

Marine earned many ranks in long career

Story and photo by
Cpl. Daniel Blatter

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – After 32 years of service, Lt. Col. Thomas E. Davis bode farewell to the Marine Corps, Oct. 9, in a ceremony held in front of the 1st Marine Division headquarters building, the White House.

At the ceremony, Davis was joined by his family, including his mother, his wife, and their two children. Also in attendance was Col. Robert Castellvi, chief of staff, 1st Marine Division, who spoke to the audience on behalf of Maj. Gen. Richard P. Mills, division commanding general.

“Today is a celebration. It’s a celebration of greatness. It’s a celebration of achievement,” Castellvi said. “It’s a celebration of a transition and it’s a celebration of a man who is leaving on top of his game.”

Davis entered the Marine Corps from Saint Cloud, Minn., in 1977. After graduating as senior honor man from recruit training, he began his career as a microwave radio operator.

In January of 1987, Staff Sgt.

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1/5 to enemy: ‘Make peace or die!’



Photo by Lance Cpl. John McCall

Lance Cpl. Roy Aeschilmann with Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, returns fire during a fire fight in Nawa district, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Aeschilmann is a 24-year-old rifleman from Tucker, Ga. The Marines were attacked while conducting a security patrol in the area. They suffered no casualties after exchanging fire with enemy insurgents for nearly two hours.

(See **FRONTLINES** on Page 4)

1st MSOB honor fallen warrior

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Eugenio Montanez

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif., -- The Marines of 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command held a memorial service for one of their own at South Mesa Blinder Memorial Chapel, Oct. 8.

The memorial service was held in memory of Capt. Joshua Meadows, 30, a helicopter pilot who gave his life Sept. 5 during operations in Farah Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“We are here to remember Capt. Josh Meadows. A warrior, a husband, a father and a friend, who has left his life to be in a better place,” said Navy Cmdr. Robert Howard, the battalion chaplain.

During the ceremony the 1st MSOB commanding officer provided his reflections to Meadows’ family and friends.

“I felt that I failed in my job by not knowing Josh better, but as I recount our short time together, I realized it was for the right reasons. He moved to the sound of the guns,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey C. Tuggle, the battalion commanding officer.

Marines who worked with him said that his unique personality was one they all missed.

“It was a great loss, he was the type of fun-loving guy everyone needed around,” said Staff Sgt. Patrick Grundza, intelligence chief for Company D, 1st MSOB. “All the jokes he used to make to cheer

(See **MEMORIAL** Page 3)



A display of a rifle, a pair of boots and dog tags stand in front of a slide show of fallen Marine Capt. Joshua Meadows, who was killed in action, Sept. 5, during operations in Farah Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The display was placed at the Blinder Memorial Chapel at Camp Pendleton, Calif., during a memorial service, Oct. 8.

Darkside Marines, sailors swap desert locales

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Benjamin Crilly

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — The Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, departed the combat center and the high desert of California, Oct. 1 through 9, for a seven-month deployment to another desert, in Afghanistan, supporting combat operations in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The infantry battalion, known by their call sign, “Darkside,” has deployed the most times since the beginning of the global war on terrorism as the warriors begin the battalion’s sixth combat tour.

“This is what an infantry battalion does: deploy,” said Capt. Craig Q. Reese, the commanding officer for Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Bn., 4th Marines.

For the past 13 months, Marines and sailors with Darkside have been sharpening their combat skills here for deployment. Training in an enhanced Mojave Viper and at the Mountain Warfare Training Center, near Bridgeport, Calif., has given the Marines the



Private first class Gori M. Denney, 19, a supply administrative clerk with Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, feeds his seven-week-old daughter before leaving Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., Oct. 8, as his wife Brianna, 18, looks on.

(See **DEPLOY** Page 3)



DIVISION TRAINING



Marines, sailors rappel as ship sails

Story and photos by
Cpl. Jeffrey Belovarac

PACIFIC OCEAN — Marines and sailors of Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, rappelled from a helicopter parked on USS Bonhomme Richard's flight deck here Oct. 6 to an elevator platform three stories below.

"It's pretty scary at first, but nice once you're on the ground," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua D. Thornbloom, 23, from Portland, Ore. "It doesn't help that we're leaning out over the rear of the helicopter with the ocean under us. The intimidation factor goes up a little bit."



Private First Class Lucas R. Hernandez leaps out the back of a CH-46 helicopter while rappelling aboard USS Bonhomme Richard, Oct. 6. Marines with Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 2/4, rappelled from the ship's flight deck to an elevator platform three stories below.

Fast-roping, or free sliding down a rope through a hole, is the preferred method for expeditious helicopter exits over land, and Marines typically rappel from towers or cliff sides. However, while sailing aboard the amphibious assault ship, they improvised.

Battalion Landing Team 2/4 is the ground combat element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which is currently deployed to the Western Pacific.

The Weapons Company members lowered themselves from the back of a CH-46 Sea Knight, many rappelling for the first time since recruit training, said 1st Lt. Jameson K. Norton, a 23 year old from Nashville, Tenn.

"Rappelling isn't used much, but it's a skill Marines can maintain while they're with us," said Norton. "It's a great confidence booster."

Norton said it gives a Marine the skill and confidence to descend into arduous terrain.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald A. Laganzon rappels from a helicopter parked on USS Bonhomme Richard's flight deck, Oct. 6, to an elevator platform three stories below. Laganzon serves with Battalion Landing Team 2/4, the ground combat element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which deployed Sept. 24 to the Western Pacific.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua D. Thornbloom, 23, from Portland, Ore., rappels out the back of a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard, Oct. 6. Marines with Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 2/4, rappelled from the ship's flight deck to an elevator platform three stories below.



Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Crevling rappels from a helicopter parked on USS Bonhomme Richard's flight deck, Oct. 6, to an elevator platform three stories below. Crevling serves with Battalion Landing Team 2/4, the ground combat element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which deployed Sept. 24 to the Western Pacific.

Memorial

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you up really helped, even if you were having the worst day.”

One of Meadows' co-workers said they had become more than just friends over the seven years they worked together and seen each other rise as Marine warriors.

“We are no longer co-workers, we are family, we are brothers,” said Capt. Ian Rowe, a helicopter pilot with the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267. “Josh's actions inspired me to be better in everything I do in life. He is the most dedicated officer I've met.”

Meadows enlisted in the Marine Corps and attended boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, graduating in 1998. Pfc. Meadows' first duty

assignment was to Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment. Then Sgt. Meadows attended Officer Candidate School in later 2001 and was commissioned December 2001.

Upon completion of OCS, 2nd Lt. Meadows attended Aviation Preflight Indoctrination in 2002 and graduated in 2004.

In Aug. 2004, 1st Lt. Meadows was assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267, where he spent the next four years deploying with various units.

As a captain, Meadows was assigned to U.S. Marine Special Operations Command in 2008, where he deployed to Afghanistan.

Meadows' decorations included the Purple Heart, Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



Staff Sgt. Patrick Grundza, an intelligence chief with U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command pays his respects at the memorial for Capt. Joshua Meadows, in a memorial service at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 8.



Lt. Col. Thomas E. Davis gives his final speech as a Marine, Oct. 9, during his retirement ceremony held in front of the 1st Marine Division headquarters. Davis started his career as a private first class and after 32 years retired a lieutenant colonel.

Retirement

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Davis was selected to become a warrant officer. After completing Warrant Officer Basic School in Quantico, Va., Warrant Officer Davis was reassigned to the 11th Marine Regiment here.

Three years later, CWO-2 Davis was assigned as the operations officer of Communications Company, 1st Marine Division. As the operations officer, he deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 1990 to April 1991.

Davis became a commissioned officer in 1995, when he was promoted to captain. He then served as the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing communications operations officer.

Davis returned to 1st Marine Division in July 2001 as the division's operations of-

ficer. Davis deployed to Kuwait in 2002 as the senior member of the division quartering party in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was then reassigned as the communications officer for 1st Marine Division forward element and Task Force Tripoli. There he participated in offensive ground combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In January 2007, Davis was promoted to lieutenant colonel. His most recent position was as the Division Assistant Chief of Staff, Communications (G-6).

Davis ended his retirement speech by giving thanks to the warriors he has served with. He then listed the names of the Fallen Marines he once stood beside.

“Lest not we forget, it is because of their selfless actions and many like them, that we as a nation live free,” Davis said. “There's not a day that goes by that I don't think of these Marines and their families.”



Kayla T. Robertson, 18, smiles as Lance Cpl. Cameron R. Reeder, 20, a rifleman with Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, proposes before leaving Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 8. The Marines and sailors of 3rd Bn., 4th Marines, departed the combat center Oct. 1 through 9, for a 7-month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Deploy

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tools they will need to be combat effective in the terrain of Afghanistan.

“They have done a pretty extensive work up,” said Reese, 33, from Thermopolis, Wyo. “I don't think there are going to be any issues.”

A solemn mood from family and friends was mixed with anticipation as Marines and sailors said their goodbyes to loved ones.

“I am not really scared to go over there,” said Pfc. Gori M. Denny, 19, a supply administrative clerk with H & S Co., from Locust Fort, Ala., participating in his first deployment. “I am more worried about being away from my wife and my daughter.”

Marines realize that this deployment will be more dynamic than the battalion's last tour in Iraq.

“It's going to be a lot more kinetic than Iraq was last year,” said Lance Cpl. James W. Vervaecke, 20, an improvised explosive device detection dog handler, with 3rd Bn., 4th Marines.

“My ambition for this company is to bring everyone home alive,” Reese said.

The devil dogs of Darkside will be conducting mechanized operations, combined-arms ops and other expeditionary tasks in order to support theater engagement plans and contingency operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom throughout their deployment to Afghanistan.

Marine Corps History:

Oct. 11, 1776: Marines serving with to Continental Army Brig. Gen. Benedict Arnold stopped the British advance on Lake Champlain, N.Y., protecting the settlement from 53 English boats near Valcour Island.



Oct. 17, 1820: The longest tenure of service as Commandant of the Marine Corps began when Col. Archibald Henderson, 38, was named to the Corps' top office. In Henderson's 39 years as Commandant, he initiated training for officers that would become The Basic School, took hands-on control of Marine regiments in the field and fought to keep the Marine Corps separate from the Army and Navy.

Brevet Brig. Gen. Henderson died in office at age 76.

Oct. 1983: Marines from the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit conducted Operation Urgent Fury to liberate the Caribbean island of Grenada from a Soviet-sponsored, Cuban-executed overthrow of the former British commonwealth. The 22nd MAU took three days to secure the island and captured Soviet Bloc diplomats who were trying to create a Cuban garrison.

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THE FRONTLINES



Marines with Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, run for cover during a fire fight in Nawa district, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Marines were attacked while conducting a security patrol in the area.

Marines light it up as sun sets on insurgents

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. John McCall

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — “I could hear the bullets flying over my head,” said Lance Cpl. Michael Estrada, 20, a team leader from Los Angeles. “They were also impacting right in front of us.”

Marines with Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, were engaged in a firefight here, Oct. 2.

Marines conducting a security patrol were attacked by enemy insurgents hiding on the outskirts of a nearby village.

“We were patrolling through an area that is known to be used by the enemy,” said Sgt. Matthew Duquette, 23, a squad leader from Warrenville, Ill. “We were moving across this small field on our way back (to the patrol base), and we started taking fire.”

Caught in an open field, Marines rushed for what little

cover they could find, attained positive identification of the enemy, and began returning fire.

“They were firing at us from a few different positions. Most of it was coming out of a small village directly in front us,” Duquette explained. “Once we identified their positions, we returned fire. We knew where they were so we had no reason to leave.”

“You could see a few guys poking their heads out along with the muzzles of their rifles,” Estrada recalled.

With the sun beginning to set, the enemy continued to harass the Marines from various positions. The insurgents put themselves between the bright sun and the Marines in a failed attempt to stifle them.

“They try to use the sun to their advantage,” Estrada explained. “The enemy will attack a lot when the sun sets or when it rises since it is hard to see anything with the sun in your eyes.”

After nearly 90 minutes, Marines radioed for an air strike to take out the remaining enemy fighters.

“The shots kept coming so air support was called in for us,” Duquette said. “I’m glad the plane came when it did because it seemed like the enemy’s shots started getting a lot more accurate as the fight went on. Once we had support from the air, the enemy retreated and stopped firing.”

The gunfire ceased after two aircraft made their gun runs, laying down fire on the insurgent positions.

After the fight, the Marines found hundreds of enemy bullet casings in many different buildings in the area. Fortunately, the Marines had suffered no casualties during the fight.



Pfc. Travis Preciado with Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, runs for cover during a firefight in Nawa district, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Preciado is a 21-year-old rifleman from Oregon City, Ore.



Lance Cpl. Roy Aeschilman with Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 3, returns fire during a fire fight in Nawa district, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Aeschilman is a 24-year-old rifleman from Tucker, Ga. The Marines were attacked while conducting a security patrol in the area. They suffered no casualties after exchanging fire with enemy insurgents for nearly two hours.

‘Zombieland’ delivers morbidly funny humor

Story by
Cpl. Shawn Coolman

‘Zombieland’ is a cleverly humorous and ghoulish edition to the zombie movie genre.

Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg) is a student attending the University of Texas, and is on his way home to Ohio after most of the earth is devastated by a virus that turned everyone into carnivorous zombies.

While walking down the highway, Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson), on his journey in his souped-up SUV, crosses paths with Columbus, and together they begin their journey to the east coast.

Harrelson, in the film, is undoubtedly the unwavering professional zombie killer, but has one weakness: Twinkies!

They run into Wichita (Emma Stone) and Little Rock (Abigail Breslin), two con-artists at a grocery store where Tallahassee kills a couple zombies in ‘improv’ fashion, while searching for his elusive

twinkie.

The girls con both Columbus and Tallahassee, and take their weapons and SUV.

The four reconnect down the road when the girls try to pull another one over on the boys, and while driving they all realize they are beginning to become a family.

They decide to drive to California so Little Rock can go to an amusement park for the first time, which is supposedly zombie free.

On the way they kill a few more zombies, smash a few vacant stores and become a family in a world full of blood sucking zombies.

Once they arrive, and as most tourists do, they quickly grab a map of the stars’ homes. From the hundreds to choose from, Tallahassee decides on what he thinks is the recently vacated house of actor Bill Murray.

Unbeknownst to any of them, Murray is all decked out in zombie attire and asleep upstairs. Acting like a zombie, Murray descends downstairs to a frightened cast.

As a practical joke by Murray, he pretends to be a zombie and sneaks up behind Columbus and Little Rock while they were watching one of his famous movies. Not knowing he wasn’t acting, Columbus pumps Murray full of buck shot.

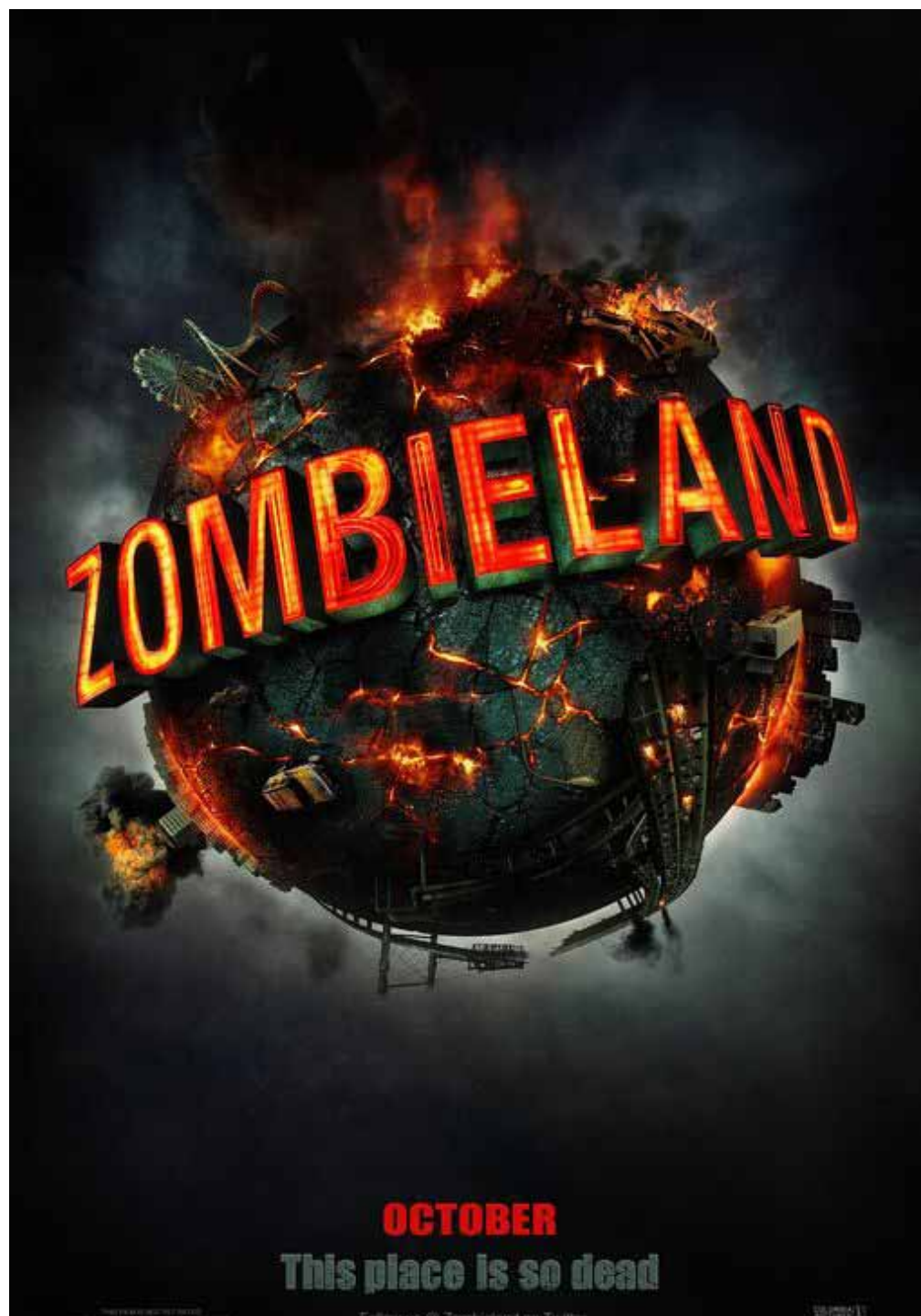
Through flashbacks during the movie we learn that Wichita and Little Rock only trust each other, and after the Murray killing, they take off by themselves to the amusement park at night and get caught deep behind zombie lines, which requires an explosive rescue from the boys.

The over the top antics and the jump out of your seat laughing cameo of Bill Murray makes this film my top choice for the best comedic horror film of the fall.



Photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures

A zombie clown stares down Columbus during the last scene of Zombieland, a movie distributed by Columbia Pictures. Although deathly afraid of clowns, Columbus defeats the zombie clown and goes on to rescue the rest of the cast.



BASE THEATRE MOVIES AND TIMES



The base theater is located in the Base Training Center, Building 1330 Vandegrift Blvd., in the 13 Area across from the Mainside Exchange.

Theater is closed Monday and Tuesday

BEGINS ENDS

Wednesday, Oct. 14
District 9 (PG-13)

6:30 PM 8:22 PM

Thursday, Oct. 15
500 Days of Summer (PG-13)

6:30 PM 8:05 PM

Friday, Oct. 16
Inglorious Basterds (R)

6:00 PM 8:31 PM

The Final Destination (R)

9:15 PM 10:36 PM

Saturday, Oct. 17
Shorts (PG)

4:00 PM 5:29 PM

Julie & Julia (PG-13)

6:00 PM 8:04 PM

Gamer (R)

9:00 PM 10:35 PM

Sunday, Oct. 18

!! FREE MOVIES !!
“See It Again Sunday!”

Terminator Salvation (PG-13)

1:00 PM 2:55 PM

Up (PG)

3:50 PM 5:32 PM

The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3 (R)

6:30 PM 8:15 PM

Semper Fit Program

Hospital Fitness Center:
1130 Tues and Thurs
Gut Cut & Weights

43 Area Fitness Center:
1130 Mon and Thurs
Survival Cycle & Abs
1130 Tues
Gut Cut

52 Area Fitness Center:
1130 Mon
Survival Cycle
1130 Tues
Survival & Stretch
1830 Mon and Wed
Turbo Kick
1830 Tues and Thurs
Zumba

13 Area Pool:
0800 Wed and Fri
Aqua Groove

33 Area Fitness Center:
1130 Tues
Survival Cycle & Abs
1130 Wed
Yoga
1130 Thurs
Combat Circuit