

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 2, 2007

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 50 ISSUE 8

MCAGCC fuels 13th MEU for war



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

An AH-1W Super Cobra Helicopter lifts off the Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson while a CH-53E Super Stallion flies in the background, during a long-range helicopter raid conducted by the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 played a vital role in pre-deployment training for the Marines and sailors of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163

attached to the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based in Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Monday. The two-day training exercise included a long-range helicopter raid, a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, and humanitarian assistance. The main portion of the

exercise, the long-range helicopter raid, required all HMM-163 aircraft, which consisted of CH-53E Super Stallions, CH-46 Sea Knights and AH-1W Super Cobras, to lift off their ship, the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD6), and fly to the Combat Center to support the MEU's ground

combat element, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. In order to present an effective training environment for the 13th MEU, MWSS-374 employed all of its supporting units, including air traffic control, airfield operations, ground control, fuels section, aircraft rescue and firefighting

and the weather section. The ARFF and weather sections were in operation 24-hours per day to act as a stand-by force in case of emergencies during the MEU exercise. The Crash, Fire, Rescue team placed a P19A fire truck, which was rotated about every two hours, in a forward field

position, called the hot spot. "It's their job to spot, respond to and report all emergency situations," said Gunnery Sgt. Mark E. Dumdie, staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the crash, fire and rescue team. See 13TH MEU, A4

Top colonel awarded air medal for OIF I heroics

CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Col. James R. Braden, the Combat Center's chief of staff, was awarded an Air Medal with the Combat Distinguishing Device at an informal ceremony in the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center's Battle Command Center Feb. 23. The medal was awarded to Braden for his actions during Operation Iraqi Freedom I, from March 23-24, 2003, during an unplanned escort mission to An Nasirayah, Iraq, among other important tasks. The Air Medal was established in 1942 under the authority of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and is awarded to those in

the United States Armed Forces, who have distinguished themselves by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. When the combat distinguishing device is authorized, the individual receiving the medal participated in aerial combat operations. Braden was unaware of the award until he stepped into the room filled with fellow Marines and sailors, family, friends and the Combat Center Band. As the commanding general, Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, stepped in front of the crowd and beckoned Braden to stand beside him, it was apparent the gathering was on his behalf. See AIR MEDAL, A4



CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Commanding general, Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone pins chief of staff, Col. James R. Braden with an air medal with combat distinguishing device Feb. 23 in the commanding generals conference room.

Weekend Weather

Friday		63/37 Mostly Sunny
Saturday		70/43 Sunny
Sunday		76/46 Mostly Sunny

Inside this issue

- A5: MCSF makes brighter future
- A6: IPAC takes on more Marines
- A10: Iraqi Riverine Assault Company

Observations



Combat Comics deliver the laughter.

This Day in Marine Corps History

— 1968 —
The battle for Hue City in Vietnam was declared finished.

A message from the Commandant



I am concerned that many Marines are not taking full advantage of the financial planning opportunities available to them. For active component Marines, only 33 percent of enlisted and 44 percent of officers are currently enrolled in the thrift savings plan. For reserve Marines, even fewer are enrolled, with only 19 percent of enlisted and 27 percent of officers participating in the thrift savings plan.

The benefits of early and long-term financial planning and investing can be substantial to a Marine over the course of their career and life. Developing healthy spending and investing habits early in a career can help Marines reach their personal and professional goals. There are numerous investment opportunities available to Marines; the TSP is one investment program that provides a simple solution to saving for the future. I encourage all Marines to take the time to explore TSP options. Details and enrollment information are available on the TSP Web site, <http://www.tsp.gov>, and there are links on Marine OnLine and the DFAS MyPay service.

Leaders are directed to stress the importance of financial management to their Marines. Encourage them to research TSP and other investment options and to plan for their future. The goal is educated Marines who understand the importance of prudent financial planning and recognize the potential benefits of saving a portion of their earnings.

Semper Fidelis,
James T. Conway, General, U.S. Marine Corps,
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Combat Center Financial Education Forum

Attend a free financial education forum for service members and families March 9. Presented by the NASD Investor Education Foundation in partnership with Marine and Family Services.

Registration

Pre-registration is required and can be accomplished by logging onto the Save and Invest Web site at <http://www.SaveAndInvest.org> or by calling 1-623-856-6550 or 1-623-856-6829.

Register now!

Agenda

March 9

10 – 10:05 a.m.	Commander's Welcome
10:05 – 10:15 a.m.	Program Introduction
10:15 – 11:15 a.m.	Smart Credit Management: Avoid the Predatory Loan Trap
	Break and Refreshments
11:15 – 11:30 a.m.	Mutual Funds, 529 Plans and More
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Break
12:30 – 12:45 p.m.	Smart Saving for Retirement
12:45 – 1:45 p.m.	

Location

Mesa Room at the Officers’ Club

Note: This is an educational program and no sales presentations will be permitted during the program or on the premises.

Why Attend?

At the NASD Investor Education Foundation, we believe that education is often the best form of investor protection. By attending one of our financial education forums for military families, you can get the tools and information you need to make critical saving and investing decisions with confidence. There's no sales pitch. No confusing advice. Just the help you need to make smart decisions for your future.

About SaveAndInvest.org

SaveAndInvest.org is a free service of the NASD Investor Education Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping you better understand saving and investing. Our financial education forums are one aspect of a multifaceted program to help members of the military and their families take control of their finances. We have partnered with the Department of Defense, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the National Military Family Association, and other organizations with expertise in the financial education arena and experience in addressing military audiences that complement the NASD Foundation's commitment to providing financial education to military families.

About NASD and the NASD Investor Education Foundation

The NASD Investor Education Foundation was established in 2003 by NASD, the primary private sector regulator of the securities industry. The NASD Investor Education Foundation's mission is to provide investors with high quality, easily accessible information and tools to better understand the markets and the basic principles of saving and investing. NASD and the NASD Investor Education Foundation do not sell investment products, promote products or firms, or offer specific investment advice. For more information, visit SaveAndInvest.org.

Centerspeak

“What band would you like to see perform at the Combat Center?”

Opinions expressed in Centerspeak are not necessarily those of the OBSERVATION POST, the Marine Corps or Department of Defense.



MASTER SGT. JEFF E. LAWING
3RD MAW

“Journey, because they are a great band. Either them or Nickelback.”



SGT. KYLE BROWN
H&S COMPANY, 1ST TANK BATTALION

“Fall Out Boy, because they rock.”



LANCE CPL. DAVID KEMP
WEAPONS COMPANY, 3/7

“Halifax. I saw them at the Warped Tour in 2002, and they're one of my favorite bands.”

What’s on your mind?

Centerspeak welcomes questions or submissions from service members, Department of Defense civilians and family members.

Call Cpl. Evan M. Eagan at 830-5472

Or e-mail to: evan.eagan@usmc.mil



C.O.P. Corner

Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal’s Office Crime Prevention Section

What is your child doing?

Did you know that in this past month an estimated 6.2 million American children age 12 years old and over are binge drinkers, which is defined as drinking five or more drinks in one sitting, and an estimated 2.6 million American children, 12 years of age and over, are currently using illegal drugs.

Does your child know what drugs and alcohol can do to them and ways to stay away from them?

In today's world more and more drugs are getting introduced into school, and drinking starts at young ages. Here are some tips to help you and your child discuss drugs and alcohol.

Kindergarten to third grade is when to begin explaining what alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are. Also explain that some people use them even though they are harmful, and the consequences of using them.

- Discuss how anything that is not food or prescribed by the doctor can be extremely harmful.
 - Tell them drugs interfere with the way our bodies work, can make a person very sick, or even cause them to die.
 - Explain the addiction and that drug use can become a very bad habit that is hard to stop.
- Children in grades four through six should know:
- The immediate effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on different parts of the body, including risks of coma or fatal overdose;
 - The long-term results of addiction and the loss of control over their lives users experience;
 - The reasons why drugs are especially dangerous for growing bodies;
 - The problems that alcohol and other illegal drugs cause not only to the user, but also to the user's family and world.

Grades seven through nine is the adolescence stage and can often be a confusing and stressful time. Teens struggle to figure out who they are and how to fit in, while establishing their own identities. Parents may not realize their young teens feel surrounded by drug use. Nearly nine out of 10 teens agree "it seems like marijuana is everywhere these days." Teens are twice as likely to be using marijuana as parents believe they are, and teens are getting high in the places that parents think are safe havens, such as around school, at home, and at friend's houses. Parents profoundly shape the choices their children make about drugs.

Teens need to know the immediate, distasteful consequences of tobacco and marijuana use, for example, that smoking causes bad breath and stained teeth and makes clothes and hair smell. As a parent you should discuss drugs' long-term effects:

- The lack of crucial social and emotional skills ordinarily learned during adolescence;
- The risk of lung cancer and emphysema from smoking;

Grades ten through twelve is when your child needs to understand how to resist peer pressure. Teens need more than a general message not to use drugs. They need to hear from a parent that anyone can become a chronic user or an addict and that even non-habitual use can have serious permanent consequences.

Most high school students are future-oriented so they are more likely to listen to discussions.

- Discuss how drugs can ruin chances of getting into a good college or being hired for a job.
- Talk about how fatal or crippling car accidents and liver damage are some of the causes from heavy drinking;
- Let them know that addiction, brain damage, memory loss, coma, and death are the consequences of heavy drug and alcohol use.

For more information on how to discuss related topics with your child, go to <http://www.yic.gov/drugfree/childknow.html> or <http://www.safestate.org>.

The following services are available to on-base personnel and residents through Crime Prevention: literature, briefs, education, crime assessments, safety tips, the Stranger Danger program, McGruff the Crime Dog, the Officer Friendly program, the Property Marking program, and the Child Identification and Fingerprinting program. For more information call Crime Prevention, 830-6094/5457.

Presented by the Provost Marshal’s Office Crime Prevention Section

Marines Sailors, and cab drivers: MCOS will reimburse AMT licensed cab company for transportation to the Main Gate, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. Drivers: please legally record information from your fare's military ID card. Thank you for participating.

MCOS
MARINE CORPS
ARRIVE ALIVE
A Combat Center Car Company 367-7433
Top's Taxi 361-6748

By endorsement of this program it is endorsed by the United States Government as of 19th 2006.

MCOS
MARINE CORPS
ARRIVE ALIVE
A COMBAT CENTER CAR COMPANY

Name _____
ID # _____
Pick up at _____
Destination _____
Fare _____
Driver _____
Date/Time _____
Customer _____
Signature _____

OBSERVATION POST

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Hot Topics

Tax Center Open

Tax Center hours Monday - Friday 8 a.m. -3:30 p.m. Appointments are recommended. To schedule, call 830-4829. Please bring in the following documents at the time of your appointment:

- All W-2’s for yourself and spouse.
- Bank interest or dividend statements.
- Social security cards for everyone on return.
- Proof of your bank account, either MyPay bank printout or blank check, for direct deposit.
- Original power of attorney, if applicable.
- Prior year tax return.

The Tax Center can only prepare returns for active-duty, reserve, retired and dependants of service members. No rental property or self-employment returns are prepared at the Tax Center. Itemized deductions begin Feb. 15. Please make arrangements for child care.

Road Closures

-The Bourke Road and Eighth Street intersection will remain closed. This area will be repaved in the near future to correct a drainage problem. • Third Street between Brown and Griffin Road will be closed for repaving from approximately Monday to Feb. 23. • Del Valle Road will be repaved from Adobe Road to Tenth Street. Stoplights will be installed on Del Valle at the Third and Fifth Street intersections as part of this project. The repaving work will be phased in order to minimize disruptions to traffic flow on Del Valle, but detours onto Mainside will be required. The construction period will be from approximately March 1 to Sept. 1. Please be attentive to all traffic control signs.

Construction at Hospital Effects Parking Lot Access

Entering and exiting the hospital patient parking lot will be reduced to one lane due to the construction of new sidewalk and repair of the existing sidewalk to the clinics. A flagman will be on site to direct the flow of traffic to minimize inconvenience. Construction will last approximately three to four weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.Beginning Thursday, entering and exiting the hospital patient parking lot will be reduced to one lane at times, due to the construction of a new sidewalk, from Sturgis Road to the clinics. A flagman will be on site to direct the flow of traffic, to minimize inconvenience. Construction will last approximately three weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience, these projects may cause.

Leisure Items

Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks

Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks is offering complimentary admission for active duty military representing all five service branches, active members of a reserve or National Guard unit, and up to three direct dependants. Valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one of the following Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks: SeaWorld Orlando, San Diego, and San Antonio, or Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg, Penn., or Sesame Place or Water Country USA or Adventure Island. Offer valid through Dec. 31. Operating days and hours vary by park. Please check with each specific park for current operating schedule.

SMP Disneyland Trip

The Single Marine Program will be taking a trip to Disneyland Saturday. The cost for the trip is \$56 and includes entrance to the park and transportation. Participants will depart from the Zone at 6 a.m. For more information, call 830-4767.

Hispanic Heritage Committee Membership Dance

The MCAGCC Hispanic Heritage Committee will be having a Membership Dance Saturday at the Staff NCO Club Hashmarks from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. The MCAGCC HHC is a non-profit organization which has been responsible for awarding more than \$3,000 in scholarships to local high school students who have chosen to pursue higher education. Members are usually asked to participate in fundraisers that benefit these scholarships, i.e. dances, car washes, planned sporting events, etc. Due to a significant attrition rate of current members, we will be actively soliciting for new members. Come enjoy the night dancing to Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Reggaeton, Cumbias, Nortenas and Hip Hop. The entry fee is \$5 for single and \$8 per couple. The dance is open to all ranks and civilians. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mario Villescascas will be relinquishing the Committee Presidency to Master Sgt. Martin H. "Flaco" Flores. The point of contact for this event is Master Sgt. Flores and he can be reached at 830-6240.

American Red Cross CPR Class

American Red Cross Chapter in Joshua Tree will be hosting a CPR March 10 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Joshua Tree Community Center. This is adult CPR only. The cost is \$5. Please call 366-5330 and ask for Steve for more information.

Christian Worship

Roman Catholic Services Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

Sun 7:30 a.m. Rosary
Sun 8 a.m. Catholic Mass*
Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD (Bldg1551)
Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women (Bldg. 1551)
Sun 9:15 a.m. Confessions+
Sun 10 a.m. Rosary
Sun 10:30 a.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 10:30 a.m. Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Sun 4 p.m. Choir Practice
Sun 4:30 p.m. Rosary
Sun 5 p.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 6 p.m. Cyrus Young Adult Group
18-35 years of age married or single
(3rd Sunday of the month)
Fri 12:15 – 4:30 p.m. Exposition/Adoration
Most Blessed Sacrament (1st Friday Each Month)

Ash Wednesday and Holy Days of Obligation Masses

11:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
11:30 a.m. Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital
Village Center
Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women*
Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD

Non-Denominational Christian Service Christ Chapel

Sun 8 a.m. Worship*
Tue 7 p.m. Praise and Worship*

Traditional Service Christ Chapel

Sun 9:30 a.m. Worship

Independent Baptist Service Christ Chapel

Sun 11 p.m. Worship

Lay-Led Gospel Service Christ Chapel

Sun 12:30 p.m Worship

Lay-Led Apostolic Service Christ Chapel

Sun 3 p.m. Worship
Christ Chapel
2 p.m. Study of Book of Acts

Mid-Week Events

Monday Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m Catholic Mass

Ocotillo Housing
7 p.m Officer’s Christian Fellowship
Call Lt. Cmdr. Faunce 830-6654 for location

Tuesday Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

5 – 7:30 p.m. Catechist Meeting
(Second Tuesday of the month)
4 – 5:30 p.m. Children’s RCIA
6 p.m. Baptism Class 1st Tuesday each month
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. Christian Women Fellowship*
C&E Mess Hall Bldg. 1660
11:30 a.m. Bible Study
Chaplain Flint 830-6187
Base Housing
6 p.m. All Hands Bible Study
Chaplain Taylor 830-7413 for location

Wednesday Village Center

11:30 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Prayer Room
Chaplain Flint 830-6187
6 p.m. Right of Christian Initiation for Adults*

Immaculate Heart of Mary
6 -7 p.m. Life Teen/Youth Group#
Christ Chapel
5 p.m. IHM Choir Rehearsal
5 p.m. Protestant Choir Rehearsal
5:30 p.m. Catholic Choir Rehearsal
7 p.m. Lay-Led Gospel Bible Study

Thursday Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

7 p.m. Knights of Columbus
1st Thursday of the Month

Christ Chapel

7 p.m. Lay-Led Apostolic Bible Study

Legend
*Indicates Child Care Provided
+Appointments can be made for Confessions by calling 830-6456/6646
Resumes Fall 2006

13TH MEU from A1

“We also provide manpower and emergency services for the airfield,” added Dumdie.

The airfield fuel section also utilized its manpower to ensure all aircraft were refueled quickly.

Lance Cpl. Eric Peterson, bulk fuel specialist at the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field, said the fuel section Marines usually conduct hot-fueling for aircraft at their airfield.

Hot-fueling is defined as refueling an aircraft with its main engine still running, according to the National Air Transportation Administration Safety First Web site.

Peterson said it was a good thing he and his fellow Marines were familiar with hot-fueling processes due to the high number of rotary aircraft in the sky that day.

Gunnery Sgt. Erik M. Steele, tower chief of the airfield, shared how MWSS-374 gave their support to the Marines and sailors of 13th MEU.

“The MWSS is always ready to support various Marine aviation requirements which prepare units for deployment,” said Steele.

He added that the MEU tasks included intense preparations for special operations capable qualification prior to deployment, which will take place later this year.

The Marines and sailors of MWSS-374 played a crucial part in overseeing, providing for and participating in effective training which will better prepare warriors for battle overseas.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

An AH-1W Super Cobra Helicopter from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 gets hot-fueled aboard the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Camp Wilson Monday.

AIR MEDAL from A1

The citation described his actions as heroic, effective, fast-acting, proactive and supportive to other units' missions.

Braden was a UH-1N aircraft commander with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force during OIF I. He operated his aircraft without a wingman for long periods of time in enemy territory, according to the citation.

After the citation was read, Braden told his side of the story.

He explained how the An Nasiriyah mission was tasked after Task Force Tarawa had been ambushed. Braden, piloting a Huey, was briefed along with another UH-1N and two CH-46E commanders to quickly respond and take control of the unplanned mission.

“I told everyone to do it just like we do it in training,” said Braden, who stepped up as the mission commander.

Through Iraqi air and ground artillery and small arms fire in the area, the flight was successful.

Then, Braden became an airborne extension of the Direct Air Support Center, while the air controller took a moment to review the situation and then resume the fight.

The crew then conducted reconnaissance along the east of An Nasirayah over more than 100 miles. They then went on to provide support to Regimental Combat Team 7 movement along Highway 1 for their next attack on Highway 17.

The aircraft assisted Regimental Combat Team 7's mission by clearing enemy positions without any ground casualties.

“No one had a clear idea of what went on during that mission until about six months later,” explained Braden. “The Marines involved acted as a professional, coherent team with their head on their shoulders. They executed when they needed to.

“This medal isn't just for me, but all of those Marines,” he concluded.

Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation makes brighter futures for military children

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, a non-profit organization that started in 1962, offers a brighter future for military children. Providing financial assistance, the MCSF is a way for many to receive an education they may not be able to afford.

“Our needs-based scholarships are available to the children of all Marines, active duty and former, as well as to the children of Navy corpsmen serving alongside the Marines,” said Auco Ho, marketing and communications manager for MCSF. “Also, we have made a special commitment to the children of Marines and Navy corpsmen serving alongside who have been killed in the ongoing war on terror. Those children will receive a guaranteed ‘Hero’s Tribute Scholarship’ of \$20,000 over four years to pursue their higher education goals.”

One-year scholarships (ranging from \$500 to \$10,000) are awarded annually and are limited to undergraduate studies at accredited educational and or technical institutions, according to the MCSF Web site, <http://www.mcsf.org>.

“The support that our foundation is able to award is often the determining factor on whether these students will be able to pursue higher education or not,” said Ho. “These seemingly ordinary youngsters are often overlooked by other scholarship granting entities, yet they have the potential to blossom into extraordinary adults if they are just given a helping hand. Our foundation assists in that worthy objective, and for many of those we help, we are key to their academic goals.”

Funds for the foundation’s scholarships come from a wide range of individuals and companies. Donations can come from places such as Toyota Motor Sales and Macy’s, all the way down to junior military members. Donations to the foundation are not limited to

cash donations. The foundation accepts cash, gift of securities, real estate, corporate gifts and personal property. With the donations received, the foundation is able to grant scholarships to numerous military children annually.

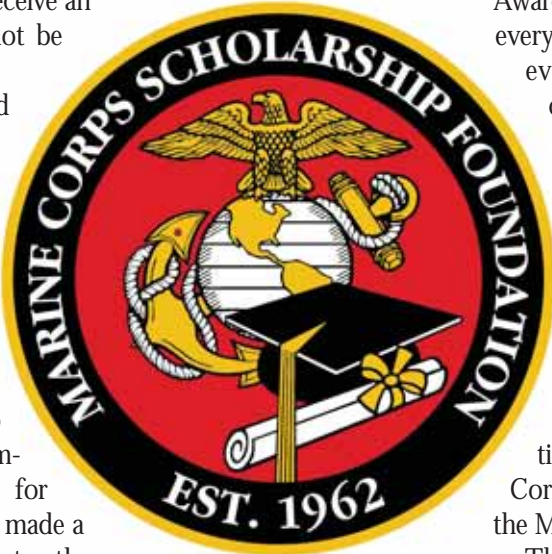
“We do not set a limit on

paign is a five-year \$50 million capital campaign. They hope to have the money raised by the foundations 50th anniversary in 2012. The goals of the campaign are to double the average annual four-year scholarship award to at least \$3,000 from \$1,500 in order to fund the Heroes Tribute Scholarship Award of up to \$20,000 for every child of a Marine and every child of a Navy corpsman serving with Marines whose parent is killed in combat in the Global War on Terrorism. It is a goal to also build the foundation’s capacity to sustain the growth and breadth of revenues to meet the future educational needs of the Marine Corps family, according to the MCSF Web site.

The foundation will continue to serve military children as long as they have the resources to do so. It’s a foundation built on the kindness of others to donate and help to make someone else’s future a little brighter.

“We recognize that as of January 31, 2007, 904 Marines and 24 Navy corpsmen have been killed, leaving behind a total of 331 children,” said Ho. “The vast majority of these children are under the age of 5 years. It will be 12 years before they apply to college and we can safely assume that the cost of higher education will continue to increase at annual rates in excess of inflation. The number of scholarship awards will most likely increase as well. We know that when these children are ready to attend college, we will be there for them.”

For more information on how to make a donation or how to apply for a scholarship, go to the MCSF Web site, <http://www.mcsf.org>



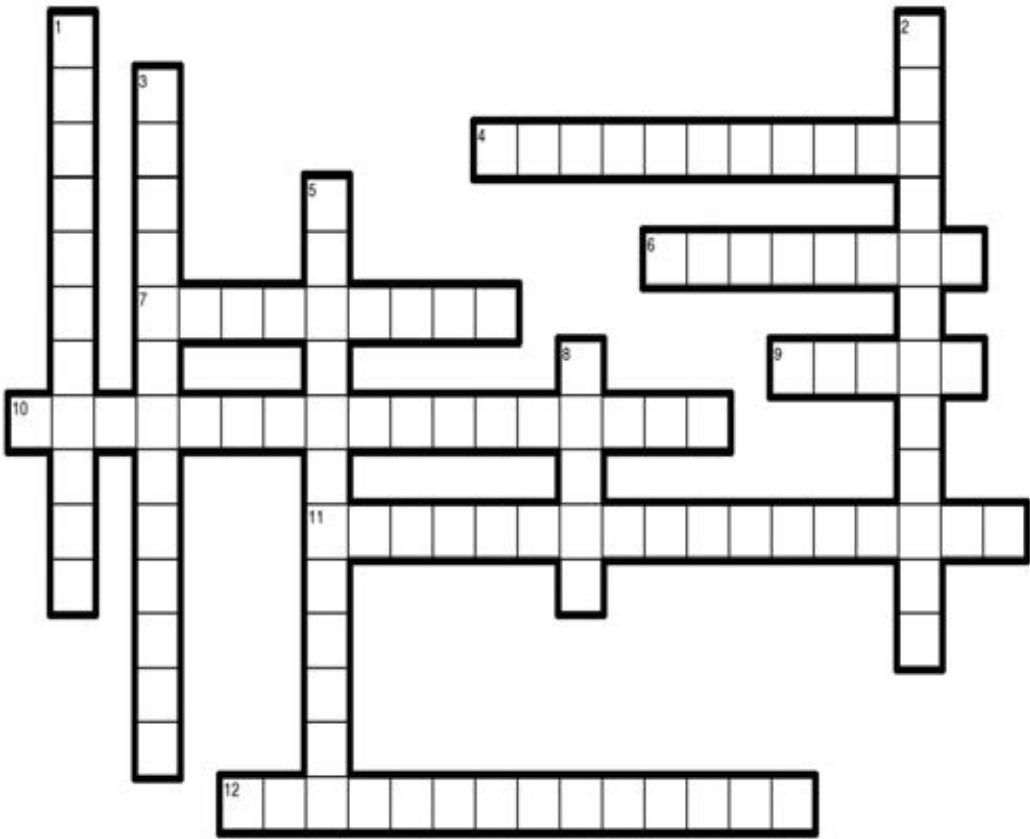
the number of scholarships that are given away annually,” said Ho. “Typically, and in recent years, we give approximately 1,000 scholarships a year. For the 2006-2007 academic year, we gave approximately 977 scholarships to the very deserving sons and daughters of Marines and of Navy corpsmen serving alongside.”

Some of the scholarships available through MCSF are the 2nd Lt. Terrence C. Graves, United States Marine Corps Scholarship, the Holz Rubber Scholarship, the Col. J. A. Hutchinson Leadership Scholarship along with several others according to the MCSF Web site.

“We have provided at least \$1 million in scholarships for these children for the past 16 years,” said Ho. “This past year we gave a record breaking \$2.2 million in scholarships.”

Currently the foundation has kicked off an American Patriots Campaign. The cam-

VIETNAM WAR TRIVIA



ACROSS

- 4. The President of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) for most of the war.
- 6. Name given to the communist Vietnamese army (2 wds.).
- 7. The Vietnam War was part of a larger conflict in Southeast Asia, also called the Second ____ War.
- 9. The geographical half of Vietnam that was communist, aided by the USSR and China.
- 10. Name of the peace agreement made ending U.S. involvement in Vietnam, although the agreement was not kept (3 wds.).
- 11. The area that was created as a buffer between North and South Vietnam, located at the 17th parallel, also known as the DMZ (2 wds. — no hyphens).
- 12. U.S. President that took over Vietnam War affairs after President Kennedy was assassinated (3 wds.).

DOWN

- 1. Powerful herbicide used by U.S. to clear tropical forest.
- 2. Name of the theory which U.S. presidents used to justify their increased involvement in Vietnam, consisting of the idea that if Vietnam is allowed to become communist, much of Southeast Asia will follow suit (2 wds.).
- 3. Name that Saigon was changed to following the war in honor of the communist Chinese leader that was formerly the president of North Vietnam (4 wds.).
- 5. U.S. President that finally halted U.S. offensive action and pulled troops out of Vietnam (2 wds.).
- 8. The geographical half of Vietnam aided by the United States.

[Solutions on A11]

IPAC takes on more Marines, Marine Corps consolidates admin

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Under former commandant Gen. Michael W. Hagee's guidance, the Marine Corps is headed in a new direction as far as the administrative side of the house is concerned. According to All Marine Message 058/05, the Marine Corps is moving toward a standard configuration of 14 Installation Personnel Administration Centers.

With this consolidation, the already hardworking IPAC Marines on base are taking on more customers.

"Prior to November 2006, the Twentynine Palms IPAC was responsible for the administrative support of approximately 10,000 Marines and sailors," said Staff Sgt. Brian A. Davis, headquarters management branch, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "As of Feb. 22, 2007, IPAC is now additionally responsible for the administrative support of approximately 500 permanent personnel and 1,500 students assigned to MCCES (Marine Corps Communication and Electronics School)."

Okinawa was the first to consolidate, whereas the Combat Center's IPAC was the first to take on the student population.

"I would say this consolida-



Marines from the Installation Personnel Administration Center complete deployment audits for Marines from 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

tion is a stepping stone, a real footprint to reduce admin personnel at the unit level to give them more war fighters," said Master Sgt. Leonard Crawford,

IPAC staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

Currently there are 125 Marines working at IPAC along with two civilians. They are responsible for things such as orders, new joins, audits, pay problems, promotions, legal issues, deployment audits, support of units that are forward, along with all the other administrative needs of Marines stationed at the Combat Center. With an increase in administrative work for IPAC, Marines who have administrative issues should take more initiative to

take care of things earlier.

"There are many ways for Marines to be proactive in their administrative needs," said Davis. "Marines who are EAS'ing [end of active service] or PCS'ing [permanent change of station] should complete requirements as early as possible. Additionally, IPAC encourages all Marines to utilize MOL [Marine Online] and MyPay to perform self-service administration which can range from requesting leave, PTAD [permissive temporary assignment of duty], changing RED

[record of emergency data] and home address information, to starting and stopping allotments. Marines can also review their record for accuracy."

With the increase in customers, IPAC will now teach a new join and audit class to the students at MCCES. It will also continue to be open 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week for administrative needs.

"It is also important to remember that as the operational tempo increases within the Marine Corps, it also increases at the IPAC," said

Davis. "IPAC provides a pre-deployment audit for all deploying units to ensure that all personal information is accurate and up-to-date for each service member. IPAC also provides a post deployment audit for all returning units so that all personal information can be updated by the returning service member."

With the increased operational tempo and responsibility for IPAC, they will remain working hard behind the scenes to keep Marines ready for the fight.

Marines save disabled man

SGT. ROBERT B. SMITH
MCAS Yuma

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. — “If they would have acted a second slower, they all would have been fried,” said Robert Hunter, after witnessing an unparalleled act of heroism shown by two communications Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, Feb. 17 at the Adobe Casitas apartments in Yuma where he is the maintenance supervisor.

Cpl. William M. Koppelman Jr., switchboard operator with Headquarters and Service Company, MWSS-371, was out on the landing of his apartment talking to a neighbor when he noticed smoke billowing from the adjacent Adobe Casitas complex.

“We noticed the smoke and I thought it was somebody’s barbecue,” said Richard Remington, Koppelman’s neighbor. “By the time I went in to call 911, (Koppelman) was down the stairs and running towards the building.”

“I heard somebody say that there might be somebody still inside so I ran down to the end of the burning building and climbed up onto the roof to try to find a way in,” said Koppelman.

As he ran back along the rooftop, he saw Gilberto Lopez Jr., laying motionless on the ground where he had collapsed from smoke inhalation outside the back door to his apartment less than a body length from the roaring fire within. Smoke rolled out both sides of the apartment, and flames licked the eaves near the young Marines’ feet.

The 5 foot, 9 inch, 160 pound Koppelman yelled, “We’ve got a guy back here!”

He then leaped from the roof, landing in the backyard where the 40-year-old man lay unconscious. Heat and acrid smoke filled the small courtyard, intensifying by the second.

While Koppelman was searching from the rooftops, his roommate, Cpl. Brian G. Johnson, radio operator with H&S Company, MWSS-371, heard the commotion outside, and stepped out to see what was happening.

“I heard somebody yell, ‘call

9-1-1,’ so I ran outside to find (Koppelman),” said Johnson.

Once the Santaquin, Utah, native realized what was going on, he ran around the other side of the Adobe Casitas building and heard Koppelman calling for help through the smoke and crackling fire.

“I had to jump over a few walls to find him, but it was pretty quick,” said Johnson. “At least we didn’t have to check for booby traps.”

During his pre-deployment training, jumping over walls in an urban environment is a practiced skill, including checking for traps.

“I never thought I would have to use wall climbing skills again, but I guess I did,” said Johnson.

The 5 foot, 7 inch tall Johnson scaled brick walls six-feet high, the last one hot from the fire’s wrath. Seconds after entering the courtyard, they realized they would not be able to lift the still unconscious Lopez’ 200-pounds of dead weight over the intensely hot bricks.

“What happened next was like something out of a movie,” said Hunter, describing the split second life saving actions. “(Koppleman) and (Johnson) and another guy picked up Lopez. Koppleman kicked through a fence in the backyard and the trio pulled (Lopez) through the fence. A second later, the sliding glass door exploded out, and a big flame forced me back out into the pool area.”

The explosion blew shards of glass 15 feet across the patio where they buried themselves in the wooden fence. The ensuing burst of flame flash-melted patio furniture 10 feet away and liquidated a satellite dish near the spot where Koppleman stood on the roof moments before. The fire from the explosion scorched the wooden fence from across the patio. Heat from the fire engulfed the patio area, consuming all materials within.

Koppelman continued to kick through fence after fence until the group could find an unlocked door to get through to the parking lot.

“All I could hear was ‘Rob, sorry for kicking down your new fence!’ every time they went through another one,”

said Hunter. “I put those fences together with hot staples, the kind with glue on them, so they were pretty sturdy.”

“Once they got (Lopez) out to the parking lot, the two Marines stayed with him until [Emergency Medical Services] arrived,” Hunter said.

On-site medical treatment was provided by the Yuma Fire Department, then Lopez was rushed to Yuma Regional Medical Center. Lopez was later airlifted to the Maricopa Burn Center in Phoenix.

“I am so grateful that those Marines took him out,” said Margarita Lopez, the victim’s mother. “They were so brave. They could have gotten hurt. They could have been killed!”

Margarita Lopez arrived on the scene after the rescue took place, and was able to hug and thank her son’s rescuers.

“If it wasn’t for those Marines, he would have been terribly burned,” she said. “Gilberto has just a little sunburn on his face, and some smoke inhalation.”

He is still being treated in Phoenix, but is recovering well, she said.

A car accident 11 years ago left Lopez with brain damage. He had come a long way and was now able to walk with a slight limp, but could ride a bike again and recently earned his driver’s license back.

“He was still a little weak on his right side, with effects much like a stroke victim,” said Margarita. “He just bought a computer and was beginning to start a business. I just can’t believe it — that fire would have gotten him.”

Koppelman, a Baltimore native, doesn’t think he is a hero.

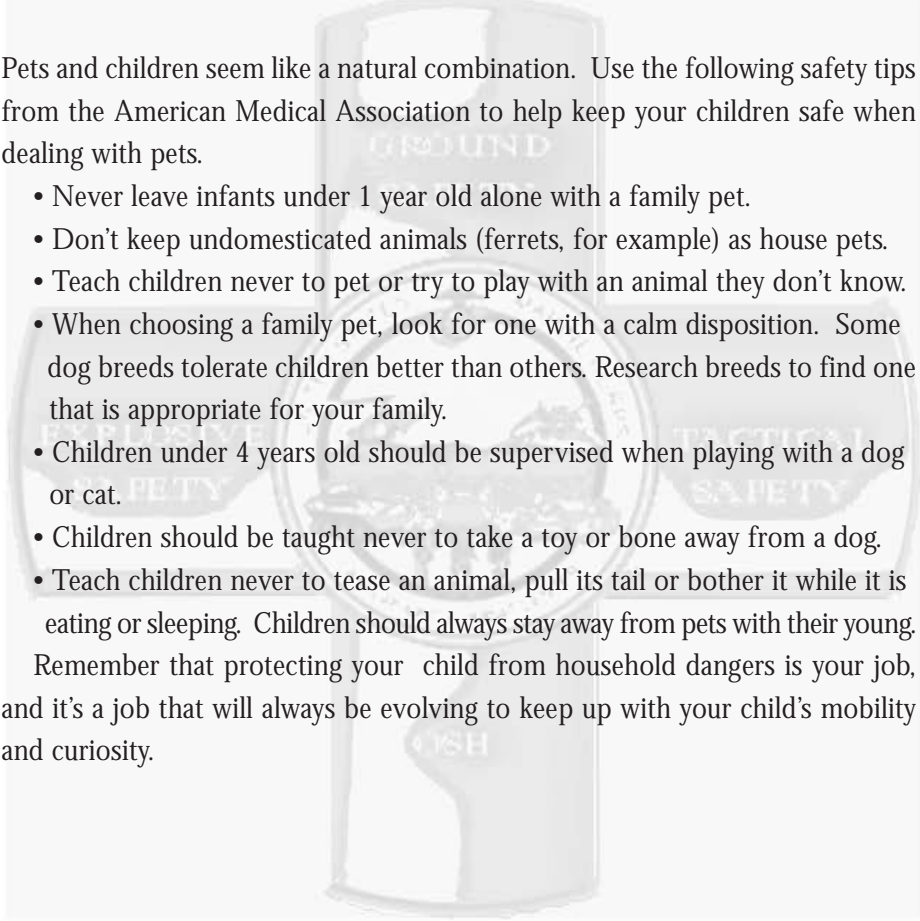
“I don’t think it’s that big of a deal, it’s just something that anybody else would have done,” he said.



SGT. ROBERT B. SMITH
Marine Wing Support Squadron 371’s Cpl. Brian G. Johnson, radio operator and Cpl William M. Koppelman Jr., switchboard operator, stand in the scorched remains of a back porch where they rescued a disabled man from a burning building and the ensuing explosion Feb. 17 in Yuma.

MAGTFTC SAFETY
ACCIDENT PREVENTION
SAFETY GRAM 001-10
Safety office; (760) 830 8465

How to prevent animal
bites in the home



Pets and children seem like a natural combination. Use the following safety tips from the American Medical Association to help keep your children safe when dealing with pets.

- Never leave infants under 1 year old alone with a family pet.
- Don't keep undomesticated animals (ferrets, for example) as house pets.
- Teach children never to pet or try to play with an animal they don't know.
- When choosing a family pet, look for one with a calm disposition. Some dog breeds tolerate children better than others. Research breeds to find one that is appropriate for your family.
- Children under 4 years old should be supervised when playing with a dog or cat.
- Children should be taught never to take a toy or bone away from a dog.
- Teach children never to tease an animal, pull its tail or bother it while it is eating or sleeping. Children should always stay away from pets with their young.

Remember that protecting your child from household dangers is your job, and it's a job that will always be evolving to keep up with your child's mobility and curiosity.

Accidents are an unacceptable risk to
mission accomplishment!

"MAGTFTC/MCAGCC Safety – Be Relentless with Safety"

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf



Town hall meetings for
Vista Del Sol residents

Town hall meetings will be held for all Vista Del Sol residents on the following times and dates. Attendance at one of the meeting is required to be eligible to be issued portable air conditioners. All town hall meeting will be conducted at the Protestant Chapel. It is important to have this information disseminated as installa-		tion instructions and demonstrations will be given.	
Tuesday		1 to 3 p.m.	
Thursday		6 to 8 p.m.	
Mar. 12		6 to 8 p.m.	
Mar. 14		1 to 2 p.m.	
Mar. 19		6 to 8 p.m.	



Serving the MCAGCC Community at Twentynine Palms, California

www.OP29online.com

SLS adds workshop from nationally recognized columnist

MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES
PRESS RELEASES

MCB QUANTICO, VA – The Spouse's Learning Series presents the new motivational workshop “Sun-Sational: Discover a more powerful you,” facilitated by nationally recognized military life columnist Jacey Eckhart.

SLS provides three venues to further personal skills and professional growth through a series of motivational and leadership skills workshops and online courseware intended to teach skills in areas such as Leadership, Communication and Relationship Building, Teamwork, Stress Reduction, Goal Setting, Conflict Management, and Personal Enhancement. All spouses are welcome to attend the free SLS workshops.

Ms. Eckhart is a syndicated columnist with the Virginian-Pilot who has been writing a “Homefront” column for ten years and is a

frequent contributor to Military Spouse Magazine and Military Money. She is the author of the book, “The Homefront Club: The Hardheaded Woman's Guide to Raising a Military Family,” (Naval Institute Press, 2005) and the creative drive behind the deployment CD “These Boots: A Spouse's Guide To Stepping Up and Standing Tall During Deployment,” available through Military OneSource. Most recently, she became the host of a nationally syndicated military family radio program, “The Jacey Eckhart Show.”

This annual motivational workshop is designed to provide spouses with the opportunity to gain a working knowledge of personal communication styles and personality types and to use the new understanding of self to improve communication and relationships with their spouse, family, friends, and co-workers. The workshop also encourages Marine spouses to

define their life-challenges and the needed support systems to help restore balance to their military family during a time of war.

Previous workshops Eckhart has presented for Marine spouses have received positive comments. “She was fun and lively, but very real and straight to the heart of what it really feels like to be a military spouse, in good times and not so good,” said a spouse from MCAS Beaufort. “Jacey's event was a LOT of fun. One thing that impressed me with Jacey, besides her bright smile and energy, was that the program was tailored to our spouses here.”

Other SLS offerings include the Leadership Skills Workshop, which focuses on leadership skills such as communication and team building. Participants take a self-scored personality assessment and learn how their personality type relates and can interact more effectively with others and leave with an understanding of the role and

importance of fostering positive attitudes, building strong communication and understanding skills and leveraging different personality traits.

Key Volunteers from Camp Pendleton attended the first Leadership Skills Workshop and commented that the workshop provided necessary skills for what they would encounter in their volunteer efforts. “It is good for all Key Volunteers to understand how to deal with different personality types,” said one participant. Another commented the workshop provided “useful subject matter that applies to all areas of life-not just work.”

For local dates or more information about SLS programs contact your local Marine Corps Family Team Building Office or checkout the SLS website at <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/sls/index.cfm>. SLS online courseware is also available online at Marine Net at <http://www.marinenet.usmc.mil>.



CPL MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

But you ain't got no legs, Lieutenant Dan

Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band performed for Combat Center Marines, sailors and family members last year at the Sunset Cinema. The band will return to the base March 11 to put on another free show sponsored by the United Service Organization. The concert is from 4 to 7 p.m. For more information call 830-5086.

Iraqi Riverine Assault Company brings new strategy to historic river

CPL. RYAN M. BLAICH
11 MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (FWD)

HABBANIYAH, Iraq — The drone of a boat’s engine, the mist of ancient waters from the Euphrates River, and the deep blue skies of the heavens paint a picture most appreciate. These days, terrorists use this very landscape to conduct insurgent strikes on the Iraqi Army, coalition forces and the civilian population. For the first time in Iraq’s history, soldiers are using boats as a strategic measure to battle insurgents and keep Al Anbar Province safe.

Mounted with machine guns and loaded with trained Iraqi infantrymen ready to rush the banks of the Euphrates, the Riverine Assault Company, 1st Iraqi Division, hopes to make a difference in the lives of those living along the shores of the river.

“This river is not safe,” said 1st Lt. Hayder Amar, Boat Company Commander. “Hopefully we can (provide) peace.”

The Riverines train day and night to perfect their skills. Iraqi soldiers work alongside



CPL. RYAN M. BLAICH

Soldiers of Iraq’s Riverine Assault Company, 1st Iraqi Division, keep an eye out for insurgent activity during a patrol on the Euphrates River, Feb 19. Terrorists use these waters to conduct insurgent strikes against Iraqi soldiers, coalition forces, and the civilian population.

Marines and practice boat formations, landing procedures, maneuvers and firing at targets.

Hayder believes the Marines provide his company

with the best training in the world. He said he owes most of the credit and thanks to the help the Marines have given his men.

Soldiers in the boat company, many whom volunteered, realize the importance of their job. They patrol the river from Kaldia to Fallujah, searching

for signs of insurgents, Improvised Explosive Devices and weapon caches. They put their lives on the line daily to stabilize the region and bring

security to their neighbors.

Master Sergeant Fahamd Abdl Abas Aziz Alsadey, boat staff noncommissioned officer in charge, said it was difficult in the beginning, but his soldiers knew overcoming the challenges at the start was important to their nation’s success. He said everyone in Iraq wants the same thing he wants, to have a free democracy and live without fear.

“It’s like we’re in jail,” he said of the terrorism in his country. “When we were under Saddam, we were in jail. (Everyone) just wants to be free.”

Each soldier aboard believes his country will liberate itself. They routinely face uncertainty, hoping their children will never know the prison of terror the insurgents enforce.

“We are delighted to serve our country for the future of Iraq,” Fahamd said on behalf of his men.

LANCE CPL. STEPHANIE
INGERSOLL

A Senate Bill that streamlines the process of acquiring California teaching credentials has taken effect as of Jan. 1.

California Governor Arnold A. Schwarzenegger signed SB 1209 at John Muir High School in Pasadena on Sept. 28, and, although the bill took effect the first of the year, many of the activities it directs do not take place until later this year or 2008.

According to an Office of the Governor press release, Schwarzenegger signed the legislation, SB 1209 along with SB 1655, "to streamline the credentialing process, improve support and incentives for new and experienced teachers, and help low-performing schools hire the best teachers." The bill, authored by California Senator Jack Scott, is a response to the shortage of highly qualified teachers in California and the problem California faces with the retirement of approximately 100,000 teachers over the next decade.

The bill will not give credentials to under-qualified teachers, but will streamline the process of getting out-of-state teachers who move to California into the classroom, said Patrick L. Christman, 56, Marine Corps Installations West's Director of the Office of Government and External Affairs.

"We see a lot of frustrated out-of-state teachers," said Rebecca C. Rider, 25, a transition and employment specialist for Camp Pendleton Marine and Family Services. Due to the California Education Code's unique requirements, many out-of-state teachers "almost have to start over" to receive their credentials.

Senate Bill 1209 aims to eliminate obstacles for out-of-state qualified California teachers with several changes that will impact about 30 different provisions of California's Education Code, which is the set of laws pertaining to education.

Beginning Jan. 1, professional growth was removed as a credential requirement, including both the 150 hours of activities and the experience requirement.

The bill also adds options to meet the basic skills requirement. The California Basic Educational Skills Test remains as one of the options. A basic skills examination from another state is also acceptable effective Jan. 1. Passing scores of other test combinations will be acceptable, as well. These tests include: the Graduate Record Examinations General Test, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, Reasoning Test and the American College Testing Plus Writing test.

The California Basic Educational Skills Test: Multiple Subjects examination is required by SB 1209 to be modified to add an assessment of basic writing skills by July 1. Once modified, the CSET: Multiple Subject examination

will also meet the basic skills requirement. This means those military spouses working as educators in other states, but who then receive orders to relocate to installations within California, will not be forced to requalify by taking the State-standard basic skills exam.

According to SB 1209, out-of-state prepared teachers will be issued a five-year preliminary multiple subject, single subject or education specialist teaching credential after having:

(1) Earned a teaching credential in a state other than California by completing a baccalaureate degree and a teacher preparation program or alternative program in a subject area that corresponds with an available California subject area.

(2) California requirements for fingerprint and character and identification clearance.

(3) Basic skills requirement (If the applicant is not employed in California, he or she must satisfy the basic skills requirement before the five-year preliminary credential can be issued; if employed, applicants must complete the basic skills requirement during the first year of their preliminary credential).

SB 1209 also requires the following:

Teachers with less than two years of out-of-state teaching experience must complete a beginning teacher induction program approved by the Commission on Teachers Credentialing, or for the education specialist credential, a Level II education specialist credential program, and earn an authorization to teach English learners.

Teachers with two or more years of experience must complete 150 hours of professional development or acquire a master's degree or higher in a field related to the credential, or an equivalent number of units from a regionally accredited university (evaluations and documentation of experience required), and earn an authorization to teach English learners. If an out-of-state teacher meets these requirements based on course work completed out-of-state when first applying for a credential in California, the legislation directs the teacher be issued a clear credential instead of a preliminary credential.

Also, teachers who hold a valid out-of-state credential

that authorizes instruction of English learners may earn a Cross Cultural Language Academic Development Certificate.

The changes eliminate some of the hoops out-of-state teachers have to jump through to become certified in California, said Christman, who is also the director of the Western Regional Environmental Coordination Office.

"They've met the requirements, they just did it in another state," said Christman. "Service members change locations every couple years. If you're qualified in one state, why shouldn't you be qualified in another?"

Rose D. Ingersoll is currently working to get her California teaching credentials.

Ingersoll, wife to Col. Alva E. Ingersoll III, Commanding Officer of Headquarters and Support Battalion, MCB Camp Pendleton, explained that it took all of September 2006, before her package was finally accepted in October.

“The first time we were in California I didn’t even apply,” said Ingersoll, from Pico Rivera. “I checked into it and I would have had to go back to school essentially.”

Ingersoll and Rider both encourage substitute teaching to get “a foot in the door” by establishing a relationship and reputation in a district.

Marine and Family Services prefer inquiring spouses who are teachers to the Troops to Teachers or Spouses to Teachers programs.

They are designed to assist active, reserve and retired military personnel and their spouses in pursuing a career in public education while also facilitating employment in public schools.

Spouses can find additional information at the California Troops to Teachers website: www.caltroops.org or by contacting the Marine and Family Services Transition and Employment at (760) 725-4737 or the Camp Pendleton school liaison officer at (760) 725-6513.

Further information will become available as the California Commission on Teachers Credentialing finalizes their SB 1209 Implementation Plan and begins its initiation.

More information on SB 1209 can be found at www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/sb1209/default.html.



Infantry unit to retain its senior enlisted leadership

MARINE CORPS NEWS
HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

WASHINGTON — Infantry Marines specializing in light armored vehicles and reconnaissance will soon have more senior enlisted experts, which until recently, reached no higher than sergeant because crewmen in the field were forced into another specialty once promoted to staff sergeant.

The staff sergeants and above who became infantry unit leaders, a job field that encompasses a wide infantry skill base, are eligible to return back to their original occupational specialty as light armored vehicle crewmen, according to Marine Administration Message 137/07.

If Marines have the Infantry Unit Leader specialty and have served in an LAR battalion, they will also be eligible to move into the LAR field. This is a one time conversion program and is applicable to both active and reserve Marines.

Leaders in the field of LAR through their operational advisory group proposed the plan to get more senior leadership experience back into the field.

“They had retention issues because Marines wanted to reenlist but it was nearly impossible for them to get back to an LAR unit,” said Capt. Paul Gillikin, manpower analyst at Headquarters Marine Corps, Plans, Policy, and Operations.



CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

Cpl. Brandon M. Stein, light armored vehicle commander with Charlie Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, glares into the military operations on urban terrain town at the Combat Center's Range 200.

A promotion pyramid has been planned and authorized to help maintain a healthy promotional level in the field, said Gillikin.

The Private to Master Gunnery Sergeant field, also known as a Cradle-to-Grave MOS, has been in the planning stages since December 2005, said Gillikin.

“The change is good,” said Sgt. David K. Snyder, a company master gunner, Delta Company, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Marine Corps Base Quantico.

He hasn't seen that many light armored vehicle crewmen move to infantry units but he has had a couple platoon sergeants that were from other infantry communities, such as infantry riflemen said the Ballwin, Mo., native.

By keeping LAR Marines in the same community, the expertise stays within the

LAR units and less time goes into training a new staff noncommissioned officer.

“The program is also a return on investment issue with training and education,” said Gillikin.

The LAR field has recently upgraded its weapons systems and is emphasizing key billets such as master gunners.

Light Armored Vehicle crewmen operate the LAV, an eight-wheeled, all-terrain, all-weather vehicle. The crewmen operate as a gunner, commander, driver, and will now include senior leadership roles. The vehicle is capable of operating in water and crewmen must be at least a 2nd Class Swim Qualification to be eligible to join. The vehicle is equipped with two machine guns, an M240 7.62 and an M242 25mm chain gun known as the Bushmaster.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Up, up, and away

Marines from Facility Maintenance Department used a High Speed, High Mobility Crane to transport a VMA-122 A-4 Skyhawk static display from the Del Valle Drive display ground to the Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 Expeditionary Landing Airfield Wednesday.

OBSERVATIONS

MARCH 2, 2007

Combat Center Cracks-Up

Comics leave base in hysterics

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center was visited by the Combat Comics tour at the Sunset Cinema Wednesday.

Three comedians, Frank Lucero, Richard Villa and Tymon Shipp, entertained the crowd with two hours of jokes, parodies and impressions.

Lucero, the first comedian of the night and native of Los Angeles, said he has personal experience with the military lifestyle being the son of an Air Force Vietnam War veteran. His brother is also an Army doctor currently stationed in Oahu, Hawaii.

Lucero has performed shows for American military service members overseas in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, as well as five other countries.

Villa has been in the comic business for the last three years, performing in Hollywood and other places, and has recently released his DVD called "Performing this Way".

Shipp has appeared on television shows like the Late Show with David Letterman and performed in the Boston Comedy Festival last year. He was also awarded as the best male comedian at the Las Vegas Comedy Festival last year.

Lucero and Villa are both of Hispanic heritage and poked fun at their ethnic roots throughout their performances.

Lucero made impressions with his guitar of the numerous types of Mariachi band singers you could encounter, ranging from sloppy, depressed singers on the verge of tears, to a shrill-voiced, ever-smiling enthusiast dancing across the stage.

Villa picked members of the audience out to

become his new topics of humor, making fun of everything ranging from their clothing to their ethnicity and gender.

"No one escapes me tonight," joked Villa.

Later in the evening, Villa actually walked down to the seats, among the audience members. He sat with, and briefly interviewed, whomever he saw fit as a worthy topic of discussion.

Shipp, the last comedian, was less animated, more direct and spoke with a gentler voice. However, he emitted no less laughter from the crowd than the previous comedians as his range of topics went from bad drivers to bad dates.

All three comedians drew large amounts of enthusiastic applause from the crowd upon the closing of the show.

"This is my way of contributing," said Lucero about performing for a military crowd. "If I can really share laughs with them and give them a taste of home, it's all the more worth it."

Shipp said he appreciates the wide variety of people in a military crowd.

"For one, this is a very diverse and intelligent crowd of many ages and backgrounds," said Shipp. "I hope to bring a universal humor that can be appreciated by everyone, especially these guys."

Lucero said he has tremendous pride for the service members of this country.

"There is no price when I look one of them in the eyes and say 'thank you,' and then they say, 'thank you' back," said Lucero.

"We just want you to come back safe," Lucero said about deployed service members. "You are in our hearts and prayers always."



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Tymon Shipp talks to the crowd about the joys and terrors of dating someone new during the Combat Comics Live Show Wednesday night.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Frank Lucero does an impression for the crowd of an enthusiastic and intoxicated Mariachi Band member.



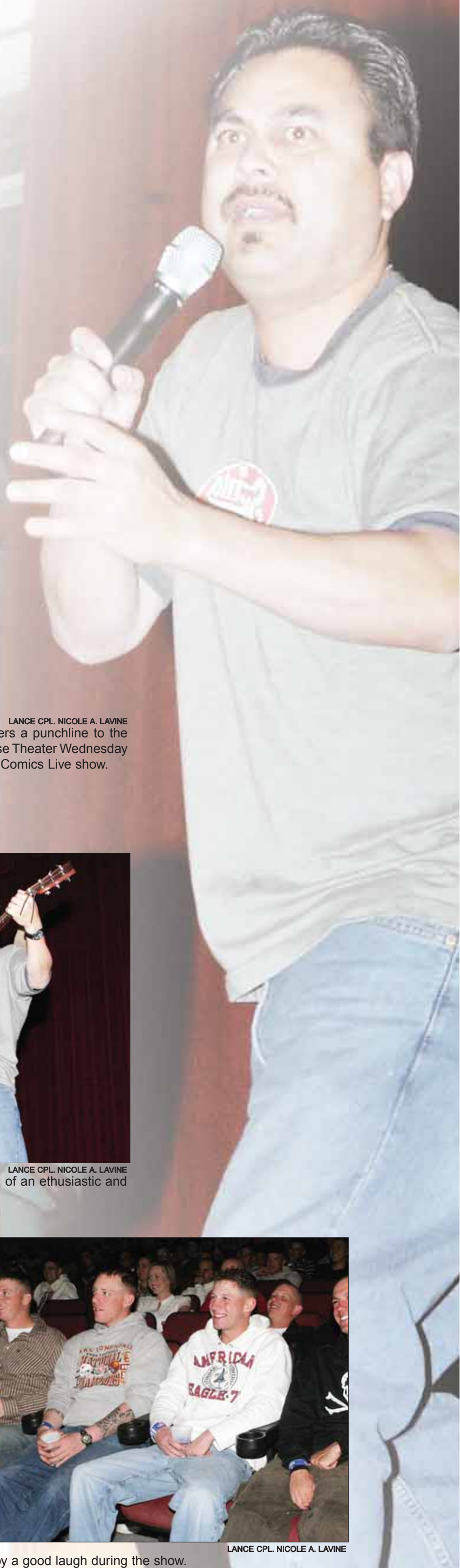
LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Richard Villa demonstrates his contentment with his physique to the audience.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

A few audience members enjoy a good laugh during the show.





Scout’s Honor

Ronald Hodge of Troop 78, Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, was one of 45 new Eagle scouts honored at the 2006 annual Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner Jan. 13. This is the Henry Coil (pictured with Ronald) class of Eagle Scouts.

Ronald earned the Eagle rank in October. His eagle project involved the planting and transplanting of Pinion Pines, Joshua Trees, and Ocotillo Cacti in the recently burned Pipes Canyon Preserve near Pioneertown.

Of all the boys who become Boy Scouts, only 4% ever attain the Eagle rank.

Ronald's Eagle Court of Honor will be held April 14, at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Community Center. Any Eagle Scout interested in being part of the Eagles Nest for this occasion please contact:

Scoutmaster Clint Blaul at clinton.blaul@usmc.mil or by calling 760-660-3091.

Troop 78 is located aboard the base. We are chartered by the Religious Ministries Directorate, and the base is our community.

Semper Fit seeks applications for Armed Forces Cycling Team

MARADMIN 119/079

Applications are now being accepted for the 2007 U.S. Armed Forces Cycling Team. The application deadline is March 13.

U.S. Armed Forces Cycling Team members will be licensed and represent the team in local, regional, national and international events throughout the 2007 season.

Male candidates must hold a USA Cycling category one license. Female candidates must hold a USAC category two license. Cyclists must possess and maintain a USAC International Racing license and meet all eligibility requirements of USAC, the Union Cycliste Internationale and

Conseil International Du Sport Militaire.

Selection will be by resume and will consider potential of top performances in elite category races, history of strong teamwork, and history of performance at the national and international level.

Priority will be given to recent performance that shows a trend of continued improvement. The ability to lead or support the team leader in the U.S. Elite National Championships is the main focus for the 2007 season and will be given the highest consideration.

Team members are expected to compete in a regular schedule of local, regional and national races.

The projected 2007 armed forces cycling schedule is:

April 26-30 - Vuelta de Bisbee Stage Race, Bisbee, Ariz.;

May 1-8 - Tour of the Gila Stage Race, Silver City, N.M.;

July 9-16 - U.S. Elite National Time Trial and Road Race Championships, Champion, Penn.;

Marines interested must

submit Marine Corps sports application and armed forces cycling application to HQMC Semper Fit no later than March 13.

Applications can be found at www.usmc-mccs.org/sports or the local Semper Fit athletics office.

Resumes must contain command endorsement stat-

ing Marine will be made available to attend all events if selected. Marines stationed at a command with a local Marine Corps Community Services Semper Fit must

submit their applications through the Semper Fit athletic director.

If you are interested in submitting a resume package, contact Mr. Skip Best at 830-4092.