

# From Miramonte to the Military

By Sophie Braccini

When Nick Read entered Si Si Cafe in Moraga, wearing his United States Marine Corps (USMC) sweater, one of the customers, a former drill sergeant, immediately addressed him to give him tips and wish him well. Behind the counter, one of the employees, a former schoolmate, hugged the recent Miramonte graduate and wished him good luck.

This is the kind of reaction that Read, and two other Miramonte graduates, Chris Capdevielle and Luke Carrillo, get everywhere – great support and encouragement as they get ready to join the Marines. While it's a life choice that's not for everybody, it makes a lot of sense for the three friends and their families.

Read, Capdevielle and Carrillo went to high school together, Capdevielle and Carrillo knew each other since the second grade. They are healthy, athletic and very bright students who are making a choice that's a family tradition. "I come from a long military line. Both my grandfathers were in the military," says Capdevielle with pride. "In fact, one of my grandfathers told me that our family history of defending this country goes back to the Revolution."

Carrillo's father was also in the

military and Read has an uncle and a cousin following the same path. The three young men are joining the Marines and have enlisted to enter the rank of Private.

Their motivation and objectives are slightly different, but they all express a deep love for their country and their sense of duty to defend it. "I want to serve my country and protect freedom," says Read. "We cannot take what we have for granted; it takes a strong military to protect our way of life."

"I always knew I wanted to join the military," says Capdevielle. "I love the United States and I wanted to repay my debt to this country for giving me all the opportunities that I have."

They also have plans for the future. "My job will be aviation mechanic," says Read. "I want to be productive right away, learn a skill and self discipline." Read sees the first four years as a stepping stone; he thinks he will go back to college, paid by the military, then if he can, become an officer. Read says he will probably make the military a career, and fulfill his dream of becoming an aircraft pilot.

Capdevielle knows that the military will be his career. "I'll try to stay

as long as I can," he says. He plans to become an officer as well. "In the Marines you need to come from the enlisted rank before becoming an officer," he adds.

None of the three young men are afraid of the dangers inherent in joining the military while the war in Afghanistan continues. "The Marines is a brotherhood, what some of my brothers went through has been terrible, what might happen to me cannot be worse," says Capdevielle.

"I'm joining at a time of somewhat peace, and I know that things can change pretty fast, but that does not scare me," adds Read. He also says that while his parents are very concerned about the risks, they are supportive of his choice.

The young men are a bit concerned about boot camp, the 10 weeks of intense training, that, according to Read, no one is allowed to quit. "We have spent a lot of time training at the Marine's facility in Pleasant Hill," says Capdevielle who feels that he is ready.

Miramonte High School College and Career Center Advisor Eloise Schneider indicated that it is a bit unusual for the high school to have three young men enlisting in



Recent Miramonte graduates Chris Capdevielle and Nick Read just before boot camp.  
Photo Sophie Braccini

the same year. "We are a college-bound school, but every year we have a few students enlisting and one or two going to a military academy," she said. At Campolindo, Gwenly Carrel said that, to her

knowledge, in the 2012 graduating class only one student went to a naval academy prep school. (Acalanes High School did not return phone calls in time for this article.)

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## THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

**Tiny Flashlight + LED, by Nikolay Ananiev**  
**Brightest Flashlight, by GoldenShores Technologies**  
**For: All smart phones**  
**Price: Free**

The ability to turn your smartphone into an incredibly bright flashlight makes either of these free apps indispensable. Tiny Flashlight has been downloaded by over 50 million smartphone users, while Brightest Flashlight has over 10 million downloads. It is not hard to figure out why these apps are so popular. Few people carry flashlights around with them, but it seems that everyone carries a smartphone. With these smart apps, your phone becomes your flashlight whenever and wherever you need it.

For example, in Lamorinda, street lights are not everywhere, especially in the hilly areas of Orinda. Using your smartphone as a flashlight can be very useful to navigate a

pathway, find those keys you dropped under your car seat, or just to shine a little light into the darkness. During a power outage, these apps could be a lifesaver. Tiny Flashlight provides the brightest light, although both apps are excellent.

These apps use the LED flash from your smartphone's camera to give off a remarkably bright light. Don't worry if you don't have a flash feature on your phone. Both apps turn your display into a flashlight at the tap of the screen. Tiny Flashlight has an additional option that allows you to turn on the flashlight by shaking your phone.

You will be amazed at how much light your phone can emit when you need it most. You won't



ever have to be in the dark again.  
 Miramonte graduate Alex Pawlakos enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time.

## TEEN SCENE

### Teenagers Learn to Work Double-Time

By Linda Lan Phung

As the summertime fades away into the beginning of a new school year, most Lamorinda teenagers decrease their frequent visits to their favorite movie theatre or ice cream shop. A few teens work here and go to school.

Eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Stein has been working at the Orinda Theatre since August 2011. Stein attained this job with the help of her brother, and, because she needs the money, she has a second job plus college.

To manage her time wisely, Stein said, "I use a calendar to write down all of my important dates, which helps me keep a good schedule." Keeping a schedule is vital for Stein, especially since her shifts vary from six to eight hours.

Other teenagers have learned to balance their life as a student and employee. Recent Miramonte High School graduate Celeste Jett has been working at the Orinda Loard's Ice Cream and Candy shop for two years. Jett wanted to support herself at an early age, and applied during her sophomore year.

Jett took a different approach to juggling work with her studies, making it a priority to complete her homework before working – whether or not her shift starts in the morning or afternoon. Along with learning better time management, Jett hopes to pick up other important life skills from her job.

"I want to learn good people skills, smart money management, and organization," said Jett.

Teenagers have trouble finding work since there

aren't many opportunities offered. Jett and Stein are two of the lucky teenagers who succeeded in securing a job in Lamorinda. There aren't many stores who hire teenagers under the age of 18, especially if the commitment isn't long-term. Susan Marconi, manager of Across the Way in Moraga, commented, "Parents aren't supporting the independently owned stores in Moraga, so it's hard to hire teenagers because we don't have the money or business to pay them."

Nonetheless, finding a job isn't impossible, but working part-time while going to school is no easy feat. It's challenging to squeeze work into a rigorous schedule of school and extracurricular activities. Teenagers who plan on managing these two tasks must realize that it requires patience, maturity, and responsibility. Jett and Stein agree. Wise time management is vital.

Linda Lan Phung is a Miramonte High School junior who volunteers throughout the East Bay and strives for 17-second miracles, inspired by author Jason Wright.



Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.