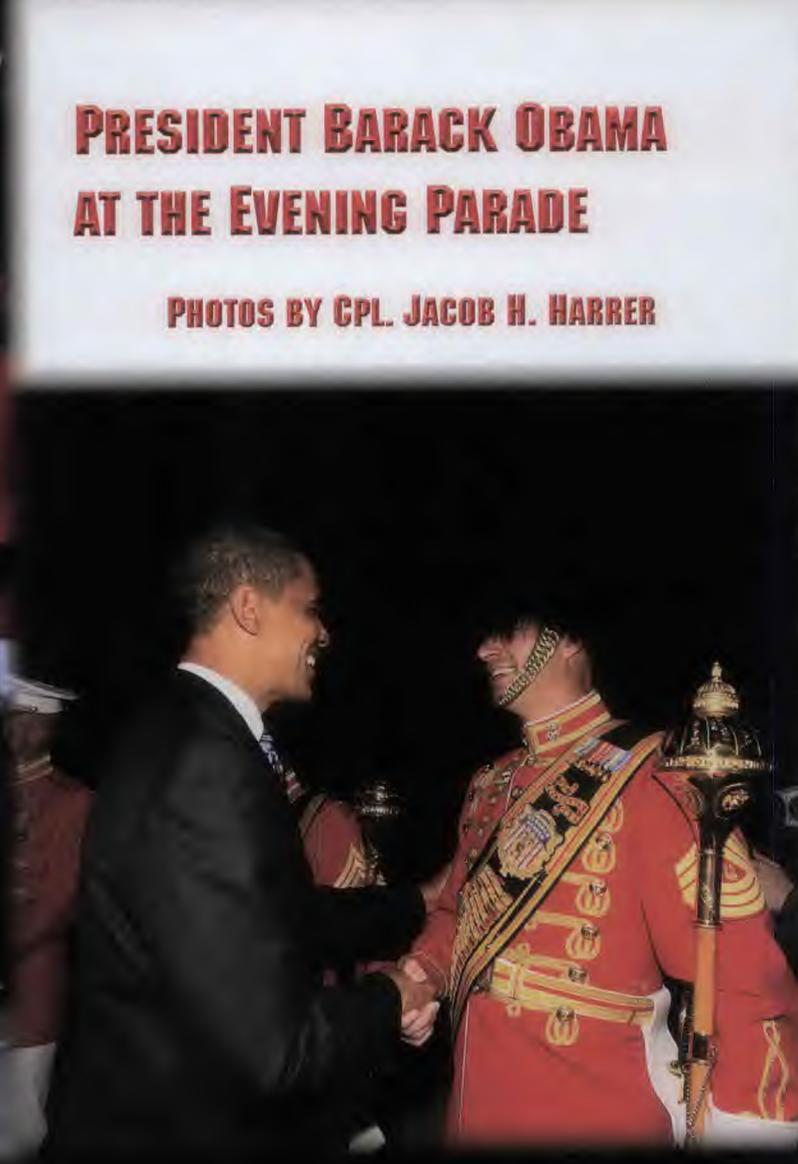
CPL. TYLER T. TOLIVER, GROUNDS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER, PERFORMS SONGS FROM HIS DEBUT COUNTRY MUSIC ALBUM AT THE FAUQUIER COUNTY FAIR IN WARRENTON, VA., JULY 18.

PHOTO BY SCOTT ZOBEL



PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AT THE EVENING PARADE

PHOTOS BY CPL. JACOB H. HARRER





President Barack Obama payed a special visit to Marine Barracks Washington as the guest of honor at the Evening Parade, July 24. The U.S. Marine Band played Hail to the Chief, while the U.S. Marine Corps Body Bearers conducted the 21 gun salute for the Commander in Chief. He then enjoyed a toast with the officers of the Barracks.



Left: President Barack Obama shares a laugh with Capt. Alexis A. Steele, assistant logistics officer, in Center House after the completion of the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, July 24.

Below: The President and First Lady pet Lance Cpl. Chesty XIII, the official mascot of Marine Barracks Washington, after the parade. Chesty is a pedigree English bulldog and is considered an active duty Marine.



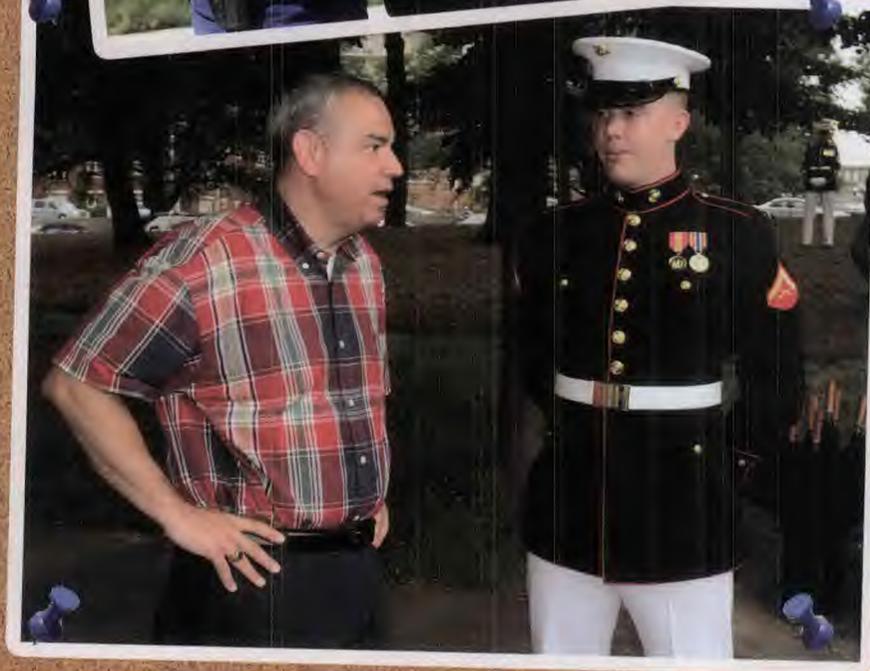
President Barack Obama congratulates Sgt. Corey R. Wunderlich, 33rd Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps. For a spectacular performance at the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, July 24.



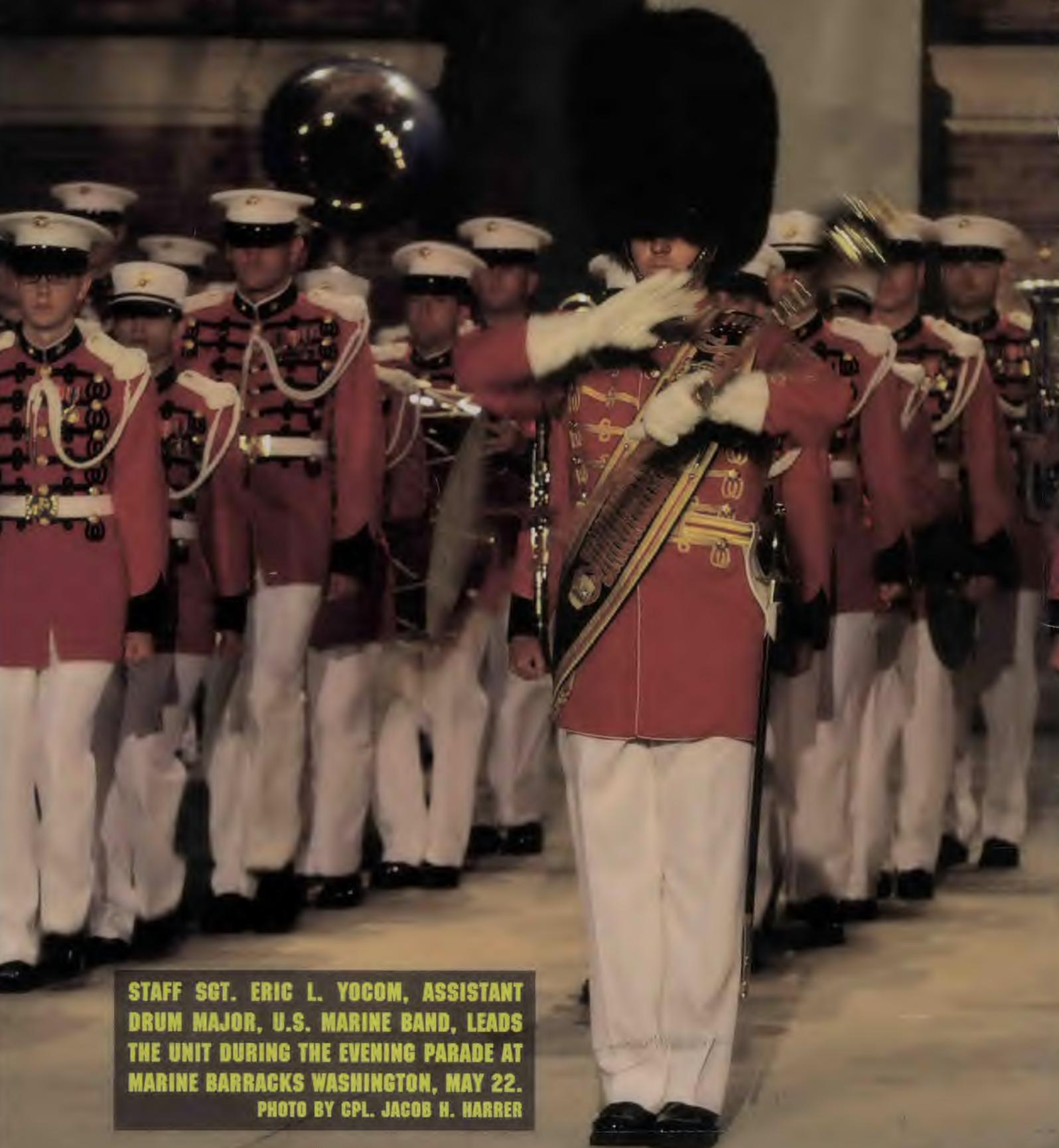
Around the Barracks



Around the Barracks



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
MARINE BARRACKS
8TH & I STREETS S.E.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20390-5000**



**STAFF SGT. ERIC L. YOCOM, ASSISTANT
DRUM MAJOR, U.S. MARINE BAND, LEADS
THE UNIT DURING THE EVENING PARADE AT
MARINE BARRACKS WASHINGTON, MAY 22.
PHOTO BY CPL. JACOB H. HARRER**