

They All Fell Out for the

By R. R. Keene



Members of MB, Washington, including the Silent Drill Platoon and Marine Corps Color Guard, fell out in summer service "Charlie" uniforms, which surprised many of the former and present military gentry who turned out to watch the traditional Marine Corps League's Enlisted Awards Parade and Presentation, hosted for the past eight years at MCAF, Quantico, Va.

When the Marine Corps League sponsors a shindig, people come. They've been holding the Modern Day Marine Military Exposition annually at Marine Corps Air Facility, Quantico, Va., for eight years since moving out of Washington, D.C., in 1994 and are still drawing throngs of military men and women as well as contractors and just plain interested folks.

Annually, more than 200 exhibitors make up the high-tech bazaar—now in its 22nd year. The expo is located in 44,000 square feet spread through and between three large aircraft hangars, making it the largest display of weapons, equipment and supplies essential to amphibious and expeditionary operations in the world.

The highlight of the expo, hosted by the Capital Marine Detach-



ment, is the League's Enlisted Awards Parade and Presentation on the air facility tarmac. It is attended not only by the Corps' top brass—including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones; Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Alford L. McMichael; and officials of the Marine Corps League: National Commandant John P. Tuohy and Executive Director Brooks Corley—but also by captains of the industries and defense contractors represented at the expo as well as leaders and youngsters of the Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs.

Companies A and B from Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., including the Silent Drill Platoon and the United States Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, provided the snap and pomp of a professional military backdrop, as those who presented awards looked on from the reviewing stand.

Awards were presented to 10 individuals who contributed greatly to the combat readiness of their units and the Marine Corps in 2002. Winners in the various categories were as follows:

Staff Sergeant Patrick L. Keister, Counter Mechanized Platoon, 1st Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, Camp Pendleton, Calif., won the Sergeant Major Wilbur Bestwick Award, presented to a Marine in a ground combat element of the Marine operating forces.

Gunnery Sergeant Richard J. Watson, based at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz., earned the Sergeant Major Frederick B. Douglass Award for significant contributions and increased combat readiness in an aviation element of the Marine operating forces.

SSgt Michael B. Coffin, Company Embarkation, Maintenance, Supply Chief, Headquarters Plt, 1st Bulk Fuel Co, 7th Engineer Support Battalion, First Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, received the Sergeant Harry D. Myers Award for a Marine serving in a combat service support element of Marine operating forces.

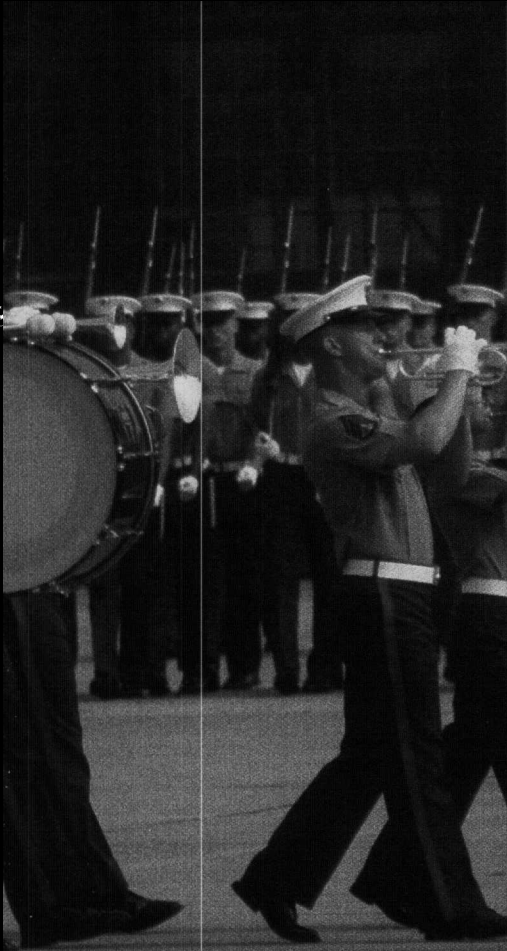
Hospital Corpsman Third Class Sean Dustman, Marine Aircraft Group Detachment Bravo, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., won the Chief Hospital Corpsman George William "Doc" Pierce Award, presented to a corpsman or dental technician serving with the operating forces.

SSgt Wesley A. Turner, Doctrine Developer and Instructor, Marksmanship Programs Management Section, Weapons Training Bn, Quantico, won the Gunnery Sergeant Carlos N. Hatcock II Award, presented to a Marine who has made an outstanding contribution to marksmanship and marksmanship training during the previous 12 months.

GySgt Javier Esparza, Senior Drill Instructor, Co I, 3d Recruit Training Bn, Recruit Training Regiment, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, received the Marine Corps Drill Instructor of the Year Award.

GySgt Valerie A. Thompson, Supply and Fiscal Chief, Marine Air Control Group 48, Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Forces Reserve, won the Sergeant Major Bertha L. Peters Award.

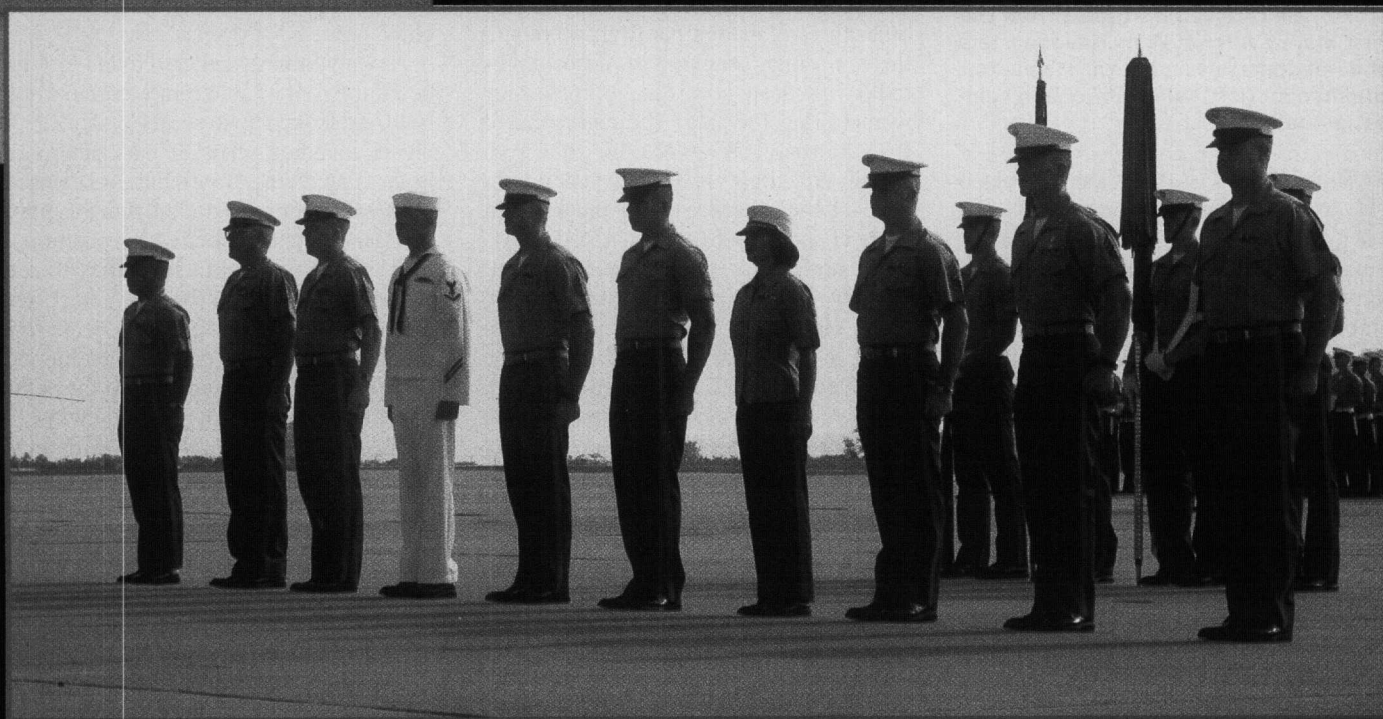
GySgt Gordon M. Miller, Marine Corps Recruiting Station New Orleans, was named the United States Marine Corps Recruiter of the Year.



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Clockwise from above: CMC, Gen James L. Jones Jr. congratulated those whose significant contributions have increased combat readiness. (Photo by Joseph R. Chenelly) The 10 winners not only were recognized publicly but also were presented trophies in the form of a replica of the flag raising on Iwo Jima. As the awardees and honored guests looked on, the band passed in review, playing "The Marines' Hymn."



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SSgt Sean Schoonmaker, Plt Sergeant and Operations Chief, Detachment, 4th Force Reconnaissance Co., 4thMarDiv, Marine Corps Forces Reserve, received recognition by earning the United States Marine Corps Reservist of the Year Award.

CrySgt Todd A. James, Headquarters and Service Co., 1st Transportation Support Bn., 1st LSSG, Camp Pendleton, was selected as the USMC Career Planner of the Year.

Sponsors of the awards included AM General LLC Corporation; Armed Forces Insurance; ATK Integrated Defense Co.;

Bell Helicopter Textron; Beretta USA Corp.; Cove Shoe Matterhorn Boots; DRS Technologies, Inc.; Dupont Co.; EDS; Firearms Training Systems; General Dynamics; General Motors Defense; Harris Corp.; Kollsman, Inc.; Lockheed Martin; Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation; Raytheon Systems Co.; Rolls-Royce; North America; Specialty Defense Systems; TexShield, Inc.; The Boeing Co.; VNU Expositions; and W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

