MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS
OBSERVATION POST
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# Sgt. Dakota Meyer presents military transition workshop

Sgt. Dakota Meyer, Medal of Honor recipient, teaches the 'Hiring our Heroes' employment and education workshop at the Mameluke Officer's Club, May 6. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Meyer and the Toyota Motor Corp.

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. JULIO MCGRAW**

Medal of Honor recipient, Sgt. Dakota Meyer visited the Combat Center May 6, 2015 to teach a 'Hiring Our Heroes' employment and education workshop at the Mameluke Officer's Club.

'Hiring Our Heroes' is a program, which began in 2014 and is sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Meyer and the Toyota Motor Corp., and is designed to help service members better prepare for the transition into the civilian world after their End of Active Service.

Meyer and Tech. Sgt. Virginia Brewer, co-facilitator, 'Hiring our Heroes,' taught a series of classes throughout the day, to more than 200 service members on the 'do's and don'ts' of transitioning into the civilian workforce, based

See **Workshop pg.** A6

Cpl. Travis Langan, role player, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, fills out résumé information during the 'Hiring our Heroes' employment and education workshop at the Mameluke Officer's Club, May 6. Langan and more than 200 service members attended the workshop.

PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO

The Mameluke Officer's Club offers offers an all-hands restaurant with delectable menu options and services for Combat Center Patrons. The Mameluke Pub is exclusively for officers but the restaurant, catering services, and pool are open to all-hands.

# Saving Our Club

**LETTER BY: MAJ. GEN. LEWIS A. CRAPAROTTA, COMBAT CENTER COMMANDING GENERAL**

We are being told to eliminate lunch service at Officer's Club. This is part of the continuing trend of reducing services due to resource constraints, regardless of whether those services are needed or wanted by the communities they serve. I need your help. The lunch served at the traditional "Officers Club" building is open to all hands. While it may seem like an easy business solution to discontinue lunch service to save money, many here on the installation want lunch service to continue. If we cannot get more people to the club, we may have no other option than to close the doors.

On a broader scale, we need to increase use of all the facilities at the Officers Club building. Only Mamelukes Pub has restricted access specifically for officers and their guests. The other three components of the club; the Restaurant, Catering Services, and the Pool, are not restricted to officers and their guests. The Officers' Club, like the SNCO Club, has regularly operated "in the red," only remaining open because of supplemented profits generated at our MCX facilities. While we fight through fiscal challenges and adjust our business practices, the one area we can immediately influence is patronage. While some things are beyond our immediate control, and some will require organizational transformation, patronage plays a large part in the risk of closure.

I am also sensitive to the limited options that families have for dining-out and therefore, purposely keep our restaurant open to all ranks, civilians and their guests. The Catering Service supports large gatherings, Mess Nights, Birthday Ball events, retirement receptions, special holiday meals, and many traditional unit functions. The officer and SNCO pool offers a much needed oasis in the summer and is a perfect place for parties. These are services I encourage you to use.

Our clubs have historically been special places and here at a remote installation they can still offer much needed services. I would encourage use of all the resources at the Officer's Club building if we want to keep these venues open for the immediate future, and for the generations that will follow. Unit hosted events, even once every quarter, would significantly increase use. I would like to see more families taking advantage of the restaurant and to that end our MCCS Team would welcome comments and recommendations to make it more family friendly.

In the end, we will be the ones who either make a difference, or watch the club continue to decline. I hope we can find a way to actively support the clubs and keep these services open for future generations.

# OSC hosts Scholarship, Grant Awards Reception

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. MEDINA AYALA-LO**

The Officers' Spouses' Club hosted the annual Scholarship and Grant Awards Reception at the home of Maj. General Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, May 7, 2015.

"[OSC] raises money for scholarships and grants," said Jessika Coons, 2nd vice president, OSC. "At the end of the year, we give the scholarships out to military children and spouses. The grants are awarded to businesses and organizations in the local area that

See **Awards pg.** A6

Curtis Mohn, son of Keith Mohn, Comprehensive Environmental Training and Education Program coordinator, Natural Resources Environmental Affairs, shakes the hand of Jessika Coons, 2nd vice president, Officers' Spouses' Club, after receiving his scholarship during the annual Scholarship and Grant Awards Reception at the home of Maj. General Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, May 7.

# Marine Corps' Top Shot

Every week, thousands of fans cast their votes for the best photograph posted on the Corps' Facebook page. This week's top shot comes from Lance Cpl. Ryan C. Mains.

Philippine Marines train with U.S. Marines attached to the III Marine Expeditionary Force/Marine Corps Installations Pacific during a fast-rope exercise Jan. 22 at Basa Air Field, Philippines.

# I know I have to sign a rental agreement, but do I need to do anything before signing?

**STORY BY MCAGCC LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE**

Yes, you should carefully read your lease, have a walkthrough inspection, and have the landlord sign your inventory checklist. Have you ever signed for a piece of gear only to find out it was already broken? Have any problems on turn in? Hopefully not, but you should carefully inspect the place you are thinking about making your home before signing a rental agreement.

Is there chipping paint, damaged walls, a leak under the kitchen sink? Notate these problems on your inventory checklist and take photographs or video.

Have as much attention to detail in inspecting your future home as a formal uniform inspection. Then, talk to the potential landlord about these defects. How do they react? It's important to know how you would get along with your landlord if problems arise.

California law requires units to be habitable for tenants and landlords to make certain repairs free of charge. Examples include running water, heat, and electricity. As for less serious repairs, the rental agreement will say whether you or the landlord is responsible, along with other important things like if your dog is allowed, if friends can stay over, or even if you can have your grill on the patio.

In sum, before you sign the rental agreement, you should pay attention to detail and take extra steps to protect yourself. Since the law states you are responsible for damage beyond normal wear you cause to the unit, knowing your rights and using the checklist will avoid future issues.

An example checklist can be found here:

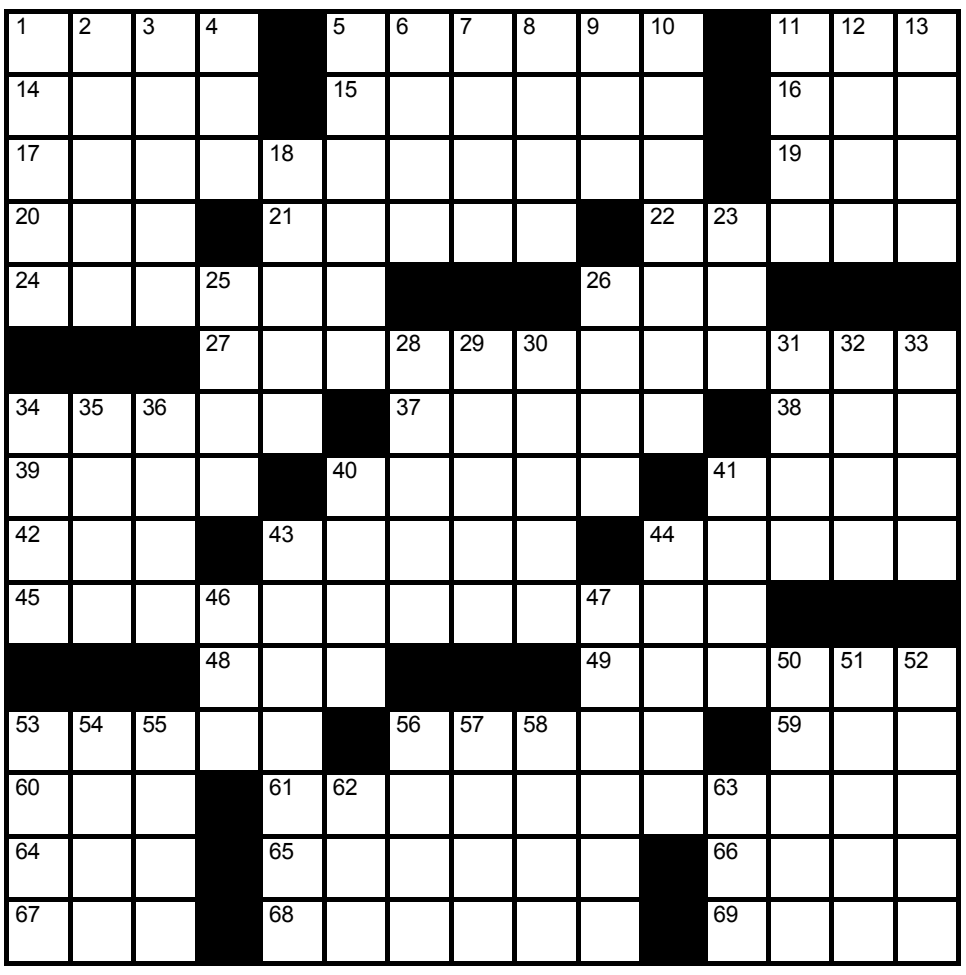
http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/checklist.pdf

California's tenant handbook can be found here:

http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/introduction.shtml

This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. If you are in need of legal advice, make an appointment with the Legal Assistance Office at bldg.. 1514 or call (760) 830-6111.

## CROSSWORD



**Across**

1. Pudding fruit
5. Dolphin fin
11. Sanction
14. Santa ___, Calif.
15. Flier Earhart
16. Generation
17. Computer error message #1
19. Hamburger's one
20. "A pox on you!"
21. Ain't right?
22. Cruel sorts
24. Kind of seat
26. Commonly
27. Computer error message #2
34. Ancient Peruvian
37. Baseball sacrifices
38. Expanse
39. Author Caleb
40. Very, to Verdi
41. Not be serious
42. Picnicked
43. Long green
44. Sealy rival
45. Computer error message #3
48. Boric acid target
49. Dr Pepper rival, once
53. Hebrew cleric
56. Disney deer
59. Classic opener
60. Can
61. Computer error message #4
64. Funny Stewart
65. Disregard
66. Icy oval
67. "Go on..."
68. Midday event
69. Pub casks

**Down**

1. Frosh teachers
2. Toon duckling
3. Minnesota hwy.
4. ___ jacket
5. One "in distress"
6. Foreshadow
7. San ___
8. Schedule position
9. Ventilate
10. Downsizing tactic
11. Unwanted look
12. Lackawanna's lake
13. Whups
18. Conform
23. Certain Pontiac
25. Not near
26. Italian eight
28. Nook download
29. Cancels
30. Ready for drawing
31. Tech support caller
32. Hatchling's home
33. Numbers to crunch
34. Apple scheduling software
35. Defense grp.
36. Boat people
40. Lion's share
41. Military wheels
43. Insignificant
44. Money substitute
46. Small amount
47. Casual walker
50. Navel type
51. Existence
52. Strong beers
53. Indian prince
54. Impulse transmitter
55. Curve
56. Capital of Moravia
57. Presently
58. Insignificant
62. Me problem
63. Sanctuary

## SUDOKU

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*Last week's answers*

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facebook

Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter

YouTube

The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel Find it at http://www.youtube.com/user/Combat CenterPAO.

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## OFF-LIMITS ESTABLISHMENTS

MCIWest off-limits establishments guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations. This order applies to all military personnel.

**In Oceanside:**
- Angelo's Kars, 222 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054
- Angelo's Kars, 226 S. Coast Hwy, Oceanside, Calif., 92054

**In San Diego:**
- Club Mustang, 2200 University Ave.
- Club San Diego, 3955 Fourth St.
- Get It On Shoppe, 3219 Mission Blvd.
- Main Street Motel, 3494 Main St.
-Vulcan Baths, 805 W. Cedar St.

**In National City:**
- Dream Crystal, 15366 Highland Ave.
- Sports Auto Sales, 1112 National City Blvd.

Local off-limits guidance prohibits service members from patronizing the following locations.

**In Twentynine Palms:**
- Adobe Smoke Shop, 6441 Adobe Rd.
- STC Smoke Shop, 6001 Adobe Rd.
- K Smoke Shop, 5865A Adobe Rd.

**In Yucca Valley:**
- Yucca Tobacco Mart, 57602 29 Palms Hwy.
- Puff's Tobacco Mart, 57063 29 Palms Hwy.

**In Palm Springs:**
- Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
- Whispering Palms Apts., 449 E. Arenas Road
- NYPD Pizza, 260-262 N. Palm Canyon Drive

For the complete orders, but not off-limits, check out the Combat Center's official-website at http://www.29palms.marines.mil

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

# Josue FUNES

Cpl., Light Armored Vehicle repair technician, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion

Funes has practiced martial arts for more than six years and has recently taken up Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu at the Yucca Valley Jiu-Jitsu training gym. In his time training, he has learned to never judge a fighter by their size and the importance of a calm mindset.

**> I've been practicing** mixed martial arts for more than six years and have been dedicated to training in jiu-jitsu for more than three months.

**> When I was younger** I used to get picked on a lot. I was a popular kid but I never really learned how to defend myself.
My uncle inspired me from a young age to join the Marine Corps.

**> He was in a reconnaissance** unit and whenever he would return from a deployment he would tell me stories of all the amazing things he did.

**> I told my uncle** that when I was old enough I would become a Marine, but one day he went on deployment and never came back.

**> I'm a man of my word** and when I graduated high school I was standing on the yellow footprints two months later.

**> I have been in the Marine Corps** for almost three years.

**> When I got into** fighting, I found that I really enjoyed it.

**> I worked on boxing** and American kickboxing fighting styles at my first gym.

**> Jiu-jitsu taught me humility.** It does not require a lot of strength and smaller fighters can make bigger opponents tap out with strategy and skill.

**> Jiu-jitsu is a** self-defense martial art and it takes much longer to master than others. In other martial arts you may see 19 to 22 year-old fighters with black belts. You rarely see a young black belt in jiu-jitsu.

**> It is a fighting style** that can't be choreographed and you must learn how to deal with real opponents.

**> Jiu-jitsu goes beyond** the physical aspect, requiring egos to be left at the door. Often with jiu-jitsu, your opponent will have an advantage in size. When you go into a fight you have to have a strategy or you're going to get beat.

**> Spending time at the gym** helps me relieve any built-up stress after a long day and when I leave I feel great.

**> I have participated** in two amateur MMA fights and spent a while coaching other fighters.

**> Your first fight is always** the most nerve-wracking experience. Building up to a fight takes six to eight months of training. It all comes down to that moment, when you look your opponent in the eye for the first time.

**> When looking for a** new gym, the most important thing to me is the people and how they interact. You should be able to go to a gym and feel like you're part of a family.

**> The gym I go to,** Yucca Valley Jiu-jitsu is also a mixed martial arts gym. We learn everything from ground fighting to karate.

**> My advice to anyone** interested in learning jiu-jitsu, is if you're going to spend money on it, don't let it go to waste.

**> I work to improve strength** and conditioning in the morning and immediately after work I go straight to the gym to work on my jiu-jitsu. All-in-all, I put in around four hours of training every day.

**> Whenever I'm feeling** down what gets me back on my feet is competition. Seeing the others training at the gym after having a tough day sparks my competitive drive.

**> My favorite jiu-jitsu technique** is the triangle choke. Once it's locked in, even on a bigger guy, there's no getting out of it.

**> Mastering a move depends** on the person. If you come here and you're not dedicated you will not learn it as quickly. I'm dedicated to training and after four months I have yet to master the choke.

*byline*

**> I feel like learning** jiu-jitsu helped me advance in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

**> During the green belt** course, there is a lot of time spent grappling. My experience in martial arts made me more prepared for those parts of MCMAP.

**> It's not fun to lose** fights but it's the competition that drives me to become better.

**> They say if you enjoy** something you will never work a day in your life.

**> Some of the fighters** who inspire me are Bruno Malfacine in jiu-jitsu and Ronda Rousey in MMA.

**> One of my favorite** quotes is "In jiu-jitsu you never lose, you learn. Accept your mistakes and work to improve them," from Rodrigo Munduruca, Canadian mixed martial artist.

**> At the end of the day,** if you're tired and still put in the effort to go to the gym, that's the moment when you discover what you're really made of.


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# Music festival salutes Combat Center

Rodney Atkins, country music singer, performs for Combat Center patrons during the 'We Salute You Fest' at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 9. In addition to Atkins' performance, the event featured a Family Fun Day and Commanding General's Car and Bike show.

**PHOTOS AND STORY BY PFC. LEVI SCHULTZ**

Marine Corps Community Services hosted the 'We Salute You Fest' at Lance Cpl. Tory L. Gray Field, May 8 through 9, 2015 to thank the Marines of the Combat Center.

The event featured live performances from rock bands Buckcherry and Adelitas Way, May 8 and country music singers Rodney Atkins and Caroline Kole, May 9.

"It's a very inspiring and encouraging experience to perform for Marines," Kole said. "Performing gives me so much joy, and being able to bring that joy to an important place like this is wonderful."

According to Atkins, the most enjoyable performances in his experience have been for service members.

"I perform shows all over the country, but there is nothing like the energy I got from playing for Marines and soldiers," Atkins said. "It's incredible to be able to sing about the things they fight for."

In addition to the live musical performances, the Commanding General's Car and Bike Show and a Family Fun Day were held, May 9.

"Events like these are great because they get us out of the barracks to spend time with our fellow Marines," said Cpl. Dylan Richmond, administrative clerk, Headquarters Battalion. "We don't have to leave town and it saves us time and money."

The car and bike show featured vehicles entered by Combat Center patrons, who competed for the People's Choice Award. The show was open to all vehicle makes, models and eras.

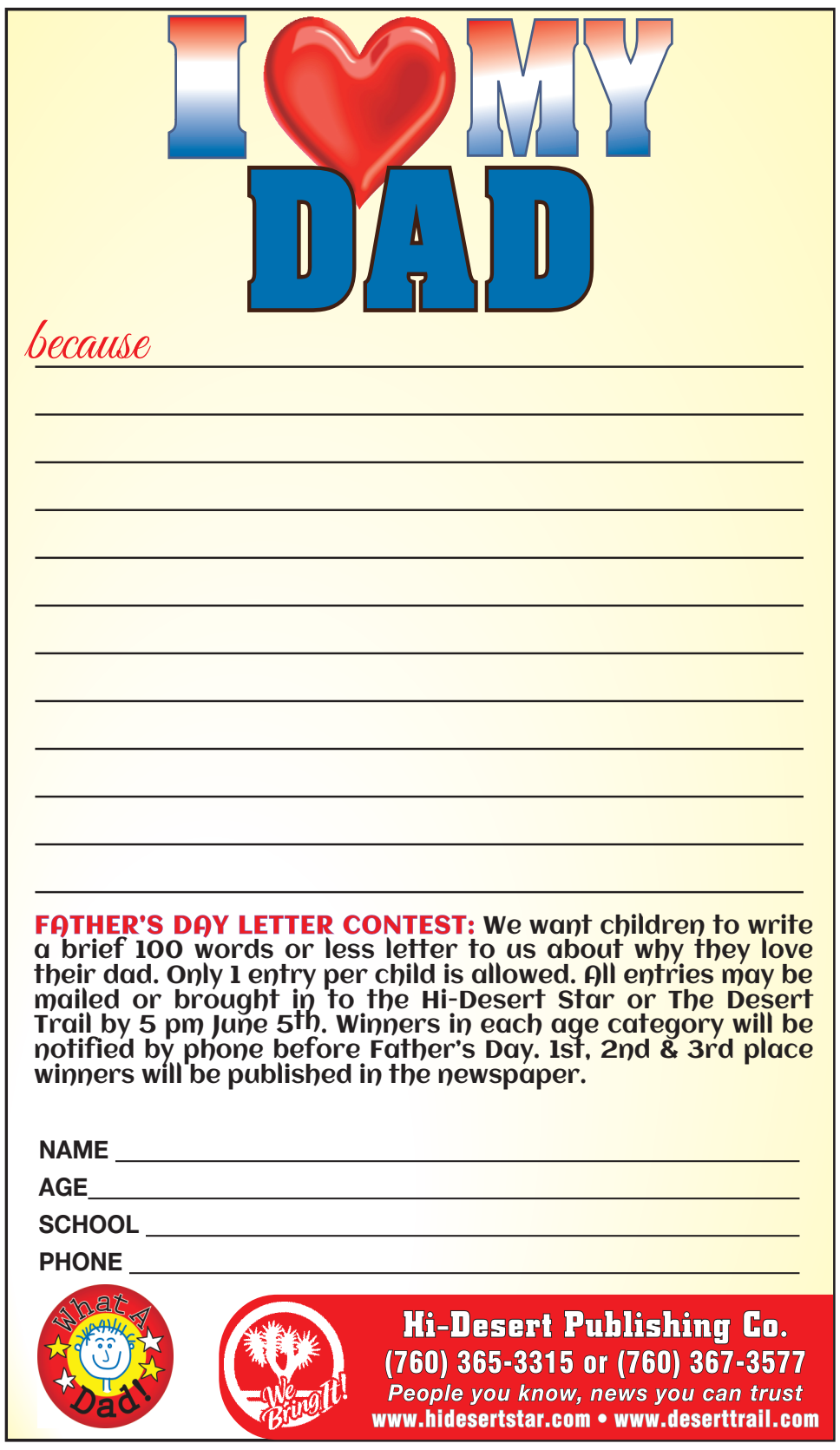
During the Family Fun Day, MCCS also provided activities such as; balloon artists, a henna tattoo station, a face painting station, a Ferris wheel, static displays of military vehicles and inflatable attractions.

"It's our way of thanking [service members] for what they do," said Celina Laserna, special events organizer, Marine Corps Community Services. "It's fulfilling to give back to them for all the sacrifices they make."

Caroline Kole, country music singer, performs for Marines, sailors and their families during the 'We Salute You Fest' music celebration at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 9. Kole opened the concert for Rodney Atkins, country music singer.

Retired Gunnery Sgt. Tim Warren and Lance Cpl. Elijah Goldsmith, cyber network operator, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, display their 1956 Chevrolet 6400 during the Commanding General's Car and Bike Show as part of the 'We Salute You Fest' at the Lance Cpl. Tory L. Gray Field, May 9. The vehicles competed for the People's Choice Award and the event was open to all vehicle makes, models and years.

Combat Center children scale an inflatable rock climbing wall during the Family Fun Day event as part of the 'We Salute You Fest' at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, May 9. Other activities available during the Family Fun Day event included; balloon artists, a henna tattoo station, a face painting station, a Ferris wheel and static displays of military vehicles.



## Workshop from pg. A1

Tech Sgt. Virginia Brewer, co-facilitator, 'Hiring our Heroes', teaches Marines about transitioning back into the civilian workforce after their End of Active service during the 'Hiring our Heroes' employment and education workshop at the Mameluke Officer's Club, May 6.

on their own first-hand experiences.

"Boot camp took 12 weeks to transition you from civilian to Marine and that was a hard transition," Meyer said. "The same process will eventually occur when transitioning from Marine to civilian and preparation is key."

The Career Resource Office aboard the Combat Center provides service members and their spouses with programs such as the Transition Readiness Seminar and the Spouse Transition and Readiness Seminar along with many other classes and workshops to help service members and their families.

"All the programs we offer here can only help the service members and their families," said Virginia Sulick, Manager, Career Resource Office. "Everyone needs a plan with an end goal in mind and we are here to help create a starting point."

According to Sulick, starting these steps early helps create more professional Marines and helps them realize what benefits are available. In addition, it shows them how their Military Occupational Specialty certifications and training transfer into the civilian workforce.

Sgt. Dakota Meyer, Medal of Honor recipient, talks to Marines and sailors about their options and opportunities as they reach their End of Active Service during the 'Hiring our Heroes' employment and education workshop at the Mameluke Officer's Club, May 6. 'Hiring our Heroes' is designed to help service members better prepare for the transition into the civilian world.

"Veterans are some of the greatest people in society," Meyer said. "They make up less than one percent of the population, [of that one percent] fewer of them are Marines. Those are the people who stood up and chose to sacrifice and defend the greatest nation; those are the type of people coming to the table preparing to become part of the workforce."

For more information on the transition programs available, call the Career Resource Office at 760-830-7225

## Awards from pg. A1

support military families."

Approximately 50 local business owners, military family members and students attended the event. During the ceremony, Eileen Murray, president, OSC, Lisa Bargeron, grant committee chair person, and Coons, awarded the scholarships and grants to students and organizations allowing them to be recognized in front of their family and friends. This year, OSC gave out $53 thousand in grants and scholarships.

"It's a continual wheel of giving back," Coons said. "Every [family] knows we raise the money to give back to the Combat Center community."

Scholarship applicants are allowed to receive the scholarship only once. In order to be eligible for the scholarship the applicant must be a child or spouse of a service member, who is active duty, reservist or retired, and stationed in the local area. Both high school and college students are eligible. Students must write a 500-word essay explaining how they plan to use the money to further their education.

"This scholarship is going to make attending college a lot more comfortable, [especially] knowing that some of my tuition is already taken care of," said Curtis Mohn, son of Keith Mohn, Comprehensive Environmental Training and Education Program coordinator, Natural Resources Environmental Affairs. "Everybody here has a different story and they all have different aspirations for their future. I think any amount of money helps and events like this are good for everyone involved."

OSC raises the money needed for the scholarships and grants with fundraisers throughout the year. According to Coons the biggest fundraiser is Mardi Gras, a huge auction held at the end of February.

"It definitely takes some of the burden off of those who are sending their children to college," Coons said. "As for the organizations, if there are membership dues or fees, the money that we give them helps to lower the cost required [for military members] to join."

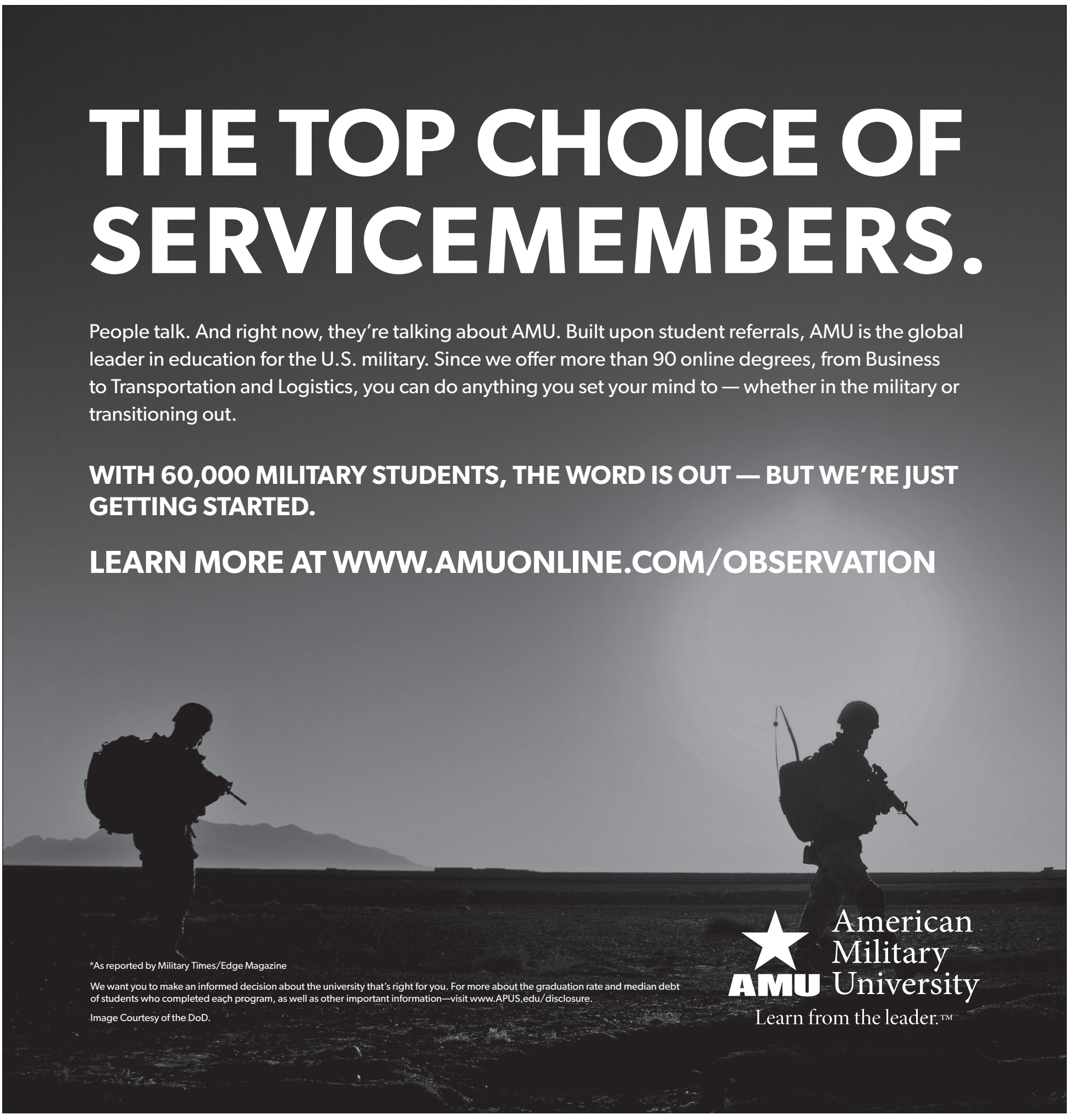
Businesses and organizations are allowed to continuously apply for grants. Eligibility for the grant requires the business or organization to prove the ways in which they provide support to military families.

"The focus of the grant is to work with veterans and current military staff, as well as their spouses, to provide scholarships

Jocelyn Valdez, student, Twentynine Palms High School, shakes the hand of Eileen Murray, president, Officers' Spouses' Club, after receiving her scholarship during the annual Scholarship and Grant Awards Reception at the home of Maj. General Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, May 7.

Kevin Wong, Desert Institute Program Coordinator, Joshua Tree National Park, receives a grant from Eileen Murray, president, Officers' Spouses' Club, during the annual Scholarship and Grant Awards Reception at the home of Maj. General Lewis A. Craparotta, Combat Center Commanding General, May 7.

so they can actually take the courses that are offered for advanced education," said David Smith, superintendent, Joshua Tree National Park. "By ourselves, we cannot financially afford to give scholarships to all of the military employees and veterans. Our ability to serve this community would not exist without grants like this."

# 101 Critical Days of Summer

**STORY BY MCACGG SAFETY DIVISION**

The summer season officially begins on June 21 and is rapidly approaching, which brings along an increase in activities such as barbeques, parties, traveling, swimming, boating, cycling, hiking, and camping to name a few. The onset of summer also brings with it the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, which runs from Memorial Day, May 25 to Labor Day, September 7. During the 101 Critical Days of Summer Campaign, units and organizations are asked to provide their Marines and sailors with the tools and training necessary to help them participate in their summer recreational activities in a safe and responsible manner.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2014, there were 8 Marine Corps and 12 Navy off duty fatalities across the Marine Corps and Navy. Fourteen of the fatalities involved cars or trucks and motorcycles. 20 trained and ready Marines and Sailors are no longer with us. During the same period in 2013, there were 10 Marine and 16 Navy fatalities. This represents a 23 percent decrease in summer fatalities. Let's work together towards a common goal and bring the number even lower this year.

Tips for motor vehicle safety:

- Start every trip well rested
- Drive during daylight hours
- Schedule breaks every two hours
- Never drink and drive
- Pull over if you get tired.

It's better to get there late than not at all

- Use the Travel Risk Planning System (TRIPS) for your trip. TRIPS is an easy online survey that helps you recognize and reduce travel risks. Leadership involvement is a key element. TRIPS is available at the Naval Safety Center website, http://safetycenter.navy.mil/.

Profile of a Motorcycle Rider Fatality:

- Sober during the day
- Sport-bike rider
- First year rider
- Incomplete training
- Under 26 years of age
- Speeding
- Doesn't know his/her or the motorcycle limitations
- Failed to identity hazards

All Marines who ride motorcycles on or off the installation must take the Basic Riders Course. All sport bike riders must take the Military Sport-Bike Rider Course or Advanced Rider Course within 120 days of completing the BRC. All cruiser/other riders must take the ARC within 120 of completing the BRC and all Marine riders must take a refresher course every 3 years. All Marines who operate a dirt bike, all-terrain vehicle or recreational off-road vehicle on or off the installation must take the appropriate safety training course. Inexperience and complacency are the most common causes of off-road accidents. Training is available at Safety Division.

Alcohol awareness and drinking facts:

- Absorption of alcohol depends on your size, weight, body fat, gender, amount of alcohol consumed, amount of food in your stomach and use of medication
- Alcohol consumption, particularly binge drinking, is associated with risky sexual behaviors
- Alcohol related mishaps kill and injure Marines and Sailors every summer
- Being intoxicated is not cool, not sexy and not healthy. Don't be That Guy!
- Many summer activities do not go well with alcohol consumption, but if you choose to drink, do so in moderation

Water Awareness:

- Learn to swim
- Swim where lifeguards are present
- Keep a close eye on the kids
- Obey signs about water conditions
- Watch for rip currents
- Don't panic
- If you are in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current

Boating Safety:

- Take a Coast Guard approved boating safety class
- Ensure everyone aboard has a personal floatation device

Sports Safety:

- Stretch prior to event
- Stay hydrated
- Wear proper gear and footwear
- Know your limits

According to the Center for Disease Control, suicides rates in the United States are the highest in the summer and spring seasons. Summer months are associated with increased transition and reduced unit cohesion. Leadership must know their Marines and recognize changes in behavior and mounting stress. Periods of transition and relocation may also cause or worsen stressors for Marines and family members. These stressors can include travel, financial strain, relationship problems and separation from support systems. In CY14 there were 45 suicides and 228 suicide attempts Marine Corps wide. As of March 2015, there were 3 suicides and 55 suicide attempts Marine Corps wide. Look for warning signs such as expressing suicidal thoughts, increased alcohol and/or drug use, withdrawal from family and friends and recklessness. ACT: Ask, Care, Treat. To talk to an anonymous counselor call 1-877-467-7734 (DSTRESS).

Units and organizations can contact Safety Division at 760-830-6154 for training materials and assistance with their 101 Critical Days of Summer training needs. Remember that Risk Management is for both on and off duty. Plan for the worst case and adjust when new risks arise. Have a safe and enjoyable summer because your family, friends and the Marine Corps depend on you. Safety first, last and always.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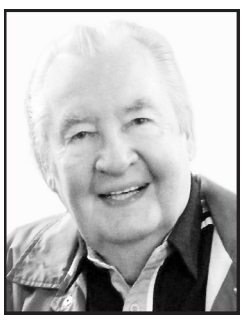
## TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

*by Lou Gerhardt*



This is another in a series of essays written by my friend Herb Orban who lives daily with all the difficulties associated with having Stage IV Metastatic Cancer. Herb and his wonderful wife Gina are dealing with this challenging situation with a positive attitude. They are truly tough minded optimists and two of the finest people I have met in a long, long time. Read on:

This year I've given up suffering. I've done this with the help and support of my incredible wife, Gina, my amazing therapist, and the love of friends/family. Cancer's suffering road to death often includes physical pain, emotions of pending loss, and incredible loneliness and isolation. I was very sick and had two surgeries in January. As my scars healed, I also had another epiphany about living life to its fullest. Gina helped me finish off another short-term bucket list and Mary Ellen Friesen gave me the Yucca Valley Death Cafes. I sold all my old cars. My freedom enabled Gina to buy her dream car while WE can both enjoy it, not post mortem. Now, my body is short of oxygen and my limbs atrophy. But, I must continue to live true to my values. The tricky part is that as I go through illness, my values are constantly changing. Last month, I wanted to ride in an Indy car. But now I want to go to Hawaii. I think that's okay – death may be a one-time event, but living with a terminal illness is a process.


*This column sponsored by:*
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Lt. Col. Philip Laing, commanding officer, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, takes possession of 3rd LAR's colors, symbolizing the transfer of command from Lt. Col. Matt Good, former commanding officer, 3rd LAR, to Laing during a change of command ceremony at Felix Field, May 7. Laing served with 1st and 2nd LARs before taking command of 3rd LAR.

# 'Wolf Pack' receives new leadership

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. THOMAS MUDD**

Lt. Col. Matt Good relinquished command of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion to Lt. Col. Philip Laing at Felix Field, May 7, 2015.

According to Good, since December, 2012 he has worked to improve 3rd LAR by establishing a command climate that fostered effective training and improved upon his Marine's skills.

"These last few years have been a privilege," Good said. "This command has been one of the greatest experiences in my career."

Laing served with 2nd LAR as a platoon commander, executive officer and company commander from 1998 until 2000. He served in various other units such as: 1st LAR, School of Infantry West and 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. He recently returned from a deployment as the operations officer for Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa.

"I have been in the light armor community for a long time now," Laing said. "I have been in 1st LAR and 2nd LAR. It is a privilege to now lead 3rd LAR."

Good's example and focus on technical and tactical proficiency improved 3rd LAR's readiness and capability as a battalion. As the new commanding officer, Laing looks to maintain the unit's combat effectiveness. Now that Good has relinquished command of the 'Wolf Pack', he will be attending the Marine Corps War College in Quantico, Va.

"Working under the command of Lt. Col. Good, we have been able to improve on everything we do," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Peterson, platoon sergeant, 3rd LAR. "I'm hoping to see even more great strides while under Lt. Col. Laing. Coming from infantry to light armored vehicles, I have gotten to see what the reconnaissance does for the division."

With more than 900 Marines and sailors under a new leader, 3rd LAR intends to remain a force in readiness for future operations.

"Lt. Col. Good has done amazing things with the 'Wolf Pack' in his years of service to them," Laing said. "My hope is to continue that legacy while continuing to increase [our] ability to do anything in a combat zone."

The 1st Marine Division Band plays the "Marines' Hymn" during 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion's change of command ceremony at Felix Field, May 7.

Maj. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, 1st Marine Division Commanding General, addresses the crowd during 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion's change of command ceremony at Felix Field, May 7. During the ceremony, Nicholson personally thanked Lt. Col. Matt Good, former commanding officer, 3rd LAR for his hard work as commanding officer of the battalion.

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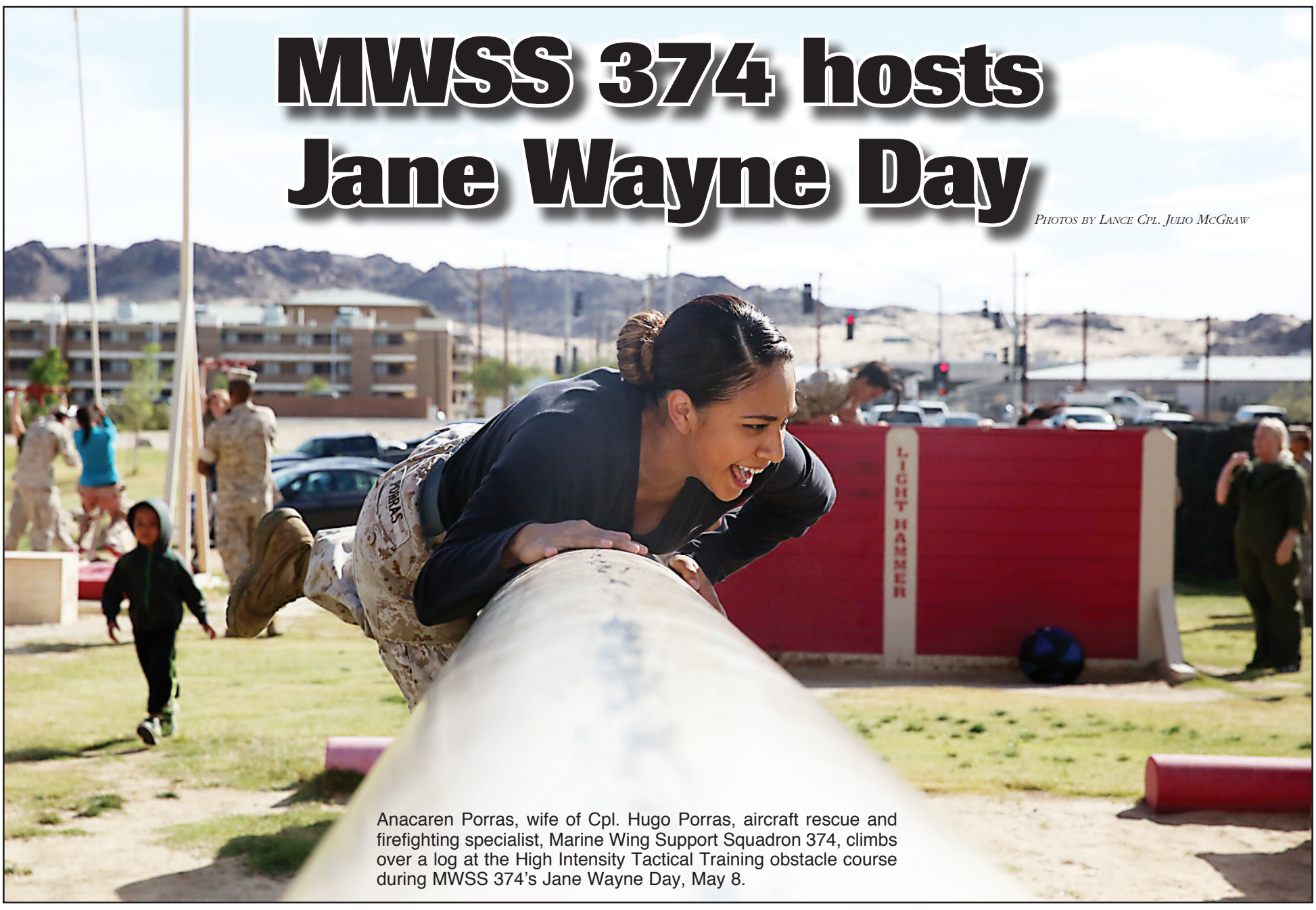
# MWSS 374 hosts Jane Wayne Day

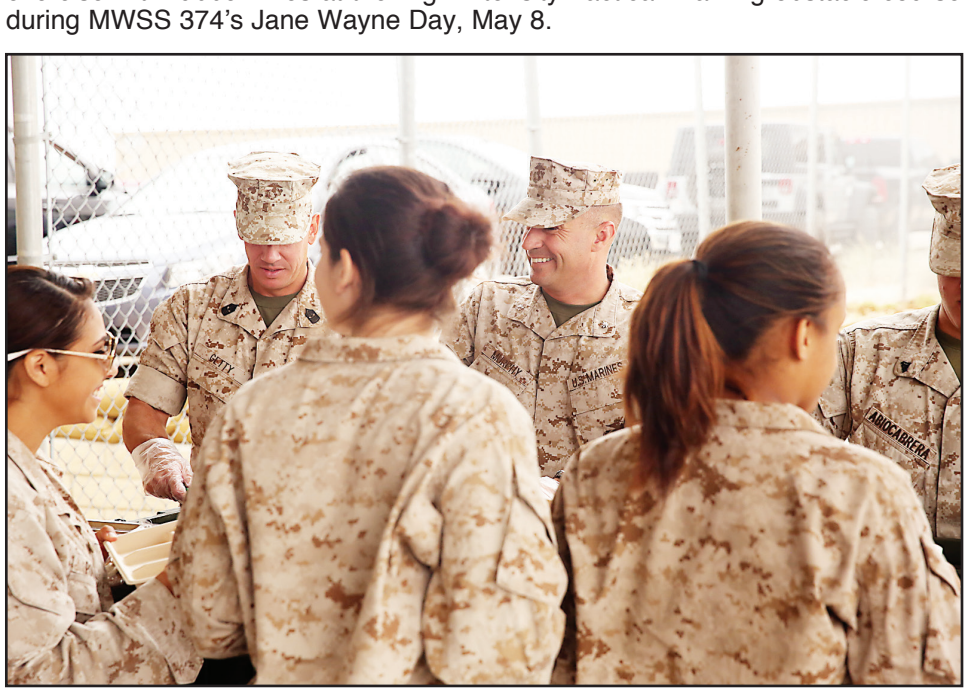
Photos by Lance Cpl. Julio McGraw




Anacaren Porras, wife of Cpl. Hugo Porras, aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, climbs over a log at the High Intensity Tactical Training obstacle course during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day, May 8.

Spouses and family members of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, perform an exercise with rubber rifles at the High Intensity Tactical Training obstacle course during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day, May 8.

Lance Cpl. Brandon Brown, motor transportation operator, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, shows Dayani Monzon, cousin of Petty Officer 3rd Class Adrian Garcia, corpsman, MWSS 374, how to use a simulated M2 .50-caliber machine gun at the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day May 8.



Sgt. Maj. Chasen E. Getty, sergeant major, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, and Lt. Col. Steven R. Murphy, commanding officer, MWSS 374, serve food to spouses and family members during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day May 8.

Lance Cpl. Deborah Stearns, aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, helps Stacy Robertson, wife of Sgt. Justin Robertson, air traffic controller, MWSS 374, put on a fire-retardant suit during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day, May 8.

Master Sgt. Charles Mahone, motor transportation chief and former deill instructor, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, shows spouses and family members Marine Corps drill movements and marching during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day May 8.

Lance Cpl. Austin Davis, motor transportation mechanic, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, gets hip-tossed during a Marine Corps Mixed Martial Arts Program demonstration during MWSS 374's Jane Wayne Day, May 8.

## Combat Center Events

**Come to the Information Expo** at the Vista Del Sol Community Center May 20th from 12 to 2 p.m. The event is open to residents of 801 Housing. Come learn about the Marine and Family Programs has to offer. Learn about programs such as: the New Parent Support Program, School Liaison and Career Resources. For more information call 760-830-8106.

**Come visit Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center.** With well-maintained lanes, large screen televisions, and a digital jukebox, it's a great facility for indoor recreational fun and relaxation. Tournaments are offered regularly and cosmic bowling runs every Friday and Saturday evening. For more information, contact 760-830-6422.

**Mameluke's Pub is holding** an 80's themed Trivia Night May 21 from 5 to 7 p.m. Test your knowledge while wearing you best 80's costume. Prizes will be awarded throughout the night. There will be food and drink specials available. For more information call 760-830-8429.

**The Officer's Club is holding a Dress for Success class** for women May 21, from 9 to 11 a.m. Come learn how to dress for success will winning themed prizes throughout the workshop. For more information call 760-830-7225.

**MCCS will host a Father Daughter** Dance Saturday, May 16. It will be held in building 1707 from 5-8 p.m. Tickets will be available at Information, Tickets and Tours for 10 dollars per father. Light refreshments and a complimentary photo will be provided. For more information, contact 760-830-5086.

## Sunset Cinema

**Friday, May 15**
6:00 p.m. – Woman in Gold, PG-13
8:30 p.m. – The Gunman, R
11:00 p.m. – It Follows, R

**Saturday, May 16**
10:30 a.m. – Over the Hedge, PG, Free Admission
12:30 p.m. – Home, PG
3:00 p.m. – Woman in Gold, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – Furious 7, PG-13
8:30 p.m. – The Longest Ride, PG-13
11:30 p.m. – It Follows, R

**Sunday, May 17**
12:30 p.m. – Home, PG
2:30 p.m. – The Longest Ride, PG-13
5:30 p.m. – Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2, PG
7:30 p.m. – Unfriended, R

**Monday, May 18**
7:00 p.m. – It Follows, R

**Tuesday, May 19**
6:30 p.m. – The Longest Ride, PG-13

**Wednesday, May 20**
6:30 p.m. – The Longest Ride, PG-13

**Thursday, May 21**
5:00 p.m. – Home, PG
7:00 p.m. – The Gunman, R

**Friday, May 22**
3:30 p.m. – Saving Private Ryan, R, Free Admission
6:30 p.m. – Flags of Our Fathers, R, Free Admission
9:30 p.m. – It Follows, R
11:30 p.m. – Unfriended, R

# Super-Stuffed

## New 'Avengers' is full of most everything—including itself

NEIL POND

***"Avengers: Age of Ultron"***
***Starring Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson & Jeremy Renner***
***Directed by Josh Whedon***
***Rated PG-13***

Summer is when Hollywood rolls out its big guns, and this star-packed, superhero-stuffed eruption certainly starts things off with a bang.

The second movie in Marvel's Avengers franchise, it's full of just about everything, including itself. It's got all six of the do-gooders from the first movie, plus a couple of newbies. It's dense with character backstories, relationship dramas and plot points that zip and zing in every direction, including forward—to more movies to come—and backward, riffing on things that happened in previous ones. It begins with one extended mega-wallop of a fight, a castle siege in a snowy forest, and ends with an even larger one, on a crumbling island city in the sky. And it crams even more in between, including a dyna-whopper that rips up most of Manhattan.

I imagine insurance premiums for the Avengers are through the roof.

Iron Man/Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), Captain America (Chris Evans), the Hulk/Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) and the Black Widow/Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson) band together again, this time to fight an evil, smack-talking robot, Ultron (voiced by James Spader), who quotes the Bible and sings a ditty from Pinocchio as he goes about his mission of global annihilation.

Two new characters, the genetically altered twins Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen) and Quicksilver (Aaron Taylor-Johnson), also come aboard—but only after playing freaky and fast for the other team first. Samuel L. Jackson, Don Cheadle, Stellan Skarsgård, Anthony Mackie and Cobie Smulders return for cameos. Look—there's Andy Serkis, who played Gollum in Lord of the Rings! Paul Bettany, previously unseen as the voice of Tony Stark's computer system, Jarvis, materializes anew as a floating, red-faced uber-android named Vision.

If you're a Marvelite, you'll probably be in fan-gasm heaven. Otherwise, you might find the constant, crashing swirl and whirl of imagery and the barrage of inside references overwhelming and exhausting.

The cast is top-notch, and returning writer-director Josh Whedon packs the script and the screen with cleverness as well as ka-pow. But even at a lengthy 141 minutes, things still feel jammed and crammed. All the busy CGI huffing and puffing make the quieter moments stand out even more, like a scene in which the other Avengers, a bit tipsy after a party, humorously try (unsuccessfully) to lift Thor's hammer from a coffee table, or the romantic subplot between Natasha Romanoff and Bruce Banner, in which she reveals a deep secret about her past and he painfully admits why his raging alter ego makes him less than ideal as a boyfriend.

It's all part of the Marvel long game, a studiously crafted, mega-million-dollar maneuver in which comic-book characters are morphed from page to screen, connected, separated, then re-combined in various combos for a seemingly endless chain of box-office catnip. Coming up: Ant Man on July 15, a new Captain America next summer, the third Thor plus Dr. Strange in 2017 and another Avengers in 2018.

"Someone's been playing an intricate game and made pawns of all of us," muses Thor as Ultron draws to a close. True that, in more ways than one.

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