

Serving the MCAGCC
Community at
Twentynine Palms, Calif.

VOL. 52 NO. 28
July 21, 2006



OBSERVATION POST



BULK RATE
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THIS ISSUE

A3 – 3rd LAR Returns

A9 – Heat Casualties

B2 – Softball Championship

HOT TOPICS

MAGTFTC/MCAGCC CORPORALS COURSE

The next MAGTFTC/MCAGCC Corporals Course will take place in August. Prospective students should contact the Headquarters Battalion S-3 for a student checklist. If you are interested in being an instructor or Class Advisor, contact Staff Sgt. Simon at 830-1116.

RAIN DAMAGE AND ROOF LEAKS

Please promptly report rain damage and roof leaks to the FMD Trouble Desk at 830-6271. Due to the infrequency of rains, it is important to take advantage of rain events to survey the condition of roofs and flood control systems.

CREDO MARINE CORPS WEST RETREATS

CREDO Marine Corps West will be hosting a personal Growth Retreat, July 28-30, at the Luther Glen Conference Center in Cherry Valley, Calif., and a Marriage Enrichment Retreat, Aug. 11-13 at Highland Hot Springs Resort located in Beaumont, Calif. For more information on Highland Hot Springs, visit: <http://www.highland-springsresort.com>. There are 30 slots available for the PGR and only 20 slots available for the MER. Registration will be on a first come first served basis. For more information call 830-4489.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

- **Motorcycle Safety Expo**
- **HEAT Demo**
- **CREDO Retreat**

THIS DAY IN MARINE CORPS HISTORY

July 21, 1944

3rd Marine Division, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and Marine Aircraft Group 21 landed to recapture Guam from Japanese forces

Fire ravages High Desert

Firefighters end battle after 11 days: 61,700 acres burned

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

After scouring more than 61,700 acres of arid desert, the flames of the Sawtooth Complex Fire were extinguished Tuesday. Residents and local communities returned to their lives after a week of smoky skies and tension.

What began July 8 as a 700-acre fire from a lightning strike in the hills north of Yucca Valley, Calif., was whipped into a fast-moving inferno by strong easterly winds three days later.

The Combat Center Fire Department received the call for assistance July 11 at 12:20 p.m., and by 12:40 four firefighters and one engine were dispatched to the scene, joining what would become the first strike team to move to the front lines.

Thousands of residents were evacuated to local shelters in days following the fire's outbreak and as many firefighters from around Southern California were called in to battle the blaze.

To make matters more complex for firefighters and rescuers, the Sawtooth Complex Fire eventually became the largest fire of the season in California at more than 50,000 acres even before it merged with the Millard Fire July 14, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention.

For many residents of the small foothill towns north and west of Yucca Valley, only a half-hour drive from the Combat Center, the relentless winds and fast-moving flames caused visible fear and anxiety as the fire moved nearer their homes. Bob Lehman was no exception.

Lehman, the chief engineer with the Combat Center Facilities Maintenance Division, left work early July 11 to join his wife at their home near historic Pioneertown, Calif., where firefighters fought to protect structures and at one point were actually surrounded by the fire.

"I headed back Tuesday afternoon and it was very eerie out there," he recalled. "The smoke was brown-grey, the sky was brown-grey and the sun was hidden and blood red."

"It was at about 4:30 p.m. when the smoke started coming toward our hillside," said Lehman, who has lived at his High Desert home for the past eight years. "It got smoky, and we could see lots of flames coming at us, so it was a little scary. We were worried about that. Then we were asked to leave and got our things together and left."

When Lehman and his wife returned later that evening after the danger had passed, he was relieved to see his house still standing

See FIRE, A7



Combat Center firefighters, as part of a multi-crew strike team, wait for the signal to move closer as the Sawtooth Complex Fire speeds down the mountainside toward them along Highway 247.

24th MEU ordered to Lebanon



Brig. Gen. Carl Jensen (second from right), Commander Task Force 59, helps U.S. citizens to the terminal at Cyprus, following their flight from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon.

CAPT. DAVID E. NEVERS

24TH MEU

ABOARD THE USS IWO JIMA — Three days after its helicopters began ferrying U.S. citizens out of war-torn Lebanon, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit has finished moving its equipment and personnel back to its ships in the Red Sea and has begun steaming toward the Lebanese coast.

Three vessels of the Iwo Jima Expeditionary Strike Group, carrying the MEU's 2,200 Marines and sailors, are now on their way to Lebanon to assist in the departure of Americans wishing to leave the country.

"We're pulling out all the stops," said Col. Ron Johnson, commander of the 24th MEU. "We know that many Americans in Lebanon are anxious to leave, and we're moving into position as quickly as we possibly can to escort them out safely."

The MEU's shift to the Mediterranean Sea continues efforts that have been underway since Saturday, when the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon requested military assistance.

That evening, more than 100 Marines and three CH-53E Super Stallion transport helicopters flew to the island of Cyprus to begin laying the groundwork for a safe and orderly departure.

On Sunday, two CH-53s inserted a small military assessment team into the U.S. embassy near Beirut, then transported the first 21 Americans to safety in Cyprus. The Marines returned to the embassy Monday to pull out another 43 Americans.

The effort gathered momentum Tuesday as Marines facilitated the departure of

121 more Americans, bringing the three-day helicopter-borne total to 185.

Even before launching its initial elements to Cyprus, the rest of the 24th MEU cut short a desert training exercise near the Red Sea and began returning to its three amphibious-assault ships.

The USS Nashville loaded first and set sail for the Mediterranean Sunday. The USS Whidbey Island and the Iwo Jima followed two days later. They'll be joined in the Mediterranean by three other vessels: the destroyer USS Gonzales, the amphibious assault ship USS Trenton, and the High-Speed Vessel Swift, a catamaran well-suited to transporting large numbers of passengers rapidly across the water.

The abrupt change in plans is a familiar drill for the MEU, a sea-based quick-reaction force that's organized and equipped to respond rapidly to crises near the world's coastal areas.

Armed with an array of weaponry and equipment designed for a wide variety of operations, the MEU can handle missions across the spectrum of conflict, from humanitarian assistance to full-scale combat.

Evacuating non-combatants from unstable countries is among the missions the MEU trains for during its six-month pre-deployment work-ups.

Upon its arrival, the MEU will fall under the operational control of Commander Task Force 59, U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Carl Jensen, who is leading joint U.S. military coordination efforts from Cyprus.

The 24th MEU consists of its headquarters element; Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 365 (Reinforced); and MEU Service Support Group 24.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN, FISCAL YEARS 2007-2011; MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE TRAINING COMMAND, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA

In accordance with the Sikes Act Improvement Act (Public Law 105-85), the United States Marine Corps and the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command give notice that a Draft Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for Fiscal Years 2007-2011 at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, is now available for Public Review and Comment. This document is simultaneously being provided for comment and endorsement (as applicable) to the California Department of Fish and Game, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and six Native American Tribes in the south central Mojave Desert. As this is a revision of the 2002-2006 INRMP, individual environmental documentation for this plan, such as an Environmental Assessment, has not been prepared.

The purpose of the INRMP is to develop and follow a prescribed planning process for the management of natural resources on the 598,178 acre MCAGCC to support military mission readiness by ensuring lands are available for sustained use. The Sikes Act requires the Secretary of the Navy to prepare and implement an INRMP for each military installation, unless exempted due to the absence of significant natural resources.

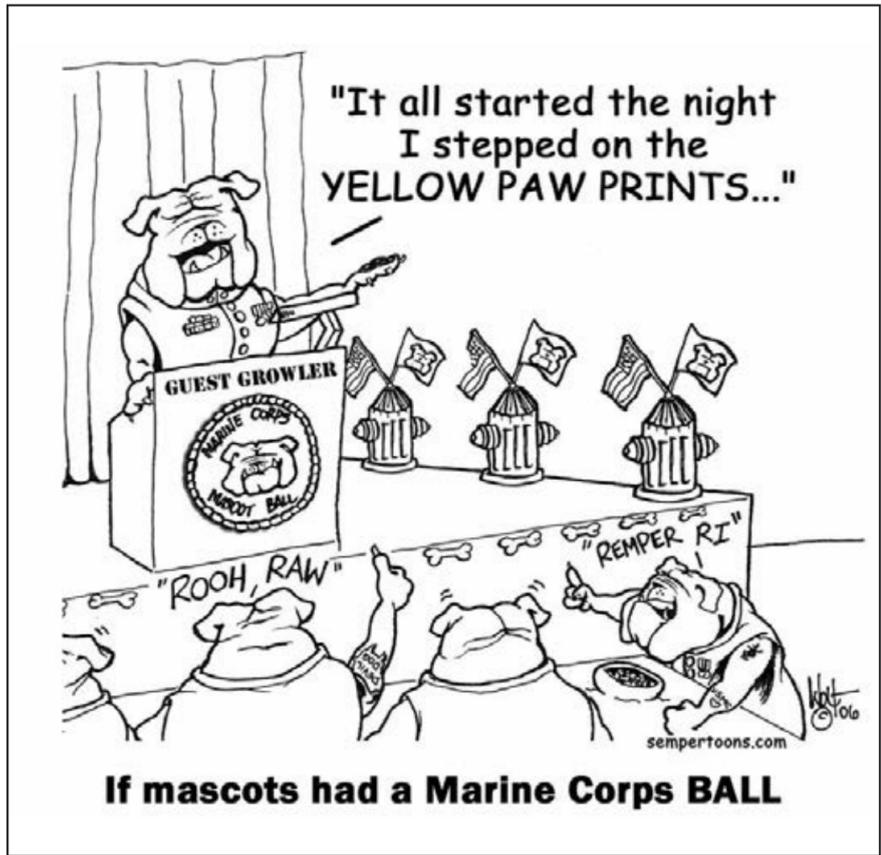
The Desert Tortoise Management Plan, Wildfire Management Plan and Invasive Species Management Plan are complementary to the INRMP. The INRMP, in addition to the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan, form the cornerstone of the Marine Corps' natural resource management program.

The draft INRMP is available for review by interested parties at the following locations:

- Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, Bldg. 1451, Third and Griffin Streets, MCAGCC 29 Palms
 - Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 1417, Fourth Street near Brown Road, MCAGCC 29 Palms
 - Marine Corps Community Services Library, Bldg. 1528, Sixth Street near Brown Road; MCAGCC 29 Palms
 - San Bernardino County Library, Twentynine Palms Branch, 6078 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms
 - San Bernardino County Library, Yucca Valley Branch, 57098 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 - San Bernardino County Library, Joshua Tree Branch, 6465 Park Boulevard, Joshua Tree
- Comments may be addressed to NREA Division (Attn: Mr. Rhys Evans), Box 788110, MCAGCC 29 Palms, California 92278-8110, or by telephone at (760) 830-7396 ext. 234. Comments or concerns will be considered if received within 60 days of publication of this notice.

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf



If mascots had a Marine Corps BALL

C.O.P. Corner

Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

Weapons in the home

Think seriously about having weapons in your home. Studies indicate a weapon in the home is more than forty times as likely to hurt or kill a family member as it is to stop a crime. Look for alternate methods for home protection. Investing in top-grade locks, jamming devices for doors and windows, a dog, or an alarm system have proven to be adequate. If you do choose to own firearms insure they are stored unloaded, trigger-locked, and in a locked gun case, with ammunition stored separately. Store other weapons in a safe or secure location. Educate your children to recognize a dangerous weapon. Teach them if they find a weapon, not to touch it and notify an adult immediately.

- Per Combat Center order P1630.6E, all residents are required to register all firearms and weapons with the Provost Marshal's Office, to include BB guns, paintball guns, rifles, pistols, knives and any other miscellaneous objects used for or resembling a weapon.

- Weapon registration forms can be obtained at the Vehicle Registration Office at Bldg. 901, adjacent to the Main Gate.
- Free weapons cable locks are available from the Crime Prevention Section, PMO.

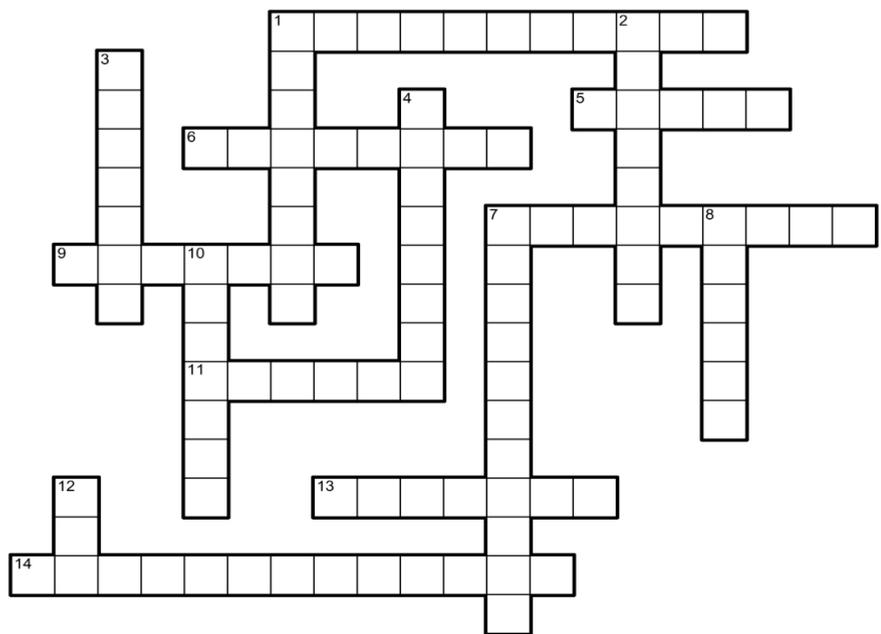
A list of illegal weapons in the state of California can be found at the Vehicle Registration Office or at <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cacodes/pen/12020-12040.html>.

Additional weapons safety tips for children are available at <http://www.eddieeagle.com>

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

SUMMER ACTIVITIES



ACROSS

- Swimming through the coral reef with scuba gear.
- The shore; the _____
- A refreshing sweet and tangy drink that can cool you off on a hot summer day. It is often sold from a stand in your neighborhood by children.
- Enjoy fun water rides at the _____
- Riding along with the waves in the ocean on a board.
- Going on an extended walk through trails in the woods for pleasure or exercise.
- Sleeping outside, by a fire, under neath the stars.
- In-line skating.

DOWN

- Taking a dip.
- _____ is a cold, sweet treat or dessert that can be enjoyed on a hot summer day.
- Grilling burgers, chicken, steaks or hot dogs. (_ _ - _ _)
- Paddling down a river on a small, light slender boat.
- Gliding through the water on skis, being tugged by a boat.
- Eating lunch on a blanket at the park.
- Catching trout, catfish or small-mouthed bass.
- Visit some animals at the ____.

[Solutions on A10]

MCAGCC MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES

ARRIVE ALIVE

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

ARRIVE ALIVE

MCAGCC MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES

Business Solutions and call centers: MCAGCC will reimburse any licensed cab company for transportation to the Main Gate, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. Drivers please legibly record information from your fare's Military ID card. Thank you for participating.

WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
TAKE THE LEAD FOR BRIBING RESISTANCE

Centerspeak

What do you really want to do before the summer ends that you haven't done yet?

Opinions expressed in Centerspeak

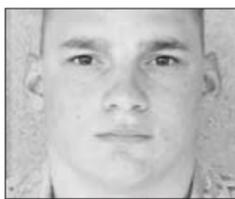
are not necessarily those of the OBSERVATION POST, the Marine Corps or Department of Defense.



JUDITH SAVAIN
SPOUSE



SGT. DAVID J. CLAVERIA
HQ Co., MCCES



PFC. DWIGHT R. SMITH
CLB-7



SGT. THANN SAK
HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

"I want to go have some fun and relax at the beach in San Diego."

"It would be really nice to go to Joshua Tree National Park. I'd like to spend a day there and explore it since it is so close."

"I want to go to Lake Havasu. It'd be really fun to just swim and relax over there with the family."

"I want to visit my family in Cambodia and get in-touch with my roots in the motherland."

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

OBSERVATION POST

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3rd LAR returns home to open arms



LANCE CPL. KATELYN KNAUER

Cpl. Jacob Purcell walks with his fiancée, Crystal Medrano, after returning from a more than six month deployment to Okinawa, Japan, in support of the Unit Deployment Program.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

One-hundred ten Marines and Sailors of Charlie Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion returned home Monday after more than six months deployed to Okinawa, Japan, as part of the Unit Deployment Program.

While in Okinawa, the company spent three weeks participating at the Jungle Warfare Training Center in the basic jungle skills course and the combat tracking course. The Marines then went to Korea and participated in the Korean Intergrated Training Program for one month, where they trained approximately 2,000 Repub-

lic of Korea Marines.

As the Marines and Sailors returned, some were greeted by parents, some by wives and some by the crying of little babies they hadn't seen for so long.

"This doesn't seem real," said Lance Cpl. Joshua Osburn as he held his son Donovan on his lap.

"I feel now I can finally start my life with my wife," said Cpl. John Roescher with his wife Laura next to him.

Cpl. Garner Pagel was

welcomed home by his father and mother.

"It's a relief to have him home," said Terrie Pagel, Cpl. Pagel's mother. "I think my hair has stopped turning gray now."

"It's good to see him again, you have to touch them every once in a while," said Pat Pagel, Cpl. Pagel's father.

"To hear their voice too," added Pagel's mother.

Lance Corporal's Andrew Jorgesen and Leslie Sheridan debated about why it was good to be back.

"It's a lot cooler here than Japan," said Sheridan.

Jorgesen said it's exciting and fun to be back in America, because he gets to see his family.

Cpl. Jacob Purcell returned to his fiancée Crystal Medrano and his father and mother, Ed and Jean.

His father said it's great to have him back and he's been counting down the days since he left.

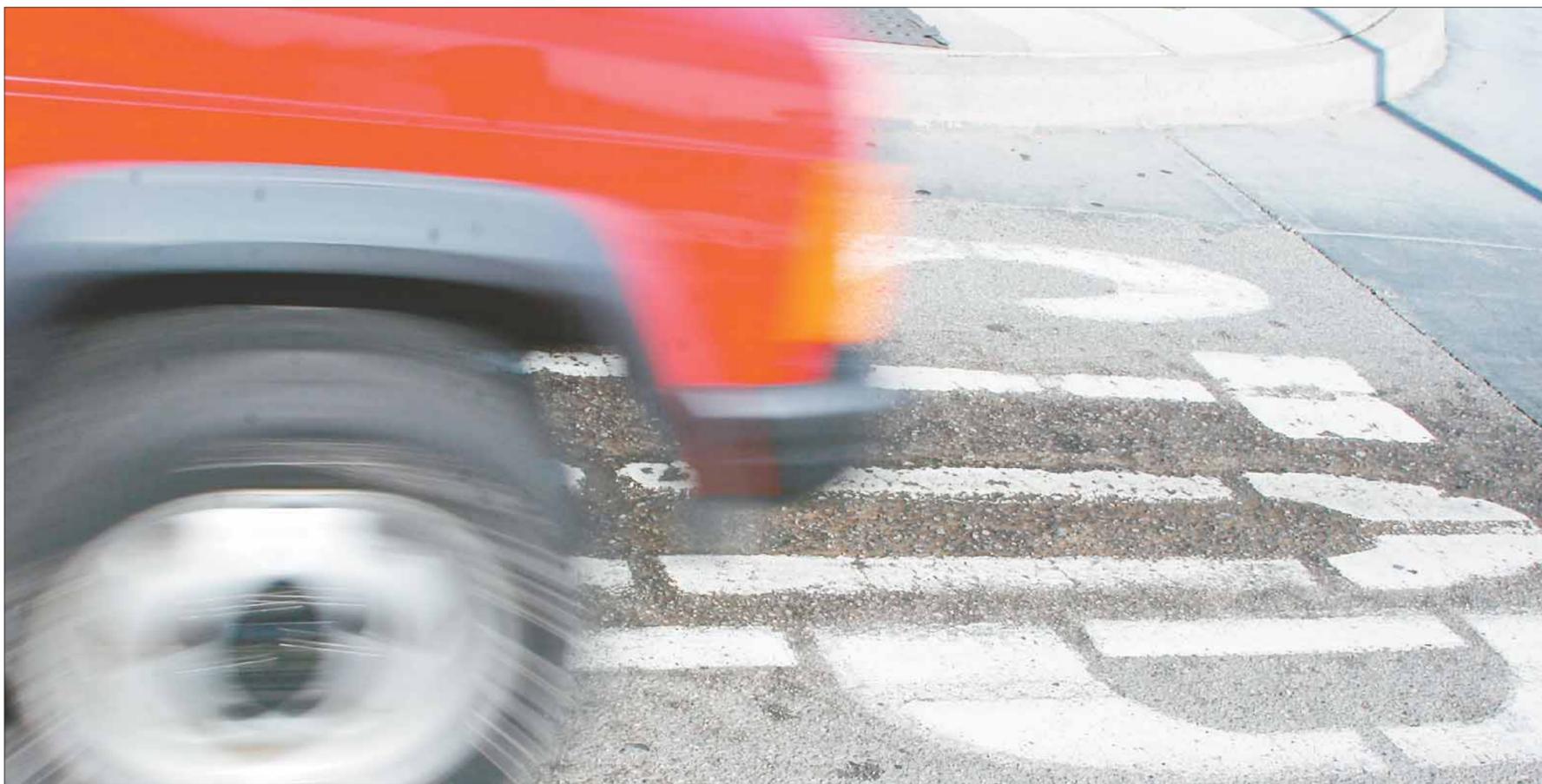
"He's due to get married July 29, so I'm glad he's back," said Purcell's mother.

Just as soon as they were off the bus and into the arms of loved ones, they were gone, packing everything up

into cars and leaving with smiles on their faces. Only a few Marines stayed back and talked with each other about what their plans were now that they were back home.

The Marines will go on block leave, before they regroup and get ready for their next assignment.

Third party citations put power in drivers' hands



CPL. BRIAN TUTHILL

A car comes to a halt at a stop sign aboard the Combat Center. The third party ticket system puts power into driver's hands to report violations they observe aboard the base or by Department of Defense personnel out in town.

CPL. BRIAN TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENTS

Drivers who have ever witnessed someone run a stop sign or red light, speed past them in a school zone or drive recklessly and said, "if only there were a cop around," now have a chance to take action.

The Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office has a system available for service members or Department of Defense cardholders to report problem drivers.

Known as the third party citation, it is essentially a ticket which requires the violator and reporter to appear at base traffic court to plead their cases.

"All someone has to do is come to the traffic court office here and fill out their information and the violator's information such as vehicle license and make and model so we can track them down for a later court date," said

Lance Cpl. Jermaine Gibson, military policeman with traffic court. "Many people who file the citations come into report an offense and don't even realize the system is already in place."

Penalties for these citations will be similar to if the driver received a regular ticket on base, said Gibson.

So far this year, 27 third party citations have been heard in traffic court.

Some major offenses which can be acted on by a third party citation that are mentioned in Combat Center Order P1630.8C:

- Speeding
- Reckless driving
- Failure to wear protective gear or clothing on a motorcycle
- Failure to wear a seat belt
- Other violations of California state motor vehicle laws

Although this system is for staff noncom-

missioned officers and commissioned officers, sergeants and below citations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. One stipulation is that the person reporting the crime must be willing to face that person to testify in traffic court.

However, since these citations can apply to all DoD personnel, they are applicable off-base as well as on, but they do not apply to other civilians.

"If you see something you want to report about a civilian, you'll have to contact the local sheriff's office to report it because we don't have jurisdiction," said Staff Sgt. James Daly, PMO operations chief.

"I think if people feel the incident was life-threatening, then they should file one of these citations," he said. "There is a lot of crime out there, so this is a good tool. Not every citation can be presented in traffic court, but if it was a serious enough offense, we will process it."

"We [PMO] can't catch everything, but we don't want everyone going around thinking they are cops," he added. "It's really a good system as long as people don't abuse it."

Another aspect of third party citations is the idea of keeping roadways safe. The commandant of the Marine Corps's 2006 Warrior Preservation Campaign states, "Our greatest challenge is preventing vehicle mishaps. It is our responsibility to stop the reckless and thoughtless behavior that leads to these needless mishaps."

One of the ways to accomplish private motor vehicle mishaps reduction is by having responsible Marines identify, submit and testify during the third party citations process both on and off base against those individuals that disregard safe driving, said Sgt. Maj. William Johnson, Combat Center sergeant major and traffic court magistrate.

For more information on third party citations, contact PMO at 830-6800.



LANCE CPL. LUKE BLOM

A Marine assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment's Scout Sniper Platoon scans the area during Mojave Viper at the Combat Center's Range 400.

2/3 Snipers survey Combat Center sky

LANCE CPL. LUKE BLOM
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine scout sniper is known to be a marksman who moves through a battlefield like a ghost, taking shots from impossible distances and hitting his mark with near perfection. While a sniper's accuracy with a rifle is legendary, their marksmanship is only a fraction of the skills they bring to the fight.

"Everyone thinks our job is just shooting, but I would say that close to 90 percent of our job is done without pulling the trigger," said Cpl. Benjamin Pratt, Scout Sniper Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment team leader. "Most of the time we're doing surveillance, reconnaissance, controlling indirect fire or CAS (Close Air Support)."

The battalion's SSP Marines proved their combat diversity while providing support for 2/3's Fox Company as they maneuvered their way through Range 400, the company-level assault range here, July 8.

Range 400 is an assault course where Marines clear simulated enemy positions spaced over more than two kilometers of desert terrain. While the rifle platoons rush the objectives, they're given supporting fire by 81mm mortars, 60mm mortars, and a squad of heavy machine guns, along with the sniper team. Throughout the entire course

that day, the SSP Marines were perched high above the desert floor on the side of a mountain observing the entire company's movements.

"We're the eyes of the company commander," said Pratt, a native of Willis, Texas. "We were painting the battlefield for the company commander, letting him know exactly where the enemy was and what position the platoons were in."

"Throughout the entire assault, he knew exactly what was going on, where the obstacles that had to be breached were and the location of enemy positions," he explained. "With all the information we provided him, he was in a much better position to give orders to the rifle platoons and set them up for success."

While Pratt and his team were observing Fox Company, it was one of SSP's newcomers who was in the spotlight of the team's success. Lance Cpl. Brian Langeliers, 2/3's SSP radio operator, was given the order to control indirect fire on four enemy positions.

While a seasoned veteran of the team usually performs this task, Langeliers, who has less than four months experience with the SSP, took control of the mortars.

"I was basically in charge of calling fire for the 81mm mortars, 60mm mortars, and heavy machine guns. My sole purpose was to get rounds on target" said Langeliers, a

native of Payson, Ariz. "There was a lot of pressure for me to do well, because the company really couldn't advance until all the targets were destroyed."

Responsible for the placement of hundreds of mortars and thousands of machine gun rounds, Langeliers played a vital role in the company's success.

"There are not many corporals or sergeants, let alone lance corporals, that could control a battlefield as well as Langeliers did today," said Pratt, smiling proudly. "The entire team performed very well today, but Langeliers did absolutely outstanding."

"It was actually really exciting calling for fire," said Langeliers. "I think the most important thing was that I understood the plan. When everyone understands what the mission is, everything just goes so much smoother."

After their success at Range 400, the Marines assigned to the SSP said they understood the importance of being a well-rounded sniper.

"The surveillance and call

for fire missions are just as important, if not more, than being able to shoot," said Langeliers. "You're not always going to be in a position to shoot, but most of the time we're in a much better

position to observe than anyone else in the battalion."

"Some people have no idea that we're observing the objective long before and after an assault," added Pratt. "We see everything."

VMU-1 assists with Mojave Viper training



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

A Pioneer RQ-2B unmanned aerial vehicle launches from an airfield south of Camp Wilson to assist units training with Mojave Viper.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It's an eye in the sky and an enemy to the insurgency. It provides live video to spot those who wish to do harm, and alert those walking into it. It's a machine with the ability to prevent casualties and assist in defeating those who cause them. It assists in the training of Marines preparing to deploy, and most importantly, helps those who already are.

It is the unmanned aerial vehicle that helps Marines several different ways in the fight against terrorism.

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 assisted 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, with Mojave Viper training July 13, launching the UAV Pioneer RQ-2B from an airfield just south of Camp Wilson to collect video image to spot role playing insurgents.

"The purpose of the UAV is to perform battlefield recon-

naissance and observation, artillery targeting, control of air support, battle damage assessment, and search and rescue," said Staff Sgt. Abelardo Platas, Air Crew Training staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

While the vehicle itself has no pilot, several Marines are involved to keep the it flying and doing its job.

There is a plane captain who is the mechanic, a mission commander who makes sure we are cleared to go down all the ranges and communicates with the control tower and Bearmat [range control], said Platas. "There's the external pilot in charge of launching and landing the aircraft. Once the aircraft goes down range the internal pilot takes control of the UAV. There is also a payload operator in the ground control station."

Flying the UAV not only benefits units training, but Marines with VMU-1.

"It's good practice for everyone to come out and set up, the technicians, communications and maintenance," said Cpl. Michael Smith, internal pilot. "It's also a good chance for the pilots to get in some practice."

And for external pilots, practice can make a difference.

"The difficult part of flying would probably be the landing," said Cpl. Lee Hernandez, external pilot. "Unlike in manned aviation, we are not inside of the plane, so we have to fly the plane in weird angles and there are a lot of judgment calls that have to be made."

UAV's play a crucial role in the war on terrorism and the Marine Corps has only two VMUs. While Marines are not overseas using their skills, it proves useful to hone them here in the states. Helping out in the war on terrorism and being part

of VMU-1 leaves the Marines proud and honored to be a part of it.

"It feels good to be in control of the aircraft, especially when we are flying in Iraq in support of a unit doing a mission," said Lance Cpl. Gabriel Acevedo, internal pilot.

"We're here to deploy with different units and provide them with the information they need to raid the house they couldn't see over the hill," said Smith.

Although the training support they provide here is important to the Mojave Viper training exercise, the service they provide overseas is vital to fight the war on terrorism.

The unit will continue training and supporting training until it deploys later this summer.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

Cpl. Lee Hernandez and Gunnery Sgt. Daniel Penrose prepare to land the unmanned aerial vehicle Pioneer RQ-2B.

FIRE

with only the hillside behind it blackened.

"I think the firefighters were what saved the house, and they kept the flames from jumping the roads to Flamingo Heights," said Lehman.

The containment of the fire was not without its victims; one man had died and 17 others had received minor injuries — mostly burns and smoke inhalation. Property damage has been estimated by CDF at more than \$8,702,000 which includes 50 homes; 171 out-buildings; 8 mobile homes; and 191 cars, pick up trucks and various other vehicles.

On scene at the peak of the fight were 2,296 fire personnel, more than 220 ground vehicles, 15 helicopters and six airplanes as well as other support vehicles from around the state which helped save an estimated \$900,000,000 in property through direct fire suppression, according to CDF.

Fire Chief Kevin P. Mathieu, Combat Center training chief, said many of the homes saved were ones which had brush cleared away from their houses. The abundance of dry fuels such as dead grass, dry trees and shrubs, and very low humidity helped the fire spread rapidly when the wind picked up.

"This was pretty much a house-to-house fight. The terrain is extremely rugged and there is so much dead fuel for it to burn," he said. "The entire area is just dead grass and dry trees and hasn't burned in years."

Despite the number of personnel on the ground to fight the fire directly, many firefighters battling the firestorm had been there since the beginning, and many remained to help with cooling "hot spots".

After working on the front lines continually for seven days as part of the first strike team at the fire, Combat Center firefighters returned home Monday night. Their team was the first disbanded as the

fire was further contained, said Mathieu.

One common thread among survivors of natural disasters is their ability to pull together as a community. The cities of the High Desert were no different. People helping neighbors by sheltering and rescuing pets, donating to the American Red Cross or simply stepping forward to lend a hand became common sights.

"The community response has been outstanding," he said. "I think it's helped bring the community together. It's a disaster, but it brings out the good in people, and that's a plus."

The smoke from the fire,

visible as far away as Las Vegas and could be smelled all the way to Wisconsin has since dissipated signaling an end to the ordeal. Most residents know this is due mainly to the tireless efforts of firefighters from the region who risked life and limb to quell the blaze.

"We owe a lot to the firefighters who are out there, because they are putting their lives on the line for us," said Lehman. "We enjoy our place, so we plan to stay. The mountains are black now, but hopefully we'll see some green again soon."

The fire was fully contained Tuesday night.



CPL. HEIDI LOREDO

A California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention heavy-lift helicopter fitted with a large water tank flies in to douse the fire near Pioneertown, Calif.



CPL. HEIDI LOREDO

The flames of the Sawtooth Complex Fire, fueled by dry brush and strong prevailing winds, easily jumped hundreds of feet every minute in the hillside towns north of Yucca Valley, Calif.



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Pioneertown, Calif., residents console one another as they watch fire crews race off to try to protect their homes from the fast-moving Sawtooth Complex Fire.

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Do-It-Yourself – Don't Do It To Yourself

Most sailors and Marines get involved with home repairs or projects at one time or another. Nothing wrong with doing so, but it takes as much planning as any job done at work. In fact, the risk-management process at work is just as critical at home. A simple slip of a screwdriver, miss with a saw, or stumble from a ladder can injure or kill.

Falls while working on home repairs or around the house are a big concern. One National Safety Council study showed that falls alone in the home led to 15,900 deaths nationwide. All age groups are vulnerable, but older adults are most at risk. In fact, 80 percent of those receiving fatal injury are over the age of 65. Falls continue to be the major reason for injury-related death, injury, and hospital admission for older adults.

Home projects result in thousands of serious injuries and emergency room visits each year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. More than 157,000 people are seriously injured using ladders in their homes, and nearly 100,000 receive treatment for handsaw and power-saw injuries. Other hand tools and equipment add even more to that total.

Here are three cases where sailors injured themselves working or being inattentive around the house:

In Kingsland, Ga., A Petty Officer 2nd class had finished cleaning out the gutters on his house and was climbing down a ladder when he missed a step and fell about 10 feet. He landed on his shoulder and broke his clavicle. According to the initial estimate, he would spend 30 days on convalescent leave.

While talking to a friend through the front door of his house in Norfolk, Va., a Petty Officer 2nd class placed his hand on the doorjamb. Everything was fine until his 5-year-old son slammed the door, breaking two of his dad's fingers. That sailor spent seven days on convalescent leave and 30 days on light duty.

The third case involved a simple hand tool that men, and women use a lot: a screwdriver. A Chief Petty Officer was installing a flagpole when a screwdriver slipped off a screw and jammed into the palm of his hand. The Chief Petty Officer was tough, sucked it up, and cleaned the wound with peroxide and water. He didn't seek med-

ical attention. The next morning, he had red streaks up his arm and had to be hospitalized for three days while doctors fought an infection.

These simple tasks had unexpected outcomes. Every year, thousands of people get injured doing simple things. Planning for any event is a good risk-management step. Think about the project, inspect the tools, make sure ladders or work platforms are safe, use goggles, wear gloves or other safety equipment when required, don't wear items that can get caught in machinery or moving parts, and do the things that will make any job safer.

As mentioned earlier, slips and falls are the most common problems in the home. Here are a few tips from the National Safety Council to reduce these types of mishaps:

- Reduce clutter and safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.
- Clean up grease, water and other liquids immediately. Don't wax floors.
- Use non-skid throw rugs to reduce your chance of slipping on linoleum.
- Install handrails in stairways. Have grab bars in the bathroom (by toilets and in the tub or shower.)
- Make sure living areas are well lit. We can all trip and fall in the dark.
- Be aware that climbing and reaching high places will increase your chance of a fall. Use a sturdy step stool with handrails when these tasks are necessary.

Additional Resources:

For tool- and machinery-related injuries:

http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/topic/machinery_hand.html

OSHA Rules on Tool and Machine Safeguards:
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/machineguarding/bibliography.html>

OSHA Guide for Hand and Powered Tools:
<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3080.pdf>

National Safety Council fallproofing your house:
<http://www.nsc.org/issues/ifalls/falproof.htm>

National Safety Council Stats on Slips/Falls:
<http://www.nsc.org/mem/educ/slips.htm>

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN, FIS- CAL YEARS 2007-2011;

In accordance with the Sikes Act Improvement Act (Public Law 105-85), the United States Marine Corps and the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command give notice that a Draft Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for Fiscal Years 2007-2011 at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, is now available for Public Review and Comment. This document is simultaneously being provided for comment and endorsement (as applicable) to the California Department of Fish and Game, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and six Native American Tribes in the south central Mojave Desert. As this is a revision of the 2002-2006 INRMP, individual environmental documentation for this plan, such as an Environmental Assessment, has not been prepared.

The purpose of the INRMP is to develop and follow a prescribed planning process for the management of natural resources on the 598,178 acre MCAGCC to support military mission readiness by ensuring lands are available for sustained use. The Sikes Act requires the Secretary of the Navy to prepare and implement an INRMP for each military installation, unless exempted

due to the absence of significant natural resources.

The Desert Tortoise Management Plan, Wildfire Management Plan and Invasive Species Management Plan are complementary to the INRMP. The INRMP, in addition to the Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan, form the cornerstone of the Marine Corps' natural resource management program.

The draft INRMP is available for review by interested parties at the following locations:

-Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, Bldg. 1451, Third and Griffin Streets, MCAGCC 29 Palms

-Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 1417, Fourth Street near Brown Road, MCAGCC 29 Palms

-Marine Corps Community Services Library, Bldg. 1528, Sixth Street near Brown Road; MCAGCC 29 Palms

-San Bernardino County Library, Twentynine Palms Branch, 6078 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms

-San Bernardino County Library, Yucca Valley Branch, 57098 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley

-San Bernardino County Library, Joshua Tree Branch, 6465 Park Boulevard, Joshua Tree

Comments may be addressed to NREA Division (Attn: Mr. Rhys Evans), Box 788110, MCAGCC 29 Palms, California 92278-8110, or by telephone at (760) 830-7396 ext. 234. Comments or concerns will be considered if received within 60 days of publication of this notice.

Heat injuries on rise, prevention is key



CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

As the summer heat continues to keep the Combat Center at peak temperatures, everyone aboard the base needs to ensure they are protecting themselves to prevent a possibly fatal situation.

With higher temperatures and changes in relative humidity in summer months, the easier it is for heat stress injuries to occur. Although methods of prevention are simple, the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital emergency room has already seen more than 25 heat injury patients since May, said Lt. Cmdr. Paul Clark, senior ER nurse.

There are a lot of factors which might make some people more or less susceptible to the heat such as body type, altitude, temperature, humidity, rigorous physical training and lack of education, said Clark.

Dangers

"Heat injuries are very serious, especially being out here in Twentynine Palms where it's very hot with little shade," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Clifford L. Salvejo, a hospital corpsman with the physical therapy department of the hospital. "I saw a few cases when I was green side [Fleet Marine Force] stationed at Camp Pendleton, but there is a much higher risk here at this base.

"A mild heat injury such as dehydration and heat cramps could easily lead to other, more serious conditions like heat exhaustion" he continued. "Marines usually have gear on, and that can add a lot to the problem. From there, it's heat stroke and that's very dangerous because you could die or suffer brain damage."

One danger people face when afflicted by heat injuries is their resistance is lowered each time, and those in that situation need to be extremely careful, Salvejo said.

Prevention

Every Marine or service member has heard it countless times from the first days of their careers: hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.

Perhaps the most important safety precaution anyone

can take when outside in hot environments or exercising is to drink plenty of water well before they begin. Water not only cools the body and helps keep vital systems operating, but is the basis of sweat, which is the body's natural defense to heat.

"Hydration is an excellent way to help prevent these injuries, but you have to start drinking water the day before because it needs time to get into your system," said Salvejo, who is also his department safety officer. "Pounding water until you're sick the morning of doesn't do you much good out here.

"You probably won't know you're dehydrated until you already are," he warned.

Salvejo also suggests wearing loose fitting clothes and drinking room tempera-

ture water rather than ice cold water when in the heat or exercising. The colder water could affect performance as your body tries to maintain a steady temperature.

"Education on heat stress at the individual level and also at the small unit leadership levels would help a lot I think," said Clark. "Those leaders need to know how far they can push their troops and know what the dangers are."

Also on the rise in the desert area are cases of skin cancer, so people should try to wear sun block over SPF 30, not tanning lotion, said Salvejo.

Beat the heat

Those who are planning an afternoon workout session with a run in the hills of the

Combat Center should think again, said Salvejo. The afternoon is when temperatures peak, so running in the morning or in the evening with an hour in the gym at lunch is probably a better choice. Also, wearing moisture-wicking fabrics will help disperse sweat over a broader region and help you stay cool.

The Combat Center's heat flag warning system, located at designated areas around base, relate potentially dangerous heat conditions with colored flags, and people can plan their workouts and training around them. When there is a black flag flying, no one should be exercising outside at all because the risk of heat injuries is so high, said Salvejo.

Those planning to be in the sun a long time should

consider an umbrella or canopy, wear a hat and sip water all day to avoid dangers. And don't leave pets locked in vehicles, where temperatures can skyrocket more than 150 degrees in only minutes, according to the hospital.

Aboard the Combat Center in summer when playgrounds pose a possible burn hazard to children, finding alternatives for family fun is also a must.

Places on base such as the Family Pool, movie theater and Community Center or a short road trip to nearby water parks or attractions can get you out of the heat and still have fun.

But to stay safe this summer, be sure to cover up, take plenty of water and try to stay in the shade as much as possible.



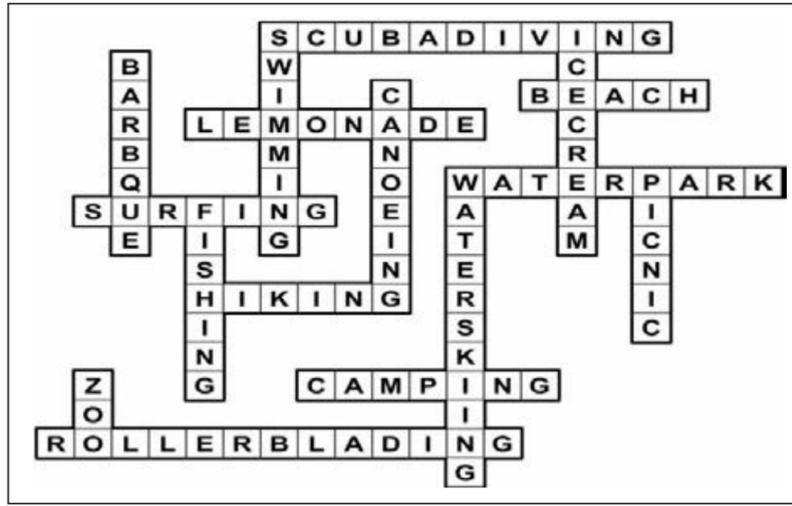
CPL. SARAH M. HICKEY

The Robert E. Bush Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 2929, will be holding a luncheon at Phelps Hall, Bldg. 2061, August 7 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY

Marines and Sailors who have received the Purple Heart are invited to a luncheon at Phelps Hall, Bldg. 1420, sponsored by the Robert E. Bush Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 2929 August 7 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The chapter will be informing service members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and what it has to offer. There will also be a static display of the new armored vehicles, along with ordnance vehicles including tanks, light armored vehicles, amphibious assault vehicles and howitzers. The President of the United States has set aside August 7 as National Purple Heart Recognition Day. August 7, 1782, is when the Purple Heart was designated as the Badge of Military Merit by Gen. George Washington. For more information contact Steven Dell at 830-8203 or by email at steven.dell@usmc.mil. You may also contact Sgt. Mark Novello at 830-3001 and by email at mark.novello@usmc.mil. Wives, mothers, daughters, step-daughters and adopted daughters of Purple Heart recipients are eligible for membership with the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, which also does important work nationally and locally at Veterans' Hospitals.

SOLUTIONS



SPORT SHORTS

FREE SUMMER MOVIES

The Community Center will be hosting their free summer movies matinees every Friday through August 18. Admission and popcorn are free and all movies begin at noon. Food and covered drinks are allowed. ALL MOVIES ARE G or PG RATED. The list of movies is as follows:

Today: Shrek 2

July 28: Cheaper by the Dozen

Aug. 4: Shark Tale

Aug. 11: Chronicles of Narnia

Aug. 18: The Incredibles

MOMMY AND BABY AEROBICS

MCCS Aerobics has added a new Mommy and Baby Aerobics Class every Monday and Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in the Community Center. Come and enjoy fitness for you and fun for your baby. For more information please call 830-4131.

PILATES CLASS

MCCS Aerobics has added a Pilates Class every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. and every Thursday at 9 a.m. in the Community Center. Build core strength and flexibility with this exciting Pilates class. For more information please call 830-4131.

LEISURE

PALM SPRINGS

AERIAL TRAM

JULY MILITARY

APPRECIATION DAYS

All military personnel receive free Tram admission with their military ID. Their guests, limit six, receive 25 percent off regular admission price. For more information call (888) 515-TRAM. This offer is valid from July 1-31.

VAN POOL

Any Combat Center personnel interested in participating in a Van Pool from the Palm Springs, Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley or Joshua Tree areas please contact Mr. James Walters (CDD) via email or call him at 830-6500. The Department of the Navy provides monetary incentives for Van Pools that qualify. Visit <http://www.fmo.navy.mil/services/tip/tip.htm> for more information.

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.

MCCES takes CG Softball Championship



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
John Rails, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, swings for the fence in the championship game against Combat Logistics Battalion 7.



SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III
A Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School player slides into third against Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Commanding General's Intramural Softball League came to a close July 13 as Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School crushed Combat Logistics Battalion 7, 23 to 6.

CLB-7 played their second game of the night after defeating 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, to move into the Championship Game.

MCCES came close to a double play in the first inning when Henry Kelcinski, MCCES third baseman, picked up a ground ball and tossed it to second base. But the ball was a second too short to get CLB-7's Juan Hernandez out at first.

When MCCES approached the plate for their first at bat, they swept CLB-7 away with nine runs.

Reminders and warnings against becoming overconfident rang out from MCCES's dugout.

"Don't get cocky, they can have an inning just like that," said Mark "The Voice" Masters, MCCES. "Stay hot, don't let off."

A swift second inning followed with three fast outs on both sides.

CLB-7 picked up their defense and managed to stop MCCES from running over them in the second and third innings. MCCES still managed to pick up another run in the third with an Eric Conway homer.

MCCES kept CLB-7 from picking up any runs for both innings.

Hernandez smashed the ball all the way to the fence in the third inning, but tripped on his way to third base and MCCES second baseman Christopher Pazos ran him down.

With CLB-7 down 10 - 0, they tried desperately to catch up in the fourth inning, but only managed two runs. MCCES returned to the plate and walked away with the game by securing a 21-point lead, 23 - 2.

Jimmy Sanchez, CLB-7 second baseman, reminded his team before their last inning the game wasn't over, nor was the fun.

"We have to take our time. Take it one hit a time," said Sanchez. "Let's just get up there and hit the ball and have fun. It's just a game."

CLB-7 had only one more inning to avoid an early defeat by the mercy rule, and still came up short with only four runs. The game closed 23-6.

MCCES lead a good season with only one loss. They came into the finals anticipating intense competition from every team they played, said MCCES coach Patrick Miller.

"We didn't want to come out here cocky and overconfident," said Miller. "CLB-7 is a phenomenal team. We were worried But we came out hitting hard, and we wanted to win."

CLB-7 coach Rick Jenkins attributed the loss to a lack of defense, but he said CLB-7 will take back their rightful place as champions in the 2007 season after they return from Iraq.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School won the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League July 13.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
Christopher Pazos, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, holds the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League first place trophy in triumph.

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

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Veterinarians play important role in pets', service members' safety



Lance Cpl. Arturo H. Vela, Military Police, dog handler, comforts military working dog, Dany, while Maj. Greg Taylor, veterinarian, checks Dany's heart rate.

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Since the war on terrorism began in March 2003, there has been a steady increase in the use of military working dogs, according to Army Col. David Rolfe in an article by Donna Mills, the American Forces Press Service.

More than 500 military working dogs are trained each year to serve alongside Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines, to guard military installations and detect drugs and explosives.

The health and care for these assets to America's fighting force is vital, and is a duty assigned to the U.S. Army and their veterinarians.

Maj. Greg Taylor, an Army reservist from South Dakota, is activated for two weeks, each year, and travels to military bases in Southern California to provide veterinary services.

He makes a stop at the Combat Center to provide care for the 10 military working dogs stationed here with the Provost Marshal's Office Military Working Dogs unit.

"Military working dogs are proving to become more and more useful as time goes by," said Taylor. "They're able to go ahead of the troops to detect explosives, and this is saving the lives of our service members."

Records show the use of dogs in battle since World War I and more so in World War II, but their abilities are broadening as technology is advancing, he said.

"They're starting to train dogs in the military to track down snipers and the people who plant [improvised explosive devices]," Taylor said. "This makes them more valuable to our troops."

Although military working dogs are on top of his priority list, there are other duties veterinarians and their staff performs with just as much care.

"We monitor the safety of all the food and drink resources aboard the base," explained Staff Sgt. Chad Baker, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of food inspections at the Combat Center Animal Clinic.

This includes the commissary, the main exchange, the fast food facilities, the mess halls and the food shipped into these facilities.

"We make sure the contracts are fulfilled," Baker said. "We make sure the military is getting what they paid for."

Veterinarians aboard military installations also provide care for the pets of active duty, reserve and retired service members.

Although the animal clinic isn't a full-service clinic, the facility is able to give vaccinations, referrals and minor injury analysis.

With a new full-time veterinarian scheduled to come in late October, full services including neutering, spaying, and various surgeries, will be available for PMO's working dogs and service member's pets throughout the base, said Taylor.

Until then, Taylor recommends several measures to take for keeping pets healthy:

- Give pets all necessary vaccinations, including rabies, distemper and parvo viruses. The clinic is able to provide these vaccinations.
- In the summer heat, provide a shady area for pets or keep them inside the house, and always have cool water available for them.
- Don't over-feed pets. An overweight pet is more likely to experience heat exhaustion or illness.
- Feed pets a guaranteed nutritionally balanced brand of food. Less-expensive, no-name brands are like junk food to a dog, said Taylor.

For any questions or concerns, please call the Combat Center's Animal Clinic at 830-6896.

HEAT CONDITION FLAG COLORS

GREEN

80° – 84.9°*

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

YELLOW

85° – 87.9°*

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

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.

All unit PT must have water available

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

*According to the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature index

