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Program visits  
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## MEET **SPIKE**

He can take you down, make you smile



Above, Spike puts Cpl. Mario Pina of 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, in a headlock at the recent Save a Life Tour, an alcohol awareness presentation which took place at Marston Pavilion. In photograph at top left, Spike stands with several Marines of 2nd AA Bn.

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Carolina Living editor

**M**eet Spike. He's the new Camp Lejeune Single Marine Program mascot, and he's here to make Marines and sailors sit up and take notice.

There is "a little bit of comedy and a little bit of seriousness" in Spike, said Cpl. Ben Mastrofilippo of Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Base. Mastrofilippo was on hand for the recent Save a Life Tour at Marston Pavilion and saw Spike, a strapping bulldog dressed in a Marine uniform and shades, in action.

"I thought he was awesome. You have all these silly mascots, but (Spike) is pretty cool to see, something that represents a little bit of what you are," said Mastrofilippo. "I like the cammies with the sleeves rolled up and with the desert camouflage for the Marines who are deployed."

Casual observation shows that, like a Marine, Spike is tough and cool. He is certainly buff. And though he is capable of operating independently, he seems to like to run in a pack, kind of like the Marines and sailors who spend their off duty hours recreating with the SMP.

If Spike were to have someone resembling a mother figure, it would likely be Susan Goodrich, Camp Lejeune's SMP coordinator.

"He took about nine months to make, almost like a baby," said Goodrich. "We're proud of him. He is very much like a Marine from his cammies down to his watch."

The digital watch, she pointed out, has the time permanently set to 11:10 which pays homage to the Marine Corps birthday, Nov. 10.

"As we got into building him with the company we contracted, it really opened my eyes as to how unique the Marine Corps uniform is," said Goodrich, who has been a Marine Corps Community Services employee for about 16 years now. "I had to actually have Marines come in almost daily to make sure the details were right. The excitement was building monthly."

Goodrich said there are only a few companies in the United States which make the camouflage material used for the Marine Corps battle uniform. For reasons of security, they were not about to ship that material to the company who created Spike. They insisted on sending it to Goodrich, who later forwarded it to the mascot-building team.

Spike stepped aboard Camp Lejeune late last year. His first public appearance was his promotion ceremony.

Lt. Col. Michael Cordero, Headquarters and Support Bn., promoted Spike to private first class at a December SMP council meeting held at the Central Area Recreation Center.

Since then, Spike has been mixing it up and mingling at various events where Marines can be found. "He's cool. He can fit in anywhere there are Marines," said Goodrich, noting that Spike has been known to cut a rug at recreation center parties.

Besides being the face of the Camp Lejeune SMP, Goodrich said she hopes to use Spike to emphasize attention to safety, whether it is not drinking and driving, the reason he attended the Save a Life Tour program last week, or not text messaging and driving. She takes him to briefings and safety stand downs.

"What's most important is the reaction we are seeing from the Marines when they see the mascot in their uniform. You see the cell phones come out and they're taking pictures with him. It's almost like you're at Walt Disney World standing next to Mickey Mouse," she said.

Only this character is much more beefy, has "USMC" tattooed on his bicep and wears the combat uniform of the Marine Corps.

Editor's note: To invite Spike to a unit event or briefing, call Goodrich at 451-1767.