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Twentynine Palms, Calif.

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OBSERVATION POST



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THIS ISSUE

A4— Mr. Denogean

A6— 3rd LAR

B4— ACRS

HOT TOPICS

RECRUITING

Earn promotion points for assisting recruiters in the Tennessee area. Recruiter assistance is needed at Recruiting Station Nashville for the areas of Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Northern Alabama. For more information, applicants are encouraged to contact Sgt. Maj. Scott Samuels or Gunnery Sgt. Wallace Mosby at 615 627-1526, extension 229.

BEEES IN THE RANGE AND TRAINING AREAS

Unit's training aboard the installation have been experiencing an increase in bee activity as the weather continues to get warmer. Unit's should take every precaution to ensure that personnel allergic to bee stings have been properly identified and the appropriate number of bee sting kits are available. It is recommended that a decoy sweetened water source or bug juice be placed away from personnel and other water sources to help reduce the probability of personnel being stung.

FREE STUFF FROM MCCS

Marine Corps Community Services has pallets of left-over diet Dr. Pepper and gourmet crackers that were generously given for the "We Salute You" Celebration by Coca Cola and the VFW. We really need to get it out of our warehouses. Everything will be given out on a first come, first served basis. Interested units should go to Building 1107 or call 830-6922 for more information.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

- 3/11 non-lethal weapon training
- Distributed Operations
- Payday loans

THIS DAY IN MARINE CORPS HISTORY

May 26, 1853

Maj. Jacob Zeilin arrived with Commodore Matthew C. Perry's squadron at Okinawa.

12,000+ attend 'We Salute You'



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Foreigner lead guitarist Mick Jones and lead vocalist Kelly Hansen belt out the tunes at the "We Salute You" concert.

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

More than 12,000 Marines, Sailors, family members and Department of Defense employees flooded Victory Field for a night of music, food and fun during the 2006 "We Salute You" concert and tribute celebration.

The free annual concert, sponsored by Marine Corps Community Services, was heard all over Mainside throughout the night and recognized the efforts and sacrifices made by service members from the Combat Center and their families. The rock band Foreigner headlined the concert.

The event began with an introduction by Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, Combat Center command-

ing general, who acknowledged various organizations for their donations of more than \$250,000 to Marines and families aboard the base.

Spectators also heard a performance from the Combat Center Band, who played various songs for the crowd as well as an echoing rendition of "Taps" to honor those who gave all as the field briefly fell silent.

Stone also took time to distinguish each unit aboard the Combat Center as well as their families and thank them for their continued support and readiness in the Global War on Terrorism.

"To each and every one of you, this salute is to you," he said to the crowd.

As Stone spoke, members of Foreigner arrived at Victory Field after a long journey from Australia, where they were touring before being asked to perform here.

Originally, southern rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd was scheduled to headline the show but their lead singer was hospitalized due to appendectomy surgery only days before the concert. Foreigner received the call and gladly came to support the event, explained manager Phil Carson.

"It's great, it's a privilege to play for the Marine Corps, and the guys are really looking forward to the show," Carson said before Foreigner took the stage.

See SALUTE, A5

Combat Center opens tortoise nursery

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs officially opened a sanctuary for desert tortoises aboard the Combat Center Tuesday in a ribbon cutting ceremony held in front of the sanctuary in the Sand Hill training area.

Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, Combat Center's commanding general, and Lt. Col. Jon M. Aytes, director of NREA, cut the ribbon to the facility, named the David J. Morafka Desert Tortoise Hatchery-Nursery, in memory of a renowned professor, herpetologist and expert tortoise biologist.

The sanctuary, nicknamed the "Davey-Joe Pen" by NREA members, is currently being used as a data-gathering facility for desert tortoise experiments.

Desert Tortoises have inhabited the high desert terrain since the time when the area was covered with shallow lakes and grasslands.

The plan to build the facility began a year ago, and was created by NREA staff members with the help of Combat Center Marines. The purpose was to

build a safe haven for the tortoises, some of which have been discovered by NREA specialists as having a virus, said Dr. Kenneth A. Nagy, a professor of biology at the University of California, Los Angeles, who has been an active member in the desert tortoise research. Research will be conducted on the virus, and hopefully the facility can also help increase the desert tortoise population, added Nagy.

According to NREA, the tortoises have not been able to adapt very well to the western Mojave Desert's expanding human population. For this reason, in 1990 the desert tortoise was added to the list of threatened and endangered animal species protected by the Endangered Species Act.

"We're going to have people on this base spearhead this project — people with a lot of academic credibility," said Aytes.

"This is a very complicated critter and even the smartest mind can't get his arms around it," he continued. "But what counts is that at the end of the day, we try to do something good ... We're doing something good by bringing people here that know a lot about these tortoises through education and

research. Hopefully, by what we're doing here today, we can deepen and broaden, and can find out more about their genetics, and flat out 'make' more tortoises."

Since the beginning of the desert tortoise research here, everyone focused on adult and female tortoises, said Nagy. However, the adult population has continued to decrease at a rapid rate.

"Our idea now is to protect the babies for a while until we feel we can release them to reproduce on their own," said Nagy.

There are two pens at the controlled research areas at the sanctuary — one for sick tortoises and one for healthy tortoises. There are three sick tortoises and 22 healthy tortoises aboard the sanctuary. Both pens are sectioned off by wire fences with a screen to protect the tortoises from touching one another, said Nagy.

"The social recognition for adult tortoises is touching noses," said Nagy. "The mucus in the snotty nose is what is known to transmit the disease."

"Because of the big effort the Marines on this base are making, many desert tortoises can be helped," added Nagy. "We are very grateful for the use of the land and for contributing morale and financial support."

It is a privilege to represent the Marine Corps, and the base specifically, in Marine Corps values and stewarding the ecological system, said Stone.

"This is a good example where Marines show care for the environment," said Stone. "I try to make every Marine have an eye for what goes on out here in our training area. I think they all genuinely care in their hearts about the tortoise. I have seen a good change over many years in the care we have for the tortoise."

"This also is not an isolated program," continued Stone. "I hope the rest of the community will advance in saving the species. We're dealing with a species that outdates mankind, now mankind is helping them live on. The tortoises won't make it without our protection."



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

A desert tortoise roams on his own Tuesday around the David J. Morafka Desert Tortoise Hatchery-Nursery.

SIGNIFICANT OVERSEAS HOUSING ALLOWANCE CHANGES

Headed to Okinawa or Iwakuni on an accompanied tour? Family traveling separately? MARADMIN 238/06 was recently published and provides significant changes to the entitlement of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for service members traveling overseas. Specifically, effective 1 Jan 2006, BAH is no longer payable when a member with dependents, assigned to a CONUS command, is issued accompanied orders overseas, but elects to leave his dependents in CONUS for personal reasons. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be submitted via AA form, and must be approved by Headquarters, Marine Corps prior to executing your PCS orders.

Additional information is provided in the following references:

- MARADMIN 238/06
- PAAN 26/06
- PAAN 27/06

If assistance is needed to obtain the references please see your S-1 or IPAC.

Hurricane hero



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, commanding general of the Combat Center, presents a hurricane lantern to Ray Caldwell of the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, Tuesday at the commanding general's office for his support and efforts during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Ray Caldwell traveled to New Orleans to support the director the base NMCRS' director, Shirley Pechon, who lost her entire house and possessions during Hurricane Katrina. Since almost all of the military families had evacuated before the storms, his job was not casework. Instead, Caldwell served as a mentor providing invaluable emotional support for Pechon and was instrumental in salvaging any equipment and supplies in the New Orleans office not ruined by the flooding. He worked closely with the Naval Support Activity leadership to identify and secure appropriate alternative office space and helped to physically move in equipment and supplies and helped to reestablish a functioning office.

C.O.P. Corner

Community

Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

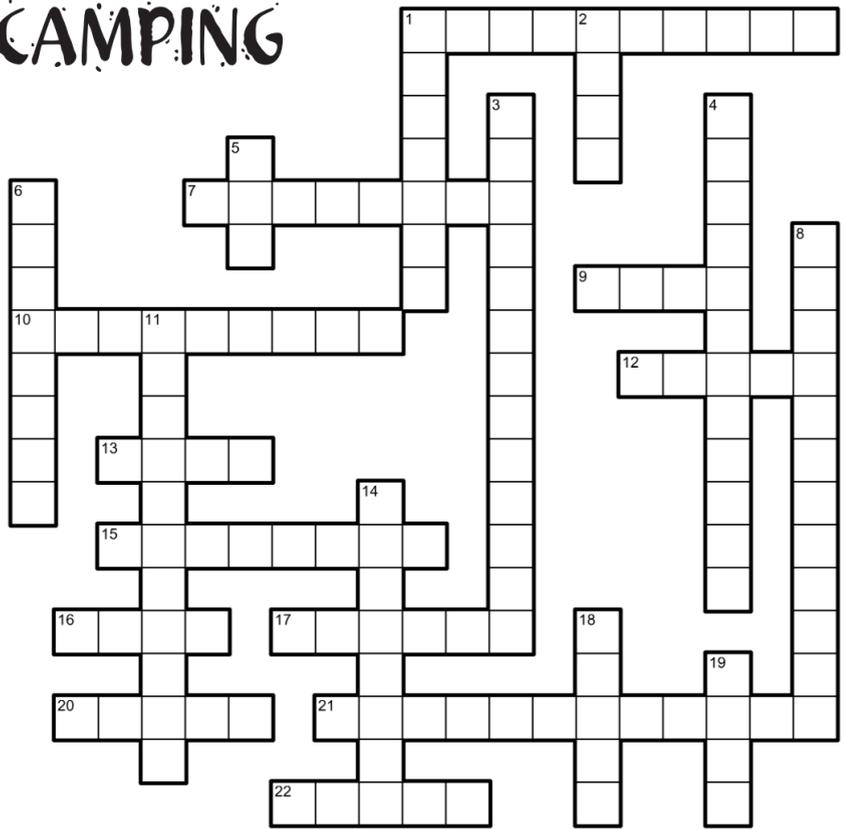
Water Safety

- Learn to swim by attending a local American Red Cross sponsored swimming course.
- Set water safety rules for the whole family based on swimming abilities (for example, inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep).
- Children or inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal floatation device when around the water.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Watch out for the dangerous "too's" – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- Don't mix alcohol with water recreation.

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

Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

CAMPING



ACROSS

- Used to illuminate at night.
- They fly, bite and drink your blood.
- A small body of water.
- Be careful not to touch this plant. It's poisonous.
- They crowd the forest.
- A portable shelter.
- Used for keeping fires going (compound word).
- Little creatures that reside in the woods.
- Authority figure of the forest. Park _____.
- Another name for a path through a forest.
- Important ingredient of smores.
- A long, narrow boat.

DOWN

- Catching fish as a sport.
- A walk through the forest.
- "Only you can prevent forest fires." - _____
- Used to keep bugs off of you.
- Used to sit on next to a campfire.
- Used to roast marshmallows (compound word).
- Scary tales to tell around the campfire (two words).
- A pouch to sleep in.
- A very large hill. In Colorado they are known as the "Rocky _____s".
- Very little sources of light. Some fly.
- Large heavenly source of light during the night.

[Solutions on A5]

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

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

WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
THANKS FOR DRINKING RESPONSIBLY

No endorsement of this sponsor is intended by the Federal Government or the U.S. Marine Corps.

ARRIVE ALIVE

WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Pick up at	_____
Destination	_____
Total fee	_____
Driver	_____
Date/Time	_____
Customer	_____
Signature	_____

Centerspeak

"Why and how are you going to celebrate Memorial Day?"

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



LANCE CPL. RICHARD BAGLEY
MWSS-374, WEATHER Co.

"I'm going to go up to Camp Pendleton to spend it with friends. Memorial Day, to me, means the start of summer, barbecues and fun."



DAN MARROW
MAIN EXCHANGE SECURITY

"It's a very important day for me. I fly the colors at my home in honor of my family members that died in World War II. I spend the day remembering them."



ROSALEE FABRICIUS
SPOUSE OF RETIRED MARINE

"We will be going to the memorial services in Twentynine Palms and Joshua Tree. It's a special day set aside for those who gave the greatest gift of all for our country; their lives."



STAFF SGT. MATTHEW RIGHT
3/7, KILO Co.

"I'll be spending the day visiting family, barbecuing, going to the Los Angeles parade. It's to remember our fore fathers who fought and died for this country."

What's on your mind?

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

Address submissions to:

Commanding General
Public Affairs Office
(Attn. Press Chief)
MCAGCC
Box 788200
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8200

Or E-mail to:

evan.eagan@usmc.mil

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Combat Correspondent
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Combat Correspondent

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Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox
Sgt. Jennie E. Haskamp
Michael J. Armstrong
Sgt. Robert L. Fisher III
Cpl. Evan M. Eagan
Cpl. Heidi E. Loreda
Cpl. Brian A. Tuthill
Lance Cpl. Michael S. Cifuentes
Lance Cpl. Regina N. Ortiz

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Spotlight on Mojave Viper

Embattled in the desert

Live-fire exercises provide 1/6 Marines with realistic combat environment

CPL. PAUL ROBBINS JR.

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Pinned down in a covered position with enemy gunfire impacting overhead and the explosions of enemy mortars moving ever closer, Marines in combat have one thing to rely on...each other.

As the next step in their pre-deployment, Mojave Viper training evolution aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, the Marines of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, have shifted their focus from individual skills training to team building and unit-driven operations.

"It was a big step, but a natural one," said 2nd Lt. John D. Branson, a platoon commander for Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, "It was a built in progression to the training."

From May 15 to 22, the battalion focused on live-fire assaults, coordination of supporting fire and unit cohesion training.

Using the many ranges provided by the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group (known as the "Coyotes"), the battalion has been able to provide realistic combat scenarios to the Marines.

"With all the noise and explosions, I think it really simulates that fog of war," said Lance Cpl. Jorge L. Rivero, a team leader for Company A, 1/6.

Many of the Marines who participated also believe that using live rounds in the exercises provides the necessary element of danger for infantry Marines.

Some of the combat tactics employed by the Marines can only be demonstrated by the use of live ammunition.

"For an infantry platoon, geometry of fire is everything," said Branson, a 23-year-old native of Washington, D.C., "You can practice with blanks all day long, but the Marines aren't going to get it until you put live rounds down range and their buddies are running around them."

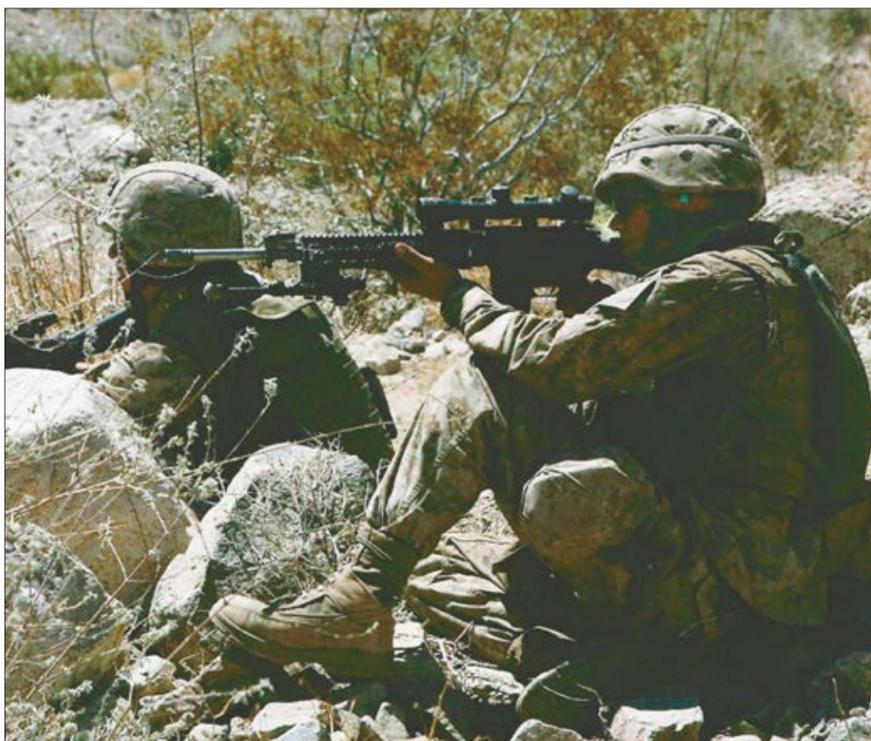
The live ammunition, pop up targets and elaborate entrenchments add excitement and accomplishment to the training cycle. The realistic environment also helps to build confidence on the battlefield, according to Lance Cpl. Michael J. Howard, a team leader for Company B, 1/6.

"Anytime you can put rounds down range it's a good day," said Sgt. Gilbert J. Hernandez, a machine gun section leader for Company B, 1/6.

Now, almost three weeks into the training cycle, the battalion is pleased with the abilities and progression the Marines are making.

With a deployment looming in the near future, the Marines of 1/6 "Hard" recognize the training as important, effective and necessary.

"The way we perform out here is the way we will perform in [Iraq], and the Marines know that," Branson said.



Lance Cpl. Jesse A. Lauch (front), a designated marksman for Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, and Lance Cpl. Michael J. Howard, team leader for Company B, provide security while waiting to maneuver during a live-fire, company assault exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, May 20.



Assaultmen with 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, take cover as their pinned down from enemy fire during a live-fire, company assault exercise aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, May 20.



Lance Cpl. Eric J. Fritzinger, a squad automatic weapon gunner for Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, lays down suppression fire during a live fire, company assault exercise on Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms on May 20.

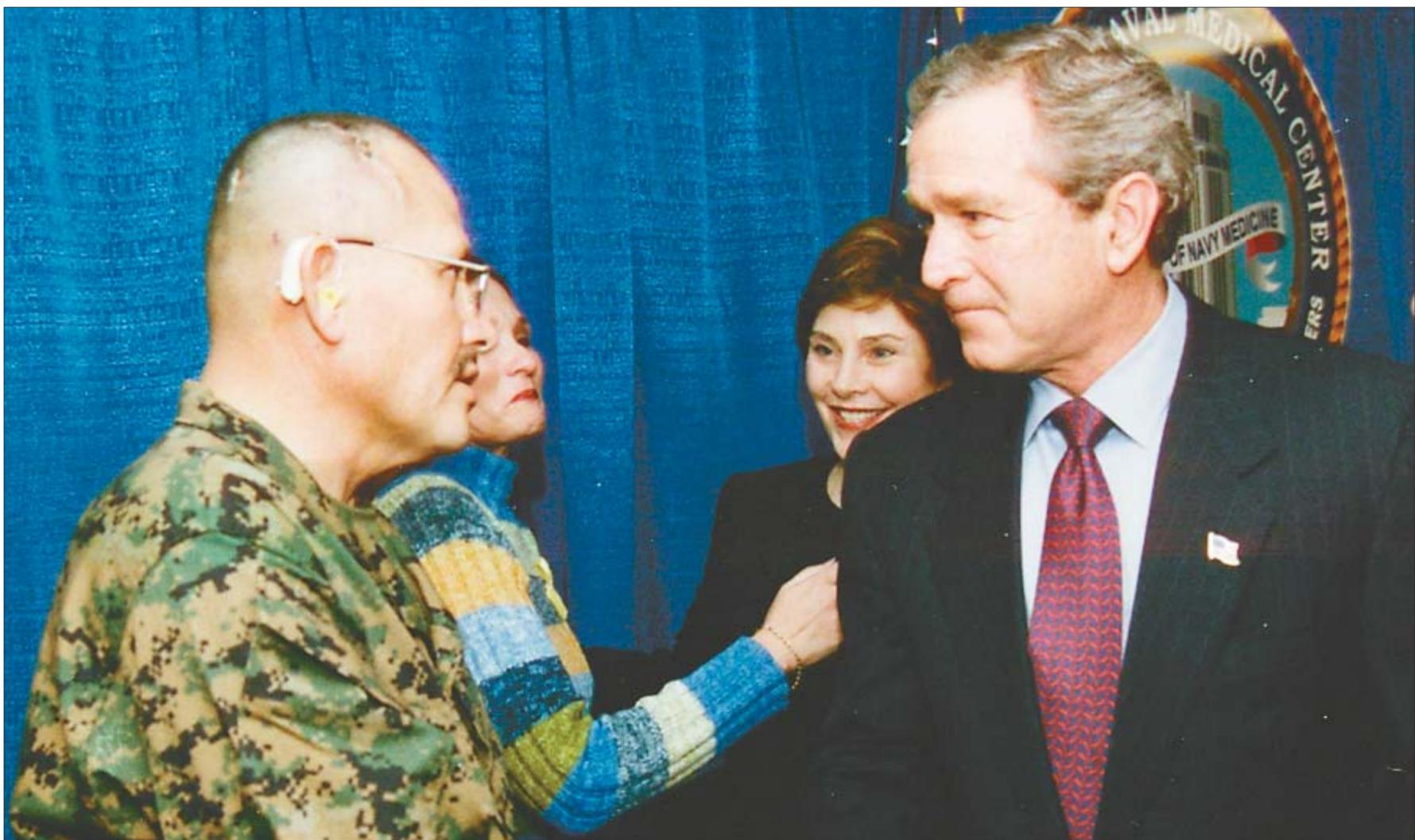


PHOTO COURTESY OF DENOGEAN FAMILY

Guadalupe Denogean shakes hands with President George W. Bush at the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Md., in 2003.

Marine becomes citizen after 25 years of service

SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Born in 1960 in the town of Cananea, Mexico, not far from the Arizona border, Mexican newspapers inadvertently planted a seed in a small boy.

"In the newspapers in Mexico, they are more graphic than they are here," said Guadalupe Denogean, a retired master gunnery sergeant. "I couldn't read, but I could see the pictures."

So he would ask his brother to read the stories to him, and they were always about the Marines, he said.

As that seed sprouted, Denogean, who

moved to the U.S. but was not a legal citizen, chose to join the Marine Corps, fight for and defend the freedom of the United States.

"It was something that was planted way back, and as soon as I turned 17, I signed up," he said.

During his time as a Marine, he also planted a seed for a simpler immigration process to be used in the military.

As Denogean lay in the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Md., in 2003 from injuries suffered in Iraq, President George Bush, along with several high-ranking officers in the military, came to meet injured service members. The president asked each of them what they would like to see done in the

military, said Denogean.

When it was Denogean's turn, he said he wanted one of his Marines meritoriously promoted for pulling him out of a burning vehicle in Iraq, and he also asked to become a citizen.

The next day, his Marine received a promotion, and three days later, with 25 years of military service, Denogean became a U.S. citizen.

"It used to take two to three years to become a citizen," he said. "The problem was every time you went to a new station, you submit an application, and you also had to pay the fees. If they called you up and you moved, you lost your money."

He brought the military's attention to the current immigration process, and shortly after they began working on ways to improve it.

"I don't want to say I was the reason, but they didn't realize what we were going through and why we were not citizens," he explained. "I was in Desert Storm and I was in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and I guess he [Bush] was impressed. We were in two wars, and we were not citizens. Why are we doing it? For the love of freedom."

Thanks to the effort of Denogean and service members like him, today, it only takes a service member four to six months to complete their request for U.S. citizenship.

Denogean and his family immigrated to the United States in 1966. Growing up in Nogales, Ariz., he learned English through school but was unable to speak fluently before enlisting in the Marines when he turned 17. Without a

full grasp of the English language, he faced many difficulties communicating in Boot Camp.

Even the most basic necessities were hard to accomplish because of the language barrier, he said.

Regardless of not being a U.S. citizen, Denogean fought for Americans and their ideals — he knew someone had to pay the price for freedom.

"I enjoyed the freedoms that were offered to me and my family," said Denogean. "For everything you do, there has to be a sacrifice. You have to pay the dues — somebody does."

He also has a sister, Yolanda Colter, who's been in the Air Force for more than 28 years.

"Between the two of us, we have paid the dues for our family," he said.

"Freedom is not free," is a phrase heard often on radio and television and written across car bumper stickers, but this phrase means more to those who weren't handed freedom, but had to earn it.

"If I give you a car, you're going to drive it and trash it. If you buy the car and you pay for it, you'll take care of it. It's no different with the United States. If it's just given to you, you'll take it for granted, but if you pay for it, you'll understand what it's all about and you'll cherish the freedoms that we have," he said.

While Denogean may not have directly influenced the creation of the easier immigration process the military uses today, his request to President Bush for citizenship certainly sparked an interest in improving it.

Transplant donor network expresses gratitude

Former Combat Center Sgt. Maj. receives award

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

James M. Ricker, former sergeant major of the Combat Center, received the OneLegacy Life Bridge Award from OneLegacy, a transplant donor network, Monday in the commanding general's conference room.

The OneLegacy Life Bridge Award was created to officially recognize those at hospitals, transplant centers, and in the community who have demonstrated a meaningful and extraordinary impact on organ and tissue donation and transplantation. By issuing this award, OneLegacy's goal is to broaden and strengthen the community of people and organizations that make organ and tissue donation and transplantation possible.

According to the citation, given by Alexis Vasilchak, community development

coordinator for OneLegacy, Ricker has been an instrumental force in securing introductions to the base commanding officers and various department heads aboard the Combat Center, to help educate the community and promote organ and tissue donation. During his tour as MCAGCC Sgt. Maj. Ricker has gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that Vasilchak received invitations to participate in base functions with the Donate Life message. He also helped to integrate the Donate Life Campaign and its recognition at all base functions. Because of his efforts, OneLegacy received a proclamation in 2005 proclaiming April Donate Life month. Most importantly he was very influential in securing Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, Combat Center's commanding general, to proclaim the Combat Center a workplace partner.



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
Alexis Vasilchak, community development coordinator with OneLegacy, a transplant donor network, presents the OneLegacy Life Bridge Award to James M. Ricker, former sergeant major of the Combat Center, at the Combat Center's commanding general's conference.

"I cannot think of anyone better or more instrumental than Sergeant Major Ricker when it came to getting the message out," said Vasilchak. "He's done everything in his power to connect with the right people and give me the

proper introduction. Far beyond that, he's an incredible guy.

There are no words to explain our gratitude for him and what he's done for this program," she continued. "A lot of our goals were accom-

plished because of him."

According to their Web site, OneLegacy is a nonprofit, federally designated transplant donor network serving 18 million people in seven Southern California counties. By bridging the lives of

organ and tissue donors with people facing dire illnesses, they help create a personal legacy of caring for others. The network supports potential donor families in their time of loss, leads them sensitively through the donation process and coordinates the recovery of organs and tissues for transplant. They also provide after-care support to donor families and inspire the communities of Southern California to donate life.

"This is a program that deserves senior military leadership involvement," said Ricker. "It's a great program to bring awareness to the Marines and Sailors on this base.

"With all the Marines and Sailors getting injured, organ, tissue and bone marrow donation is very important and deserves a lot of attention and support, he continued. "It can affect many Marines, Sailors and their families. We may not see it on this base how they do at Walter Reed [Army Medical Center], but it's something that is affecting us."

SALUTE, A1

Patrons were also treated to a free barbecue and refreshments courtesy of MCCS. Nearly all who attended felt the show was a hit.

"It was pretty cool and turned out to be a great show," said Cpl. Dale Greenwood, an administrative clerk with 1st Tank Battalion and a 22-year-old Yelm, Wash., native. "It was actually about the size of a civilian concert you'd find out in town somewhere, except it was free and had free barbecue so that was nice. I was sad to hear Lynyrd Skynyrd could not make the show, but Foreigner rocked pretty hard in concert."

Foreigner took the stage to the cheers and chants of the audience and played for more than two hours, belting out their hit songs from the past 30 years.

"We were in Australia last night and we heard some Marines needed some rock and roll!" Foreigner lead vocalist Kelly Hansen said to the crowd.

Hansen said he believes the sacrifice Marines and service members make is as important as what freedom itself means.

For Jason Bonham, Foreigner's drummer and son of Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham, being at the event to support the Marines was personally important. Bonham turned down a trip to Sweden that day to join the surviving members of Led Zeppelin to receive an award on his late father's behalf, and

instead chose to perform at the Combat Center.

"I live in America now, if I'm going to entertain anybody, it's going to be the people who protect my kids," said Bonham, who was presented a challenge coin from Stone for his sacrifice.

"I thought it was fantastic," said Lt. Col. Matt Baker, deputy director for MCCS. "We went from one major act to having nothing, then all of a sudden having everything lined up again. It could not have gone this well even if we had planned it this way six months ago.

"I think most importantly we recognized the efforts of the Marines and Sailors and their families out here tonight. It was humbling to see how much these guys really respect the Marines," Baker added.

Many Marines and family members also agreed the tribute was well-deserved after a particularly challenging year for units between deployment schedules and casualties in Iraq.

"I think it meant a lot to everyone that they recognized all the units and families out there. They really appreciated this a lot," Greenwood said.

WE SALUTE YOU Photo spread on B1

SOLUTIONS

FLASHLIGHT





CPL. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE

Cpl. Joseph E. Sherwood, a 29-year-old from Orlando, Fla., assigned to Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, scans a berm for anything unusual during patrol.



CPL. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE

Marines from D Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, patrol a berm during a daily patrol.

3rd LAR maintains security outside Fallujah

CPL. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE

1ST MARINE DIVISION

GHARMAH, Iraq — They're fast, lethal and quickly working themselves out of a job.

Marines of D Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion are clearing this small town north of Fallujah of insurgents and training Iraqi soldiers to operate independently at the same time. They're doing it all with their light armored vehicles, an eight-wheeled vehicle they eat in, sleep in and use to maintain security and stability in their area of operations.

The company's main priority is keeping the roads through the town secure from insurgents and free of improvised explosive devices, said 2nd Lt. Courtney Rape, a 23-year-old platoon commander.

"The main route in our AO [area of operations] has a lot of insurgent traffic running to Baghdad and Ramadi, transporting personnel and weapons, because it has fewer checkpoints," Rape said.

The Marines operate out of LAVs, a vehicle capable of traversing all types of terrain, traveling at more than 70 mph. It's not just a speed-demon, though. It's brimming to the teeth with a pair of machine guns and a 25 mm cannon. Top that off with infantry scouts in back and it's the linchpin to the company's success. Locals see a sign of strength and speed, and insurgents see a rolling death threat.

"We can go everywhere a tank can go, but we have enough fuel to drive for a week," said Lance Cpl. Mark Efimoff, from Woodburn, Ore. "We are fast, mobile, have scouts on the ground and heavy fire power right there. LAVs are a quick, self sustaining force."

D Company's platoons leave their home base of Camp Fallujah for several days at a time, roaming their 60-square kilometer area, mainly covered by farmland, but dotted with a few villages.

They never really take a break either. Even when they're not rolling down the road, they're ready to fight, coiled in a 360-degree security perimeter while the Marines take turns sleeping and grabbing a bite to eat, according Efimoff.

In addition to keeping the roads safe, the company — working in direct support of 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment — is conducting counterinsurgency operations, finding weapons caches, and working alongside the Iraqi Army.

"The Iraqi soldiers are a great asset," said Rape, from College Station, Texas. "Instead of our one interpreter, we have about 18 guys who can communicate with the Iraqi people—making their presence known and giving us the heads up on insurgent activities."

The Iraqi Army is slated to take responsibility for select areas of Iraq starting at the end of this year and recently recruited more than 1,000 men from the Fallujah area. The close work

with Iraqis is surprising even the harshest of critics.

"I had my expectations of how they would perform before I saw them, but they came out and impressed us," said Sgt. Timothy Redleaf, a vehicle commander from Rapid City, S.D. "They are here to make a difference."

While the operations conducted with the Iraqis have not been on a large scale, they have shown promise in what they can offer.

"Our Marines will fight beside them without reservation in any conflict," said Capt. H. Ripley Rawlings IV, the company's commander, from Boulder, Colo. "If all of the Iraqi platoons are like the ones we have operated with, then the IA [Iraqi Army] will be a force worthy of deploying with Marines. When the time is right, they will be ready to take over this province — and that time is approaching quickly."

After operating in the area for roughly two months, the 3rd LAR Marines have proven their capabilities as a fighting force. Insurgent attacks in the area are down from just a couple months ago.

Prior to their arrival just weeks ago, the region experienced insurgent attacks every day, including small-arms fire, improvised explosive devices, rocket attacks and ambushes. Now, it has ceased, Rawlings said.

"Our enemy is very focused and determined, but ... we have degraded and defeated the enemy to the point where they stopped attacking us," Rawlings explained. "The last few days have been very quiet."

"We are winning this war and Iraq's time as a free and sovereign democratic nation is just around the corner," he added.

1/7 patrols streets of Husaybah with Iraqi police

CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7

HUSAYBAH, Iraq — After three years without a police presence in this western Iraqi town of approximately 10,000, the community is beginning to see a fully-restored police force with the introduction of two new police stations.

With a new force of fully-trained police officers, many of whom are seasoned veterans from the previous police force, Iraqis here hope the added security forces will curb insurgent activity in the area, according to tribal sheikhs.

The Police Transition Team here, a team of Coalition service members responsible for training and mentoring Iraqi police officers, has worked in recent months to prepare these law enforcement officials for their duties of providing law and order here.

Despite delays in the arrival of necessary police equipment, such as vehicles, the new police stations are providing an additional asset for Iraqi security forces by collecting tips and information from citizens and responding to criminal activity to combat insurgent operations in the region, according to the transition team.

“The police officers are eager to get out there in the towns and establish a presence,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Torres, an intelligence chief with a transition team serving in western Iraq. “They are very organized, motivated, and they already have the respect from the community.”

That is because unlike Iraqi soldiers who often serve away from their hometowns, the police officers here are from the area and are serving where they live, said Maj. Robert C. Marshall, the officer-in-charge of the region’s transition team.

“These guys all live within walking distance of the police station where they serve,” said Marshall, 37, from Denver, Colo. “These officers know who doesn’t belong in the neighborhoods and they are in it to keep their community safe.”

Maintaining safety in the area is the top priority for the Iraqi police here who are based at a police station in the heart of Husaybah, a town on the Iraq-Syria border. The police station recently came

under attack from a suicide bomber, killing five Iraqi officers.

Immediately following the tragedy the transition team saw an increase in the cops’ vigilance.

“They got out into the street pretty quick and they were doing everything they needed to do to take care of their people,” said Staff Sgt. David J. Perry, the team’s operations chief. “They were immediately setting up roadblocks and checking people out.”

The 42-year-old Santa Cruz, Calif., native said the search after the blast netted the cops’ two arrests.

When attacks on the Iraqi police like this happen, the role of the transition team does not change as they continue to advise and mentor the Iraqi officers in carrying out their duties.

“The Iraqis responded well and they were pretty amazing,” said Marshall. “All of the officers, including those off duty came out to see how they could help.”

As the events after the attack unfolded, Marshall saw the Iraqi cops handle the crime scene in much the same fashion as cops back home would handle it from collecting statements from witnesses to photographing the crime scene.

“They did as much as they could with as little as they had,” said Marshall who also pointed out the fact that many of the officers have been devoid of a salary for several weeks now.

“Some of these guys haven’t been paid in a while yet they’re still out there protecting their people,” added Marshall.

The Iraqi police have been adding to the fight against the insurgency by conducting foot patrols alongside Marines, said Torres.

The Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment conduct daily security patrols through the streets and work with the new police officers on the tactics they’ll need to eventually maintain law and order on their own.

Although the patrols are

more for training purposes, the police force here is already interacting with the community and responding to calls made by citizens regarding criminal activity, said Torres.

“People honk their horns and wave when they see the police now,” said Torres, 34, from Fredericksburg, Va. “This is a good sign of how the people are responding to their new police.”

The added foot patrols puts the police in the lead of local security operations, and takes the burden off Iraqi soldiers and Marines who have provided the bulk of security thus far.

Last week, local police officers worked together with Iraqi soldiers to provide security when detainees from Abu Ghraib prison were released in the town.

The ex-prisoners were released from the prison at Abu Ghraib into their hometown of Husaybah after they were cleared of charges by Iraqi Government officials.

The police chief here had a face-to-face meeting with each of the former insurgents and warned them that there was now a strong Iraqi police presence and that the people would no longer cooperate with terrorists.

“The people here are not afraid anymore,” said the police chief. “We have Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi police now. We know your families and your sheikhs. We know where to find you.”

The group of about 50 men were photographed and released with a firm understanding of the new law enforcement in their town. The police chief let them know that he had already lost six family members in the fight against insurgents and he was willing to do whatever it took to clean up his city.

“They can either cooperate and live peacefully or they can face their new police chief,” said Torres. “They have a choice now,” said the police chief. “This is their opportunity to clean up.”

With their security forces in place, Iraqis here can begin to move forward with further



Ahmed, a 25-year-old Iraqi police officer, speaks to a local resident while on patrol with 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, in Husaybah, Iraq, May 15.

advancements, such as starting construction projects on much-needed infrastructure improvements such as health clinics and micro-loan centers to improve the economy.

A micro-loan center allows people to apply for loans to jump start a small business.

As long as communication is strong and there is cooperation between the people and the security forces, construction projects can begin, said Lt. Col. Nicholas F. Marano, commanding officer for the Twentynine Palms, Calif.-based Marine battalion.

Cities like Fallujah and Baghdad have seen consistent, violent attacks against Iraqi police, and Iraqi recruiting drives in those cities to bolster numbers in the Iraqi

Army and local police forces seem to have suffered some due to the attacks.

But here, locals are not deterred by the attack against the Husaybah Police Station, evidenced by a steady increase in recruitment numbers, according to Torres.

The team has held several recruiting drives in the region with limited success but after the new police station was established, the Marines say they saw a sharp increase in recruitment numbers.

At a recruiting drive held several weeks ago, Iraqi police recruiters accepted a mere eight recruits out of 50 applicants.

One month later, and after the establishment of the police force, 50 were accept-

ed in a similar recruiting drive.

Torres credits the sudden boost in numbers to the people’s reaction to their new police force.

But the Iraqi police here have more work to do before they are deemed fully capable of handling security in the town on their own. The Marines say the police will train with the Iraqi Army unit stationed here to learn tactics and procedures they’ll need to keep the peace.

There is a good level of cooperation between the soldiers and the police in this area, said Marshall.

The Iraqi officers will receive machine gun training from the Iraqi soldiers in the next several weeks.

CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS

Commandant to reinforce core values in visits to Marine bases

PRESS RELEASE

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HQMC, Washington, D.C. — General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, left Thursday morning to visit Marines at forward operating bases in Iraq to reinforce the ideals, values and standards for which Marines have been known for more than 200 years. Reflecting his personal concern over recent serious allegations about actions of Marines in combat, Hagee will address Marine officers and enlisted men and women in a series of events inside and outside the U.S. over the next several weeks.

Hagee's remarks will focus on the value and meaning of honor, courage, and commitment and how these core values are epitomized by most Marines in their day-to-day actions – both in and out of combat. During these talks, Hagee will reemphasize the training all Marines receive in the Law of Armed Conflict, the Geneva Conventions, and Rules of Engagement. He will remind his Marines that each of them has a duty to obey and issue lawful orders and apply only the necessary force required to accomplish the mission.

He will not address any specific incidents currently under investigation until any and all legal actions are complete.

ON MARINE VIRTUE

GEN. M. W. HAGEE

Recent serious allegations concerning actions of Marines in combat have caused me concern. They should cause you to be concerned as well. To ensure we continue to live up to General Lejeune's description of a Marine as someone who demonstrates "all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue," I would like to review the importance of our core values.

As Marines, you are taught from your earliest days in the Corps about our core values of honor, courage and commitment. These values are part of and belong to all Marines, regardless of MOS, grade, or gender. They guide us in all that we do; whether in combat, in garrison, or on leave or liberty.

To a Marine, honor is more than just honesty; it means having uncompromising personal integrity and being accountable for all actions. To most Marines, the most difficult part of courage is not the raw physical courage that we have seen so often on today's battlefield. It is rather the moral courage to do the "right thing" in the face of danger or pressure from other Marines. Finally, commitment is that focus on caring for one another and upholding the great ideals of our Corps and Country.

The nature of this war with its ruthless enemies, and its complex and dangerous battlefield will continue to challenge us in the commitment to our core values. We must be strong and help



SGT. JUAN VARA

AL ASAD, Iraq – General Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses Marines and sailors with Provisional Security Battalion and Marine Wing Support Squadron 271 during a visit to Al Asad on July 25.

one another to measure up. The war will also test our commitment to our belief in the rule of law.

We have all been educated in the Law of Armed Conflict. We continue to reinforce that training, even when deployed to combat zones. We do not employ force just for the sake of employing force. We use lethal force only when justified, proportional and, most importantly, lawful. We follow the laws and regulations, Geneva Convention and Rules of Engagement. This is the American way of war. We must regulate force and violence, we only damage property that must be damaged, and we protect the non-combatants we find on the battlefield.

When engaged in combat, particularly in the kind of counterinsurgency operations we're

involved in now, we have to be doubly on guard. Many of our Marines have been involved in life or death combat or have witnessed the loss of their fellow Marines, and the effects of these events can be numbing. There is the risk of becoming indifferent to the loss of a human life, as well as bringing dishonor upon ourselves. Leaders of all grades need to reinforce continually that Marines care for one another and do what is right.

The large majority of Marines today perform magnificently on and off the battlefield. I am very proud of the bravery, dedication, honor, courage and commitment you clearly display every day. And America is proud as well. Americans, indeed most people around the world, recognize that Marines are men and women of the highest caliber — physically, mentally, and morally.

Each one of you contributes in your own unique way to our important mission; I am proud of your dedication and accomplishments. Even after 38 years, I still stand with pride every time I hear the Marines Hymn. The words of that Hymn mean something special to me. Especially, "Keep our Honor Clean". I know that means something to all of you as well. As Marines we have an obligation to past Marines, fellow Marines, future Marines and ourselves to do our very best to live up to these words.

As your Commandant, I charge all Marines to carry on our proud legacy by demonstrating our values in everything you do — on duty and off; in combat or in garrison. *Semper Fidelis.*

SPORT SHORTS

TRAINING TANK LAP SWIM

Lap swim at the Training Tank is Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. This is exclusively for lap swimming only. No PT or recreational swimming is allowed. Recreational Open Swimming will start Memorial Day Weekend. If you have any questions, please call the Aquatics Program Manager at 830-6212.

STEP CLASSES

Step Classes are available at the West Gym on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 6 a.m. For more information, call 830-4131.

YOGA CLASSES

Yoga classes are available from 9 to 9:45 a.m. at the Community Center and from 5 to 5:45 p.m. at the East Gym. For more information please call 830-4131

LEISURE

SOAPBOX DERBY FOR 5- TO 16-YEAR-OLDS

The Soapbox Derby is back and brought to you by The Armed Services YMCA. Kicking off the Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce Street Fair and Car Show, the event will take place on Old Dale Road on June 2, at 3 p.m. This year racers will be competing for General's, Mayor's and People's Choice along with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. All funds raised from the Soapbox Derby will be used for parent/child interactive and after-school programs offered to military personnel and their families aboard MCAGCC. For more information call the ASYMCA at 830-7481, or the Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce at 367-3445. Or send an e-mail to info.asymca@adelphia.com.

RED CROSS SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM

The Twentynine Palms Red Cross Summer Youth Program is fast approaching. The program is for youths between the ages of 13 to 18 years old. We have limited availability for youth's 13 to 14 years of age. You may pick up an application at the Red Cross office Bldg 1551, Room 29, Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Applications are due back by June 7. The program begins June 19 and ends August 11. For more information please call 830-6685.

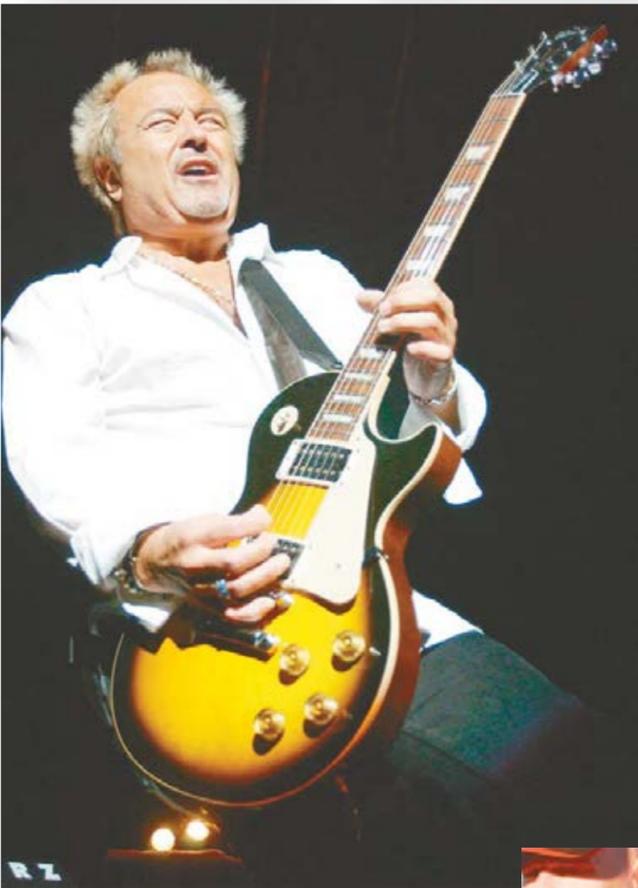
NAT'L UNIVERSITY'S M.B.A. DEGREE PROGRAM BEGINS

National University's first term of the Master of Business Administration program will begin in July. The MBA provides students with a comprehensive foundation for business decision-making and prepares them to lead effectively in a rapidly changing business environment. For more information contact National University at 830-6312 or 830-6887, or visit Bldg 1526S.

Did You Know?

In July 1934 Babe Ruth paid a fan \$20 dollars for the return of the baseball he hit for his 700th career home run.

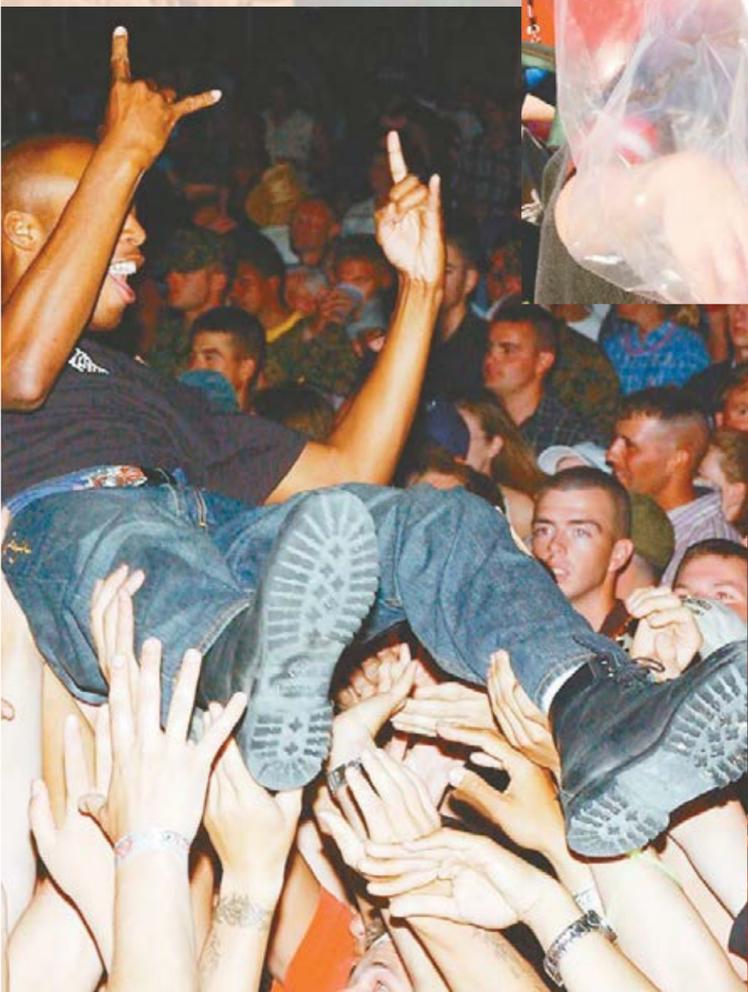
WE SALUTE YOU



Foreigner's Mick Jones performs a solo at the We Salute You 2006 concert.



The Headquarters Battalion color guard displays the colors during opening ceremonies.



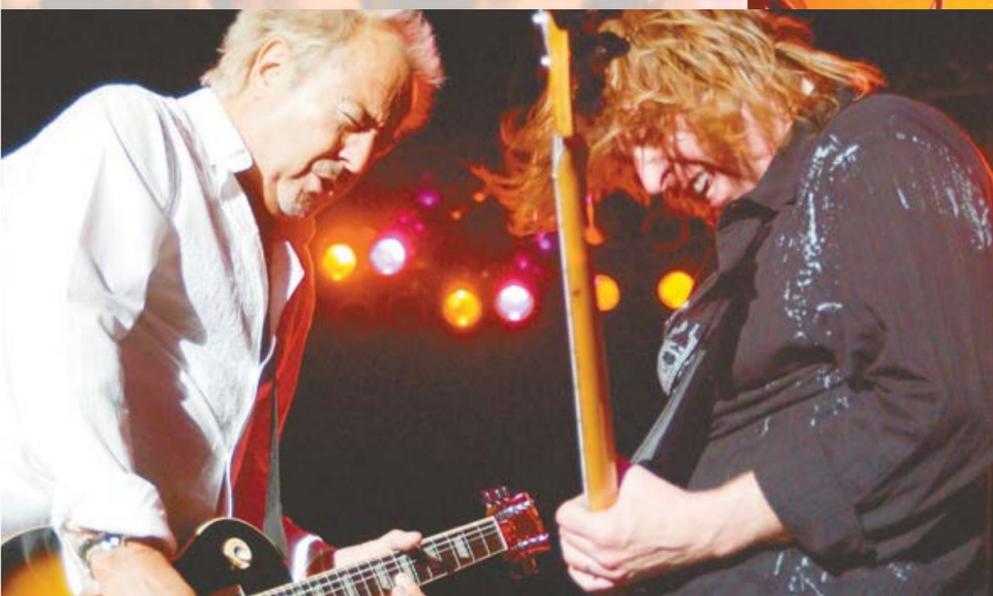
A crowd-surfer rocks out to the music of Foreigner.



Joshua Grant and Destiny Larson enjoy cotton candy before the concert begins.



Marines, Sailors and family members watch as Foreigner plays.



Mick Jones and Jeff Pilson of Foreigner play during "Jukebox Hero."

Side-Out defeats Golden Girls in Women's Volleyball League

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

In the second week of the Combat Center Women's Volleyball League, Side-Out defeated the Golden Girls in a best-of-three match at the West Gym Monday.

Female volleyball players from the Combat Center formed their own teams to compete for the top spot of the league this year.

Side-Out showed up with only five players and still managed to dominate the match against the Golden Girls' full team of six. Side-Out had to forfeit their first game of the season due to a shortage of players.

While the Golden Girls defense kept the team afloat, Side-Outs' ground-slapping spikes and strong communication lines put the points on the scoreboard.

The Golden Girls' simpler and softer defensive moves caught Side-Out off-guard and scored more points than their kill attempts.

Side-Out stuffed a few Golden Girl spikes, putting points on the board each time.

The first game was short and sweet for Side-Out, who won 25-8.

In the second game of the match, Side-Out didn't seem as smooth as they gave away six points for hitting the ball out of bounds, four points for serving the ball directly into the net and three points for failed block attempts.

Although the Golden Girls sailed the ball into the net five times, stumbled over each other and the ball to give away 10 points, they still came close in the second game, improving their overall game.

Three failed dig attempts, two balls hit out of bounds and a couple of communica-

tion errors kept the Golden Girls from coming back to take the win.

Side-Out won the second game, 25-21.

Better communication lines between the Golden Girls could possibly be the key to success for the season. On more than one occasion, the Golden Girls swarmed one area unable to decide who will save the ball from hitting the floor, while the ball landed in the center of the gathering, and added more points to Side-Out's score.

Steadily improving with each game is enough to keep these volleyball players happy, said Jessica Amos of the Golden Girls.

"We actually played a game the second game," she explained. "We had no practice, so considering that, we did pretty well."

Winning isn't the most

important thing for the Golden Girls to take from this season, she added.

"We just want to have a lot of fun and play as a team," said Amos. "As long as we do that, I'll go home happy."

There are only four teams this year, a big drop from previous years, said Side-Out's captain, Cindie Blair.

"The league needs more girls so there is more competition," she explained. "Hopefully more girls join the league throughout the season."

Side-Out team member, Rose Silvas, looks forward to the rest of the season and having fun.

"You know we're just out there to have fun," said Silvas. "We are grateful that a league is offered that allows us the opportunity to play a game we enjoy. The season is short but we'll make the best of it!"



LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Side-out's Cindie Blair spikes the ball over the net in a game against the Golden Girls in the Women's Volleyball League at the West Gym Monday.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MILITARY POST OFFICE

You probably already know about many of the benefits associated with military service like the Marine Corps Exchange, the Commissary and the Auto Hobby Shop. But did you know about the Military Post Office? Yes, it is a benefit too, to make your life easier so you don't have to go out of your way to handle everyday tasks like mailing and picking up packages.

Here are some answers to common questions about the Combat Center Post Office:

Can I get a passport made at the post office on base?

No, passport applications are submitted at a post office that have passport application services. The local post offices that have this service are Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley. You can download the passport application located at <http://www.usps.com/passport> and be prepared ahead of time.

How much is a Post Office Box?

Small (5x3 inches): \$37, Medium (5x5 inches): \$53 for six months.

How do I get a Post Office Box?

You must apply in person at your local post office. Tell them the size of box needed, and include a check or money order for the six month fee. The postal clerks will help you complete the application. Once the application is completed, mailed and received you should receive your box in about three days.

If the carrier leaves a notice at the house, when can I pick it up at the post office?

At 3 p.m. of the day the notice was given.

How do I get a package redelivered?

If you sign the back of the notice and leave it in your mailbox, it lets your mail carrier know to redeliver the package the next day.

Can I pick up a UPS or FEDEX package at the Post Office?

No. Non USPS carriers such UPS and FEDEX deliver these packages directly to the office or residence the package is addressed to.

How long will the post office hold a package?

Express: 8 days, Certified: 15 days, and Insured: 30 days.

Can I pick up a friend's package?

If the back of the notice is signed, yes.

What kind of tape should be used to seal official mail?

Paper, clear or brown packing tape are all acceptable. Scotch and masking tape are not.

What is my correct mailing address?

See your unit mail clerk for a correctly formatted address. Barracks and building addresses are non-deliverable addresses.

Can I send out mail or buy stamps on the Military side of the post office?

All services that involve any financial transactions must be done by the civilian side unless sending out official mail.

What time does express mail need to be mailed by?

Express mail must be received by 4 p.m. Standing in line does not count!

Where can I get a customs form?

Customs forms (PS FORM 2976's) can be picked up on the civilian side without waiting in line.

Where do I go to pick up my package if I am given a notice?

Military members may pick up packages on either the military or civilian side of the post office. Non-military may pick up packages on the civilian side.

Can I send weapons through the mail?

Certain regulations restrict what may be mailed. Mail restrictions are covered in Publication 52 located in the main lobby of the base post office or you can view the regulations at <http://www.usps.com>.

How big can a package be that I am sending out?

No larger than 130 inches, 70 lbs. Fees are charged when a package is larger than 108 inches.

How long does it take mail to get to Iraq?

Priority mail: 7-10 days
Standard mail: 4-6 Weeks

How can I track a priority piece of mail?

A form can be obtained from your local post office.

Where do I get my delivery confirmation package if it's going to a unit address?

At your unit mailroom.

What are the hours of the post office?

Civilian side: 10 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Monday - Friday
Military side: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Friday



LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Tone Malvo, ESD, knocks the ball to the outfield Tuesday against Tanks.

Tanks stays on top in CG Softball League, defeats ESD, 14-8

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

In the fifth week of the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League, Tanks remains one of the top teams so far this season with a 7-1 record after defeating Exercise Support Division, 14-8, in a game Tuesday at Felix Field.

Tanks scored one run in the top of the first and shut out ESD in the bottom of the inning.

At the top of the second inning, Tanks showed no mercy with three score-piling in-the-park homeruns.

Tanks' pitcher, Roy Cheeks, went to bat with the bases loaded and hit an in-the-park grand slam, scoring four runs.

Then, Tanks' left-center fielder, Jonathan Griffith, knocked out the second in-the-park home run, pushing home another runner, scoring two more runs.

With no outs and two runners on base, first baseman, Chris Willenbecher, slammed out the third in-the-park homerun, adding three more runs to the top of the second inning.

The next three batters were out by caught pop flies to the outfield when ESD had enough of Tanks' tracks across home plate.

With a hard act to follow in the bottom of the second, ESD stepped up to the plate and scored two runs.

The score was 10-2 at the top of the third inning when things started to slow down for Tanks. ESD trying hard to catch up, managed to get extra hitter, Matthew Thomas, home when Tanks' infielders scrambled over what should have been a single by ESD's shortstop, Austin Yu. That was the only run made in the third inning.

In the top of the fourth inning, Tanks' shortstop, Preston Lazenby, hit a triple, sending home Griffith from first. The next batter, Willenbecher, hit his second in-the-park homerun of the game, scoring two more runs.

No runs were made by ESD in the bottom of the fourth,

leaving the score 13-5 at the start of the next inning.

Still determined to make a comeback, ESD got the first three Tanks' batters out in the fifth inning and stepped up to bat. Thomas was first up to bat and hit a single. Yu hit a single grounder to center field, and when ESD's right fielder, Jacob Smith's grounder got past Tanks' shortstop, Thomas and Yu ran home. Then, left fielder, James Molloy's single pushed Smith home for the third run of the inning. The score was 13-8.

No runs or major plays were made in the sixth inning leading the game to the last inning.

First up to bat, Tanks' third baseman, John Bultema, knocked out a double. He then used the next batter's sacrifice fly to get to third and when Willenbecher hit a single to right field, Bultema ran home. That was the last run of the game as it went into the bottom of the seventh.

Tanks were eager to go home. The first three ESD batters were out on pop flies and the game ended with a Tanks victory, 14-8.

Tanks remains one of the top teams in the league so far, competing for second place with six other teams. Only Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School remains undefeated, however, they have only played four games so far this season.

Tanks' catcher, Tino Garza, knows they have a good chance of moving up right behind MCCES, if not destroying their undefeated record, he said.

"We keep improving with each game," he explained. "We practice everyday and are determined to take the top spot."

This loss keeps ESD at the bottom of the standings with a 0-7 record, but the coach and first baseman, Dalton Black, keeps high hopes for his team, he said.

"I was happy with the way we played," he said. "If it wasn't for the second inning, having a few errors, giving up nine runs, I think we could have won."

Scores from Tuesday's games in the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League:

Base Tel beat Hospital, 19-7.
AAV 1 beat VMU, 25-24.
Tanks Comm beat Hospital, 12-2.
Tanks beat HQBN 2, 39-6.
HQBN beat AAV 2, 16-14.



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

The new Automated Career Retention System gives Marines more control of their careers.

New online career planning system gives Marines edge

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A new career planning management tool has become available to Marines online which puts more power at their fingertips.

The Automated Career Retention System, activated earlier this month, is a new system which works through Marine Online accounts to provide feedback to unit career retention specialists and research options before ever stepping into their office.

However, because the system is new, ACRS is still being implemented by units around the Marine Corps but its effects have already been positive, said Staff Sgt. Alora B. Carter, CRS for Headquarters Battalion.

"ACRS is not only for the CRS but also for the individual Marine," she said. "It's helping to streamline the process as Marines come closer to the end of their contracts for interviews."

Carter said she has already begun using the system for setting up and filing interviews with Marines who are nearing their end of active service, or EAS, who must complete three to five interviews before making their final say on whether to reenlist or leave the Marine Corps.

Through ACRS, which is under MOL's "Resources" tab, Marines can easily see the progress of their interviews with their respective CRS and have multiple options such as preparing for their next interview with research of possible career options, select their personal career needs, reviewing interview history or be notified of upcoming or past interviews.

"This lets the CRS know what the Marine wants out of the interview before even coming in," said Carter. "In the preparing for the interview section, it actually has a step-by-step checklist for Marines to go through so they know what they need to do before coming to see me. That will allow us to have more knowledge on both ends."

Future updates to ACRS will allow users to select their preferences for duty stations through the same program occupational field monitors currently use.

Another upside for using ACRS is digital storage of interview notes and reminders which go directly to the individual Marine via MOL notifications on their login screen, said Carter.

"There is no way to misplace this information now," she said. "Before we would do an interview with a Marine and he may lose all those forms and notes and, we'll have to conduct all of the interviews over again. So it can be frustrating if someone has to come in for 10 interviews instead of five."

One aspect Marines who have used ACRS say they enjoy is its simplicity and ability to send and review electronic messages to their CRS without having a government email account.

"It's well laid out and very easy to understand," said Lance Cpl. Joseph Bellavia, an electro-optical ordnance repairer, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Tank Battalion, who used ACRS to prepare for his interview with his career planner. "It's very user-friendly for anybody."

Bellavia, whose EAS is in December, said he feels the new system will save time and increase productivity for Marines who use it.

"It will save time, and time is money," said the 27-year-old San Diego native. "It feels safe when you use it. I trust it because it's through MOL."

Commanders, who are a part of the interview process for Marines ready to EAS, also have access to ACRS to conduct and schedule interviews, Carter said.

"I think it's going to help in the long run once we get the knowledge out on the street," Carter said. "One thing we need to do is get the word out about this to the Marines. ACRS won't do you any good unless you use it."



SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III

A sign sits next to the Staff Judge Advocate office, which is located in building 1515. SJA helps countless service members and their families with the any legal support, advice or assistance they may need.

SJA: More than just legal assistance

SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Staff Judge Advocate office consists of Marine lawyers and Marines trained in the legal system who take care of and assist service members with legal problems.

"We provide legal support to all units aboard the Combat Center and all units off the Combat Center," said Maj. Daren J. Erickson, deputy SJA. "We are combat service support and...prepare all supporting units for combat in regards to legal readiness."

Six sections comprise SJA: Legal Assistance, Installation Law and Review, Military Justice, Defense, Court Reporters and Legal Administration. While each section is part of SJA, they each serve a different function.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Legal Assistance Office assists more than 11,000 service members, their families and retired service members, according to the Combat Center SJA Web site at <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/base/sja/legalasst.asp>.

Possibly the most used section, they offer legal advice and guidance from bar-certified lawyers in several areas including: powers of attorney, uncontested divorces, child support, taxes, immigration, notarization, wills, and several other areas, said 1st Lt. Chad R. Hyde, legal assistance officer-in-charge.

DEFENSE

When a service member is going up for a court-martial, or needs non-judicial punish-

ment counseling or administrative separation counseling, they will need a lawyer to guide them and possibly defend them. This is where the Defense section steps in with their attorneys.

"We all have law degrees, we passed the bar in states that require it," said Capt. Cindie Blair, senior defense counsel. "Even though we wear a uniform and we are Marines, we're lawyers first in our ethical duties."

However, the Defense section cannot represent a Marine in criminal cases involving civilian authorities because each attorney took the bar in different states, said Blair.

Fear of reprisal makes some clients refuse to trust in the defense lawyer provided by SJA.

"Some of our clients don't trust us enough to open up and tell us what happened," said Blair. "We are under an ethical duty not to disclose. We don't talk to the units."

The client's needs are the most important thing, she said.

"We have strict confidentiality — our state bars require it. We can not breach that confidentiality. We are their attorney, we are here

for them," she said.

MILITARY JUSTICE

In order to maintain the strict policies of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Marine lawyers must also enforce each of its statutes. This is the purpose for the Military Justice section.

"We receive requests for legal services and we prosecute cases for the battalion commanders and the commanding general," said Maj. Lisa B. Muscari, military justice officer.

Military trials can be taxing on the service member being prosecuted, their family, the commands and each service member involved in the trial. An extended trial compounds the stress on everyone involved.

Many people don't understand how much work is involved in putting on a trial, how many resources are required. Beyond the cost there are also members from the unit to sit on a jury, transporting the witnesses and providing subject matter experts if their input is needed to make a case, said Capt. Jonathan C. McDonald, trial counsel.

COURT REPORTERS

Graduates of a 27-month court reporting school, the stenographers sit in on all courts-martial and also assist commands in typing transcripts.

INSTALLATION LAW AND REVIEW

Once a case is completed, a thorough review must be completed to ensure proper procedure was followed, to determine if a base order needs revising, or commanders need ethics advice. Installation Law and Review accomplishes this mission.

"We handle pretty much everything that's not legal assistance of military litigation," said 1st Lt. Andrew M. Wallace, installation law attorney and a New Hartford, N.Y., native.

While they do not serve service members directly, they ensure every trial was performed properly.

"I review all the courts-

martial that have already gone to trial and I ensure all the proper procedures were followed," said Maj. Hugh J. Redman, installation law officer and review officer and a Milwaukie, Ore., native. "I'm the government watchdog that makes sure the courts-martial get pushed to the appellate courts as required by statute," he said.

LEGAL ADMINISTRATION

Legal Administration is the final stop for some service members. Not everyone who wears digital camouflage adheres to the UCMJ. Those who choose to disobey its rules may eventually come to this section.

They also assist service members in filing claims against the government.

"We help them get all the information they need to get together to send in their claims to the Navy Legal Service Office. They are the ones that process and pay the claims," said Chief Warrant

Officer 2 Dale E. Board, legal administration officer.

LEGAL READINESS

"The SJA mindset is to ensure that supported units and staffs are given quick, cogent advice in a timely manner," said Col. Allen Turbyfill, SJA. "We ensure everything is done with due process."

Located in building 1515, adjacent to Pacific Marine Credit Union, SJA helps countless service members and their families with the any legal support, advice or assistance they may need.

"That's the good thing about having all the different sections here, there's a lot of experience," said Muscari. "We have junior officers, we have senior officers — and there's experience where we've all worked in different areas. The Marines here work really hard. They are very dedicated in each area. I feel very confident they can address any issue."





CG's annual golf tourney at Combat Center



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

A player who participated in the Commanding General's Annual Golf Tournament May 19 drives a ball down the course from toward his first hole of the day.

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Desert Winds Golf Course hosted the Commanding General's Annual Golf Tournament May 19.

More than 100 players showed up to the golf course's biggest event of the year. Cost of the event per player was \$40 and included greens fee, golf cart, range balls, continental breakfast, lunch, beverages and raffle prizes. The tournament, sponsored by Michelob Ultra and Callaway Golf, also included a putting contest closest to the pin and longest drive contest.

The format of play was four people to a team. On each hole, each player drove the ball down range the course. Each team member then played their second shot from the spot where the best selected tee shot landed. The process of shooting or putting the ball from the best landed shot from one of the four players was repeated until the ball went in the hole.

Playing in first with a handicap of 57 was a team lead by Julius F. Nofo of Combat Center Installation and Logistics. Placing second with a handicap of 60 was a team lead by George E. Schadegg of Combat Center Sports.

"We didn't make the putts that we normally should have made," said Schadegg. "It was a long, hot day on this range. But we placed second, which is good."

"We play this tournament almost every year," added Schadegg. "I've been on this range all week preparing for this tournament. It's the biggest event they have, and everyone enjoys coming out here. It's a lot of fun, and the staff does a great job."

Cisco Harris, the golf course's Duffer's Retreat cook, contributed to the high spirits and enthusiasm to the players during the day by cooking steak and beans for lunch.

"I mean this when I say this is the best place on the base to have a good, stress free time," said Harris. No matter how bad your golf game is, there is still good food here. I cook the best food on this base for the players that come here, and there's no other place that comes close to it."

Even some, who rarely play, came to enjoy the camaraderie of the tournament. Robert Kinne of 1st Tank Battalion came to enjoy the golf, food and a great time with his peers, he said.

"I play just a few times a month and participate in some of the tournaments they have here," said Kinne. "I've never seen a better turn out for a tournament until today. The course was in its best conditions, and it was good day to play. I golf here because this course is a great course, especially for being out in the middle of the desert."



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

Marlo Arrington attempts to sink a putt during the Annual Commanding General's Golf Tournament May at the Desert Winds Golf Course May 19.



Last week, 1st Sgt. Ryan F. Blue, India Company first sergeant, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, was incorrectly identified in this photo as the company gunnery sergeant.

HEAT CONDITIONS FLAG COLORS

GREEN
80° – 84.9°*

Exercise can be conducted and discretion is required for all heavy exercise unless acclimatized to desert conditions.

YELLOW
85° – 87.9°*

Strenuous exercise and activity must be reduced for new, un-acclimatized personnel during the first three weeks of heat exposure. Avoid outside classes.

All unit PT must have water available.

For current Heat Conditions Flag status, call 830-2190.

RED
88° – 89.9°*

Strenuous exercise must be halted or reduced for Marines and Sailors who haven't had up to 12 weeks to acclimatize.

BLACK
90°* – ABOVE

All outdoor activities and training must be suspended. Weather conditions are too dangerous for exercise or movement outside.

*According to the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature index