

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

APRIL 23, 2010

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 53 ISSUE 16

Combat Center Marines train to counter IED threats at Range 800

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Improvised explosive devices account for 85 percent of American and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces casualties during Operation Enduring Freedom. So, stopping this deadly threat has been a top priority for military officials.

After approximately 18 months of planning and construction, the Combat Center opened Range 800 April 9 to train tenant units on the basics of counter-IED warfare.

Mike Fay is the site lead instructor for the new, \$16 million range, which was established solely for tenant units to receive blocks one through five of the training. Many other suitable areas aboard the Combat Center are constantly in use by visiting units conducting pre-deployment training with Enhanced Mojave Viper.

"The home station training is already conducted at other bases, to include [Marine Corps Bases] Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune," said Fay, from San Francisco. "The IED is the most effective weapon for insurgents, because they don't want to go toe-to-toe with the Marine Corps in battle."

Fay said a combination of data collected from overseas and incorporation of the data into the training they

give Marines has led to an increased success rate in combating IEDs.

"We've noticed improvement in the units that have had the training when they're deployed," he said. "The Master Lesson Files we teach are a precursor to Mojave Viper and what they'll learn there. We teach them the fundamentals of counter IED warfare."

Fay described what the service members here can expect from the range.

"The first lane also includes possible IED and security checks, reaction to detonated IEDs in conjunction with the five C's [Confirm, clear, cordon, control and call] and fives and 25s [five and 25 meter checks around the vehicle]," he said. "," said Fay. "In the optics lane, Marines learn how to use their optics on their rifle or binoculars to scan for IEDs. In the indicator lane they learn about the visual indicators of an IED."

The length of the course changes from unit-to-unit depending on specific requests from each command.

Scott Wheeler, a C-IED instructor here, said it is almost like an arms race between Marines and a resourceful enemy.

"We change the classes if need be, based on our research on the trends in country," said the Mendota, Ill., native. "The enemy is

always watching us and always recording us. They study the patterns we use, and try to one-up us constantly.

"They get to pick and choose where they put the IEDs," Wheeler said. "To help the Marines get better, we try to teach them to think like an insurgent when dealing with IEDs, based on the trends we've seen in Afghanistan."

Loren Hutton, another instructor, gave further insight into just how experienced the enemy is, based on their nation's history of conflict.

"Afghanistan has been fighting conventional militaries for 60 years," said the Apple Valley, Calif., native. "They know what attack sites worked well against the British and Soviets. The enemy likes to use them again and again, because they know how well they worked."

They pass these attack sites down from generation to generation," he said to an attentive class of Marines. "It just shows how much it means that you do your research."

Marines who have completed the training said learning and practicing these techniques as early as possible before deployment is essential so that implementing them becomes second nature.

"We have a lot of new

See IED, A5



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Pfc. Dylan Williams, a motor transportation operator with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, investigates possible improvised explosive devices Tuesday at Combat Center Range 800.

Marine Mart opens for convenience



CHRISTINA L. FELDBAUER

Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III, the Combat Center's commanding general, and Laurette Rogers, the manager of the new Marine Mart, cut the ribbon during the grand opening ceremony of the Marine Mart across from Carl's Jr. April 16. The store provides service members and dependants a one-stop shop, and features a gas station, convenience store, laundromat and barbershop.

NMCRS recognizes volunteers for hard work, dedication

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

YUCCA VALLEY, Calif. – The sweet aroma of grilled steak wafted through the air as soft music mingled with the laughter of Navy Marine Corps Relief Society volunteers during the biannual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at Sizzler Wednesday.

The ceremony, dubbed "Volunteers Rock!," was a two-hour luncheon held to recognize all NMCRS volunteers and the hours they donated to help Marines and sailors stationed aboard the Combat Center.

The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society provides financial

See NMCRS, A8



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Sgt. Maj. John J. Elliott, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalions sergeant major, laughs with Marge Archibald, a member of the "Mormon Mafia" who make blankets for the Combat Center's Navy Marine Corps Relief Society.



Calling for recruits ~ See A7



Family fitness fun ~ See B1



Soccer season starts ~ See B1



Driving for funds ~ See B1

Get hip to HIPAA

TYLER PATTERSON

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Whether you access your health care through TRICARE or a private health insurance plan, you’ve probably had to sign a HIPAA form every time you filled out paperwork at your doctor’s office. Do you know why? What exactly is HIPAA, and what does it mean for you?

HIPAA, or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. HIPAA works for you by advocating four important things:

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Simply put, HIPAA’s portability requirement means you can retain access to your health insurance while changing employers or leaving the workforce. This helps avoid lapses in coverage that could cost you benefits down the road.

Lower Insurance Costs

According to a study by the Department of Medicine at Cambridge Hospital and Harvard Medical School, 31 percent of every healthcare dollar spent in the U.S. is spent on administrative costs. HIPAA aims to reduce those costs through “administration simplification.” Administration simplification establishes national standards for electronic transmission of certain health information. If fully implemented, this would help control administrative costs while improving the quality and efficiency of your health care.

Patient Privacy

HIPAA also establishes very strict rules and regulations protecting your privacy as a patient. It regulates how and to whom your information can be disclosed to make sure your protected health information stays private. You will get a copy of your HIPAA privacy rights from your doctor as part of your routine paperwork.

Patient Rights

Among other things, HIPAA gives patients rights regarding their health information. Thanks to HIPAA, you have the right to access, review and copy your protected health information, request changes to it, limit who can see it or what parts they can see, and more.

Want to know more about HIPAA, including how TriWest, the West Region TRICARE program administrator, protects your personal information? Visit www.triwest.com and click “Privacy Policy” at the bottom of the page.

Centerspeak

What non-alcohol related activity do you enjoy doing?

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



PFC. STEVEN HUMPHREY

Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, Headquarters Battalion

“I like to watch movies and college football and play Call of Duty: Modern Warfare.”



CPL. CHARLES LONDON

Staff Judge Advocate’s Office

“I like to lift weights and better myself so I can be sexy for the summer.”



STAFF SGT. MATTHEW CHASEN

Company C, 1st Tank Battalion

“I like to fix stuff around the house and spend time with my kids.”

Hot Topics

UNITED THROUGH READING

Parents can stay connected with their children during deployments with United Through Reading, a program that allows parents to record themselves reading a bedtime story. This program is free and open to all active duty personnel. Books and DVDs are provided. Call 830-6875 for more information.

COMMANDING GENERAL’S GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Desert Winds Golf Course will hold the annual Commanding General’s Golf Tournament May 7th. The format will be a 4-person scramble. Cost is \$80 and includes golf, continental breakfast, steak lunch and prizes. To sign up and for more details, call 830-6132.

VARSITY BASKETBALL BEGINS

Varsity Basketball practices begin April 26 at the West Gym and Fitness Center at 6 p.m. Spots are still open on the team. For more information contact King Bishop at 860-0293.

LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES

Marine Corps Family Team Building offers a Family Readiness Lunch and Learn Series once a month from 11:30am to 1:00pm at the Village Center. Bring your lunch and learn from guest speakers about topics that affect our military families. For more information, call 830-4163.

Marine Corps History

April 27, 1805

First Lt. Presley N. O’Bannon raised the United States flag for the first time over a conquered fortress at Derne, a stronghold of the Tripolitan pirates.



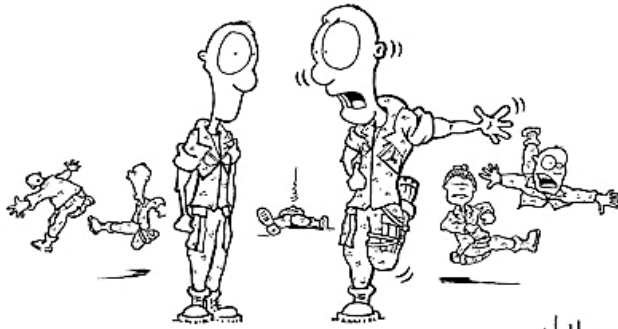
Eagle Eyes

Report any suspicious activity immediately which may be a sign of terrorism, including:

1. Surveillance
2. Suspicious questioning
3. Tests of security
4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

830-3937

“Am I BUSY??!!!..., HA!, Take a look around, EINSTEIN!!



-AHHH, THE DAILY BUTT KICKING CONTEST-

SEMPERTOONS: CREATED BY GUNNERY SGT. CHARLES WOLF, USMC/RET.

SUDOKU #1788

1				2	3			4
	3				5			6
			7		4			
6	8	5				9	7	2
		9				1		
7	2	1				3	4	5
			6		8			
9			2				5	
2			3	1				7

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

WATERED DOWN

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
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52								53	54					
55						56	57					58	59	60
62						63					64			
65						66					67			

ACROSS

1. Often-dressed fare
6. Pioneering video game
10. Kebab holder
14. “Humble” home
15. “I agree!”
16. Put an edge on
17. Source of material for CNN or NPR, perhaps
19. Dr. Seuss’s “If ___ the Zoo”
20. A ___ “apple”
21. Cut down the middle
22. “Don’t sweat it”
26. Flash Gordon and crew
29. Laundry workers
31. The Who’s “Tommy,” e.g.
32. Lined up perfectly
33. ___ up (spoke)
35. Match sticks game
38. Fare from a smokehouse, maybe

39. Stumped solvers’ needs
40. “___ additional cost”
41. A Beatle bride
42. Bat used in fielding practice
43. Grab the tab
44. Of some benefit
46. Barbecue fuel
48. Stubborn as a mule
51. Campaign matters
52. Informal hoops game
53. Some egg containers
55. Graph lines
56. Turn-of-the-century decorative movement
62. “It’s been ___!”
63. Grant basis
64. Cops collar them
65. Together, on a score
66. Like many horror films
67. Box score info

DOWN

1. ___ Clemente
2. Justice Fortas
3. Like some illegal blows
4. Much spam
5. Lowered in value
6. ___-mutuel betting
7. Signs to heed
8. Museum-funding org.
9. Bearded antelope
10. Black eye
11. Blend of two words, like “stagflation”
12. Totally floored
13. Mortise mate
18. The Beatles’ “Back in the ___”
21. Like coffee or tea, sometimes
22. Explosive stuff, for short
23. Politico Hatch
24. Legendary player-manager of the Cleveland Indians
25. Till stack
27. Soda can opener
28. Bronx Zoo houseful

30. Compact piano
34. Gerund ending
36. Half-witted
37. Dust specks
39. Hippy dance
40. Some Dada works
42. Show the door to
43. Hard-to-decide cases
45. Skirmish
47. Memorable role for Edward G.
48. Surname at Tara
49. Duked it out
50. Perfumer’s compound
54. Curmudge only Rooney
56. “Hulk” director Lee
57. Rock’s ___Speed wagon
58. Nov. 11 honoree
59. Time worth noting
60. Many a NYC dwelling
61. Letters on the Ronald Reagan

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General

Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III

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Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Cpl. Steven Afalla
Hometown: Minneapolis
Job title: Legal assistance clerk
Duties: Providing legal assistance to service members and families.
What do you like most about your job? “Helping Marines, sailors and their dependants with legal problems.”
Significant achievements: Humanitarian missions on the MEU
Hobbies: “Working on my junk 1980 Chevy box truck.”
Service: Four years
Time at Combat Center: One year



Alcohol awareness key to mission readiness

CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Many people don't know five servings of alcohol in one sitting qualifies as binge drinking or a driving under the influence violation in the state of California can cost up to \$13,000.

Unfortunately for many drivers, they learn the sobering facts after the hangover and while facing DUI and other serious criminal charges.

"I'm not saying you can't or shouldn't drink, I'm just saying be responsible," said Billy V. Smith, an alcohol abuse prevention specialist with the Combat Center's Substance Abuse Counseling Center.

Educating oneself is an important part of being responsible, he said while also explaining April is Alcohol Awareness Month.

Although the Marine Corps was born in a bar and drinking seems to be ingrained in generations of Marines, the importance of being aware of the effects and consequences pertaining to alcohol is vital, said Smith, from Wichita Falls, Texas.

"The party animal aspect of Marine life is changing," Smith said. "The Marine Corps is pushing the healthier Marine concept. The bot-

tom line with alcohol is that it affects mission readiness."

The SACC has many programs designed to keep alcohol in the forefront of Marine Corps leaders' minds. The basic safety brief given before every liberty period, annual alcohol training for noncommissioned officers and annual commanders' summit all aim to keep alcohol abuse a talked-about issue rather than a private problem.

Smith, a recovering alcoholic of 27 years, has been there before.

As a corporal, Smith began receiving treatment for alcoholism after an altercation with another Marine in his unit. He received treatment several times before kicking the habit for good.

"I was one of those hard-headed Marines. Don't tell me I can't do something," he said, reflecting on his younger days in the Marine Corps. "If I can get just one Marine today to stop and think about it, I've done my job."

Smith regularly teaches an alcohol impact class for servicemembers involved in DUIs or other alcohol-related incidents. Part of what he tries to do is impress upon servicemembers how alcohol affects their perception, goals, and to dispel alcohol myths.

The fastest way to sober up is not by exercising, or drinking coffee or water, but many still put their faith in this dangerous college lore, said Smith.

What offenders should believe, said Smith is that DUIs and other alcohol related incidents can haunt violators at critical points in their lives like when applying to colleges or jobs.

However, Smith said he can't get the word out by himself, commands play a big part in keeping their Marines informed.

Steve Mann, the director of SACC, agrees with Smith. "Prevention starts at the top," said Mann. "If you get a command that's loosey-goosey about booze, it shouldn't be a surprise when alcohol-related incidents start happening.

Although it's tough for commanders to focus on this issue because their mission is to fight and destroy things, we believe that alcohol prevention can help them in the end by positively effecting mission readiness," said Mann.

For more information on alcohol awareness programs visit the SACC website at <http://www.mccs29palms.com/pages/mFamServices/counseling.html#sac> or call 830-7461.

Marines facilitate crop change through agriculture transition program



LANCE CPL. JAMES CLARK

Participants in the Marjah Accelerated Agricultural Transition program register their crops and where they live at the government center in Marjah, Afghanistan, April 13. Afghan National Army soldiers and Marines with 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, are taking part in the MAAT program, which is aimed at facilitating the transition from illicit to licit crops.

LANCE CPL. JAMES W. CLARK
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MARJAH, HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A little more than a week since it first began, the Marjah Accelerated Agricultural Transition program has begun to gain momentum in Marjah, Afghanistan, April 14. The program is one of several others, including programs provided by non-governmental organizations, which the Afghan government and coalition forces are conducting in order to foster agricultural growth.

The programs are designed to assist farmers and landowners in their transition to alternate and licit crops. In

many, but not all cases, this involves the switch from opium, the illicit product of poppy cultivation, to other crops that will allow participants to make a living, legally.

Designed as a short term solution meant to give the city's citizens a leg to stand on, MAAT is aimed specifically at residents of Marjah and only for the current harvest season, in order to stabilize the city's market and provide residents with a viable and legal source of income.

"We are trying to ease the transition from illicit crops to licit in order to prepare for next year," explained Maj. David Fennell the Civil Affairs team leader attached to 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. "We want the Afghan people to understand we're trying to help

them transition even though we're interfering with [the opium] market."

The registration for the program is a multistep process where those wishing to participate first sign up with the NGO's, from whom they will receive seeds and fertilizer. Next, they can choose to participate in the Marjah Accelerated Agricultural Transition program. If they decide to take part in MAAT, they will register where they live, the amount of land they farm on, and what crop they grow.

Participants will be issued ID cards as well as vouchers, which will be used later on when they run across Marine patrols, who will look in on those who have signed up for

See CROP, A8

New Kabob outlet at Combat Center



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Major Chris Nicholson, the Camp Wilson camp commandant, and Ali Mehse, the owner of the new Ali Baba Kabob stand proclaim the vendor open for business during a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Combat Center's Camp Wilson April 16. The cash-only food vendor is an answer to a long-term problem at the camp. There has been a lack of hot, fresh food for service members returning from the training area, said T. C. Dowden, the contracting officer for Marine Corps Community Services at the Com, and a native of Cromwell, Ind.

No more migration for diet supplementation



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Christopher Meyers (center), a General Nutrition Center regional sales manager, officially opens the Combat Center's GNC during a ribbon cutting ceremony at the main exchange April 16. The store provides installation personnel a place to purchase vitamins and other nutritional supplements, which were not available prior to the opening. "[GNC] makes it a lot easier for to get the supplements I need," said Lance Cpl. Matt Condie, a rifleman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, and Prescott, Ariz., native. "Now I don't have to drive to Palm Springs, Calif., or wait for them to come in the mail." The store is just one of several new establishments to recently open aboard the installation designed to improve the quality of life of Combat Center personnel and their families.

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for local
entertainment?

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LIBERTY CALL
section

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We Want Your Story!

Are you or a loved one among the ranks of Morongo Basin residents who are sworn to protect and serve? If so, we want your story. Hi-Desert Publishing Co. has revamped our annual public safety special section to tell the stories of emergency medical responders, firefighters and law enforcement officers who work in the trenches in the Hi-Desert every day.

"Real Stories of Those Who Protect and Serve"

will be published in JULY 2010 and will feature stories written by everyone from firefighters and EMTs to sheriff's deputies, California Highway Patrol officers, military policemen and probation officers, or by their family members.

To submit your story and photographs for the section, e-mail them to Features Editor Kelly O'Sullivan at osullivan@desert-trail.com or call her at (760) 367-3577 for more information. Be sure to include your contact phone number. All submissions are subject to editing for style and for length, and we request that they be 800 words or less. We prefer text submissions via e-mail or on disk as a text-only or Word document (.doc only, no .docx). Digital photographs should be at least 1 megabyte in size. If you don't have a digital photograph, call O'Sullivan for more information on how to submit a photo. Deadline for all submissions is 5 p.m. Friday, June 4, 2010.

1/7 Marines storm beach during raid training



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Marines from Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, keep their combat rubber reconnaissance crafts from being swept away by the tide after landing at San Onofre State Beach during an amphibious assault exercise April 14. The battalion has been training for two-and-a-half months in preparation to deploy with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

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CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

SAN ONOFRE, Calif.—All was quiet on the shores of San Onofre, Calif., the night of April 14, except for the sound of waves crashing on the shore as the tide rolled in and out.

The scene was still - almost surreal - until two Marines rose from the water slowly and aimed their rifles toward the sandy beach ahead. Their objective - find a safe landing zone for an amphibious raid force tasked with taking out a simulated lightly-defended enemy force three kilometers inland.

For the Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, this kind of training was far from what they're use to. There were no doors to be kicked in or rooms to be button-hooked, no calls for fire support or vehicles to be dismounted. Just a quiet beach and a group of heavily-armed, pumped-up Marines

waiting patiently at sea for the signal to raid.

Co. B trained in numerous maritime tactics during the last two-and-a-half months in preparation for the battalions' deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. This is the first time the unit will deploy with a MEU in more than a decade. The final step in the battalion's transition back to amphibious operations will be a large scale exercise designed to fit all the working pieces of what they learned together.

"This is a great opportunity for our guys to learn what it takes to operate on ship, and get to see another side of the Marine Corps," said 1st Lt. Derek Rey, the assistant operations officer for the battalion.

Some of the classes taught to the Marines of Co. B included maritime navigation, coxswain skills, scout swimming, combat rubber reconnaissance crafts and maritime leading course, all of which are essential for the missions they will conduct as the 31st MEU's battalion landing team. The unit will provide the unique capability to insert a sizeable clandestine force into enemy-infested areas.

The exercise started an hour after dusk, using the low visibility of night as cover to start the reconnaissance of the beach landing zone.

A Landing Craft, Air Cushion dropped 17 F470 Combat Rubber Raiding Crafts 15 nautical miles from shore to begin the raid.

"We were on the water for a while," said Lance Cpl. Jacob King, a wave leader with Co. B. "The cold was a different type of cold - the wind just blows away your body heat."

The crafts navigated approximately 500 meters from the shore. Eight scout swimmers took to the water and finned to the landing zone to gather information about the beach. They assessed potential obstacles, the best landing area for the raid force and enemy presence in the area.

After determining the area was safe, the scout swimmers signaled to the rest of their platoon to come ashore.

"Communication is very important," Rey said. "Radio

might not always work, infrared signals might not always work, but as long as the two types of communications overlap, the message will get there."

On cue, waves of Marines from Co. B poured onto the ashore. They moved to quickly secure their water crafts from the surging tide and quietly pulled their boats out of the surf.

"Once we hit land, we trained so much that everyone knew what they had to do, so there wasn't need for much talking," King said. "But that's not to say things went smoothly."

As the Marines came ashore, their boats and gear gained additional weight from the brisk water crashing over them.

"The boats were so heavy 12 Marines couldn't lift them, let alone 6, which made us realize the need to carry something in the boats to bail out the water once ashore," said Capt. Roberto Rodriguez, the commanding officer for Co. B.

"Its good to train in horrible conditions, though, because that's the way it could really be, and they can only get better because of it," he said.

With all the gear and personnel accounted for, they left a small security element with the boats as the rest of the company geared up and headed for the objective just three kilometers away from the beach.

After completing an exercise almost identical to their mission aboard the 31st MEU, the Marines headed to their boats, and as quickly and quietly as they had appeared, they disappeared out into the sea.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

A scout swimmer hits the beach during a raid exercise.

Go for the Gold

Commanding General's Golf Tournament

Friday, May 7th

7:00am show / 8:00am start

MC CS
MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY CENTER

The Desert Winds Golf Course will hold the annual Commanding General's Golf Tournament on Friday, May 7th. The format will be a 4-person scramble. Sign up as an individual or to be assigned to a team. Cost is \$80 and includes golf, continental breakfast, steak lunch and prizes!

To sign up & for more details, call 830.6132 or visit MCCS29Palms.com

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LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Cpl. Adam Randall, a motor transportation mechanic with Motor Transportation Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, patrols outside his vehicle Tuesday at Combat Center Range 800. The new range specializes in counter improvised explosive device warfare.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

A training improvised explosive device explodes near a convoy from Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 Tuesday at Combat Center Range 800.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Cpl. Ty Baker [left] and Cpl. Adam Randall, motor transportation mechanics with Motor Transportation Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, scan for improvised explosive devices Tuesday. The range was built to support tenant units.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Lance Cpl. Evan Fraser, a military policeman with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, scans the open desert for indications of improvised explosive devices Tuesday at Combat Center Range 800. The use of optics to detect IEDs is one of many techniques taught at the new range, which opened April 9.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Loren Hutton, a counter improvised explosive device warfare instructor at Combat Center Range 800, instructs Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 during pre-deployment training Tuesday at the range.

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First Afghan National Army recruiting event draws dozens in Nawa

SGT. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7

PATROL BASE JAKER, NAWA, Afghanistan – More than 60 citizens from Nawa District gathered at Patrol Base Jaker, near the district center area, for Nawa’s first-ever Afghan National Army recruiting and information event April 12.

Attendees and ANA soldiers displaying automatic weapon systems mounted atop their trucks, watched a squad of soldiers conduct a close order drill demonstration, passed in review of Afghan and Marine officers and marched around a group of citizens.

“Look at these soldiers, they are not from here,” Col. Ali Ahmad, an ANA cultural and religious advisor, said to the crowd, pointing out physical differences in the soldiers who hail from various parts of the country. “If you join the army, you will travel and serve the entire country, not just the town you’re from or the tribe you belong to – but all of Afghanistan.”

Men young and old nodded their heads in agreement as Ahmad described the benefits the army offers each individual and how military service is important to the future of an independent and free Afghanistan.

“One message Col. Ahmad delivered in particular was to dispel myths and counter Taliban propaganda about religion,” said Maj. Ramon Garcia, the Marine officer-in-charge

of Embedded Partnering Team 1-1-215, which helps train the ANA battalion based in Nawa. “The Taliban said the ANA is very secular, that it’s against the five pillars of Islam, and soldiers are not allowed to pray. He explained how they pray five times a day, and the ANA encourages their soldiers to practice the tenets of Islam. I think it dispelled a lot of the propaganda, especially since he’s a religious leader within the battalion.”

Many of the attendees to the event were local farmers or laborers, but most of whom were outside the qualifying ages of 18-32 for military service. Despite that fact, Garcia said having so many elder males attend the event to hear about serving their country was beneficial since those men have influence in the local communities.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how articulate Col. Ahmad was in talking to the people about the ANA and its significance to the future of Afghanistan,” Garcia said. “He didn’t conceal anything. He was very upfront and forthright with them in everything he talked about. That’s especially important because most of the front row was elders, who will help spread the word, and the spoken word is very powerful here.”

Even though 15-year-old farmhand Mohammed Shah attended the event at the encouragement of a local elder man, he said he was



SGT. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Afghan National Army soldiers answer questions from local citizens prior to the start of Nawa, Afghanistan’s first-ever ANA recruiting and information event at Patrol Base Jaker April 12. More than 60 people attended the event to hear about the benefits of military service.

not particularly interested in joining the army, but would share the information he learned at the event with friends.

“Today I learned about the army and how soldiers

work and help the country,” Shah said. “I don’t think I will join, but I’ll tell others what they said here today. We need a good army.”

For those men who were of age at the event, most said

service in the army was not necessarily appealing because they had successful farms, businesses or families to care for in Nawa.

Although nobody came forward to sign up for service

that day, Garcia still considered the event a success and hopes to make future recruiting events larger, more frequent, and better advertised to have more military-aged males in attendance.



SGT. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Men from Nawa listen to Col. Ali Ahmad, an Afghan National Army cultural and religious advisor, speak during Nawa’s first-ever ANA recruiting and information event April 12. More than 60 people attended the event at Patrol Base Jaker to hear about the benefits of military service.




SGT. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Col. Ali Ahmad, an Afghan National Army cultural and religious advisor, speaks to a crowd of people at Nawa’s first-ever ANA recruiting and information event April 12. More than 60 people attended the event at Patrol Base Jaker to hear about the benefits of military service.


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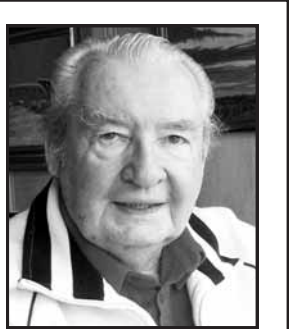


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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Remember the haunting voice –over in the motion picture “Field of Dreams” that strongly encouraged a mid-western farmer to act on his dream of building a baseball field on his farm? The voice whispered “Build it and they will come.” And, of course, his dream became a reality.

Well, I’ve met a real life dreamer who is following his dream. His name is Moe Pegorelli of Twentynine Palms. He has taken a spacious empty furniture store building on Adobe road and is rapidly turning it into a popular gathering place for people of all ages.

When the building is completely remodeled there will be a pool room, a short order restaurant with a wide variety of sandwiches, soft drinks, beer and wine, a first class Italian restaurant operated by an experienced restaurateur, and well equipped Dutch bakery operated by a baker with decades of experience as the proprietor of a similar bakery in the low desert. The fabulous dream is rapidly becoming a reality. Moe, his lovely wife Sloane, and their children have constructed a home in Twentynine Palms and are already fully involved in the community. What a tremendous addition they are to the High Desert.

Moe’s business is named HEADQUARTERS and it already opens every day and has enjoyed incredible acceptance by the entire city in a matter of a few weeks. Why not stop in and check it out. Maybe even have a sandwich and/or the drink of your choice.

Incidentally, Moe, a true tough minded optimist with the courage to act on his dream may be reached by telephoning 1-760-367-2100.

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If you are active duty, retired military or a family member and do not have an @usmc.mil address you can go to the PAO page of the base Web site at: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/dirs/pao/> and complete a request to publish an ad.

The limitations for ads are: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for noncommercial classified ads containing items of personal property offered by and for individuals authorized to use this service. Such ads must represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

Ads for housing rentals will not be considered for the Combat Center Trader.

To have a “House For Sale” ad run in the Observation Post, applicants must provide Permanent Change of Station orders and have the ad approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-6213.

The second front is more direct. By assisting farmers and land owners in changing their crops, it allows

A Marine with 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment greets a young boy while out on patrol in Marjah, Afghanistan, April 13. Marines and Afghan National Army soldiers with 1st Bn., 6th Marines are taking part in the Marjah Accelerated Agricultural Transition program, a project aimed at facilitating the transition from illicit to licit crops.

"This is our battalion coin, and on the back it reads, the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack. You embody

"When [Marines and sailors] come in, once they talk to you, it is a little more relaxing," Elliott said. "There is somebody out there who can help them and get them in the right direction," Elliott said. "You go out there, volunteering your time and effort to help these young men and women get through their crisis."

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Fitness Festival makes family health fun

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Splash! Children squealed with delight as a well-aimed ball hit its target and a life-guard plummeted into a dunk tank. Music from a local radio station punctuated the joyous din of children's laughter as they enjoyed carnival-style games. This was the scene during the Family Fun Fitness Festival at the Commissary and Home Store parking lots April 17 and 18.

The festival offered more than just games, it was also a source of information for Combat Center parents to learn about local emergency and recreational services, safety and family fitness.

Although this is the first year for this festival, it is not the only one of its kind. More than a hundred Department of Defense installations across the world are also gearing up for their Family Fun Fitness Festivals, according to a Defense Commissary Agency press release.

Despite the blaring sun and heat, many families attended the two-day health hoopla to see what the installation is doing to enhance their physical and mental fitness and well-being.

"We have so many groups teaming up together to ensure this event provides as much information as possible," said Niki McBain, the Combat Center's Marine Corps Community Services coordinator, from Jensen



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Scruff McGruff the Crime Dog gives a high-paw to Maribella Grotberg, 2, during the Family Fun Fitness Festival April 17 at the Commissary and Home Store parking lot. McGruff, along with representatives with California Highway Patrol, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and the Provost Marshal's Office were at the festival to promote safety and encourage youngsters to "take a bite out of crime."

Beach, Fla. MCCS Semper Fit, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the American Red Cross, Combat Center Aquatics, the

Combat Center Fire Department and the Paintball Park were some of the organizations present. The Coast Guard also made an appearance with a

boat and water safety booth. A plethora of activities and competitions geared toward all ages kept the party rolling. One of the more popular activities was in the paintball

tent. Children watched in awe as combat-hardened Marines peppered targets with splatters of paint. A few brave children even stepped forward to receive a few tips on how to

fire a paintball gun accurately and safely. "I did really good at shooting the paintball

See **FESTIVAL**, B4

Golf tournament an ace for fundraiser

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN
EDITOR/PRESS CHIEF

Almost 100 golfers mixed business with pleasure as they drove, sliced, stroked and putted to the hole to help provide higher education opportunities to Morongo Basin students during the Copper Mountain College Foundation's 26th annual golf tournament at the Combat Center's Desert

Winds Golf Course Saturday. In just a day of play, the tournament raised \$7,000 for educational programs and equipment. The college, whose main campus is located in Joshua Tree, Calif., also hosts classes at the Combat Center for service members and their families. An entry fee of \$70 per player covered 18 holes of best-ball play with a team of four, range balls, breakfast,

lunch and dinner, said Tim Connolly, the assistant manager of the golf course. After 26 years of organizing the same event, one would think the planning process to be relatively simple. Not so, said Mario Villegas, the tournament's chairman and a CMC Foundation board member. "It takes hard work and imagination," said Villegas, from Pecos, Texas. "The first [planning] meeting was in November, and we met twice a month until last month, and then we were meeting every week. It took hundreds of man-hours." The committee ran into another issue which set this year apart from previous ones. "With the economy the way it is, unless you talk [with potential sponsors] face-to-face, a letter requesting support is not going to do it," he said, explaining the donation process which funds the yearly competition. Villegas said this worked in their favor, though, and opened up new opportunities to get out into the community and meet people. The team raised funds and made friends, he added. A chance meeting with actor Raymond Cruz, whose resume includes playing Det. Julio Sanchez on "The Closer" and Domingo Chavez in "Clear and Present Danger," during a New Year's party earlier this year gave Villegas one more unique element to help make this year's event a success. One quick phone call to



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Abraham Razo, a midfielder for the Base Soccer Team, dribbles the ball down the field during a scrimmage against his teammates Monday night at Felix Field. The Base Soccer Team represents the Combat Center while competing in the regional tournament against teams from other installations.

Signups for intramural soccer end May 5

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Aspiring soccer players have until May 5 to sign up for the Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League, which begins at Felix Field May 10. Although four unit teams have already been formed, Skip Best, the sports director, is hoping to have six to eight teams before the deadline. Team rosters normally consist of players from within the same unit. However, if a unit has not formed a team or there are no open spots on their unit's team, potential players are eligible to play with a different team by signing a waiver, Best said.

"If I come across someone who really wants to play, but they missed deadlines, I will still let them play on a team as long as they are eligible," said Best, a Honolulu native. The season lasts until mid-July, and the teams will play once or twice a week at Felix Field, depending on how many teams sign up for the league. Some teams have already begun practicing. Nathan Rohn, a defenseman with the newly formed MCCES team, said the early start will really help his team stabilize as a group. "We have a lot of [Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School] students who play for our team," said Rohn, a Fountain Hills, Ariz.,

native. "They're really energetic, but they don't have a lot of experience." Rohn, who has been playing soccer since he was a toddler, said he acted more as a coach to his teammates than just a fellow teammate during practice. "I really urged the players to communicate, but it is something we still have to work on," he explained. His players make up for the lack of experience with drive, determination and endurance. "They never gave up out there, so I definitely see the potential for a good team." To raise the level of his 20-member squad, Rohn began practicing with the Base Soccer Team. The team

See **SOCCER**, B4



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Ian Anthony follows through on a swing during the 26th annual Copper Mountain College Foundation golf tournament at the Desert Winds Golf Course aboard the Combat Center Saturday. Anthony, from Columbus, Ohio, was one of almost 100 participants during the day-long event.

See **GOLF**, B4



Local Events

The Paul Chesne Band
Description: Alternative country and rock
When: 8 p.m., Friday, April 23

Three Chord Justice followed by Lemon Sun
Description: Country crafted originals
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, April 24
Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information call 365-5956 or visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

“April” at Groves Cabin Theatre
Description: An original work by Kurt Schauppner
When: 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. on Sundays through May 2.
Where: Groves Cabin Theatre
8768 Desert Willow Trail, Morongo Valley
For more information call 365-4523.

City of Twentynine Palms Spring Concert Series
Description: Hazmat
When: 6 p.m., Saturday, April 24
Where: Luckie Park
at the corner of Two Mile Road and Utah Trail.
For more information call 367-7562.

Curly and the Black Lung
Description: A unique band whose sound is described as acid folk
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, April 24
Where: The Palms, 83131 Amboy Road, Wonder Valley
For more information call 361-2810 or visit
<http://www.curlyblacklung.com>.

Lower Desert

May Day! Country Western and Classic Rock Concert and Dance
Description: Iron Horse Marines Inaugural Fund-raiser featuring Billy Erickson and the Bandits.
When: 6 p.m., Saturday, May 1
Where: Palm Springs American Legion
400 North Belardo, Palm Springs
For more information call 325-6229.

The music of Snoop Dog and the Comedy of Mike Epps in one show
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 1
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Battle of the Badges Boxing
Description: Law enforcement vs fire fighters
When: 5 p.m., Saturday, May 8
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Earth, Wind and Fire
Description: Music Hall of Fame band play their hits
When: 8 p.m., Friday, May 14
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Bongo at Morongo II, with Mark and Brian featuring Blue Oyster Cult
Description: The pop-rock legends perform their hits
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 15
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Steve Miller Band
Description: The rock ‘n’ roll legend performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 22
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit
<http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, April 23
6 p.m. – Alice in Wonderland, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Shutter Island, Rated R
Midnight – Cop Out, Rated R

Saturday, April 24
11 a.m. Free Matinee– Avatar, Rated PG-13
Marines Got Talent - The talent show is free. 6 to 8 p.m., must be over 18 or posses an active duty military ID.
Midnight – Green Zone, Rated R

Sunday, April 25
2 p.m. – Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Remember Me, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – She’s Out of My League, Rated R

Monday, April 26
7 p.m. – Crazy Heart, Rated R

Tuesday, April 27
7 p.m. – Brooklyn’s Finest, Rated R

Wednesday, April 28
7 p.m. – Shutter Island, Rated R

Thursday, April 29
7 p.m. – Cop Out, Rated R

‘Clash of the Titans’ an exhausting spectacle



COURTESY PHOTO

Sam Worthington from “Avatar” plays Perseus, the mixed-breed son of the deity Zeus and a mortal mother.

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

We owe a significant cultural debt to the Greeks. Fine arts, sports, medicine, philosophy, the letters on the front of frat houses – thank you, achievers of Mediterranean antiquity, for these and many other fine things.

But you can’t hold the Greeks responsible for “Clash of the Titans,” even though it’s their story. No, for this one, you can thank – and blame – Hollywood. And France. Paris-born Louis Letterier, who brought “The Incredible Hulk” to the big screen in 2008, directed this romping, stomping revisit to the legend of

Perseus, the mythological Greek demi-god, king and monster slayer.

Sam Worthington from “Avatar” plays Perseus, the mixed-breed son of the deity Zeus and a mortal mother who grows up unaware he’s got god-juice in his veins. But when humans pick a fight with their cosmic CEOs up on Mount Olympus, and Perseus’ adopted family dies as a result, he springs into action as a resistance fighter. It’s only then he learns his true nature, the unique position, the power it affords him and the crucial role he’s destined to play in the epic struggle.

Now, wait a minute, you say. Wasn’t this already a



COURTESY PHOTO

When Perseus’ adopted family dies, he springs into action as a resistance fighter.

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Clash Of The Titans (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	Losers (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

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Combat Center Sports



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Josh Delos Santos, a player with MCCES 2, spikes on his opponents Tuesday at the Combat Center's West Gym and Fitness Center.



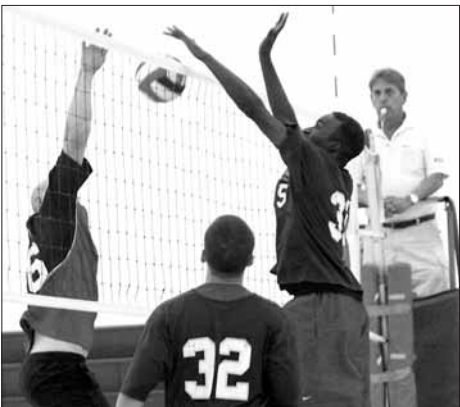
LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Kelly Cook, a player with MCCES 2, slap-serves the ball Tuesday at the Combat Center's West Gym.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Josh Delos Santos, a player with MCCES 2, stretches to keep the ball in play Tuesday at the Combat Center's West Gym.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Antoine Lawson, a player with Dental, defends against a spike from a MCCES 2 player Tuesday at the Combat Center's West Gym.

Commanding General's Volleyball standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
HQBN 1	1	0
MCCES 1	3	1
HQBN 2	3	1
Hospital	1	3
MCCES 2	1	3
Dental	0	4

Athlete of the Week



Name: Joe McKinney
Hometown: Oxnard, Calif.
Unit: Exercise Support Division
Recognition: Left centerfielder known for his speed and agility
Favorite aspect of the sport: "Getting out of the house."
Advice for aspiring athletes: "Say no to drugs."



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

James Robertson with Advisor Training Group, races to beat pitcher Steve Selser's throw and the tag from shortstop Ryan Avena, both from Exercise Support Division, Monday at Felix Field during the opening game of the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League. Robertson was safe at third. ESD defeated ATG 19-18.



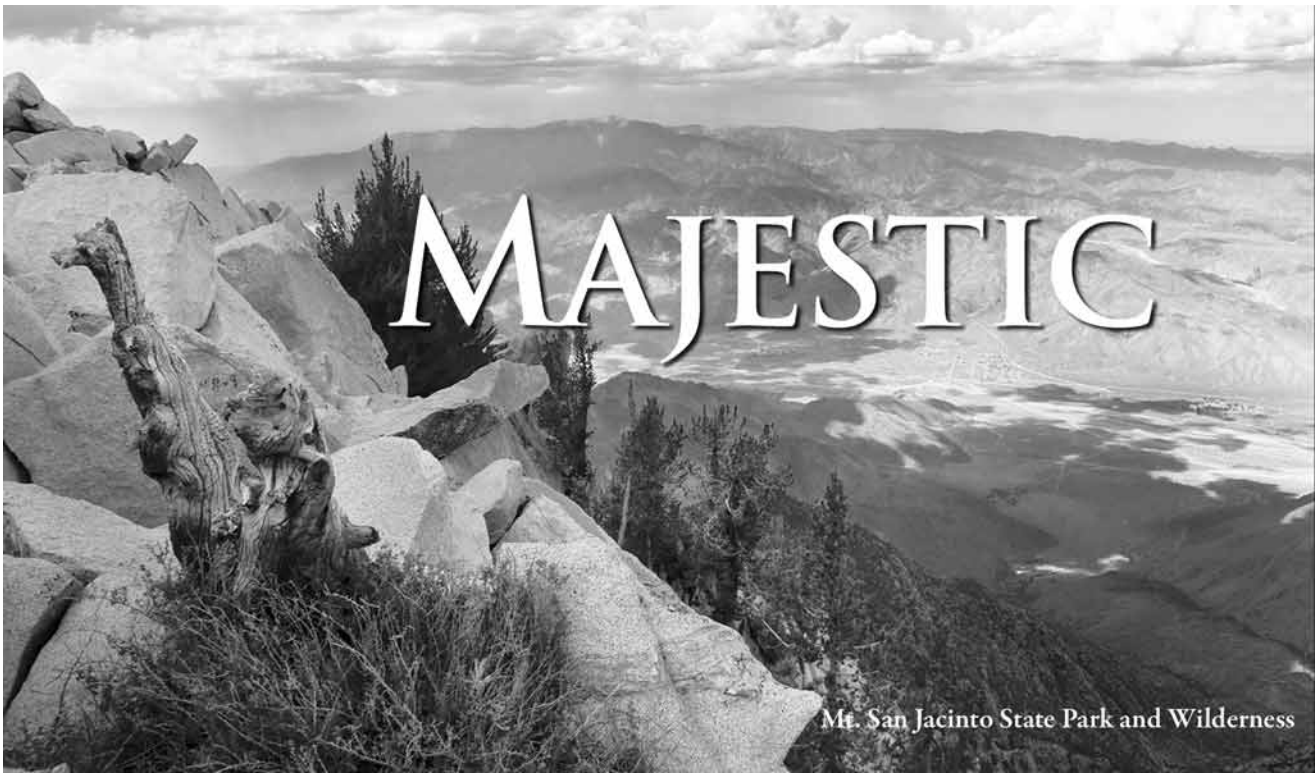
CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Advisor Training Group pitcher Glynn Vice lobs a softball during the opening game of the intramural season against Exercise Support Division Monday at Felix Field. After a close game, ESD pulled ahead to beat ATG 19-18.

THE COPPER MOUNTAIN COLLEGE FOUNDATION
would like to thank the sponsors of our 26th Annual Golf Tournament for their support of educational excellence in the Morongo Basin

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FESTIVAL, from B1

gun,” said 6-year-old Ryan Gendron, as he pantomimed shooting targets. “I got the target ten times!”

The dunk tank, supervised by lifeguards from the Combat Center’s Aquatics section, also drew a crowd. Children dunked a Marine in a barrel of water and signed up for swim lessons all in one stop.

Sheila Gendron, Ryan’s mother, was more excited to learn about all the free resources and activities available aboard the Combat Center. She said she never knew these were available before attending the festival.

“This is wonderful, because a lot of us can’t afford this type of life outside the military,” said Gendron, an Orange County, Calif., native. “This event shows us the cheap or free way to be healthy.”

In conjunction with the festival, Alan Friedman, the division-



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Liam Sutton, 3, prepares to knock over bowling pins with a little help from his mommy, Melody, during the Family Fun Fitness Festival at the Commissary and Home Store parking lot April 17. The festival provided Combat Center families a plethora of information and free resources about healthy lifestyles.

al sales manager of the Marine Corps Exchange, said the exchange hosted a discount for all fitness supplies and sportswear, and the Commissary held a case lot sale.

For more information on living healthy lifestyles or free fitness programs offered aboard the Combat Center, visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Michael Paul Chan [far left] and Raymond Cruz [far right] look on as Geoff Rivas points to where his ball landed in the distance during the Copper Mountain College Foundation’s 26th annual golf tournament at the Desert Winds Golf Course aboard the Combat Center Saturday. The three, joined by Phillip Keene, were the celebrity team during the event. Chan, Cruz and Keene play characters on television’s “The Closer,” and Rivas plays a detective on the CSI series.

GOLF, from B1

Cruz and the tournament boasted a celebrity team consisting of Cruz, fellow “The Closer”

actors Phillip Keene and Michael Paul Chan, and Geoffrey Rivas, who plays a detective on the CSI series. “It sounded like a

great idea,” Cruz said. “We feel honored to be asked to play here.”

“Any little thing to further education, and I’m all for it,” Chan added.

The committee cannot take all the recognition for another successful year, though, said Villescas. He also credited the golf course staff for their efforts, saying the foundation may have organized sponsorship and the details of making the event happen, but the golf course staff is the real reason the tournament itself was such a success.

The tournament is just one of three annual fundraisers which supply the majority of the year’s funds. Other events include an art auction and fall dinner.

The foundation provides funding for “college programs and student support, such as scholarships, student events, art lectures, an annual book for student writers and art programs,” said Syndee Slayton, the Foundation’s executive director.

The foundation also bought audiovisual equipment and built a multi-function facility, the Bell Center, which includes a multi-use gymnasium and sporting fields.

For more information of the foundation’s events, visit www.theCMCF.org

SOCCER, from B1

plays against other installations and competes in a regional tournament every year. Many Marines use the Base Soccer Team as a gateway to be scouted by the All-Marine soccer coach.

“We really started practicing early this year,” said Steve Bohanan, the head coach for the Base Soccer Team, as he watched his players run through warm-up drills. “I wanted to keep them active and keep them playing.”

Bohanan, a Tacoma, Wash., native, said once he has his team, they will begin the “real” preparation for regionals.

“Their whole day will be devoted to training,” Bohanan said. “In the mornings they will have physical and endurance training, and the afternoon they will practice individual skills. After lunch we will scrimmage and play games out in town.”

For more information about intramurals or the Base Soccer Team, call Best at 830-4092.



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Andrew Ericson, a stopper for the Base Soccer Team, performs ball control drills Monday night at Felix Field.

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