

Serving the MCAGCC
Community at
Twentynine Palms, Calif.

VOL. 52 NO. 25
June 23, 2006



SOFTBALL, B1

OBSERVATION POST



FALLOUJAH SURGICAL, A7

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THIS ISSUE

A9 – USMAP

A10 – Silver Star

B2 – Dodgeball Bash

HOT TOPICS

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Children ages 4 through 12 years attending this year's Combined Vacation Bible School at the Protestant Chapel will be taken back in time to the nights before Jesus' birth. They will register with the Census Taker to be counted in the proper tribe of Israel. Learn games that Jesus played as a child. Sing songs, hear the Christmas story and find out what the shepherds saw and heard as they watched their sheep. Stop by either chapel to register. There is a CD to help children learn the songs, many of which are favorite Christmas carols. Bus service is available to on-base housing, and a hold-harmless agreement, is available in each chapel office, for each child. No child will be able to board the bus until after the hold harmless is completed.

SECURITY GUARD SCREENING

The Headquarters Marine Corps Marine Security Guard screening team will visit the Combat Center on June 30 at the Catholic Chapel to screen enlisted Marines for potential future assignment on Marine Security Guard Duty. The MSG briefs will be provided to all interested Marines to explain pertinent information relating to their career when they are assigned a tour of duty as a Marine Security Guard. All Marines who will be screened have to be at the Catholic Chapel at 7:45 a.m. For more information, contact The Base Career Retention Specialist, GySgt. Whitaker at 830-6171 or your unit CRS.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

- Tanks Change of Command
- Bronze Star
- 3/7 Memorial

THIS DAY IN MARINE CORPS HISTORY

June 23, 1993

Marines of the 24th
Marine
Expeditionary Unit
returned to
Mogadishu, Somalia.

3/7 Marine awarded Bronze Star for outstanding valor in Ar Ramadi



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

Lt. Col. Roger B. Turner, commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, awards Cpl. Jordy Vega, and two other infantrymen with India Company, 3/7, the Bronze Star during a formation held behind their battalion command post June 2.

BY LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S.
CIFUENTES
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Two months after returning home from a seven-month deployment to Iraq, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, recognized many heroes from their battalion by awarding them with Bronze Star Medals, Purple Hearts, and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals behind 3/7's command post June 2.

One Marine awarded the Bronze Star Medal was Cpl. Jordy Vega, a

section leader with Weapons Platoon, India Company, 3/7, for outstanding courageous actions during combat operations in Iraq.

The 22-year-old La Feria, Texas, native, embarked on his journey in the Marine Corps when he went through recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and graduated January 2003. He was assigned to India Company, 3/7, after School of Infantry Training in Camp Pendleton, Calif. In September 2005, he deployed to Iraq for the third time with his battalion.

During this deployment, his company was tasked with training the Iraqi army in the city of Ar Ramadi. He was assigned as a squad leader with 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon.

On October 8, roughly one month into the deployment, Vega and his platoon went on a "leave-behind" mission, embedding Marine snipers in a section of the city.

The platoon traveled into the city via a four-vehicle convoy. Vega was traveling in the third vehicle, an armored troop carrier humvee seating a driver and a passenger in the front

cabin and eight Marines in the bed of the vehicle.

As the covert convoy turned a corner close to their destination, a series of improvised explosive devices exploded along the passenger side of the convoy, said 1st Lt. Johnathan D. Reed, Vega's platoon commander during the deployment.

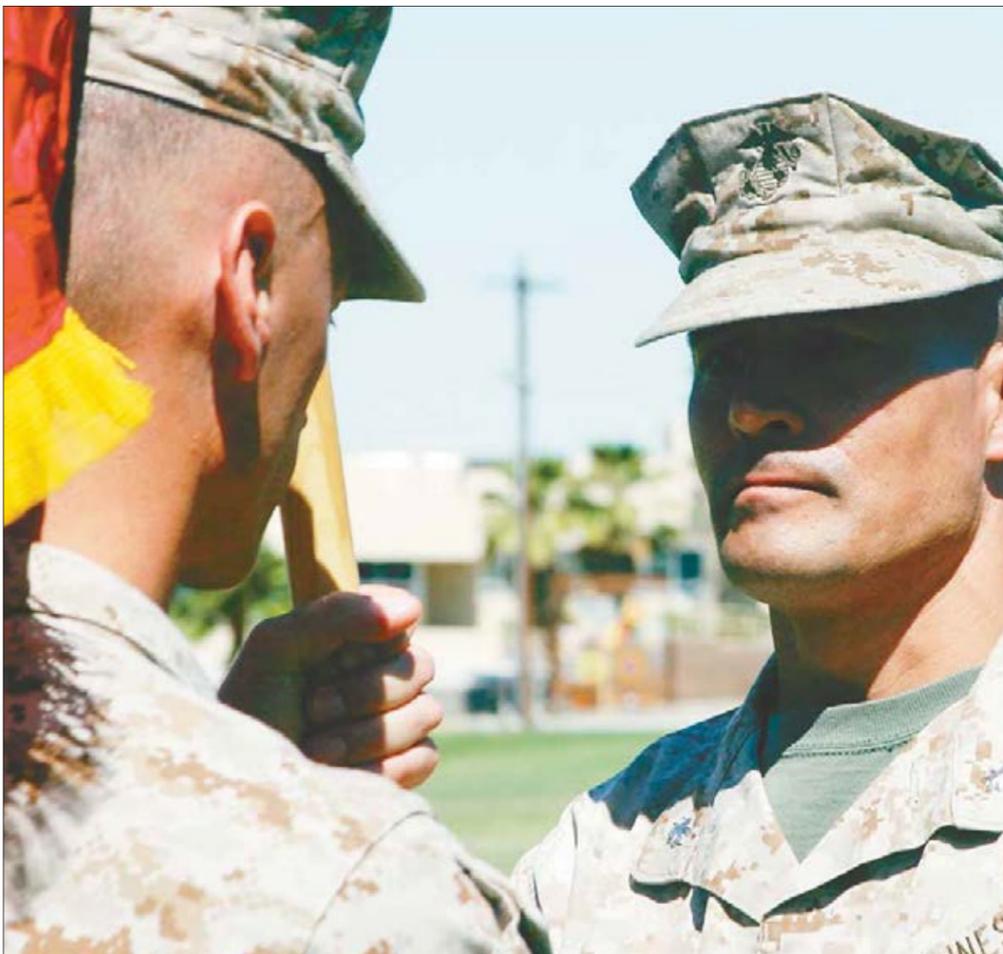
One IED did not detonate, one did no damage and the third caused catastrophic damage on the third vehicle, said Reed, a Midland, Mich., native.

See BRONZE, A5

Fairfield departs 3/11 after 20 months

Huxhold welcomed to 'The Cannon Cockers'

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Lt. Col. Douglas H. Fairfield, outgoing commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, handed his battalion colors to his successor June 16 in a change-of-command ceremony June 16 at the Parade Field.

The commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, handed his battalion colors to his successor June 16 in a change-of-command ceremony held at the Commanding General's Parade Field.

In front of more than 150 people and his battalion, Lt. Col. Douglas H. Fairfield, 3/11's commanding officer, welcomed Lt. Col. Paul Huxhold as the battalion's new leader.

Fairfield also received a Meritorious Service Medal, the second in his career, for his "outstanding performance" while serving with 3/11 for the past 20 months.

"These Marines have done some incredible things," said Fairfield. "These Marines turned themselves around from being a provisional military police battalion back into a working artillery battalion in only 13 working days. That's really impressive.

"We are also the first battalion in the Marine Corps to field the new triple-seven howitzer [M777 lightweight howitzer]," he continued.

Even with the fast-paced deployment schedule for the battalion, Fairfield said he is proud of the tremendous efforts the battalion put forth.

"The battalion last deployed as a battalion in OIF II when I took command here, and ever since then, every one of these Marines has deployed again or are getting ready to deploy again this summer," he said. "When they are back here, they are in the field constantly. They have supported between 30 and 40 field exercises in the past 20 months. These guys are in the field all the time. They have put more than 20,000 rounds downrange over the last 20 months, which is by far more than any other battalion in the Marine Corps."

Fairfield went on to thank his wife for her dedicated support to the family as well as the battalion in their time here.

Exchanging the microphone with a warm

See FAIRFIELD, A4

HOSPITAL CORPS 108TH BIRTHDAY MESSAGE



On behalf of all Marines, I extend a hearty congratulations to the men and women of the Hospital Corps, including the dental technicians who joined your ranks this past year, as you celebrate your 108th anniversary.

Throughout your history, you have continued to serve alongside Marines with courage, valor, and honor, at home, at sea and in the air, and on foreign shores around the globe. Today, whether conducting combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan or responding with humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia, you are answering the call "Corpsman up" in a superb manner that is true to your proud legacy.

The bond between Marines and their "docs" has never been stronger. Your professionalism, courage and compassion has been above and beyond the call of duty.

As you reflect on the Hospital Corps' many accomplishments and your proud heritage, you can be certain that every Marine and their families appreciate your dedication and commitment. The memories of your comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice will always be honored by the Marine Corps and a grateful nation.

Happy birthday and Semper Fidelis,
M. W. Hagee, General,
U.S. Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

SemperToons SAFETY Presents:
"DON'T BE A Speedster KNUCKLE HEAD"

SEMPERTOONS.COM

SAY-TAN SAMS CYCLES
"WHERE YOU ARE DYING TO SERVE US"

OHHH YEAH.....!!!!!!
There's my BABY!!!!!!
Lets fire up my DEBT, get me on the road...and throw in the personal license plate that reads....KNKLHED....

DEATH DEALER
COMES COMPLETE WITH COFFIN

DEMON BEGINNER

Soul taker

Respect the Ride and Ride to Live Everyday
- Your family and Corps depend on you -

C.O.P. Corner Community Oriented Policing



The proactive voice of crime prevention

Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

Bicycle Safety

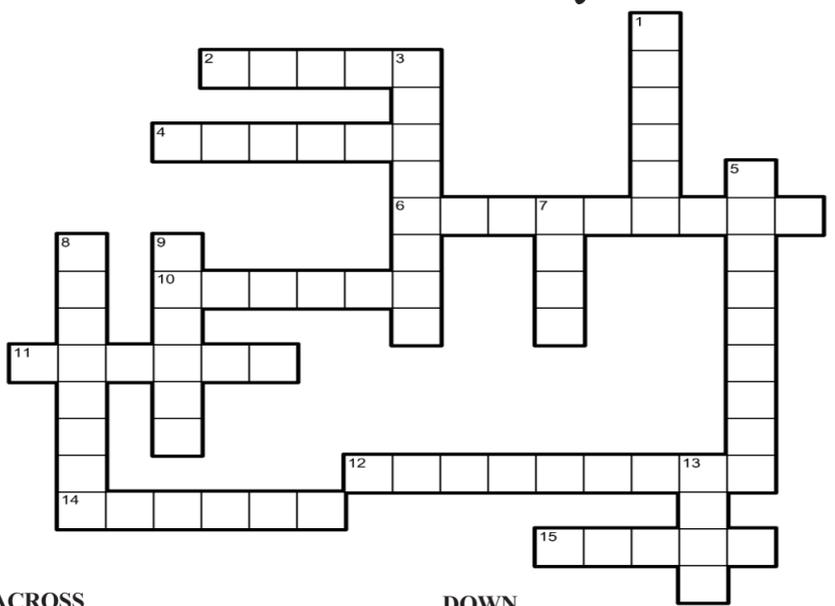
Now that summer is here, there will be many children wanting to ride their bikes. Here are some safety tips to ensure that your child is safe:

- Wear proper safety equipment at all times, (bright colored clothing, approved bicycle helmet, safety goggles, etc.)
- Ride with the flow of traffic and obey traffic laws, (stop signs, traffic lights, etc.)
- Adjust handle bars so that your hands are no higher than your shoulders when using a regular steering grip.
- Bicycle size should be so that the operator can safely stop the bicycle upright with at least one foot on the ground.
- Brakes must be able to make one wheel skid on clean, level, dry pavement.
- When riding at night, ensure your bicycle is equipped with reflectors. Use of a headlight is recommended.
- Cross sewer gratings and railroads tracks at an angle.
- Stay in a single file when riding with others.
- Walk your bicycle across busy intersections.
- Wear closed toe shoes.
- Avoid long skirts and flare pants. Clasp pants to legs with clips or leg bands.
- Clip or band hair to keep from blocking vision. Avoid scarves which can flap over eyes.

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

MARINE CORPS QUOTES



ACROSS

- "Casualties many; Percentage of dead not known; Combat efficiency; we are winning" - Col. David M. _____, USMC, 1943.
- "We're surrounded. That simplifies the problem!" - Lt. Gen. Chesty B. _____, USMC.
- "Gone to Florida to fight the Indians. Will be back when the war is over." - Col. Archibald _____, USMC, 1836.
- "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem." - Ronald _____, President of U.S., 1985.
- "Being ready is not what matters. What matters is winning after you get there." - Lt. Gen. V. H. _____, USMC, 1965.
- "I am convinced that there is no smarter, handier, or more adaptable body of troops in the world." - Sir Winston _____, Prime Minister of Britain.
- "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." - Fleet Admiral Chester W. _____, USN.
- "You'll never get a Purple Heart hiding in a foxhole! Follow me!" - Capt. Henry P. _____, USMC, 1943.

DOWN

- "A ship without MARINES is like a garment without buttons." - Admiral David _____, USN.
- "Why in hell can't the Army do it if the Marines can. They are the same kind of men; why can't they be like Marines." - Gen. John J. _____, US Army, 1918.
- "The raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next five hundred years." - James _____, Secretary of Navy, 1945.
- "Come on, you sons of bitches! Do you want to live forever?" - Gunnery Sgt. Dan J. _____, 1918.
- "There are only two kinds of people that understand Marines: Marines and the enemy. Everyone else has a second-hand opinion." Gen. William _____, US Army.
- "For over 221 years our Corps has done two things for this great Nation. We make Marines, and we win battles." - Gen. Charles C. _____, USMC, 1997.
- "The safest place in Korea was right behind a platoon of Marines. Lord, how they could fight!" - Maj. Gen. Frank E. _____, US Army, 1952.

[Solutions on A5]

Centerspeak

What do you want to see
at this year's Fourth of July celebration?

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



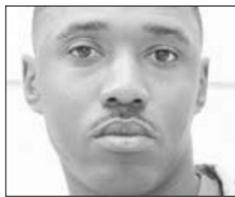
LANCE CPL. ALEX GAVIDIA
C. Co., 1st CEB

"A magician."



STAFF SGT. WILLIAM WALKER
EOD, HQBN

"A live band."



SGT. JOHNEY ROBINSON
2ND BN., 6TH MARINES

"More fireworks."



PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS
FRANK SMALL
TTECG, HQBN

"A barbecue."

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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1st Lt. Christy L. Kercheval
Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox
Michael J. Armstrong
Sgt. Robert L. Fisher III
Cpl. Evan M. Eagan
Cpl. Heidi E. Loredo
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Lance Cpl. Regina N. Ortiz
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24/7
[OPERATION SUMMER FORCE PRESERVATION]

MOTORCYCLISTS FACE TWICE THE HAZARDS

A Marine captain died when his speeding motorcycle left a paved surface, overturned, hit the right side of the road, and went airborne. The bike then collided with the far side of a ditch that parallels the roadway and came to rest at a tree line about 50 feet away. Officials found the victim's body in brush 31 feet from the side of the road and 119 feet from the point of initial impact.

Police estimate the victim was traveling about 75 mph (20 mph faster than the posted speed limit) when he crashed. They found a 287-foot skid mark at the scene. The victim was wearing all the required personal protective equipment, and he had completed the required motorcycle-safety course. According to the police, he died at the site of many other motorcycle mishaps.

According to 2005 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 4,008 motorcyclists were killed on our nation's roads in 2004, an 8 percent increase from 2003. Of those fatalities, 66 percent were not wearing a helmet in states without all-rider helmet laws, compared to only 15 percent in states with all-rider helmet laws. Annual motorcyclist injuries number more than 50,000.

In comparison, Naval Safety Center statistics show that 21 Navy and 13 Marine Corps motorcyclists died in FY05 crashes. Those numbers in FY04 were 25 and 7, respectively. So far this year, 18 sailors and 11 Marine fatalities have occurred. If this trend continues 2006, will be the deadliest recorded year for Navy and Marine motorcyclists.

If you ride a motorcycle, always wear all the required PPE, which, for sailors and Marines (as outlined in OpNavinst 5100.12G), includes a Department of Transportation- or Snell-approved helmet, long trousers, long-sleeved shirt (minimum requirement), jacket designed for the motorcycle rider (preferred), full-finger leather gloves, hard-soled shoes with sides to protect the ankle, and protective eyewear.

Here are some more tips from the NHTSA and Motorcycle Safety Foundation to help you guard against serious and fatal injuries:

- Get licensed. All states require a motorcycle license.
- Never drink alcohol before operating a motorcycle.
- Follow all the rules of the road. Don't speed—40 percent of motorcyclists who die in crashes are speeding.
- Watch for hazards on the road, such as large cracks, holes and bumps. Keep an eye out for vehicles coming from driveways and side streets.
- Make sure your headlight is on every time you ride (a law in most states).
- Don't let anyone ride with you until you're skilled at riding in all kinds of conditions.
- If you're a new rider, take a motorcycle riders' course (a requirement for sailors and Marines who ride motorcycles).

The Combat Center Safety Office offers two motorcycle courses, the Beginners Riding Course and the Experienced Riders Course, monthly for all military and civilian personnel assigned to the Combat Center. Please contact Bill Huie at 830-6154, or go the Combat Center Safety Office located in building 1447, to sign up for these free motorcycle safety classes.

For more information, refer to these websites:

- Motorcycle Operator Checklist: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/ashore/checklists/motorvehicle/motorcyclechecklist.htm>
- Sea&Shore Spring 2005, "Riding High on the Hog for Safety": <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/media/seashore/issues/spring05/ridinghighonhog.htm>
- SafeUSA.org: <http://www.safeusa.org/move/motorcyc.htm>
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation: <http://www.msf-usa.org/>
- Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety Fact Sheet on Motorcycle Helmets: <http://www.saferoads.org/issues/fs-helmets.htm>

Stay Marine

University of California's Jack Clark to coach All-Marine rugby team

MCB QUANTICO -- University of California, Berkeley, Rugby team head coach Jack Clark has been named the coach of the All-Marine Rugby Team. Clark has been a Rugby coach for the past 23 years, has compiled an impressive 391-64-5 record and has captured 18 National Collegiate Championships.

The All-Marine Rugby Team will compete at the 2006 Armed Forces Rugby Championship hosted at Camp Lejeune, N.C. October 23-28. The All-Marine Rugby Trial Camp will be held October 13-22 also at Camp Lejeune.

"I'm honored to have the opportunity to work with the All-Marine rugby team," said Clark. "It has been made clear to me that the Armed Forces Rugby Championship is a difficult tournament to win and that we will have our work cut out for us."

Clark was named one of California's 10 Most Influ-

tial Sports Figures of the 20th Century, and has also been the USA National Team Coach (1993-1999), USA National Team General Manager (1993-2003), Head Collegiate All-American Coach (1987-1992), and the Collegiate All-American Team General Manager (2000-2004). Clark also played for the USA National Team and was a standout football and rugby player at Berkeley.

"We are very excited to have a coach of Clark's caliber working with our

Marines," said Steven Dinote, the All Marine Sports Program Director. "The Marines have fought hard over the years and are always a team to be reckoned with. We believe that Clark will be the final ingredient to bring home the gold at Armed Forces championship."

For additional information regarding the All-Marine Rugby Team, please contact Mr. Steven Dinote at 703-784-9542, toll free at 866-400-8753, or email at: steven.dinote@usmc.mil.

Space Camp scholarships awarded to Marine children

MCB QUANTICO, Va. -- Three Marine Corps applicants have been selected to receive 2006 Bernard Curtis Brown II Memorial NASA Space Camp Scholarships. The future astronauts are Rebecca Femat, 7th Grade, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan; Joseph Eaton, 7th Grade, Mobility Command, Kansas City; and Justin Rumps, 8th Grade MOBCOM Kansas City.

The winners will receive tuition, meals, lodging, program materials, and transportation, for a five-day program at Space Camp in

Huntsville, Alabama. Space Camp offers a unique, hands-on approach to learning outside the classroom. Activities include simulated Space Shuttle missions, training simulators, rocket building and launches, scientific experiments, and lectures on the past, present, and future of space exploration.

Children of active duty service members, in grades 6 through 9, were able to apply for the scholarship which was created by the Military Child Education Coalition in memory of Bernard Curtis Brown II, the 11-year-old son of

Chief Petty Officer and Mrs. Bernard Curtis Brown, who was killed on Sept. 11, 2001, when the hijacked airliner he was on was crashed into the Pentagon. Scholarships were awarded based on information in the student's application essay and letters of recommendation.

More information on the 2006 Bernard Curtis Brown II Memorial NASA Space Camp Scholarship application can be found by visiting the Military Child Education Website at <http://www.militarychild.org/Scholarship.asp>



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Lt. Col. Douglas Fairfield salutes during the playing of the nation anthem during the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, change-of-command ceremony.

FAIRFIELD, A1

smile and handshake, Huxhold made his comments to the gathered guests and Marines behind him.

"I am honored to serve with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines," said the new commander. "Although it's a unique situation, the responsibilities of the commander remain unchanged. My goals are to accomplish the mission and take care of our Marines and sailors."

Huxhold has come to 3/11 while still in command of 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, based at Camp Pendleton.

"There is such a thing as an artillery groupment, where one battalion has more administrative control over another," explained Fairfield. "That is happening today, and Lt. Col. Huxhold is now the commander of two battalions — 5th Battalion and 3rd Battalion. I'm not at all concerned because I've seen the great work he's done with 5th Battalion, and I know he's not going to let you down."

Although Huxhold's responsibilities have expanded, he said his focus will remain on the success of the mission and also his men.

"Both battalions have assigned missions," said Huxhold. "The Marines and sailors are making that happen. One of my challenges will be balancing my team here with 3/11 in Twentynine Palms and 5/11 at Camp Pendleton. The Marines will make it happen."

Huxhold graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., and was commissioned an officer of Marines in May 1987. His personal decorations include three Meritorious Service Medals, two Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medals and the Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

After the ceremony, guests and family members, as well as battalion personnel, were treated to a barbecue lunch at the battalion command post to conclude the event.

Fairfield said he would miss the Combat Center as he departs for Harvard University in Boston for advanced studies, but is thankful he will be able to spend more time with his family.

BRONZE, A1

"That vehicle caught on fire and all of its passengers received shrapnel wounds and concussion injuries."

Lance Cpl. Sergio Escobar, 18, was killed instantly from the IED blast.

"The explosions knocked me out instantly," said Vega. "The IED blast launched Marines on the passenger side of the bed toward the driver side and severely wounded the platoon sergeant who was riding in the passenger seat of the cabin. I came to after a couple seconds and noticed that our vehicle was hit badly."

The IED blasts were the initial action of a small arms ambush.

"The platoon then started taking small-arms enemy fire from the rooftops of the surrounding buildings," said Vega. "My first action was to unload the Marines out of the vehicle."

"My buddy and I helped get Marines out of the vehicle and toward a casualty collection point that we set up right beside a nearby wall, covered from enemy fire," he continued. "We had to carry and drag a few. I tried bringing some back to life, and some did come back."

Vega then ordered the first vehicle in the convoy to come around beside the third humvee of the convoy, which had caught on fire, to act as cover.

"I then began suppressing fire on the enemy. Just then, one of my sergeants told me that I was bleeding from my leg. That's when I became aware that I got hit by some shrapnel too."

Although he was wounded, Vega ensured that all Marines from the vehicle got off safely, and he directed all wounded members of the squad to the casualty collec-



Lt. Col. Roger B. Turner, commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, congratulates Cpl. Jordy Vega, a section leader with Weapons Platoon, India Company, 3/7, after awarding him the Bronze Star June 2.

tion point. He provided suppressive fire with his M16A4 service rifle and his M203 grenade launcher. After he marked the position, he helped establish a link-up with nearby Weapons Company, said Reed.

"As he executed his actions, he showed no signs of hesitation, nor any signs of pain," said Reed. "He came with me and one other Marine to search through the wreckage for personnel and gear. Vega was an active participant in establishing positive numbers that we had everybody."

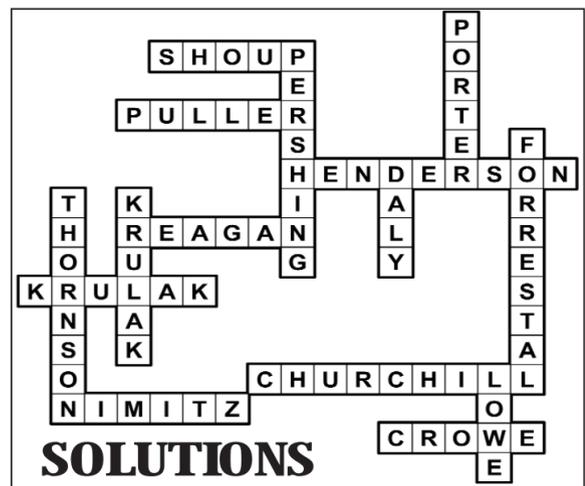
The leave-behind mission was compromised, and the convoy headed back to the camp as Weapons Company relieved their position.

Returning back to the camp, Vega was more worried about members of his squad than himself.

"I told the Marines this is war, and as men who are fighting it, we need to take care of each other," said Vega. "I did not let that incident mentally phase me. I didn't ever stop letting the Marines know that this is real and they are pretty much trying to kill us."

Due to Vega refusing to be treated, remaining active in the fight and his zealous and courageous initiative, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

"Vega is a solid Marine," said Reed. "He is very vocal. There's never any hesitation from him. He puts his Marines above himself and is very dependable. He kept his Marines calm and maintained his bearing during the eight-hour evolution that night. He's very deserving of the recognition."



Columbine High grad combats terror in Iraq

CPL. MARK SIXBEY,
1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP HABBANIYAH, Iraq — For some, joining the Marine Corps is a dream in itself. For others, it's a bridge to another career. For one 21-year-old Marine from Littleton, Colo., however, it's both.

Lance Cpl. Zach Feiler is on his first deployment to Iraq, assigned to 3rd Platoon, I Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, which recently moved its area of operation west from Fallujah to the more volatile city of Habbaniyah.

"We've seen more in the last week than in the last five months," he said.

And that's exactly why he's here.

Feiler was a freshman at Columbine High School during the infamous 1999 shooting, in which two students killed 12 others and one teacher before turning their weapons on themselves. He joined the Marine Corps to build up his experience for a career in law enforcement.

"I wanted to help people and maybe pave the way for a career in SWAT to help people out of situations like [Columbine]," Feiler said.

He recalled sitting in his math class when the shooting started.

"Nobody really knew what was going on at the time," he said. "We thought there was a fire at first. We heard a bunch of rumbling, which was actually a thousand people running down the hallway."

A girl pounded on the window and she was crying, and then the fire alarm went off.

The students started filing out of the building until somebody shouted, "They've got a gun!"

"That's when it all sunk in," he said. "All the phone lines were busy in the city all day long. Everybody tried to call and see if their friends were okay. It was all a kind of guessing game."

He said the loss of friends and teachers was a growing and bonding experience for the entire school. Even the distinct social cliques that define high school life meshed together in the wake of disaster.

"Everybody kind of grew up afterwards," he said. "We were forced to grow up pretty quick, so our class was a lot tighter after that."

Feiler played lacrosse for the Columbine Rebels until he graduated in 2002. He was 20 years old when he stepped on the yellow footprints at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on March 20, 2005.

"I've always wanted to join the Marine Corps since I was a kid," he said. "I got bored of going back and forth to work every day. I didn't want a normal life. If I didn't join, I always would have wondered."

He graduated Camp Pendleton's School of Infantry October 8, 2005, and spent the next six months building up his experience with patrols, raids, and cordon-and-knock operations, all the while keeping his long-term goals in mind.

"He cares about his job," said Cpl. Matthew Goodman, Feiler's team leader. "He gets the job done when you need him to do it. He doesn't mess up, which is always good."

Goodman said Feiler uses his wit to make the best of any situation, whether a long day on patrol or standing security posts late at night.

"He's got a great sense of humor. Makes you laugh all the time," said Goodman, a 25-year-old from Mesa, Ariz. "He can quote almost every line from 'Office Space.'"

He said the battalion's move to their new area of operations makes sense in both the short and long-run.

"It seems like we probably should have been here the whole time, with the way this place is," Feiler said. "We did some good work in that other AO, but the Iraqi Army pretty much has it. We did our job over there while they recruited, then it's time to move here."

Goodman said his whole squad is looking forward to taking the insurgents head-on as they clear the insurgency from the new area.

"They're all excited to get some action in a different place," he said.

The battalion will eventually hand responsibility for security in the area over to another Marine battalion, and more importantly, prepare to eventually pass the responsibility back to the Iraqi government.

"Maybe we can pave the way for the people here to be like us, but we've got to get rid of some of the terrorists first," Feiler said.

After the Marine Corps, he plans to join the Aurora Police Department in Denver to begin his law enforcement career and live closer to home.

"I really miss Colorado. I didn't realize how cool it was until I left," he said. "I want to get back into the mountains and do some snowboarding."



CPL. MARK SIXBEY

Lance Cpl. Zach Feiler, an infantryman with 3rd Platoon, I Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, sits against a brick wall in Al Ambar province, Iraq, June 12



Medical care in Fallujah a team effort

BY CPL. DANIEL J. REDDING
1ST MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — While convoying across the dangerous roads of Fallujah, a humvee is struck by an improvised explosive device. The blast of flames and shrapnel destroys the military vehicle and critically wounds several Marines.

Immediate and potentially life-saving care is necessary; a process that starts immediately on the scene as a corpsman with the convoy quickly and efficiently prepares the injured service members for transportation to the closest medical facility — Fallujah Surgical.

This is where a team of professionals stand ready 24-hours-a-day for these wounded warriors' arrival.

From start to finish, the process of medical treatment at Fallujah Surgical is a team effort, with Navy surgeons, nurses, corpsmen and Marines handling the duties of both emergency and operating rooms.

This Navy-Marine team serves as a critical link between treatment in the field and care at more advanced facilities in Baghdad.

As soon as a patient arrives here, he is searched for possible explosives or other

weapons. The medical personnel impatiently wait behind concrete barriers, anxious to do their part.

Once the Marines have cleared the patient and transported him to an emergency room, corpsmen and nurses begin working side-by-side. They perform immediate care to stop blood loss while ensuring the patient's ability to breathe has not been endangered.

Set in a building erected during the reign of Saddam Hussein, the makeshift hospital offers minimal space for their treatment, but the life-saving professionals here have not let this slow them down, said Cmdr. Maureen M. Pennington, officer-in-charge of Fallujah Surgical.

As the corpsmen and nurses perform their roles, the Marines will occasionally assist the Sailors by performing basic medical tasks like putting pressure on a bloody wound or setting up intravenous fluids.

"Everybody does a little bit of something," said Navy Capt. Jim J. Schneider, a general surgeon and officer-in-charge of the Forward Resuscitative Surgical Suite here.

A practicing surgical oncologist back home in the U.S., Schneider, a 49-year-old native of Norfolk, Va., typically specializes in cancer-



CPL. CHRISTOPHER A. GREEN

With a look of intense concentration reflecting off of his protective eyewear, Lt. Cmdr. John-Paul H. Rue, a 36-year-old native of Northfield, Minn., performs surgery April 21 at Fallujah Surgical.

related care. In Iraq, there are no specialties. As a general surgeon here, he delivers whatever treatment his patients need to survive.

"It's gratifying to see everyone ... throw in [their expertise] to get the job done," said Schneider.

The medical team has treated approximately 400 combat injuries since arriving in February. Major injuries are common, with soft tissue wounds from improvised explosive devices a common occurrence.

As they treat wounds varying from severely burned Iraqi soldiers to American service members who suffer major gunshot wounds, the Sailors and Marines work as a cohesive unit to accomplish their life or death mission.

Constant coordination and communication between the different medical specialists is necessary as they handle this pressure, said Navy Lt. Keith G. Dobbins, a 30-year-old native of Chicago.

"You have to be ready for the unexpected trauma," explained Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert M. Johnson.

The tough conditions and stress create strong bonds between everyone who works here, said Johnson.

"I've never seen a group of personnel come together as quickly as this one has," said Johnson, a 29-year-old native of Columbia, Mo.

Treatment is given at Fallujah Surgical to patients of all backgrounds including U.S. and Iraqi forces, civilians and even insurgents.

Whether it's American or Iraqis who are injured, in the end, "It's like you're working on family," said Pennington, a 41-year-old native of Port-

land, Maine.

The injuries sustained by individuals here are often unique and sometimes difficult for the Sailors and Marines.

"People get injured in the worst of environments [here]," said Dobbins. Wounds suffered by service members in Iraq are what people would "only read about in books," he said.

As fighting continues in western Iraq the pressure of life-saving work on a daily basis is a way of life for the team known as Fallujah Surgical.

When asked about her Sailors and Marines, Pennington could only whisper that she was "very proud."



CPL. CHRISTOPHER A. GREEN

Speed and communication are essential as Marines and sailors load a patient onto a waiting helicopter April 28, for medical evacuation at Camp Fallujah.



USMAP gives real world credentials

ANDREA KATOLIN
LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER

Marines and sailors in many military occupational specialties have the opportunity to get recognition from the Department of Labor for the work they perform in the military. United Services Military Apprenticeship Program, or USMAP, is a formal training program that allows service members complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while on active duty.

Apprenticeship programs are some of the oldest formalized occupational training. All apprenticeship programs across the country combine both formal instruction and on-the-job training. USMAP is no different.

Based on their military occupational specialty, a service member is assigned an apprenticeship trade. The trade will require 2,000, 4,000, 6,000, or 8,000 hours to complete. Completion of the program requires no off-duty hours. Service members simply keep track of the hours they work each day while on the job. This completes their on-the-job training requirement as required by DoL. Service members must also complete formal instruction of 144 hours for every 2,000 hours of on-the-job training. For almost all apprenticeship programs, these hours are completed at their military occupational specialty or Navy "A" school. Once a service member completes the required number of hours, they receive a completion certificate from the Department of Labor.

The completion of this program can mean a lot for a service member once he or she is no longer on active duty. Many companies across the country recognize this certificate as equivalent to a journeyman's license. This can mean a significant jump in salary compared to someone who did not complete this program. Additionally, all USMAP trades correlate with civilian apprenticeship programs. Civilian employers understand what experience and training the service member has. They may not know what a 1341 means, but they do understand what a diesel mechanic does.

In addition, this program can improve your proficiency and conduct marks or fitness reports, and it shows that you are furthering your technical proficiency and expanding your abilities. Sgt Timothy Kincaid, a Marine assigned to Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, has completed multiple apprenticeship programs and encour-



ANDREA KATOLIN

Sgt. Timothy Kincaid, an instructor with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, receives a certificate of completion as an electronics technician and an electronics tester from the USMAP program through the Lifelong Learning Center.

ages other Marines to do the same. "When completed, it demonstrates to your command and potential civilian employers that you have commitment and are continually seeking ways to better yourself," he said.

One of the best things about this program is that it requires very little extra work. Marines and Sailors can sign up for the program online in a matter of minutes, and then take about five minutes a week to record their hours. "The effort you put into this program isn't even a consideration when the outcome can mean the difference of \$10 to 25 more per hour in the civilian job market," said Kincaid.

To sign up, Marines can stop by the Base Education Center or enroll online at <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil>. Service members will receive 1,000 hours of pre-registration credit for every full year since their MOS school, up to half of the program. This means that many will already be halfway done with their program.

Call the Education Center at 830-6881 with questions or to schedule a brief for your unit.

ASYMCA Wounded Comrades Fund reaches out to those in need

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Lending a helping hand is nothing new to the men and women of our armed forces, so when it comes time, the Armed Services YMCA extends a helping hand to wounded service members and their families through the Wounded Comrades Fund.

The fund was designed in January to assist wounded service members and their families with financial needs such as travel, food and lodging expenses. The fund came about after the ASYMCA directors met with donors and military advisors regarding the needs of service members stationed here, said Anita Neu-Fultz, ASYMCA executive director.

"I was a board member, and people came to us looking to donate money to wounded Marines, sailors and family members," said retired Sgt. Maj. Jim Ricker, Manpower Operations, who helped start the program. "The board assisted in making sure the fund was done right legally."

The ASYMCA and Wounded Comrades Fund is a non-profit organization available on a case-by-case basis. Service members stationed here can have their case reviewed by the ASYMCA Twentynine Palms Branch,

Board of Management. The ASYMCA prefers that the referrals come through the unit's commanding officer for legitimacy, said Neu-Fultz.

The fund receives money through donors and fundraising, she continued. Donations come from organizations such as American Friends of our Armed Forces and the Partner Member Program. They are also received by private and anonymous donors by contacting ASYMCA. The fundraising events include events such as the Soap Box Derby or The Red, White and Blue sponsored by Polo America.

"Donations are American citizens' way of saying 'thank you' to the young men and women who are in uniform today," said Ricker.

"The fund has currently helped 23 service members and their families at no cost to them with financial expenses," said Neu-Fultz.

In one case, the Marine Corps transported injured Marines who were at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine's memorial service here. They didn't have the money for their families to come with them and that's where the Wounded Comrades Fund came into play. The fund was able to pay for those expenses, said Neu-Fultz.

In another case, a Marine who sustained severe injuries while serving in Iraq, paid out-of-pocket to attend that same memorial service. The Wounded Comrades Fund

paid the travel expenses for the Marine to return home, said Neu-Fultz.

Also brought to the attention of the ASYMCA by senior enlisted leaders on base were Marines from other bases involved with Mojave Viper training. They wanted to know if Marines were to get hurt and their units contacted ASYMCA, would they be able to receive help in transporting family members or other financial needs. So the ASYMCA took that into account and decided they could also assist those Marines, said Neu-Fultz.

The program continues to grow, allowing us to succeed in our mission of meeting the needs of service members and

their families, said Neu-Fultz.

The plan for the future is to continue meeting those needs and expand on services. The program will continue to do this because people support what the men and women in the military do. They sign up risking their lives to fight for freedom, and donors want to

support them, said Neu-Fultz.

"Our young Marines, sailors and family members need to become aware of the program so that no one goes with a need, because they are not aware," said Ricker. "It's not asking for a handout, it's asking for help in a time of need."



CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS

Lt. Col. Nicholas F. Marano, commanding officer of the Twentynine Palms, Calif.-based 1/7 Marines, awards the Silver Star to Sgt. Jarred L. Adams at the Marines' camp at Al Qa'im, Iraq, June 10.

Scout sniper serving in Iraq awarded U.S. military's third highest award for valor

CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7

CAMP AL QA'IM, Iraq — When Sgt. Jarred L. Adams retrieved the body of a fallen Marine from a burning humvee, he says he was simply doing his job.

The 22-year-old scout sniper assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, was awarded the Silver Star June 10 while currently deployed to Iraq with the southern Calif.-based unit for a second time.

The Silver Star is the nation's third highest military award for combat heroism after the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross.

"I don't think I did anything any other Marine wouldn't do," said Adams, from Wasilla, Ala. "I would do it again if it came down to it."

In January 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Adams

was deployed with the battalion to the Iraqi-Syrian border region of western Al Anbar province.

In the city of Husaybah, a city of about 50,000 citizens, Adams' humvee was attacked by insurgents with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

When his vehicle crashed and became stuck, Adams immediately took up a stable position and returned fire at the enemy. After Marines dislodged the vehicle, Adams and his squad drove back to retrieve another humvee lost in the melee.

That's when a rocket-propelled grenade struck Adams' vehicle, killing one Marine and wounding others inside. Adams received shrapnel from the blast as well as burns from the vehicle which was set ablaze from the attack.

After seeking a safe position, Adams realized the body of the fallen Marine was still inside the blazing vehicle. Running back into the burning vehicle and while under enemy fire,

Adams retrieved the Marine's body and carried him through an intersection while broadly exposed to enemy fire.

It wasn't until Adams and the other Marines were back in the safety of their headquarters that Adams sought medical treatment for his wounds.

He downplays his actions in the firefight, and said that he feels that any Marine would have performed as he did.

"I am very proud that we can count on Marines like [then] Corporal Adams," said Lt. Col. Nicholas F. Marano, Adams' commanding officer, during the ceremony. "He is an example of the kind of leaders we have in this battalion."

Marano took the time to address his Marines who are serving at a remote forward operating base, or "battle position," as the Marines call it, north of the Euphrates River. The battalion arrived in Iraq three months ago to provide stability and security, alongside their Iraqi Army counterparts, to a cluster of towns in the region.

"I think all of you are doing an outstanding job and I am very proud of the work you are doing with the Iraqi Army," said Marano.

Adams says nothing has changed during this deployment except that things are a lot quieter now in regards to insurgent activity. The battalion has not had to face a direct insurgent attack, like the one Adams faced in January 2005, during their current deployment.

The last major U.S.- and Iraqi-led offensive against insurgents in this region occurred in November last year, a mission dubbed, "Operation Steel Curtain." The operation resulted in more than 250 killed insurgents.

1/7 Marines brave Iraq's roads daily in western Al Anbar province

CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS
1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP AL QA'IM, Iraq — In order for the battalion commander to move throughout his area of operations, he must be able to count on the security of a special team of Marines.

For Lt. Col. Nicholas F. Marano, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, that team is his personal security detachment, a Combined Anti-Armor Team called "CAAT Black" for short.

Anti-Armor means the squad of humvees has the weaponry and capabilities of eliminating an enemy's armored units, such as tanks.

But these Marines aren't out hunting tanks — they're job is to provide maximum security for the battalion's top brass.

The security team is responsible for providing Marano flexibility to move throughout his entire area of operations near the Iraq-Syria border.

Every day is a different experience for these Marine guards, according to Cpl. Michael T. Wier, the platoon's first section leader.

"This job allows me to get out there and see the different towns, talk to different people through an interpreter and shake hands with little kids who swarm us every time we get out of our trucks," said the 22-year-old from Scottsdale, Ariz. "The people are very friendly out here, especially the kids."

Part of the Marines' job is collecting information from the citizens through an interpreter. This means the Marines are out in the villages talking with and shaking hands with the locals. The information is used by Marano to get an idea of how the Iraqis are responding to the Marines' and Iraqi Security Force presence. It also allows him a chance to address any issues with the locals.

Despite Iraqis' warm reception to the Marines, the insurgency is still prevalent in this area with recent attacks on civilians, Iraqi Security Forces and the Marines.

On a recent mission, Wier recalled having to assist an Iraqi family with the deaths of family members killed by an improvised explosive device. Since the team was in close proximity to the site of the blast, they were first to respond at the scene of the explosion.

"We had to go to the family's home and explain to the family what happened," said Wier. "The family was not mad at us. They understand that it's the insurgents who are planting the IEDs."

Wier, an avid golfer back home, admits that there is some level of fear every time he goes out on a mission but feels comfort from a picture he carries with him everywhere he goes — it's a picture of him holding his girlfriend during a sunset.

On every mission he tapes the snapshot onto the humvee's radio.

"It reminds me of better times and gets my mind off of all the things I see out here that don't make sense," said Wier.

While most personal security teams are composed of Marines from the infantry military occupational specialties, Marano's personal security team is mainly comprised of Marines with backgrounds in non-infantry-related fields.

For infantry Marines, or 'grunts,' their job is providing security and weeding out insurgents by conducting security patrols both on foot and in armored vehicles. The Marines with support-related jobs like mechanics, warehouse clerks and cooks are responsible for providing the necessary tools and supplies

to the grunts

While every Marine is a rifleman, most Marines in the support-related fields perform their duties "inside the wire" of a base, leaving the task of performing security patrols and operations to the infantry Marines.

"This team allows the Marines of non-infantry-related military occupational specialties to learn the job of the infantry and perform like an infantryman on a daily basis," said Staff Sgt. Matthew W. Marks, the team's platoon sergeant.

The team travels in a handful of armored vehicles, outfitted with a variety of infantry weapons mounted on revolving turrets atop the vehicle's roof. The guns can turn in every direction, providing each vehicle 360 degrees of visual security.

The Marines learn the job of the infantrymen and they go through the same training packages as their 'grunt' counterparts, according to the 28-year-old Marks. The platoon commander feels his men are just as qualified as a bonafide infantryman, to perform the job.

In Iraq's Al Anbar province, improvised explosive devices are the number one killer of Coalition Forces and are arguably the greatest threat Marines encounter most on their daily patrols through cities like Husaybah and Ubaydi near the Iraq-Syria border.

The security team has been able to spot IEDs along the roadways before they are detonated.

The IEDs are just one example of how insurgents in the area are trying to disrupt the Marines' job of training and mentoring the Iraqi Security Forces, according to Marano.

"You need to be prepared to face anything 'outside the wire,'" said Marks. "Whether it's receiving small-arms fire from the enemy or setting up a vehicle checkpoint on-the-spot, you have to be ready to respond."

Nearly six months ago, Marines cleared the area of insurgents during Operation Steel Curtain. Since then the battalion has seen a drastic decrease in enemy activity thanks to the combined efforts of daily security patrols alongside Iraqi Security Forces, according to the Marines.

As dangerous as their job is, the members of the security team feel the perks of the job outweigh the hazards they may face.

"The positive thing is that you're personally selected to represent the colonel and be a part of his security team, which goes everywhere and anywhere he goes," said Cpl. Mario Morales, who has deployed twice with the battal-



CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS

Navy Hospitalman George Ziekowski, a corpsman with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, watches the setting sun after another day of transporting the battalion commander through northwestern Al Anbar province.

ion. "You get to see the entire area of operations and do something different everyday."

Besides visiting the numerous outposts along the Euphrates River or interacting with locals in towns and villages, Morales feels that being part of the team has enabled him to experience Iraq differently than if he were doing the job he was originally trained to do — working on computers.

Morales, who traded his desk job in his communications shop for a seat behind the wheel of a humvee, says he is not scared about encountering insurgents. He takes pride in being able to meet local Iraqis and hand out candy to children whenever he gets the chance.

"I've done very little of the job I was originally trained for during my time in the Marines," said Morales, who is trained to work on Marine Corps computer network systems. "I would rather be driving to different places in the area of operations and seeing new faces, eating the local food and just interacting with Iraqis than sitting behind a computer screen."

There are also a handful of infantry Marines in the team. Marines like Lance Cpl. Jason M. Parkhurst were selected by their superior non-commissioned-officers to bring their infantry knowledge to the group.

Parkhurst, from Sacramen-

to, Calif., was an infantry squad leader in another battalion before joining the team and was part of Operation Iraqi Freedom II and III.

The 21-year-old recalled the initial push through the city of Fallujah where he cleared rooms of insurgents in house-to-house fighting. He is thankful that things have 'settled down a bit,' in this area of operations and does not miss the days of getting shot at on a daily basis.

The combat experience from two previous deployments left Parkhurst eager to complete a third deployment before leaving the Marines in 2006 — a personal goal he set for himself before leaving the Marine Corps.

"I want to be able to say that I completed three tours in Iraq," said Parkhurst.

The 21-year-old is anxious to get back home to Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., and start spending some time with his wife. He carries her picture with him at all times.

"I want to get back home to get my life started and have the white picket fence," said Parkhurst. "I just want to sit down and have a nice dinner with my wife."

The Marines in the security team spend a great deal of time together even when off the job. When they're not performing mission-essential training like sharpening their shooting skills,

they're working out at the gym together or eating at the chow hall as a group.

"We're like a large extended family," said Cpl. Christo-

pher J. Scott, a 21-year-old vehicle commander from Lumberton, Texas. "There are squabbles and arguments just like in any other family."

SPORT SHORTS

TWILIGHT GOLF

Desert Winds Golf Course is hosting Twilight Golf every Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$5, which does not include golf cart or club rental or entry fee. The game consists of four players to a team and is played in best ball format. Please contact Al Ybarra at 830-7945 or Mark Carrington at 830-6172 / 6953 for any questions or details.

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. 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

BLOOD DRIVE AT
NAVAL HOSPITAL

The next base blood drive is scheduled for Saturday, July 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in Classroom 4 of the Naval Hospital.

PALM SPRINGS
AERIAL TRAM
JULY MILITARY

APPRECIATION DAYS
All military personnel receive free Tram admission with Military ID. Their Guests (limit 6) receive 25 percent off regular admission. For more information call (888) 515-TRAM. Offer valid July 1-31.

FREE BOWLING

Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center is offering free lunch time bowling every Monday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Shoe rental is additional.

Did You Know?

A completely blind chameleon will still take on the colors of its environment.

3/11 buries Tanks Comm

STORY & PHOTOS BY SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The softball team from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, defeated 1st Tank Battalion (Communications), 17 to 3 in the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League Tuesday at Felix Field.

Rodney Buentello, 3/11 second baseman, hit a double to pick up two runs for their first inning. Tanks Comm had a dry beginning for the first inning.

Going into the second inning, 3/11's turn at bat went uneventful. Tanks Comm had a few close calls for base runs but managed to pick up two runs to tie the game 2-2.

Aided by errors in the outfield, 3/11 picked up six runs in the third inning.

Daniel "Hot Rod" Rodriguez, 3/11 first baseman, hit a double with two RBIs. Then Buentello brought Rodriguez home with another double. Christopher Howell, 3/11 third baseman, pounded in two more runs on a Tanks Comm outfield error. Chad Lydic, 3/11 right fielder, picked up another run after another outfielder dropped a fly ball.

Finally, Tanks Comm started catching fly balls to finish the top of third, but they couldn't bounce back, leaving the score at 8-2.

For the fourth inning, 3/11 picked up two more runs, stretching their lead even further. Tanks Comm returned for another unsuccessful swing in the bottom of the fourth, leaving them still behind 10-2.

With Tanks Comm's repeated errors in the outfield, 3/11 steamrolled through the top of the fifth inning with seven more runs. With their last chance at bat before facing the mercy rule, Tanks Comm only managed one run before finishing the game defeated 17-3.

"I had my doubts after the first inning, but once we got the bats going we were good," said Bryan Sexstone, 3/11 coach. He said he hopes to be in the finals but his only worry is facing Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School July 6 in their last game before the finals.

Softball games are played Tuesday and Thursday nights each week at Felix Field. Look for continuing coverage in future issues of the Observation Post.



Daniel "Hot Rod" Rodriguez, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, gets ready to throw after catching a fly ball.



Thomas, 1st Tank Battalion (Communications), and the rest of his team stare off at a fly ball as he runs toward first base.



A 1st Tank Battalion (Communications), softball player slides into home a second too late against 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, Tuesday.

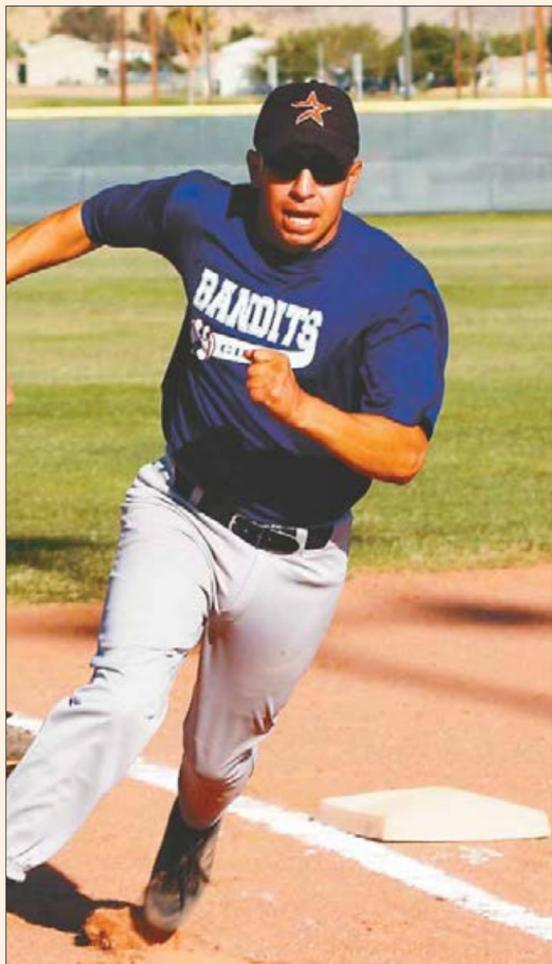
Highlights from this week's games

Clockwise from Right:

Justin Chacon, Headquarters Battalion Team 2 "Spitters," stares at the ball after it popped out of his glove into the air in their game against Assault Amphibian Battalion Team 1.

Steven Santana, 1st Tank Battalion, swings at the ball against the Headquarters Battalion Team 1 "Game Cocks."

A Combat Logistic Battalion 7 softball player rounds third base in their game against 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.



Marines laugh it up with Iraq comedy tour

CPL. BRIAN REIMERS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP BAHARIA, Iraq — Sounds of laughter and clapping filled the room as the crowd sat listening to the performer on stage.

Marines from 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, were able to relax and be entertained during a show put on by a group of comedians.

"Laughter is a stress reliever," said Sgt. David T. Rowland, the battalion armory chief. "These guys went out of their way to make us laugh and help boost morale for the Marines."

"The mission here requires Marines to work 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week," added Sgt. Toniko O. Parker, the battalion maintenance management chief. "Coming and letting us laugh with them helps your mind be at ease for a little while. It's like home away from home."

The three professional American comics served up two straight hours of fun and laughter for Marines who routinely patrol the streets of Fallujah and the surrounding villages.

Larry Myles, Cortney Gee, and Yoursie are touring Iraq for eight days, performing two shows per day at several different forward operating bases throughout the combat zone.

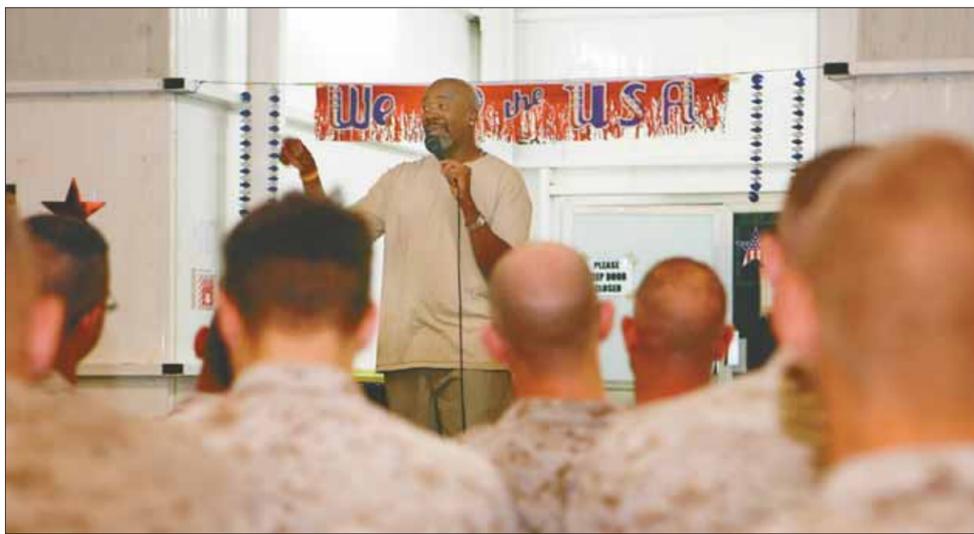
For them, performing for Marines was their way to serve the troops.

"I didn't think about the risk," said Gee, who was recently featured on the Def Jam Comedy Tour. "I figured as hard as all of the soldiers and Marines work to keep us free, this was the least I could do. I think that it is my duty."

The show kicked off just after sunset in the camp's chow hall where Marines gathered, anticipating the comedians' entrance.

"I was excited to hear that that the show was coming here," said Lance Cpl. Patrick S. Gormley, a radio technician from Stoughton, Mass. "I have never seen a comedy show before. I never thought that I would be able to see a live comedy show here in Iraq."

"Usually we would pay to see their show, but they are taking time away to pay us with their show



CPL. BRIAN REIMERS.

Comedian Cortney Gee entertains a group of Marines from 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, during a recent show held at Camp Baharia, Iraq.

and that really means a lot," 25 year-old Rowland added.

Myles, from Dorchester, Mass., had the "New England's Own" crowd smiling from ear-to-ear within moments of hitting the stage.

"The first comedian was from the Boston area, he had something for everyone," said 21-year-old Gormley. "He made a lot of references to back home which made me laugh a lot and really enjoy the show."

The Marines each had their own favorite comedian, many of whom had seen them before in the United States.

"I thought that the show was hilarious," Rowland said, from Dalles, Ore. "It was pretty cool to see Cortney live. I had seen him on television before and this is the last place I would think to see his show live. It was great."

The smiling Marines stood in line after the show recalling the jokes told to receive autographs and CDs from the stand-up comics. They spent time

talking to each Marine and personalizing a poster given to them to take home.

"Thanks for what you do," Myles said to the Marines. "It makes it possible for me to do what I do, make people laugh."

"That is what we fight for, freedom — the freedom of speech and the freedom to be able to laugh, live, and have a good time," said Parker from Clarksville, Tenn. "Anybody that will take time out of their schedules, sit down and laugh with us, and express themselves in a way that we can't always do here is an awesome thing."

Spending only hours on the ground, the comics headed out a short time after their performance to visit their next group of service members. Their show filled the Marines here with laughter, smiles, and a positive remembrance when looking back on their time in Iraq.

"It's funny because now I will be sitting at my desk thinking of the jokes and I will just start laughing out loud," 27-year-old Parker said.

Dodgeball Summer Bash coming in July

Double Elimination Tournament July 22 -23, 2006

School is out for the summer and Dodgeball is here in Twentynine Palms July 22 - 23 at the East Gym aboard the Combat Center. It's about time dodgeball has returned! It has been dormant since the 1970's, but it is finally in

mainstream America. Dodgeball is no longer just a kids' game. It is now receiving the respect it deserves with over 100,000 teams playing across the country. The Twentynine Palms Dodgeball Association is committed to:

Enhancing the enjoyment of dodgeball through safe and family-oriented activities.

Fast action play in a competitive and non-competitive atmosphere. Through tournament play, increase team building and morale for businesses, corporations, and private/public industry and our military service personnel and family members.

Provides youth the opportunity to participate in a posi-

tive activity with other peers. Continue the tradition and fun of playing dodgeball. Dodgeball is the fastest growing, most exciting recreational sport ever to be revived and its popularity has taken the country by surprise. Be a part of this phenomenon, and sign up now to play on July 22 (Youth) and July 23 (Adults). This event will leave your eyes tearing with laughter and excitement.

Registration: Three Youth Divisions (4 - 6) (7 - 8) (9 - 12) One day tournament
Adult Teams: Sunday July 23 (Entering/Currently in those grades)

Entry Fee: \$60 per team (\$10 per player if sign up individually)

Time: Tournament starts at 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.

There is a mandatory Coaches meeting at 8 a.m. July 22 at the East Gym to go over the rules.

1st and 2nd Place Individual Awards will be given for teams.

Limited space first 12 teams with paid entry fee in each division will play.

For more information, contact Randy Husted at 830-4092 or e-mail rhusted.softball29@hotmail.com for copy of the rules or other questions.

U.S. Marines compete in grilling competition

NEW YORK — Col. Stewart Navarre from Camp Pendleton, CA, claimed the "Command of the Grill" championship title after edging out nine other Marines in Weber's first grilling competition created solely for the men and women serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

The aroma of grilled steaks greeted pedestrians in New York's famous Times Square during morning rush hour on May 25 as the Marines competed against each other in the event held in conjunction with the 19th Annual Fleet Week, and was featured live on ABC's "Good Morning America."

As the "Command of the Grill" champion, Navarre took home a prize package worth more than \$5,000 that includes a new luxury Weber® gas grill along with a grilling lesson and dinner for Navarre and 10 Marine buddies with acclaimed chef and best-selling cookbook author Jamie Purviance.

The 10 Marines won their spots at the all-beef barbecue battle after winning semi-final competitions that were hosted by Marine Corps Community Services. Prior to the event, each participant was required to submit an original recipe and an essay detailing why their entry should be selected. After the coals were hot, the Marines showcased their culinary skills by grilling two New York strip steaks using their original recipes. The judges chose the winner based on recipe creativity, visual appeal and the taste of the steaks.

"We're looking for a good spice rub and marinade — something spicy but that still allows the beefy flavor of the meat to come through," Chef Purviance said.

Navarre, a native of Evansville, Ind., whose Combat Steak recipe, which featured a salt, pepper and garlic rub, with grilled mushrooms, said, "I was honored to be part of the competition and absolutely surprised to win. The opportunity to participate with my fellow Marines in this event ... made it very special for us."

According to Mike Kempster, executive vice president for Weber-Stephen Products Co., the Command of the Grill competition is their opportunity to give back to Marines and Sailors.

"We want to show our support for the brave men and women who have been separated from their families, wounded in the line of duty, and need help coping with new challenges when they come home," explained Kempster.

Navarre's Combat Steak along with recipes from his fellow competitors and former famous Marines, including Ed McMahon, are featured in a cookbook Command of the Grill—A Salute to Steak. The book can be purchased for \$10 at Marine Corps Exchanges or through the promotion website at <http://www.commandofthegrill.com>.

For more information check out the promotion website at <http://www.commandofthegrill.com>.

Command of the Grill Participants

MCB Camp Pendleton
Col Stewart R. Navarre
(Winner)

MCB Quantico
Capt Robert L. Burton

MCAS Cherry Point
SSgt Joseph E. Taylor

Camp Allen
SSgt Jeremiah E. Batista

MCAS New River/MCB Camp Lejeune
Capt Eric P. Dominijanni

MOBCOM Kansas City
Sgt Michael K. Clawson

MCAGCC Twentynine Palms
Capt Phillip J. Woodward

MCB Hawaii
SSgt Daniel G. Newcomb

MCAS Beaufort/MCRD Parris Island
Sgt Michael J. Clayton

MCAS Yuma
LCpl Jaynine L. Goodroe

ITT offers cheap summer fun

Information, Tickets and Tours, located in the back of the Combat Center's Main Exchange, provides customer-driven travel venues and services, and entertainment activities. Information about local, regional and national attractions and events is available at their desk. They provide discount tickets theme parks, local event venues, and attractions. Group tours to popular events and attractions such as NASCAR races and Major League Baseball games can be arranged through the program.

The following are some of the many California attractions ITT offers discounted tickets to:

ANAHEIM

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM
Expires 12/06 Phone: (714) 220-5200
Adult: \$26.70 Child (ages 3-11): \$14.95 Gate prices: \$45.00/\$14.95

MEDIEVAL TIMES
Adult: \$40.35 Child (under 12): \$30.25 Gate prices \$48.65/\$34.40

Reservations are necessary. Call (800)899-6600. You must bring in your reservation number to purchase your tickets.

PIRATE'S DINNER ADVENTURE
Adult: \$43.00 Child (under 12): \$31.00 Gate prices \$48.95/\$31.95

Reservations are necessary. Call (866)439-2469. Please bring in your reservation number to purchase your tickets.

VALENCIA

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN
Expires 12/06 Phone: (661) 255-4100

Adult: \$26.00 Child (3 y/o to 48" tall): \$17.00 Gate prices \$59.99/\$29.99

HOLLYWOOD

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS
Phone: (800) 864-8377
Front of the Line Pass all ages (ages 3 and up): \$70.35 Gate prices: \$99.95

Buy a day-get the rest of 2006 free! All ages (3 and up): \$39.00 Gate prices: \$59.00/\$49.00. Blackout dates do apply.

CATALINA

CATALINA EXPRESS
Expires 12/06
Adult: \$47.00 Child (ages 3-11): \$38.50 Gate prices: \$56.00/\$43.50

LONG BEACH, SAN PEDRO OR DANA POINT DEPARTURES – Reservations are necessary. Phone: (800) 891-5652. You must bring in your reservation number to purchase your tickets. Black out dates do apply.

CATALINA SIGHTSEEING
Expires 12/06
Adult: \$20.40 Child (ages 3-11) \$10.70 Gate prices: \$23.00/\$11.50

Choose 2 of 4 tours available: Casino tour, Avalon Scenic tour, Daytime Glass Bottom Boat, Seal Rocks Cruise (seasonal). Black out dates do apply.

SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO ZOO DELUXE PACKAGE
Expires 03/31/07 Phone: (619) 234-3153 Adult: \$25.25 Child (ages 3-11): \$16.00 Gate prices: \$32.00/\$19.75

Good for Admission, Unlimited use of Guided Bus Tour, Express Bus and Skyfari Aerial Tram. Excludes special ticketed events/attractions. Active duty military can receive free general admission at the park with valid ID. The free admission does not include the tours.

WILD ANIMAL PARK NAIROBI PACKAGE
Expires 03/31/07 Phone: (760) 747-8702

Adult: \$21.00 Child (ages 3-11): \$15.50 Gate price \$28.50/\$17.50

Good for admission and Wgasa Bushline Railway. Active duty military can receive free general admission at the park with valid ID. The free admission does not include the tours.

LEGOLAND
Expires 11/06 Phone: (760) 918-5346

Get 2nd day free with ticket purchase - redeemable at customer service counter. Second day must be used within seven days of first visit.

All ages (3y/o and up): \$33.50 Gate prices: \$53.00/43.00

SEA WORLD SAN DIEGO
Military appreciation days – Expires 11/11/06 Phone: (619) 226-3901

All ages (3y/o and up): \$37.00 Gate prices: \$53.00 and 43.00.

SEAWORLD BREAK-FAST WITH SHAMU
Expires 12/31/06 Phone: (800) 275-4742

Adult: \$19.50 Child (ages 3-9) \$16.75 Gate prices \$21.50/18.26

Reservations required. Children under 3 are free but require a reservation. Park admission is required and not included.

SEAWORLD DINNER WITH SHAMU
Expires 12/31/06 Phone: (800)275-4742

Adult: \$33.00 Child: \$19.00 Gate prices \$36.64/20.47

Reservations required. Children under 3 are free but require a reservation. Park admission is required and NOT included.

LAKE HAVASU, ARIZ.
Reserve a Marine Corps Community Service cottage at Lake Havasu, Ariz. See ITT personnel in the Main Exchange for details.

To enjoy the summer and save money, visit the ITT desk in the Main Exchange, open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., or call them at (760) 830-6163 ext. 252.



SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III

Attention all shoppers ...

Ron Arden, merchandise manager; Col. Michael M. Weber, Installation and Logistics director; Daisy M. Dedeaux, Marine Corps Community Services director; and David Cahoon, main exchange manager; cut the ribbon at the Marine Corps Exchange grand re-opening and sale June 16 to celebrate their recent renovations. The exchange staff expanded many departments with additional floor space, and they installed new carpeting, tiling and lighting fixtures.



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

Retired warriors' breakfast

Fred Green (left), a retired master gunnery sergeant, Larry Fairfield (center) a retired petty officer 1st class, and Guy Rosbough, a retired first sergeant, enjoy a hearty breakfast at Phelps Hall Wednesday morning as part of the retired service members' monthly breakfast. Phelps Hall, Messhall 1460, and Littleton Hall, Messhall 1660, hosts the Military Retirees Breakfast for retirees of all branches of service and their spouses every month.