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OBSERVATION POST



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THIS ISSUE

A3 - Naval Hospital COC

A4 - Purple Heart Luncheon

B10 - Education Fair

HOT TOPICS

VISTA DEL SOL RESIDENT SURVEY DEADLINE

Vista del Sol Residents - You should have recently received the second annual Resident Satisfaction Survey in the mail. We ask that you please complete the enclosed survey, which takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Use the prepaid, self-addressed envelope to return your response. If you want to comment on a particular issue or to be contacted regarding a specific concern, please complete the Comment Sheet, and include it in your return envelope. Your response on the survey form is completely confidential. CEL & Associates, a private sector consulting firm, is engaged to execute this survey and compile the results. The Vista Del Sol neighborhood results will be tabulated and reports will be provided to Headquarters Marine Corps and the Housing Office for review and appropriate action. The deadline to mail your survey is Monday.

THE OFFICERS' SPOUSES' CLUB PRESENTS: "HOT DESERT NIGHTS" WELCOME ABOARD EVENT

All officers' spouses are invited to attend our OSC Welcome Aboard event on Thursday, September 7 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the General's Quarters in Ocotillo Heights. Learn more about 29 Palms and the OSC. Dress cool for a Hot Desert Night! For more information, please contact Jessica Pinkerton at 368-7787.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

- Range 215 Training
- All Marine Golfer
- Housing Part 2

THIS DAY IN MARINE CORPS HISTORY

August 11, 1923

The Marine Corps West Coast recruit depot transferred from Mare Island, Calif. to San Diego.

Thousands attend Charlie Daniels Band performance



CP. BRIAN A. TUTHILL

Charlie Daniels rocked the Combat Center Monday night. See B1 for full story and photos.

3/11 Mike Battery deploys to Okinawa

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

More than 100 Marines and sailors from Mike Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, departed the Combat Center for a six-month deployment to Okinawa, Japan, Monday.

The deployment is part of the Unit Deployment Program, where the artillery unit will support 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, in firing exercises in various locations on the island, as well as take part in other training exercises.

"It's a great opportunity for our Marines to train and fire at places they never could if they stuck around here," said Capt. Neal Fisher, Battery M commander. "We'll be shooting off of Mount Fuji and taking part in the jungle warfare training exercise."

Fisher explained what other opportunities the troops will have on this deployment.

"It's a time for us to catch up on a lot of training," he explained. "There's plenty of downtime where we can allow our Marines to take part in a sergeants course or off-duty education. We're able to work on our leadership skills with primary military education classes as well."

The battery recently returned from a seven-month deployment to Iraq in March. This will be a break from what the troops have been doing for the past couple years, said Fisher.

"Our battery has been out of the UDP cycle for a while and this will be a nice break from the rotations in and out of Iraq they've been doing," he said.

Actually, a lot of the Marines stepping out to Japan have said they would rather be going to Iraq, said Sgt. John Albert, section chief.

"Most of them almost feel guilty for going to Japan, where it's almost a vacation, instead of serving in Iraq," he said.

Albert, who has been deployed to Japan twice under the UDP, encourages the troops to enjoy Japan and take advantage of all it has to offer.

"It's great to get away from here," said Albert. "Especially for the young Marines to experience the cultural diversity and see the things only Japan can offer."

This could be the best deployment for a troop's first deployment, said Albert.

"Iraq and Okinawa are two different animals," he explained. "But going to Okinawa can prepare a new Marine for the distance and some circumstances similar in Iraq."

But some of the Marines, like Lance Cpl. James Fehr, a 19-year-old native of San Manuel, Ariz., still would rather go to Iraq for his first deployment.

"Yeah, I'm excited because I'll be able to go to the gym more often in Okinawa," he explained. "But I'd rather go do what I've been trained to do in Iraq."

His wife, Maria, holding their 13-month old daughter, Kassidi, shook her head in disagreement.

"I feel more at ease knowing he won't be on the front lines of Iraq," she said. "But I know that time will come eventually. I'm just happy he's going somewhere neat for now."

There's a similar sentiment among all the family members of the Marines and sailors, such as the mother of Pfc. Ramon Martinez, Margie Martinez.

"This is his first time so far from home," she said. "At least he's going to Japan."

The unit makes family top priority by order of their commander, Fisher said.

"I have a family, and I ensure that every Marine's family is part of the unit," he said.

In keeping with that tradition, the senior enlisted Marines in charge of Martinez talked to his mother to tell her what to expect.

"The Marines are great," she explained. "They have made me feel real at ease. I know he's in great hands."

The Marines and sailors were scheduled to depart Aug. 4, but due to flight delays, the unit departed Monday. They are scheduled to return in February.



LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Lance Cpl. Cody Backward gives his friend, Anthony Cox, 5, a hug goodbye.

MARINES

THE FEW. THE PROUD.



Marine Corps Recruiting Station Twin Cities — Recruiting Substation Coon Rapids — is looking for squared-away Marines, sergeant and below, to participate in the Command Recruiting Program as recruiter assistants for the following areas: Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Sherburne, and Wright County.

You will be issued permissive TAD orders by your command if authorized. Promotion points, Meritorious Mast, Certificate of Commendation and many other incentives available. For more information contact Master Gunnery Sgt. Bautista (763) 576-9049, or e-mail bautistaeg@marines.usmc.mil

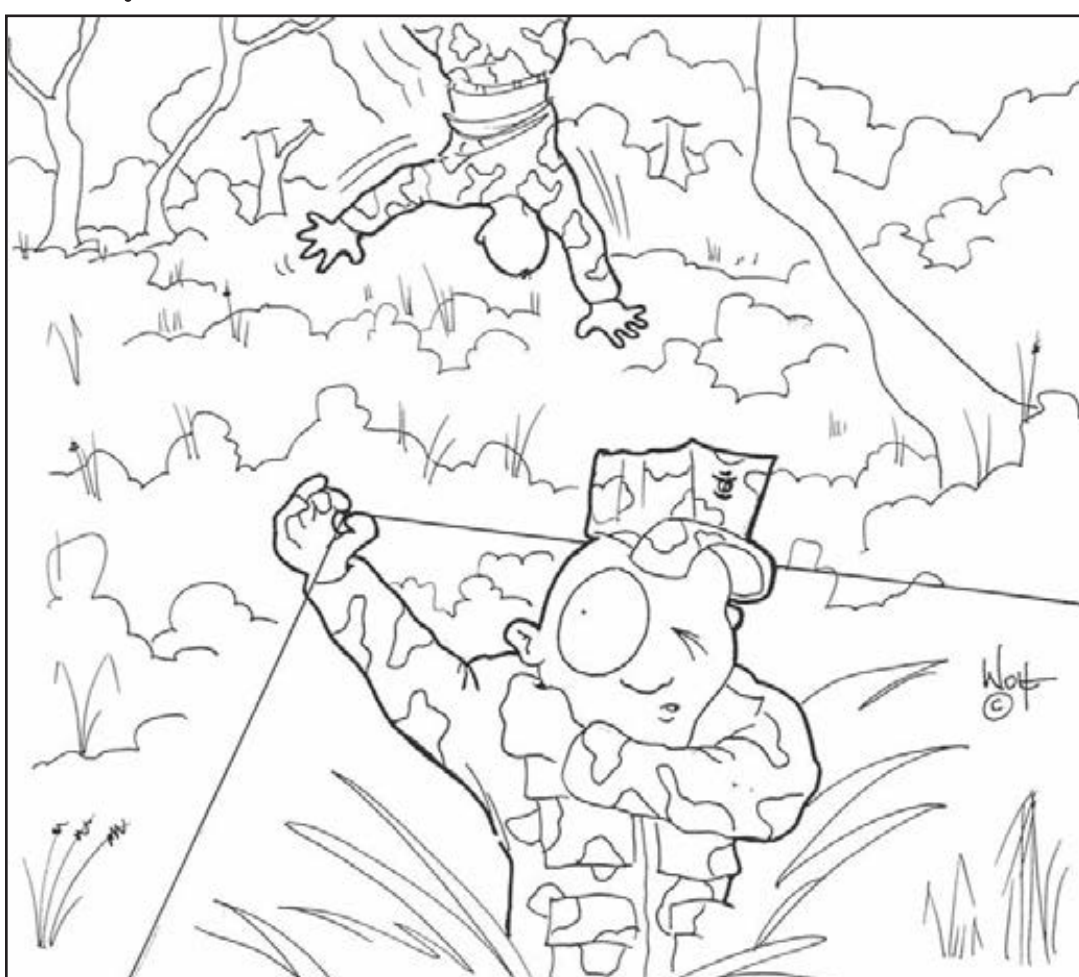
Birth announcements



Elizabeth Dawn Hickerson
Daughter of Lance Cpl. And Mrs. Timothy Hickerson
Born April 26, 2005, weighing 7 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 21 inches.

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf



"That's funny..., nothing happened?"

C.O.P. Corner

Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

How Not to Get Hooked by a 'Phishing' Scam

Phishing is a high-tech scam that uses spam or pop-up messages to deceive you into disclosing personal information. The message usually requests you to update or validate your account information. The message directs you to a web site that looks just like a legitimate organization's site, but it isn't. Your personal information is then used to make unauthorized purchases and in some cases your identity is stolen.

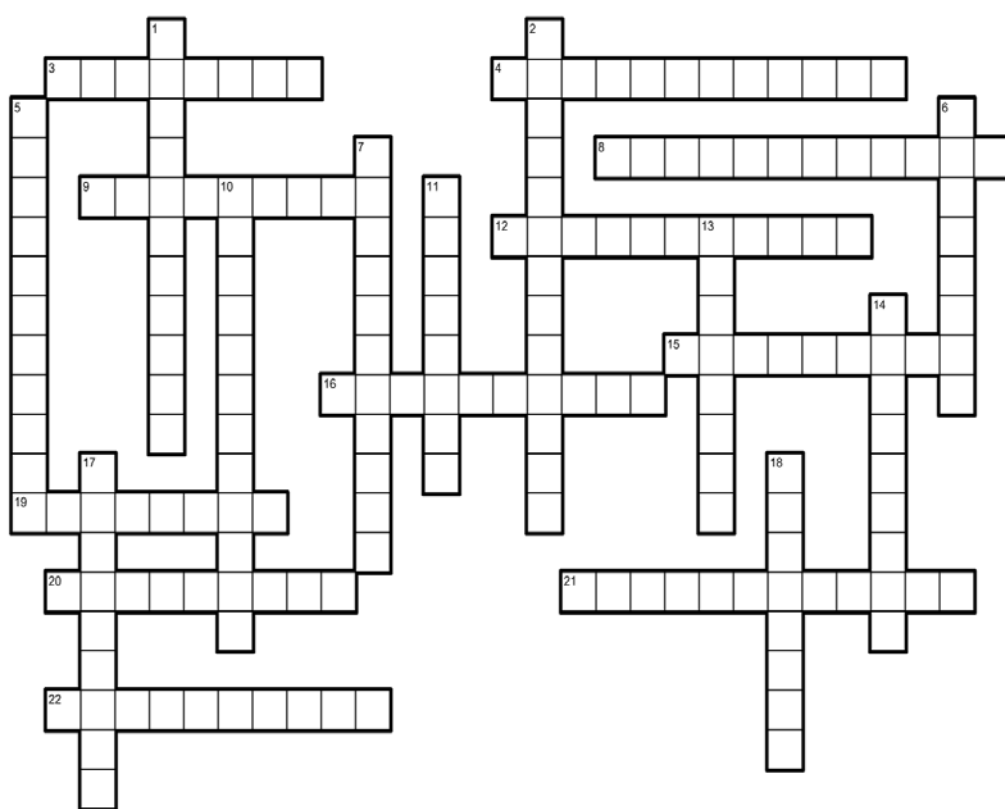
Preventive Measures:

1. If you get an e-mail or pop-up message that asks for personal or financial information, do not reply or click on the link in the message.
2. Don't e-mail personal or financial information.
3. Review credit card and bank account statements.
4. Use firewall and anti-virus software, keep it up to date.
5. Be cautious about opening any attachment or downloading any files from e-mails you receive.

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

ACTORS



ACROSS

3. Played as Tyler Durden.
4. He played as Indiana Jones.
8. Started his own fight club with Tyler Durden.
9. His missions were impossible.
12. He played a wedding crasher.
15. He played as shallow Hal.
16. He had to meet the parents.
19. He played as Rocky Balboa. Sylvester _____
20. The pet detective.
21. He was gone in 60 seconds when he stole cars.
22. He played as Edward Scissorhands.

DOWN

1. He was a donkey in "Shrek."
2. He played as The Joker.
5. He didn't die...hard.
6. He played the owner of Bubba-Gump Shrimp.
7. He was the "one."
10. He had to meet the in-laws.
11. He played as Nicky Santoro.
13. He played as Tony Montana.
14. He fought in a rumble in the Bronx.
17. He played as Ray in "Ray."
18. He played as Tim "the Tool Man" Taylor.

[Solutions on A10]

Centerspeak

What is your favorite leave destination?

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



CPL. ADRIAN GARRISON
3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Going home to Miami."



LANCE CPL. ROBERT LEE
4TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION

"I would have to say Michigan, I like going there to spend time with my fiancé."



MASTER SGT. RICHARD COTTON
MCCES

"Home to Illinois."



SGT. JASON COOPER
2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Florida, going to the beach."

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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Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital welcomes new commander, bids farewell to Englehart

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A traditional Navy change-of-command ceremony was held at the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital Aug. 7 as Capt. Mark Boman relieved Capt. Robert J. Englehart as the hospital's commanding officer.

More than 200 people were in attendance, including guests and most of the hospital and Adult Medical Care Clinic staff, except for emergency personnel who remained on duty.

"As a regional commander, this is a super day because I get to pick up a new, extremely capable commanding officer and I get to have a great guy join my staff," said Rear Adm. Brian G. Brannman, commander, Navy Medicine West. "Captain Englehart is one of those iconic figures inside of the medical department.

"The Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital here has a big name to live up to," continued Brannman as he addressed the crowd. "Bob Bush was one of the great heroes of our nation. And this command in every way epitomizes his self-sacrifice and his dedication to his duty."

During the ceremony, Englehart was awarded a Legion of Merit medal for his "exceptionally meritorious service" as he led the hospital since taking commanding in November 2003.

His award citation made special note of his leadership through numerous inspections and certifications, especially the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, a first for any Department of Defense facility.

Englehart took the podium to address his crew for the last time in formation and gathered guests before he moved



Capt. Robert J. Englehart, outgoing commanding officer of the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, salutes incoming commanding officer Capt. Mark Boman at a change-of-command ceremony Aug. 4 at the hospital.

on to the staff of Navy Medicine West in San Diego.

"For nearly three years I have been the luckiest person in the world," he said. "You represent Navy medicine: world class; anytime; anywhere. The crew is what brings the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital to life. Without them, this would just be another building.

"Today, I turn the conn

over to Captain Boman," continued Englehart, who enlisted as a Navy Corpsman in 1968. Very soon Captain Boman will be the luckiest man in the world. He will serve as your commanding officer here at the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital."

Englehart said he knows his crew will continue to fulfill their ongoing commitments to patient care, safety,

leadership and enthusiasm in all that they do.

After the reading of official orders and a friendly handshake, Boman stepped up to the podium to address his new crew for the first time as their commanding officer.

"Although I have only been

onboard for a week, my brief interactions with patients and staff have convinced me that the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital is the hospital of choice," said Boman. "To the staff, I look forward to serving with and for you."

Boman had his son,

Robert, and nephew, Sean join him to pin on his command ashore pin, signifying his appointment as the facility's commander.

Englehart leaves the Naval hospital here to join Brannman's staff at Navy Medicine West.

Chapter 2929 hosts Purple Heart Luncheon



Marines, members of Chapter 2929 and family members gathered at Phelps Mess Hall Monday for a Purple Heart Luncheon.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

On August 7, 1782, at his headquarters in Newburgh, N.Y., Gen. George Washington designated the Purple Heart as the Badge of Military Merit. It is now the oldest military decoration in the world in use.

Marine and sailor Purple Heart recipients were invited to a luncheon at Phelps Mess Hall Monday; a day set aside as National Purple Heart Recognition Day by President George W. Bush.

The luncheon was sponsored by the Robert E. Bush Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 2929. Members old and new gathered to discuss the Military Order of the Purple Heart and everything the chapter has to offer.

The Purple Heart is awarded to individuals who have been wounded or killed by enemy forces while serving in or with the armed forces. To be eligible to join Chapter 2929 you have to have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal by the government of the United States.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, established in 1932, is the only congressionally chartered veterans organization in the country composed of combat wounded Veterans, according to the Chapter 2929 website.

Members sat around and told stories about their days in the military and about the decorations they were awarded.

Rich Blasongame, a former Marine and recipient of the Navy Cross and Purple Heart, told of his service.

"I enlisted in '50 and my enlistment was up in '58," said Blasongame. "I was wounded twice in Korea in '52. I was with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. I have been part of the chapter for about a year now."

Charter member John A. Bowley, a retired Army Captain, attended the event with his wife Ruby.

"I was with 1st Division in Guadalcanal, and I also served in Vietnam," said Bowley.

Active duty Marines sat with older Chapter 2929 members and listened to events that happened in their era.

"I was in the Army infantry in Germany with Alpha Company," said Jon Schwappach, Purple Heart recipient. "It was a rainy day when I got wounded by an 88 millimeter shell. I was at the top of a hill so I had to slide down on the good foot. The funny thing about that day was half way down, a German medic treated my injury giving me sulfur. I joined the Chapter in March and today I am receiving my card."

Chapter 2929's commander Steven H. Dell greeted Marines and other members as they entered, showing off the chapter's flag and offered educational information on the chapter. Dell also presented Schwappach and Thad Thorson, an Army Purple Heart recipient, with lifetime memberships.

"I think the lunch went great," said Dell. "I liked the interaction between the new guys and the old guys. It didn't matter what war or battle you fought in because a wound is a wound."

For more information on Chapter 2929 log on to their Web site at <http://www.purpleheartchapters.org/Chapter2929.htm>

Ohio native keeps 3rd LAR Marines mobile in Iraq

CPL. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE
1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP KOREAN VILLAGE, Iraq — Regardless of how many insurgents they catch or hours they spend patrolling Iraq's roads in their massive, eight-wheeled light armored vehicles, U.S. and Iraqi forces in this region wouldn't be nearly as mobile if it weren't for Marines like Cpl. Brett M. Briscoe.

The 22-year-old from Warren, Ohio, is one of the pieces to the puzzle that keeps 3rd

Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion's driving force — the light armored vehicle — moving forward.

The LAV is an armored, all-terrain troop transport vehicle which provides direct fire support to the infantry.

"I help keep the vehicles up and running — which keeps [the battalion] in the fight," said Briscoe.

The Twentynine Palms, Calif.-based battalion, charged with maintaining security and stability in their area — a region of mostly

desert littered with small towns throughout the far reaches of the southwest corner of Al Anbar province — relies heavily on their mammoth LAVs to provide security in one of the largest U.S. military areas of operation in Iraq.

Before he was turning wrenches in the Middle East for the Marines, the 2003 LaBrea High School graduate gave college a shot, but it turned out it wasn't meant for him, he said.

"I wanted to work on

diesel engines and I saw the Marine Corps as a good opportunity — so here I am," said Briscoe, who worked as a mechanic at his uncle's shop in Ohio for about five years while he attended high school and briefly, college.

In addition to turning wrenches, Briscoe spends even more of his time keeping the battalion's thousands of vehicle parts organized. He is responsible for tracking, storing, and issuing everything from tires to fuses — anything and everything needed to

keep the more than 24,000-pound LAVs operational.

"The LAV has thousands of parts — Briscoe keeps all of them in order," said Cpl. Chris A. White, a fellow LAV mechanic. "My job would be a lot harder if he didn't have his act together."

Briscoe, who was promoted to his current rank Aug. 1, has also spent a majority of his deployment patrolling with the infantrymen — Marines who primarily patrol on foot or "dismounted" patrols — in LAVs: providing

security on convoys through this vast desert "outside the wire." His time as part of an LAV crew patrolling western Iraq's roads, towns and villages was quite a different experience from his usual regimen of sorting parts and maintaining vehicles.

"I learned a lot about infantry tactics, the different weapons systems and what to do in certain situations," said Briscoe. "We were constantly on the road going all over the place."

Still, with his time as an improvised infantryman over, Briscoe is glad he's back to turning wrenches, where he belongs, he said.

"Both sections are good, but I like being back here," said Briscoe. "I like the maintenance guys and I get to do my official Marine Corps job."

"He is a great Marine. You tell him to do something and he won't quit until it is done," said Sgt. James R. Hemphill, Briscoe's platoon sergeant. "There have been plenty of times he has worked well into the night to make sure the job is done, and done the right way."

Roughly half-way through his stint in the Marine Corps, Briscoe is considering a career as a diesel mechanic in the civilian sector upon completion of his tour in the Marine Corps.

Still, he's keeping his options open, saving the extra money he's made while serving in Iraq as he's not 100-percent sure he won't stay in the Corps.

"My plan is to get out, but you never know," he said.

Briscoe says he looks forward to seeing his parents, grandparents and sister upon returning to the States in September.



CPL. GRAHAM A. PAULSGROVE

Cpl. Brett M. Briscoe, a 22-year-old Marine from Warren, Ohio, stocks Light Armored Vehicle parts in a tent-turned-warehouse at Camp Korean Village in Iraq's western Al Anbar Province.

Mojave Viper Medical training: from injury to evacuation

CAPT. CHAD WALTON

TACTICAL TRAINING EXERCISE CONTROL GROUP

Injuries in war are an oft-highlighted subject in the news. At the Combat Center, it is the job of the Navy corpsmen on the staff of the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group to ensure that deploying Marines and corpsmen receive the best possible medical training.

The TTECG corpsmen evaluate, train and test an exercise force's own corpsmen and Marine Combat Lifesavers through a series of courses, lane training and finally, during the Mojave Viper final exercise at Range 215 here where the unit must care for the simulated wounded from the point-of-injury to the necessary level of follow-on care.

"We realize that these Marines and corpsmen are going to war, so we try to make the training as realistic as possible," said Petty Officer 1st Class Temitope Ayeni, head medical instructor at TTECG. Ayeni, a Lagos, Nigeria, native and recently naturalized U.S. citizen, deployed with 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment during Operation Iraqi Freedom I from January to May of 2003.

Nearly all the TTECG staff corpsmen here have personal experience with lifesaving during multiple deployments to Iraq. Exercise Mojave Viper's medical training is designed to reinforce life-preserving actions by focusing on the basics and then gradually increasing the seriousness and stress of the medical care for the simulated patients.

Each successive event requires more sophisticated care procedures and additional evacuation requirements. Training during the opening week of Mojave Viper is focused on classroom work where Corpsmen and combat lifesavers are given instruction in casualty assessment, evacuation and triage. As they transition to live-fire training, Corpsmen are evaluated on their skills beginning at the company live-fire assault course that takes place at Range 400. During that event, simulated casualties are assigned and nicknamed "cherry-pickers," to prevent any confusion with actual casualties, and Exercise Force corpsmen must properly triage, care for and evacuate them from the point-of-injury to the unit's casualty collection point.

Support units receive training at the Motorized Operations Course, which requires medical personnel to move the simulated casualties from the point-of-injury through the casualty collection point, and then to a landing zone for a simulated helicopter evacuation.

During the Deliberate Assault Course, a reinforced company sized live-fire attack, the corpsman must evacuate cherry-pickers all the way to the battalion aid station via a helicopter airlift.

Following the combined arms live-fire phase of Mojave Viper, the exercise force transitions to the Urban Warfare Training Center where they learn urban skills ranging from tank-infantry integration to assaults on urban targets. Dubbed "lane-training" because each day focuses on different skill sets, each of the lanes also provides for medical training and assessment.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin Garcia of the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group helps the exercise force participants improve their combat lifesaving techniques

During the urban warfare casualty lane, fire team- and squad-sized units are brought into a building that contains several casualties and they must rapidly decide what must be done to care for the wounded.

"The Marines and corpsman don't know what is inside when they come down our lane," said Ayeni. "Once inside they quickly realize there are simulated injuries and they must use their Improved First Aid Kit to take the necessary steps to save lives. They have five to seven minutes to complete all the necessary tasks involved in casualty assessment, treatment, triage and evacuation. It requires quick thinking and good analysis of the injuries."

"Before they come here, Marines can't open up their IFAKs for training; they are issued one and that is it," said corpsman Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin Garcia of San Benito, Texas. "We provide them with kits they can use to give the first aid required. Without this training, the gear in their IFAK would be unfamiliar." Garcia deployed twice to OIF, first with 1st Battalion, 6th Marines and then with a surgical company located at Al Asad.

In another area of Range 215, Petty Officer 2nd Class Khan Webb trains other units for casualty evacuation drills.

"We are assessing how good their training was at home and prepping them for the harder things to come," said Webb, who was deployed as part of the I MEF commanding general's personal security detachment from July 2004 to March 2005 at Camp Fallujah. "We try to teach Marines not to rely on the corpsman," he said. "A squad or patrol might not always have one and they have to take care of each other." A few moments later a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter arrives to pick up the simulated casualties before looping around for another run.

Throughout the three days of the Final Exercise, the exercise forces will be assessed numerous "cherry-pickers" that they must treat, track and report from the initial point-of-injury to the battalion aid station, and then to notional follow-on theater-level care.

"We want to give Marines and corpsman the knowledge, skills and especially the confidence to be able to stabilize injuries under fire," said Petty Officer 1st Class Raj Chand, of Downey, Calif., who was with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) when they participated in the battle for Fallujah in November 2004. "We don't want them to give up and decide someone can't be saved."

Also on the medical staff is Petty Officer 3rd Class Brett Phillips, of Ventura, Calif., who likened the experience at Mojave Viper to the rifle range.

"You can practice snapping in all you want, but until you send rounds down range it is not the same," he said. "Seeing simulated wounds, covered in fake blood is as close to the real deal as we can come."

Iraqi police conduct 'solo' operations in Iraq

CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS

1ST MARINE DIVISION

KARABILAH, Iraq — Coalition Forces are not the only ones taking bomb-making material and other weapons out of insurgents' hands. Iraqi police in this city bordering Syria recently found two hidden stashes of munitions and weapons.

The police discovered the two caches, which consisted of multiple rockets, mortars, and hundreds of machine gun rounds, while on a security foot patrol through their city.

Thanks to months of training and mentoring by U.S. Marines and soldiers, Iraqi police in this portion of Iraq's western Al Anbar province, are now operating independently out of their own police station.

"The Iraqi police are beginning to provide security on their own," said Lt. Col. Nicholas F. Marano, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "The work that Marines have been doing over the last couple months is starting to show."

Just a few months ago, there were no police here. Now, they have dozens of officers who provide local security for the city's 30,000 residents.

"The Iraqis finding weapons caches means they're progressing towards becoming more independent," said Marano.

Moreover, Iraqi police in this city, as well as throughout many border cities along the Euphrates in northwestern Iraq, are now operating independently, thanks to months of training and working with U.S. Marines and soldiers.

Just one week before the discovery of the caches, Iraqi police also assisted in the discovery of two suicide-bomb vests which could have been used by insurgents against the Marines and Iraqi Security Forces here, officials say.

Marano's Marines are responsible for conducting security operations in one of the largest areas of operations in western Al Anbar Province, which begins at the Iraq-Syria border and covers thousands of square miles both north and south of the Euphrates River.

While Marines from the southern California-based unit maintain outposts near the Iraqi police stations, the Iraqis and Marines often work on entirely different operations independent of each other.

Iraqi Security Forces have made steady progress throughout Iraq with some provinces' security entirely in the hands of the Iraqis, according to senior U.S. officials.

"We've been very successful with the Iraqi Security Forces," said Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, in a press interview at the Capitol July 27. "Particularly the Ministry of Defense forces are doing increasingly an excellent job."

Rumsfeld pointed out the current number of Iraqi Security Forces, which are trained and equipped at about 275,000.

"This is a milestone for the Iraq Security Forces," said Marano. Just several weeks ago, the Iraqi police were conducting combined patrols alongside Marines and Iraqi soldiers.

Although the Iraqi police are working on their own now, Marano maintains close contact with all of the police commanders and meets with them on a regular basis to address any security issues and check progress in the area.

In Karabilah, the police chief there has already noticed a significant increase in the amount of civilian traffic after Coalition Forces opened a new bridge over the Euphrates River. The bridge gives villagers living north of the river easier access to that city.

"There is more trading now and more people bringing their sheep and cows to the market for sale," said Karabilah's police chief, who chose to remain anonymous for this interview.

The police presence in Karabilah means more to the locals than the Marines' presence, according to some Marines there.

"The people see the police in their uniforms and they are more willing to talk to them and interact with them," said Sgt. Patrick J. Huwiler, a rifleman from the battalion's Company C.

Still, U.S. forces are always close by Iraqi police to help provide additional security. Anytime the police patrol their cities, the Marines know at all times when and where the Iraqis in blue are at, said Huwiler, a 23-year-old from Hales Corner, Wis.

A bonafide police force in this region was unheard of just three years ago, the Marines say. The lack of security made this border-city a hangout for terrorists until Marines conducted a large-scale operation in 2005 to clear the area of insurgents.

Today, there are nearly 600 policemen in this border region, according to Marano.

A 40-year-old local Karabilah fisherman who lives just minutes from the Euphrates River said he has seen a lot more people crossing the river since Iraqi Security Forces setup positions near the river's edge.

"I think the people here feel safer with all of the police and soldiers around," said the fisherman through an interpreter. "Just a few months ago it was not safe to be near the river after dark."

During foot patrols through the city, Iraqi police often stop by local shops and markets to speak with the people, who are hospitable. Sometimes the people offer them a glass of water or a piece of fruit during the encounters.

For Huwiler, who is on his second deployment to this same region, the changes he has witnessed from his first deployment are "phenomenal."

On a visit last month by the Al Anbar Province governor, city officials here lauded the improved security thanks to the work of Iraqi Security Forces and Marines. Better security meant the governor could give the green light for construction projects to commence such as a refueling station and a new hospital.



CPL. ANTONIO ROSAS

Iraqi police officers from the city of Ubaydi, Iraq, provide security during a meeting between a tribal sheikh and Marine commanders.

This is the battalion's second consecutive deployment to the same area of operations near the Iraq-Syria border. This year the battalion focused more on building Iraqi Security Forces due to the region's improved security according to the Marines here.

"Our job is easier now from when we were here last," said Huwiler. "Last year we would go on raids and that was it. Working with the Iraqis this year has paid off."

Karabilah and the nearby city of Husaybah were the sites of some of the heaviest fighting in western Al Anbar province last year when Marines conducted several counter-insurgency operations to hamper the terrorists' control of the area.



Accelerating Into Danger

CFC starts 2006 campaign: What in your world would you give?

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combined Federal Campaign is gearing up to start their 2006 campaign season at the Combat Center and surrounding areas Sept. 1.

“The Combined Federal Campaign is the only authorized fundraising event for employees of the Federal Government,” said Brenda Roberts, chair of the Twentynine Palms area Local Federal Coordinating Committee. “A person can give a monetary gift that supports eligible nonprofit organizations that provide health and human services throughout the world.”

The Combat Center is the LFCC for the Twentynine Palms area which includes the cities of Joshua Tree, Morongo Valley, Pioneertown, and Yucca Valley. The LFCC is responsible for governing the conduct of the local CFC.

There are 320 CFC areas throughout the country, where local and national nonprofit organizations collaborate closely with committees of volunteer federal employees to make strategies for each year’s campaign and to record and control federal employee contributions to the charities they choose, according to the CFC Web site, <http://www.opm.gov/cfc/>.

The money is distributed to international, national and local agencies that support the military and surrounding communities with their services, such as the American Red Cross, Armed Services YMCA, Joshua Tree Kid’s Club, Hi-Desert Medical Center, Reach Out 29, Greyhound Adoption Center and First Steps Child Development Center.

The nonprofit organization leaders are involved in the design of new policies and programs

that shape the future of the CFC. These partnerships promote direct giving from federal employees to the local and national nonprofit organizations, according to the Web site.

Last year, more than \$160,000 was pledged to the Twentynine Palms area CFC and more than \$16,000 was designated to 16 agencies throughout the Morongo Basin area, said Roberts.

“The goal for the 2006 CFC is to raise \$225,000,” she said. “We want 100 percent contact this year, as well. Last year we only had approximately 60 percent contact.”

This year’s campaign theme is “What in your world would you give?” This is aimed to make people question what they are willing to give toward those in need, said Roberts.

“In a world that seems plagued by tragedy, natural disaster and challenges to peace and democracy, donating to the CFC is an opportunity for federal government employees to embody the good intentions we all have, influence our daily activities and aid the welfare of the community,” she explained.

The CFC kick-off ceremony is scheduled for Sept. 8 at the Combat Center’s Victory Field from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Once the campaign is officially kicked off, cash, checks, and allotments are accepted for donation. Although the CFC is designed for federal employees, funds may be accepted from anyone who would like to donate, said Roberts.

Donations are accepted from Sept. 8 until Nov. 4. For more information about CFC, log on to the Web site, <http://www.opm.gov/cfc/>.



CPL BRIAN A TUTHILL

A heartfelt 'thank you'

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Robert C. Jacob, band officer for the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Band, accepts an ornate plaque from Chuck and Teri Adrianson Wednesday as a thank you for their performances and support at banquets to help raise money for wounded Marine scholarships. These scholarships are only for combat wounded Combat Center Marines and Navy corpsmen. The scholarship is currently being awarded to 30 Marines from the base. It is \$6,000 to each recipient for four years and includes a laptop computer.

Veterinary Services Limited at the Combat Center through October

ROBERT E. BUSH NAVAL HOSPITAL, Twentynine Palms, Calif. – Currently, the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Veterinarians Clinic is without a permanently assigned U.S. Army Veterinary Corps Officer.

This has caused the clinic to reduce services until the assignment of a full-time Veterinarian in mid-October.

Until then, veterinary services will be provided on an intermittent basis by other Veterinary Corps Officers from the Southern California District Veterinary Command. According to the district command, all efforts will be made to provide an attending veterinarian as often as possible.

To maximize appointments, priority will be given to those types of appointments that can be scheduled days to weeks in advance. These types of appointments include any non-urgent care, vaccinations, and health certificates. Sick call appointments can only be scheduled on short notice and fit into the work day schedule. Emergencies and other ill animals will be referred to one of the local civilian veterinarians in the area.

A schedule of projected appointment dates, which are subject to change without notice, will be posted at the Combat Center's Veterinarian Clinic.

Marine deployed to Iraq learns Arabic

SGT. ROE F. SEIGLE
1ST MARINE DIVISION

BARWANAH, Iraq (Aug. 2, 2006) — When Pfc. Kenneth Dickerson goes to sleep at night, he keeps a Bible by his side, pictures of his family and a notebook filled with hand-written Arabic words and phrases he has learned since he arrived in Iraq.

The 19-year-old U.S. Marine has used many of those words and phrases daily while patrolling the dusty streets of Barwanah with his fellow Marines in the Hawaii-based 3rd battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

He came here not knowing one word of Arabic, and now we take him out on patrol and we do not need an interpreter," said Cpl. Daniel Robert, a 22-year-old from Philadelphia who says Dickerson "is an outstanding Marine."

When the battalion arrived in Iraq four months ago, there was a shortage of interpreters. On many patrols, the Marines were not able to communicate with the local populace.

Dickerson soon found out he had a knack for learning the language — he was able to remember almost every phrase Iraqi soldiers taught him.

I just carried a waterproof notebook with me and I would write down every word I was taught," said Dickerson, a native of Clive, Iowa — a suburb of Des Moines. "The soldiers have always been willing to help me learn their language and they have become good friends now that I can understand them."

Recently, Dickerson and the Marines in his squad were involved in a gunfight with several insurgents. Eight of the insurgents were captured, but the Marines did not have an interpreter with them, they only had Dickerson.

He translated all the ques-

tions his noncommissioned officers asked the detainees, and was able to establish an identity on all of the insurgents.

Dickerson says he feels good when he is able to use his language skills in a combat situation but he gets more joy when he is able to talk to locals, especially young children.

I enjoy working with the Iraqi people and learning about their culture and way of life," said Dickerson, who says he was an avid motocross racer when he grew up in his small town.

He joined the Marines at age 17 after graduating from Waukeg High School in 2005.

Although Dickerson believes he is just doing what he can to help the Marines accomplish missions on a daily basis, several of his peers and seniors believe Dickerson has the potential to become a great leader of Marines.

Dickerson is one of the youngest Marines in the company but he far exceeds my expectations of a Marine his age and rank," said Capt. Michael Hudson, 33, Dickerson's commanding officer. "He goes above and beyond to accomplish missions on a daily basis and he will be placed in a leadership billet on our next deployment to Iraq."

In addition to his linguist skills, Dickerson is a radio operator by trade. When he is not speaking Arabic, he's the one who maintains contact with higher headquarters during patrols, which sometimes last more than six hours.

But Dickerson's talents don't stop there.

Recently, he learned how to use a metal detector in his precious-little spare time, and located a small-weapon cache that was buried.

Dickerson does so much more than I expect of him and



SGT. ROE F. SEIGLE

Pfc. Kenneth Dickerson, a 19-year-old Marine from Clive, Iowa, assigned to Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, hands out candy to two girls in Barwanah, Iraq.

I can always count on him to do the right thing no matter what," said Robert. "We really do not need an interpreter with us anymore because 90 percent of the time he is able to translate. He just rattles it off — it's amazing."

Dickerson, whose father also served in the Marine Corps, said he plans to continue to learn Arabic and will enroll in formal classes when he returns to Hawaii later this year.

He said he will be a more proficient translator when he returns to Iraq next year.

I have wanted to serve my

country since the terrorist attacks on 9/11," said Dickerson. "My Marines and I have been shot at and have been in some really intense

situations, but that does not change my mind about being here. I look forward to coming back next year."

Dickerson and the rest of

the 3/3 also known as "America's Battalion," is scheduled to depart Iraq later this year and will be replaced by another Hawaii-based unit.

SPORT SHORTS

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

SUMMER FAMILY FUN FESTIVAL AT THE MAIN EXCHANGE

The Main Exchange will hold their annual Summer Family Fun Festival, today from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. Enter and win super prizes, including face painting and a clown.

APPLICATION WINDOW FOR ARC DENTAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The American Red Cross Dental Assistant Program is now accepting applications through August 30. Interviews will be held Sept. 5 and the class will begin Sept. 18. Anyone interested in the program or who would like more information should call the Red Cross office at 830-6685.

EDUCATION FAIR HOSTED BY MCCS LIFELONG LEARNING

MCCS Lifelong Learning will be hosting its 3rd Annual Education Fair on Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Colleges and universities will be attending to promote their respective education programs and recruit interested students. Participating institutions may offer vocational programs, certificate programs, associates, bachelors, and graduate degree programs. Attending this year's event include: Copper Mountain, National University, Central Texas, California State University San Bernardino, Grand Canyon University, Allied Business Schools, Walden University, DeVry University, American Military University, University of Phoenix, Chapman University and many more. For more information call 830-6881.

SUMMER MOVIE MATINEES FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES

The Community Center will be hosting Summer Movie Matinees every Friday through August 18. Admission and popcorn are free. Food and covered drinks are allowed. All movies are G or PG rated. The list of movies is as follows: Today: Chronicles of Namia Aug. 18: The Incredibles For more information call 830-3380.

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?

Alaska is the most eastern and western state in the U.S.

Charlie Daniels Band 'Rocks' the Combat Center

CPL. BRIAN A. TUTHILL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Mainside area echoed with music Monday night as the Charlie Daniels Band took center stage to perform for more than 4,000 Combat Center Marines, sailors, family members and others as part of the Spirit of America Tour.

Fans who attended the show were treated to more than two hours of entertainment and nearly 20 songs from the famed country music performer, who wasted no time grabbing his violin and jumping right into his music after his introduction as the crowd cheered. They ended on a high note as an encore of their signature song "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" was played, bringing the crowd to a deafening fever pitch.

"I've never been to Twentynine Palms before, but I had a great time here," said Pat McDonald, the band's drummer who held up a towel as he performed a drum solo with "Semper Fi" written on it.

"Doing these kinds of shows are great because military guys are always pumped up and excited," he said. "But these guys are Marines, and Marines are always fired up. It was a great crowd."

Although the Charlie Daniels Band has a different fan base than other bands who have performed aboard the Combat Center in the past, that did not deter thousands from showing up to enjoy the show.

"With Charlie Daniels we saw a lot of retirees and civilians come for this as opposed to Foreigner, who brought in a lot more of the younger Marines to their show," said Kelley Coe, Marine Corps Community Services special events coordinator. "I thought they were great, and the show was outstanding. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Charlie Daniels was very generous in donating his time to put on this show for our Marines and sailors and families. I hope to see them back here in the future."

Many Marines said even though they were not familiar with the band's music, they still wanted to come to relax and just enjoy the show.

"I went there not really knowing much Charlie Daniels Band music," said Chris "Tuba" Terry, a tuba player with the Combat Center Band. "I came with my girlfriend who is a big fan. They put on a really good show and I had a great time. He can really entertain a crowd, so everyone had a good time, even if they weren't very familiar with the music. All of the musicians up there did some great solos, too."

"Their volunteering for this tour seems like a very good cause, because it seems like service members stationed in the US don't get as much attention for entertainment as overseas units do," added Terry, a 21-year-old Aurora, Colo., native. "This show was also really good for the morale of units here who are just coming home or just about to deploy."

The Charlie Daniels Band volunteered their time Monday to participate in the 70th performance of the Spirit of America Tour, a non-profit national tour which began in 2002 to bring mainstream musicians and bands to stateside military bases, said Robert Rosenthal, creator and president of the tour.

"He is here as a volunteer and does not get paid for this," said Rosenthal. "He does it for you because you are part of the greatest armed forces of all."

Brig. Gen Douglas M. Stone, Combat Center commanding general, also took time on stage to recognize deployed Marines and sailors from the base as well as Combat Center units who are preparing to deploy again in coming weeks and months.

Stone also recognized the 102 Marines and sailors from Combat Center units who have given the ultimate sacrifice fighting overseas. He presented all members of the band with a challenge coin to thank them for their performance and time shared with the base community.

Also joining Daniels and Stone on stage was Leslye A. Arsht, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, who presented Daniels and Rosenthal with certificates of appreciation from the Department of Defense for their efforts in supporting troops at home and abroad.

"We're working hard to let everybody know we're behind the military 100 percent," said McDonald. "Even though there is negative press sometimes, there are so many good things we do and we're there to support them. It's been great performing here."



Charlie Daniels Band drummer Pat McDonald jams a drum solo.

Thousands of Marines, sailors and families cheer as the Charlie Daniels Band performs at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center as part of the Spirit of America Tour.

Charlie Daniels Swapped out his usual hat for a Marine utility cover during one of his final songs.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

Khanh Nguyen defends Michael McAlinden during the Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League double-elimination championship July 31 at Felix Field.

3/7 defeats 3/11 in the CG's soccer championship

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Third Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment defeated 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment in the Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League double-elimination championship July 31 at Felix Field.

The game started off intense as both teams had several kicks on the goal, but no success in scoring. At half time the score still remained 0-0 and both teams huddled to discuss how they would up the ante for the second half.

"We need to connect on passes," said Michael McAlinden, 3/11. "The ball is not getting over the defense, and when we get the ball in the middle we have to give it up quicker."

Both teams discussed what plays they were doing wrong and what they needed to pay attention to in the second half.

"We're going to put the ball in the net," said Andrew Yel-lope, 3/7 captain. "We need to get the first touch on the ball and improve our passes."

In the second half, the flow and momentum started to pick up as both teams battled it out for the ball. With just under 30 minutes left on the clock, 3/11's captain Patrick Tangye scored gaining the lead 1-0.

Minutes after 3/11 scored, 3/7's Marcos Garcialopez brought the ball all the way from midfield to even the score out 1-1 with less than 26 minutes on the clock.

Both teams fought it out for over 25 minutes with no one scoring. Then with less than a minute left on the clock 3/7's Garcialopez was tripped and 3/7 received a penalty kick. The clock hit zero and the game went into stop loss overtime. Philippe Leveille of 3/7 lined up for the penalty kick as team members watched nervously from behind. Leveille kicked the ball and scored making 3/7 this year's season champions.

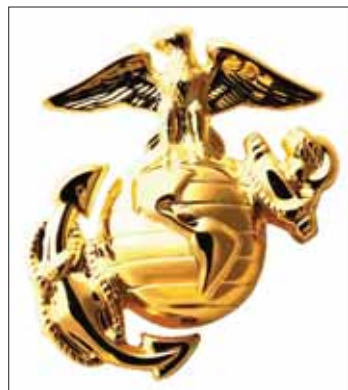
The game ended 2-1 with 3/7 coming out number one out of eight teams to compete in the season.

"I came here with a mission and that was to win," said Garcialopez. "In the end all our team's hard work paid off."



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

Rigoberto Melendez throws the ball in to Vira Lampolsen during the Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League double-elimination championship July 31 at Felix Field.



Line between hobby, addiction blurred in virtual world



LANCE CPL. KARIM DELGADO

Cpl. Matthew D. Brooks plays a massively multiplayer online game in his room July 23.

LANCE CPL. KARIM DELGADO

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP BUTLER

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — It's 4 a.m. and Cpl. Matthew D. Brooks can't decide whether to take a smoke break or finish slaying servants of the Scourge camped at Fenris Keep. His dark room, illuminated only by a computer monitor's faint glow, is empty. Some might see this as a low point for Brooks, assuming all of

his friends had much better things to do on a Saturday night. But the truth is his friends are online and waiting for his decision.

"I had a friend whose girlfriend came by and asked if he wanted to go do something, and he said, 'Not right now, I'm playing 'World of Warcraft,'" Brooks said, referring to massively multiplayer online games, or MMOs.

In less than 30 years, fantasy gaming has evolved from a basement strewn with 20-

sided dice and a socially inept circle of friends to entire virtual societies, complete with functioning governments.

These online computer games are referred to as "massively multiplayer" because they are capable of supporting hundreds or even thousands of players simultaneously. MMOs take place in what are known as persistent worlds, which continue to exist and evolve even when players are away from the game.

World of Warcraft is currently the most popular MMO, with a subscriber base of more than six million users worldwide. And at least 500,000 of its subscribers are online at any given time, according to the World of Warcraft Web site. Other popular titles include City of Heroes, Guild Wars and Star Wars Galaxy, each having its own distinctive twist on the genre.

The games, with artificial societies that mimic economic and sociological trends that take place in real-world nations, have drawn significant attention. Undersecretary of Defense for Readiness Paul W. Mayberry noticed the games' potential, stating in Military Training Technology (Vol. 8, Issue 4) that recent developments in MMOs could influence future military applications and training.

Marines in Okinawa are not immune to the obsession. Quite the contrary, according to Brooks, who said a large percentage of Marines at the B Company barracks on Camp Foster regularly play at least one type of MMO.

In addition to that, almost every service member with the American Forces Network Okinawa has created a character for World of War-

craft, according to Lance Cpl. Todd Crowell, the morning DJ for WAVE 89.

The games have spread through entire sections of Okinawa units, with Marines grouping up to form official game teams, or "guilds."

A Google search for the "31st Marine Expeditionary Unit" and "Battlefield 2," a first-person shooter MMO, yields several results referencing a guild on the game modeled after the real-life unit, to include infantry and even an aerial operations unit called Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262.

The benefits of MMOs, it seems, is they offer Marines a medium to have fun without having to worry about curfews or the costs of going out in town.

Guild membership may start to dwindle, however, with the new III Marine Expeditionary Force liberty card policy in place since June.

"We lose a lot of people to gold cards," Brooks said, referring to the revised policy that affords Marines more liberty choices.

While most players can rationalize the MMOs as just games, a small few become addicted and lose touch with reality. MMO addiction has ruined careers,

marriages, and even led to death in one known case.

In August, the Associated Press reported that a 28-year-old man suffered a heart attack from playing non-stop for 49 hours. The man had been fired from his job the month before after habitually missing work to play the games. He had eaten minimally and not slept.

"You have to be able to separate fiction from reality," said Lance Cpl. Christopher Rojas, an MMO enthusiast. "The last thing I want is to pay a monthly subscription fee to have my life controlled by a computer game."

Though MMOs can be dangerous if approached without level-headedness, if regarded as a modest hobby, they can provide players the chance to live out ethereal fantasies in distant lands for a few hours a week, Rojas explained.

As far as Brooks' dilemma goes, the weak, persistent pulse of the Scourge will continue beating while, to the dismay of his guild members, he opts for a smoke break. Before he peels himself away from the World of Warcraft, however, he swears to his team members those three letters of unrelenting gamer loyalty: BRB — be right back.

Marines cast stresses away at Camp Baharia

CPL. BRIAN REIMERS
1ST MARINE DIVISION

CAMP BAHARIA, Iraq — Pfc. Carlos J. Nayola doesn't have combat stress. That's because he's got a fishing rod.

"Fishing relaxes the soul and helps me get away," said the 19-year-old warehouse clerk from Lynn, Mass.

Nayola, along with a few of "New England's Own" Marines from 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, sit at the shore of Lake Baharia a couple nights every week. The murky water ripples its way to the lake's edge where it crashes in small waves on the rocky shore. There, sweat-stained Marines serving with Regimental Combat Team 5 laze away the evenings waiting for something to snag their attention.

"It brings a touch of home that much closer to Iraq," said Lance Cpl. Robert J. Veglucci, a 30-year-old field radio operator, from Shirley, N.Y.

The man-made lake, dug during Saddam Hussein's reign, was part of what the Ba'ath party called Dreamland, a vacation getaway spot for Iraqis loyal to the dictator. It was once filled with amusement rides and lighted streetpaths. Now, the bungalows that line the lake's edge house Marines. Drive-ways are filled with armored humvees, heavy-barreled machine guns jutting out.

And the lake is now a draw for faithful anglers. Marines in desert camouflage trousers and olive-drab t-shirts silhouette themselves against the glistening water. It's a scene that repeats itself. As the orange desert sun dips, Marines tie away their stresses, knotting hooks and sinkers.

They use simple rods and reels, the sort that can be bought for a few dollars at a department store. They don't bother digging for bait. They just reach into the latest care package from home.

Small, greasy pieces of "Slim Jim" Spicy Smoked Snacks are ripped from the bright packaging and carefully threaded on to barbed hooks.

"One of the Marines who was stationed here before told me about the bait trick," Veglucci said. "I like beef jerky and apparently the fish here do too."

"It is actually kind of funny," said Lance Cpl. Eric T. Shaw, a 22-year-old supply administration clerk from Leicester, Mass. "I find myself eating and enjoying the same thing I am trying to trick the fish into eating."

A Marine repeated the ritual. He gripped a five-foot graphite pole and snapped it forward, sending the chunk of beef flying into the warm breeze over the water. A moment later, it splashed on the surface, then slowly sank into the hunting

grounds of catfish, carp and eels among others lurking about.

It's not exactly the graceful casting about of a fly fisherman, but it's a combat zone. They enjoy what little angling they can dredge up. The Marines take their positions, lean back on the water's edge. And they wait.

For some, it's therapeutic. "Patience is the key," Veglucci said, who considers himself an avid fisherman back home. "You'll never catch a fish if you try to rush and that is the best part about it. It forces you to relax and your mind just drifts off."

"Sometimes I think that is the most fun part of fishing, when you are sitting there waiting for a fish to bite the bait," said Lance Cpl. Jason R. Yates, a field radio operator from Rockland, Maine. "Nothing else matters. It's just you and the water."

Not every one in the group of fisherman here are familiar with the waiting game.

Noyola called home and asked his father to send some gear after watching his peers so that he could join them and learn about the sport. He's still figuring out knots and tackle, but like his catch, he's hooked.

"It is something that I have always been interested in, but never had a chance to do living in the city growing up," he said. "Who would have thought that Iraq would be the place that I learn to fish. I think it's great."

The sun glittered off the water. Shadows grew longer and the night sky was settling in. So far this night was leaving the anglers empty-handed.

"It's the excitement of not knowing that keeps you coming back for more," Noyola said. "You never know if you are going to catch the big one or if you are not going to catch anything at all."

Yates slowly reeled in his line, ready to pack it in for the night. Suddenly, his eyes grew wide as his fingers softly plucked at the eight-pound test monofilament fishing line for reassurance.

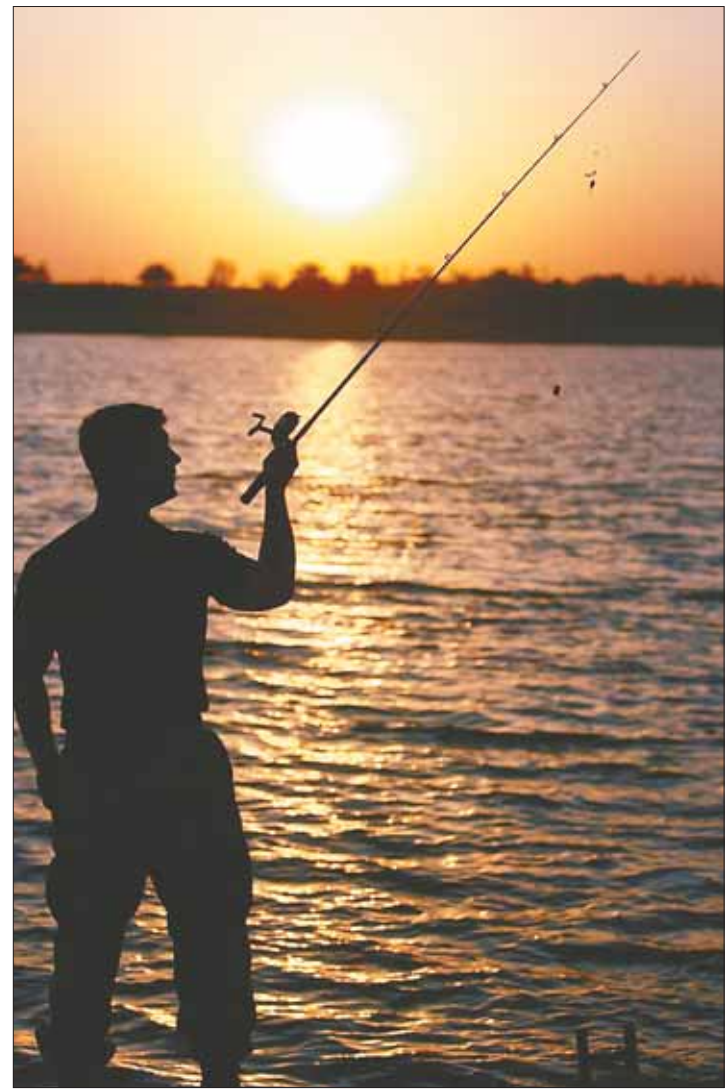
"Yeah, I got one," Yates said. Yates wound in more line, bringing the catch to his feet. "It's a little one, but it's still a fish that I caught off of beef jerky in a combat zone," he said. "That's just weird."

Marines crowded around his bitter smelling trophy, congratulating him before releasing it back into the lake to swim again.

A dozen more casts slapped the water and several sticks of jerky sank somewhere in the depths of the lake. Night was upon them and the Marines grew restless. They gathered their gear and thoughts and made their way back towards their barracks.

"Any day fishing is a good day," Veglucci said. "It's not always about catching anything. Matter of fact most of the time I don't care if I do catch a fish. But as long as I am fishing, enjoying a passion of mine, that is all that matters."

"Even if I walk away empty handed, I really don't," Noyola said. "Every time I fish I create more memories and it gives me the personal time I need to get through the deployment."



CPL. BRIAN REIMERS

Lance Cpl. Eric T. Shaw, a supply administration clerk assigned to 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, casts a piece of beef jerky as bait into the lake at Camp Baharia, Iraq.

Head EO advisors speak to Combat Center leaders

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Staff noncommissioned officers and officers gathered at the Combat Center's Catholic Chapel to brush up on leadership skills at an Equal Opportunities Brief Monday and Tuesday.

The presentation was given by Col. A. J. Dyer, head advisor, Manpower Equal Opportunity Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, and Master Gunnery Sgt. Russell Whitney, senior advisor, MPE, HQMC.

"We've been traveling to various bases since results from



COURTESY PHOTO

Gunnery Sgt. Herrick Ross is the new Combat Center equal opportunity advisor.

the 2004 climate survey were published," said Whitney. "The results were good, but once they're out there, it means it's time to get back to work on the commandant's intent."

The 2004 climate survey results showed:

- There were fewer racial disparities among active duty Marines than in 1999.
- There was an increase in agreement that the USMC Performance Evaluation System is fair.
- A steady decrease in racial discrimination among active duty Marines continues since 1994.
- An increase of fair treatment by chains of command among female active duty Marines.
- Although there was an overall positive result on racial discrimination, there are still one-fourth of active duty enlisted minorities that have experienced negative racial/ethnic comments, remarks or offensive jokes during the past year.

A statement by the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Michael W. Hagee reads:

"I will not tolerate behavior inconsistent with our core values of honor, courage, commitment. Commitment to equal opportunity enhances unit cohesion and our war-fighting superiority."

Dyer also advises Hagee on manpower issues, policy, recruitment, and retention as they relate to equal opportunity. The branch is committed to providing every Marine with the equal opportunity for advancement based on individual merit, according to the Web site, <http://www.manpower.usmc.mil>.

The climate survey results, and the goal to eliminate unfair treatment throughout the Marine Corps, prompted Dyer and Whitney to reach out to unit leaders at installations across the globe. They use slides, videos, audience participation and discussions in the presentation, along with a feedback survey at the end of discussion to gather opinions and suggestions from the audience, said Whitney.

"We receive 95 to 100 percent positive feedback on the brief," he said. "We can't do an effective job without feedback and suggestions from the audience."

The brief was more like a seminar, said Capt. Kenneth J. Parisi, exercise action officer, Exercise Support Division.

"I was skeptical at first because I figured it was just another rendition of the same brief we have heard for years," he explained. "But the ability to turn the lecture into more of a seminar than a brief was a great learning tool."

"It was great to see the [staff noncommissioned officers] and officers throughout the day discussing some of the concepts brought up in the seminar," he continued.

The Combat Center's EOA, Gunnery Sgt. Herrick A. Ross, plans to continue similar effective training here.

"Equal opportunity is leadership," he said. "My job is to advise leaders about the diversity of the workplace and cultural awareness among Marines."

For more information on the EO program, log on to the Web site, <http://www.manpower.usmc.mil>.

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MCCS Lifelong Learning Education Center to Host Education Fair



LANCE CPL. KATELYN KNAUER

The Lifelong Learning Education Center encourages Marines to hit the books and is hosting its 3rd annual education fair at the Marine Corps Exchange Tuesday.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN KNAUER
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Community Services Lifelong Learning Education Center is scheduled to host its 3rd Annual Education Fair at the Marine Corps Exchange Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Several different colleges and universities will be present, providing information on the different programs available through their institutions.

“We recognize that we are in a very remote place,” said Katrina Chlebk, education services specialist. “A lot of people don’t realize all the new technology we have, and that they don’t have to give up on their educational goals.”

Active duty Marines and sailors can also be approved for the active-duty Tuition Assistance Program and receive a set amount to put towards schooling. To receive tuition assistance Marines and sailors must sit through a brief and apply at the Lifelong Learning Education Center.

Colleges and universities that will be present at the Education Fair include Copper Mountain Community College, National University, Central Texas College, California State University San Bernardino, Grand Canyon University, Allied Business Schools, Walden University, DeVry University, American Military University, University of Phoenix, Chapman University, Coastline Community College and many others.

These institutions offer several different programs, such as vocational, certificate, associate, bachelor, and graduate degree programs.

“The purpose of this fair is trying to get people in school,” said Chlebk. “We are here to help with funding, counseling and testing.”

For more information regarding the fair and education services, call the Education Office at 830-6881.