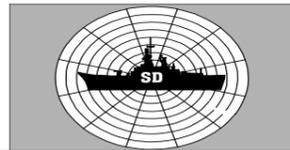


Local Military



MilitaryConnection.com: Troops and families first

by Scott Sutherland
staff writer

The Internet-based MilitaryConnection.com is a one-stop portal for all the resources that servicemembers and their families need to help endure deployment, separations and the special requirements of being a military family.

With more links than all of the golf courses in Florida, MilitaryConnection.com

welcomes members of all branches of America's Armed Forces to spend hours reviewing all its resources. For Navy and Marine Corps members, the Resource and Information Directory connects you with everything from installation and hospital locations, to public and military schools and benefits.

"We're a portal of everything military with thousands of pages, hundreds

of directories of information and resources," said Debbie Gregory, president of the Simi Valley, Calif., company. "One of our focus areas is recruitment, but there is something on the site for everyone. We also spend a great deal of time and resources supporting the military community in a variety of ways and working with some outstanding non-profits."

Even though there is commercial advertising on MilitaryConnection.com, Gregory says the site provides space at no charge to feature special events, conferences, reunions and more.

"All of the resources and information on the site are free to users," she said. "Clients who advertise on the site are extended a discount that we encourage them to donate directly to featured military non-profits with the hope of establishing a 'connection' that goes beyond the discount between these excellent corporate citizens and the non-profits."

No resource or family support center can fully ease the burden of having your family separated for huge chunks of time. Troop support programs and

patriotic displays help, but as Gregory says, "I don't know if we or anyone can ease this burden."

"We try to help as much as possible" she said. "We appreciate the sacrifices of those who serve, and the sacrifices made by their families."

"Our resources are there for families, veterans and those who serve to use whether it is the news, jobs, columns, databases of benefits, resources, printable forms or whatever. It's there for the entire audience. We work with non-profits that serve San Diego and Orange County on programs that provide such things as toys to kids, backpacks for school, adopting families for the holidays, providing toys and adopting families with non-profits such as Homefront America."

Gregory claims the website, launched over a year ago, offers one of the most comprehensive directories of military resources and information on the web,



Debbie Gregory poses next to a screen shot of MilitaryConnection.com, an information resource for servicemembers and their families.

featuring over 10,000 pages of resources, databases and links. "We receive over 250,000 daily hits," she said. "We specialize in connecting members of the military community with top government and civilian employers. All of the numerous resources and services are free to users."

MilitaryConnection.com has the blessing of the Department of Defense and Office of Veterans Affairs to link to each organization's website to supplement information already provided by MilitaryConnection.com.

If you need a job, the website provides possible

employment for you. If you need coupons to save money at Exchanges and Commissaries, the website also provides you with that. If you need to see how much your military pay increased for next year, the website provides that, too.

"We want to hear from you," said Gregory, "so join our forums and let us know what you think. When the next tour is back home, it's on MilitaryConnection.com."

New range scoring system takes effect

by Lance Cpl.

Fredrick J. Coleman
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR - Service members going to the Carlos Hathcock Range Complex here to requalify on the M16-A2 service rifle can expect their scores to tally in a different way this fiscal year.

The new scoring system includes the table 2, or field fire, to achieve a combined score.

Prior to the changes, field fire was scored on a pass-fail basis with 60 being the minimum passing score, explained Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric Brayman, the range officer here.

With the new scoring system, the minimum amount of points required to qualify at different levels has also changed. The new combined score to qualify as a marksman is 250, for sharpshooter is 280 and for expert is 305.

The change is designed to serve as a foundation for Marines to enhance their combat skills by better simulating a combat environment. Shooters fire while wearing full combat gear and improve their abilities to assess and disable targets in urban terrain.

Marines or sailors who shoot expert during the known distance fire, still have the possibility of qualifying as a sharpshooter, or not qualifying, explained Brayman. Failure to qualify in either firing stage automatically disqualifies the Marine or sailor, he added.

"If someone shoots the minimum score for expert during the KD fire, the Marine can still qualify as a sharpshooter if he or she scores an 84 or lower on the table 2 fire" explained Brayman. "Someone who shoots a high expert score and fails the field fire is automatically unqualified."

A Marine or sailor who scores the minimum for marksman can qualify as a sharpshooter if they shoot 89 or higher during field fire, said Brayman.

Lance Cpl. Martan Dye, an outboard orders clerk at the station's installation personnel administration center, said the new scoring system helped him achieve a higher level of qualification.

"The new scoring system is definitely good for anyone who wants to boost their rifle score," said Dye. "The last time I qualified I qualified as a marksman, but this year the field fire boosted my score up to sharpshooter level."

Although someone accumulates a combined score of 305, qualifying that Marine

or sailor as an expert, 305 will not appear on that service member's training record.

Brayman explained the scoring officials use a conversion chart to convert the combined score to the training score. For example, if someone shoots a combined score of 250, the minimum passing score, the score in their training record will be 190, the minimum passing score for the KD fire.

Anyone who scores 305, without failing either KD or field fire, will see 220, the minimum requirement for expert.

Since the Marine Corps implemented the new scoring system, there has been an increase in rifle qualification.

Mossy sponsors free holiday shuttle

San Diego automotive dealer Mossy Nissan will again serve as the official sponsor of the Navy Region Southwest's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) holiday programs, offering free holiday shuttle service to local airports, train stations and bus terminals for active duty personnel with leave.

Utilizing a fleet of new vehicles that include the Nissan Quest, Pathfinder, Armada, and Xterra, the service will also be used to shuttle active duty personnel remaining on military bases to local malls and shopping centers, movie theaters, amusement parks and sporting events during the holiday season. Shuttle service will be offered Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., November 14 through January 6, and is available to personnel stationed at Naval Base San Diego, NAS North Island, NAB Coronado, NSB Point Loma, and Fleet Anti-Submarine Warfare Training Center.

In addition, the Mossy Nissan

sponsorship will help underwrite MWR holiday programs so that active duty military personnel remaining in the area will be able to enjoy these special events and activities at no cost. It's a constructive way to support participation in leisure and recreational programs for service members and their families.

"For active duty personnel with leave, we'll make our shuttle service available so they can make their travel connections," said Peter Mossy of Mossy Nissan. "And for those who remain behind, we'll be available to take them to the movies, sporting events, and local attractions. This is the least we can do to recognize the men and women who are courageously defending our country during these difficult times."

Active-duty members needing shuttle transportation during must call their base Liberty Center to make a reservation.



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