Some U.S. Marines at Camp Pendleton developed a series of training exercises designed to make them more well-rounded. During the workup, they endured weapons qualifications, strenuous workouts, and counterinsurgency drills that mirror the sights, sounds and smells of Afghanistan.

Surprisingly, they added weekly meditation classes where they sat motionless in a chair and focused on a point of contact between their feet and the floor. At first, many thought this exercise was a waste of time. But eventually they felt more relaxed and less tense.

The result of this workshop is because Marine Corps officials are testing a series of brain calming exercises called “Mindfulness-Based Mind Fitness Training (M-Fit)” that could possibly enhance the performance of troops who are currently facing longer deployment periods, stringent budget cuts and uncontrollable downsizing of the Armed Forces.

Designer and former U.S. Army Captain and current Georgetown University professor Elizabeth Stanley says that M-Fit draws on a growing body of scientific research indicating that regular meditation alleviates depression, boosts memory and the immune system, shrinks the part of the brain that controls fear and grows the areas of the brain responsible for memory and emotional regulation. M-Fit techniques can be very effective in increasing situational awareness, limiting emotions driving behavior, bolstering performance and resilience in high-stress environments.

While teaching troops to perform effectively in combat makes them a better warfighter, teaching mindfulness makes them a more productive Marine. M-Fit helps them to decompress which could have lasting effects.

Cheryl Collins
Education Office: Develop Your Mind Through College Skills

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) announced October 1 that the College Placement Skills Training (CPST), a new online program provided by DANTES, is now live and can be accessed at www.nelnetsolutions.com/dantes/. CPST is available to Service members, DoD civilians, and family members, to help prepare for college, build academic skills, and prepare for exams such as CLEP or DSST. CPST is especially helpful for those beginning their college program, as most colleges require students to take placement exams prior to enrolling in English and math classes.

Students who put the effort into taking a refresher program like CPST can impact the number of pre-college classes they might need, thereby saving their tuition assistance dollars for credit classes. More importantly, when these students test into college level courses, they save time and accelerate their degree completion.

This course is self-paced and customized according to each participant’s answers on a pre-assessment. Lessons are supported by interactive exercises such as drag-and-drop matching, video game style multiple choice, and dynamic flash cards. Quizzes and practice problem sets also help students gauge their mastery of the material.

CPST not only offers skill-building lessons, quizzes and tests, but also helpful articles covering such topics as “How to Beat Test Stress” and “Last-Minute Study Tips.” Furthermore, this program offers detailed tips and strategies for doing well on college entry exams.

Call the Education Office at (252)466-3500 for additional information.

Testimonial from Maj Dennis C. Bard on How to Develop the Mind

“My experience with Trident University International (TUI) has been very rewarding. The course of study utilized for the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) was consistent and easy to follow; with each course having 6 separate modules and requiring 2 essay papers per module and at least two chat room blog responses required for each module as well. The courses were definitely Masters Level and I thoroughly enjoyed the academic exercise required for all course requirements.

I would advocate TUI to any potential military students, as all course delivery method execution and assignments turn-in requirements were accessed via the university website. I chose to take a leave of absence for the 6 months I was deployed to Afghanistan, however, depending on the individual’s circumstance regarding deployment requirements there may be no need to take a break from courses while deployed. Including the 6 month leave of absence, it took me 2 and 1/2 years to complete my Master’s degree.”
Military Academic Skills Program (MASP) Another Service to Help Develop Mind Strength Skills

A student that finished MASP in October of 2013 speaks out about how this program helped him. He sums it up in a simple quote. “I got my ASVAB scores back and I went up at least 15 points on all of my line scores including my AFQT score. I am ecstatic with the results. I just want to thank the instructors for all of their help. The program was outstanding and I hope it never goes away”. MASP is designed to help improve in the competencies of reading, writing and math. This program can prepare you for college courses, SAT or ACT and College Placement Exams. If you are interested in finding out more about MASP, please call the Education Office at 252-466-3500.

Station Library A Great Place to Exercise or Relax the Mind

In 2013, MCCS Cherry Point Station Library made some outstanding changes to its facility and services resulting in leading the Marine Corps in library services for 2014. The library has created a relaxing and very inviting space for our military community to socialize, enjoy some coffee while reading the latest news article or a great book. The community has responded positively to the changes made to the library and have contributed some ideas to make the library even more inviting.

We believe that professional development is important to our military community, so one of the first tasks we will achieve is to kick off the New Year reviving the MCI collection. The library also introduced a new subscription to Atomic Training. It provides the tools needed to help users develop and increase proficient and productive technology based skills. We offer a variety of language learning material. Our foreign language programs have grown over the years, from cassette tapes to online subscriptions. We have the Rosetta Stone CD-ROM and The Transparent Language online subscriptions. Both of these services provide the user with helpful techniques in learning a foreign language. For our patrons worried about finances, the library offers a variety of resources at no costs.

The library has resources for all customers’ professional needs. The professional reading collection contains full print access to the Commandant’s, Sergeant Major’s, and First Lady’s professional reading lists. We also have a special section for our patrons’ test preparation needs. For those who do not have an internet capability, we have a full service computer lab which includes a printer and scanner for your research needs.

Mental health is important for everyday life. The library offers many ways to keep your mind at ease. We have just unveiled our circulating video game collection. Our collection has games for the Play Station 3, Xbox 360 and Wii consoles. If video games aren’t your idea of relaxing we have a fresh collection of music cd’s ranging in genres from Jazz to Rock. One can even download 3 digital songs a week for free using the Freegal website. We are located in building 298 and can be reached at 252-466-3552.
Happy New Year! Another year has come and gone and the Family Member Employment Assistance Program is still moving forward with new and innovative services to help your employment needs. The FMEAP program is promoting new initiatives to assist spouses and family members in becoming employment ready!

FMEAP will be starting the year off with the Spouse Transition and Readiness Seminar (S.T.A.R.S.) January 22, 2013, 0900-1100. If your Service member is transitioning out of the military, be sure to register to attend this informative workshop designed just for spouses. This 2 hour seminar will provide entitlements and benefit information regarding the transition process. This year we will bring new and exciting instructional material to your living room, so be on the lookout for FMEAP webinars on www.mccscherrypoint.com.

FMEAP Coordinator: Patrice Bryant (252) 466-5836/4201

The Sponsorship Program will be playing an important part in the Commandant’s vision. As of September 23, 2013 he has stated that each and every Marine that is under PCS orders will receive a sponsor. With the increased focus on sponsorship, we have added more Sponsorship Training classes to our calendar.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor to incoming Marines and or family members, you will need the required training before assuming responsibility.

Training covers the responsibility of a sponsor by going over the steps to be informative and proactive for incoming Marines and their families. For more information call the Relocation Assistance Program at 252-466-4201/5743 to sign up for the Sponsorship Training class. Below you will find the 2014 class dates.

Jan 9
Feb 13
Mar 13
Apr 10
May 15
Jun 12
Jul 10
Aug 10
Sep 11
Oct 9
Nov 13
Dec 11
Financial Management: Get a Jump Start on Your 2014 Finances! Clear The Mind For Financial Health

Are you currently ignoring your finances? Do you have bad spending habits, or are you just financially afraid of saving and investing tools? As we enter into the New Year, it is a great time to look at how you manage your money. It is important to establish realistic financial goals or New Year financial resolutions. Whether your desire is to eliminate debt or build wealth, as you map out your plan, it is important to remember patience is the key! A good first step is to change your behavior and attitude towards money. For many of us, when it comes to money, we don't have one bad habit we have a combination of factors that can have negative affects on our finances. It is difficult to develop realistic financial goals if you have not taken the time to understand how you want to spend your money. In other words, if you have not defined a financial goal, you are probably not going to achieve it!

As you enter into 2014, why not take the time to develop a better understanding of budgeting, credit management, and saving & investment by attending one of the many Personal Financial Management classes offered aboard MCAS Cherry Point. The Personal Financial Management Program is located in the Training and Education Building, Room 213 or call 252-466-5837/4201. Click here to obtain additional information on the program!

Military Saves Week, 24-28 February 2014, is an annual opportunity for installations and organizations to promote good savings behavior and a chance for Service Members and their families to assess their own saving status. The picture to the right shows some of our smart Marines who have taken advantage of this program to become financially fit.

National Consumer Protection Week

National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), 2-8 Mar 2014, is a coordinated campaign that encourages consumers nationwide to take full advantage of their consumer rights and to make better-informed decisions. For more information about this campaign visit www.ncpw.gov/.

Information to Read & Share

Personal Finance Management Program: LouAnn Witmer (252)-466-5837/4201
Best wishes and much success as we head into the New Year! As you depart from the military and start a business of your own, let the Transition Readiness Seminar staff and the Small Business Administration (SBA) provide you the tools needed to start your own business. Our 2-Day Boots to Business (B2B) Pathway will help you achieve your entrepreneurship dreams. The first class starts in February 2014. Once you complete the 2 day course, Instructors will provide a code to an 8-week online Entrepreneurship Course with the Small Business Administration. Active-duty, veterans, spouses and other authorized patrons of the installation are welcome to register.

### 2014 Operation Boots 2 Business Workshops Dates

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Almost 9% of all U.S. small businesses are veteran-owned.

The value of an idea lies in the using of it.

—Thomas Edison
**Information & Referral: Eases The Stress Of Finding The Right Resource**

Our mission is to ease the minds of Marines and their families by helping them navigate through the mobile military lifestyle. We do this by providing Information and Referral functions, linking individuals with unresolved information needs to the sources/resources that are best capable of addressing those needs. Information and Referral is located in building 232. Our phone number is 252-466-4401 and hours of operation are Monday-Friday 0730-1630.

**USEFUL WEBSITES:**

**Useful Websites:**

http://www.nmcrs.org/ (Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society)

http://www.tricare.mil/ (Tricare)

http://www.marines.mil/ (USMC)

http://www.usmc-mccs.org/ (Main MCCS website)

http://www.militaryfamily.org (Natl. Military Family Association)

http://www.militarykidsconnect.org (Military Kids Connect)

http://www.dstressline.com (Distress Line)

http://www.militaryonesource.mil/ (Military One Source)

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**Retired Services Office**

The Retired Services Office has been made aware that, upon the death of retiree, surviving spouses and families are receiving letters, forms and other materials that attempt to pressure them into making hasty decisions or to take an immediate action that may not be in their best interest. This is happening locally and this week the RSO received two such reports in a single day.

Surviving spouses and families should be taking the days immediately after a death to grieve and manage the details of the funeral. Ignore pressuring correspondence and delay important decisions until full attention can be paid to their potential impact.

Shortly after the death of a retiree, surviving spouses and families will receive a Retired Service Office condolence package that includes a guide to what needs to be done and a suggested timeline. For assistance with these matters, call the Retired Service Office at 466-5548. For planning purposes, a copy of the Spouse Guide is available on-line at [http://mccscherrypoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Surviving-Spouse-Guide1.pdf](http://mccscherrypoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Surviving-Spouse-Guide1.pdf).
Mind, Body, Spirit and Soul Makes a More Productive Marine

What makes a well-rounded professional service member? Is it someone who looks good in uniform? Is it someone who can calculate a logistics movement without a calculation device? What if you had all elements working together in your daily life? Often times we view the need to look physically fit as a means of presenting that image of being a professional military man or woman, but if you combine the importance of improving the mind, spirit and soul with the body, at that point, not only will you look good, you will also feel good about who you are and where life is taking you. While you are out running those 3 miles, or building those biceps, think about the Personal and Professional Development Program helping you become a more productive Marine. P&PD will assist you in becoming educationally fit, financially stable or comfortable about your next transition post military obligation to reduce stressors the mind encounters.

A sound mind in a sound body is a short but full description of a happy state in this world. ~John Locke

To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear. ~Buddha

“Many people do not realize the toll stress can have on their lives or that mental health is key to overall health in general. Caring for both the mind and the body not only helps boost a person's spirits but can help lead to a healthier, happier and more productive life.”

Cynthia Wainscott

Happy New Year!!!

Ranza Thurman,
P&PD Program Manager

A Word from the P&PD Program SNCOIC

The three pillars of holistic health are essential characteristics that drive our quest for personal and professional growth, development, and productivity. Having a strong mind, a properly functioning body, and a courageous spirit and soul, undoubtedly enhances our ability to perform required tasks and responsibilities effectively. The Personal and Professional Development Program is committed to providing the resources and guidance needed to ensure that every service member is empowered to find ways to maximize their individual productivity, and achieve personal and professional success while on active duty and beyond.

MSgt Fred Brock