

Serving the MCAGCC
Community at
Twentynine Palms, Calif.

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L.I.N.K.S. CAX, A4

OBSERVATION POST



UGLY GOWN 'BALL B1

THIS ISSUE

A3 - Toys For Tots

A5 - Devil Hogs

B1 - Toys For Tots Golf Tournament

HOT TOPICS

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MILITARY CHILDREN PROGRAM OPENS FOR 2007

Scholarships for Military Children program opens for 2007. Applications for the \$1,500 scholarships are available at 264 commissaries worldwide, or can be downloaded through links at <http://www.commissaries.com>, <http://www.militaryscholar.org>, or <http://www.dodea.edu>.

AMERICAN RED CROSS DENTAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The American Red Cross Dental Assistant Program will begin accepting applications Dec. 15. The next class will begin Jan. 29. The Dental Assistant Program consists of 750 hours of classroom and clinical experience. Upon completion of the program, students will receive a certificate in basic dental assisting. For more information please call the American Red Cross at 830-6685

THE ID CARD CENTER WILL BE IN OBSERVANCE OF THE UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

Christmas: Dec. 23, 24, 25 and 26
New Years: Dec. 30 and 31, Jan. 1 and 2

HOSPITAL RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Are you looking:
-for a meaningful experience?
-to make a difference?
-to acquire healthcare experience?
-for a rank free environment?
Call 830-8409.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

- Hollywood Festival
- Jay Leno SMP Trip
- Football Championship

THIS DAY IN MARINE CORPS HISTORY

Nov. 24, 1942 -
1st MAW established the South Pacific Combat Air Transport.

Combat Center takes part in mass casualty exercise



Marines from the Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Platoon simulate a decontamination rinse on a role player during the Combat Center's portion of the Statewide Mass Casualty Drill Nov. 16 at Victory Field.

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital took part in the 2006 California Statewide Medical and Health Disaster Exercise on the base Nov. 16.

This is California's eighth annual exercise incorporating hospitals and

ancillary healthcare providers, including long-term care facilities and clinics, pre-hospital care providers, auxiliary communication networks, blood transfusion services, Emergency Medical Service agencies, Public Health and other governmental agencies.

The focus of the exercise was on patient movement, patient tracking, surge capacity, location and allocation

scarce resources, coordination with law enforcement, building security and implementation of emergency management plans, according to the State of California Emergency Medical Services Authority's Web site, <http://www.ems.ca.gov>.

All California hospitals were given the same scenario to implement their individualized emergency manage-

ment plan in the annual event that tests each hospital's readiness for an emergency or disaster, said Navy Lt. Wendy Stone, emergency management officer.

In the Naval Hospital's case, other elements of the base were utilized such as the Antiterrorism Force Protection Platoon, Combat Center Fire

See EXERCISE A7

Combat Center honors fallen from 1/7



Cpl. Nicholas J. Vose holds the dog tags of a fallen brother in arms during a memorial on Gray's field Nov. 16.

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Seven stacks of sandbags sat aligned in the green grass of Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 16. Twenty-one Marines in groups of three stood in dress blues behind each stack of sandbags. Each Marine held a rifle, Kevlar, or boots and dog tags. When the names of the fallen Marines and sailor from 1st Battalion, 7th regiment were called, one Marine with a rifle stepped forward and stuck the rifle with a bayonet attached into the stack of sand bags. A second Marine then placed a Kevlar on top of the buttstock of the rifle, followed by the Marine with the boots and dog tags.

"These men have inspired us both in life and in death," said Col. Nicholas F. Marano, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, in his speech to the crowd at the memorial.

Marano spoke heavily about the dedication, ceaseless work and intense compassion of the men in his unit.

"The Marines and sailors in this unit dedicated themselves to showing the Iraqi people what it is to live a life free of fear and tyranny," he said. "These men knew the difference between our enemies and the Iraqi people trying to live their lives. We showed them that we are a just and humane society."

The unit's two main missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom were to secure borders to prevent the

The following Marines and sailor were honored at the memorial service Nov. 16:

Lance Cpl. Bryan Taylor, 21, a Milford, Ohio, native and a combat engineer in Company A.

Lance Cpl. Aaron W. Simons, 21, a Modesto, Calif., native and a rifleman in Company C.

Lance Cpl. Michael L. Ford, 20, a New Bedford, Mass., native and tanker with 1st Tanks Battalion, Company C.

Seaman Apprentice Zachary M. Alday, 23, a Donaldsonville, Ga., native and a corpsman with Weapons Company.

Lance Cpl. Salvador Guerrero, 22, a Whittier, Calif., native and a mortarman with Weapons Company.

Lance Cpl. Jeremy Z. Long, 19, a Sun Valley, Nev., native and rifleman with Company A.

inflow of terrorists, and to secure urban areas and build civilian institutions to work for a more peaceful Iraqi nation. Marano revealed that, in addition to accomplishing the original missions, the population had also almost doubled between the time the unit arrived and the time they departed.

Marano said that, despite the numerous missions, the unit worked for much more than the mission-at-hand.

See MEMORIAL A3



LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Marines from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion took first place in the tug-o-war event in last year's Combat Center Challenge. This year the Combat Center Challenge will be held Dec. 1 at Victory Field.

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

4 HOUR TIME LIMIT IS UP!!!, GET THOSE GAS MASKS OFF!!



Wheeww, those drills are killers, huh?



sempertoons.com

C.O.P. Corner



Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

Winterizing your vehicle

With the Christmas holiday right around the corner, the harsh winter days are coming too.

To keep your loved ones safe on long trips home, or to see family, here are some tips on winterizing your vehicle:

Start with a checkup of your vehicle that includes, but is not limited to:

- Checking the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Changing and adjusting the spark plugs.
- Checking the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspecting the distributor.
- Checking the battery.
- Checking the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Checking antifreeze levels and the freeze line.

You should carry the following items in your trunk in case an emergency situation on the road should arise:

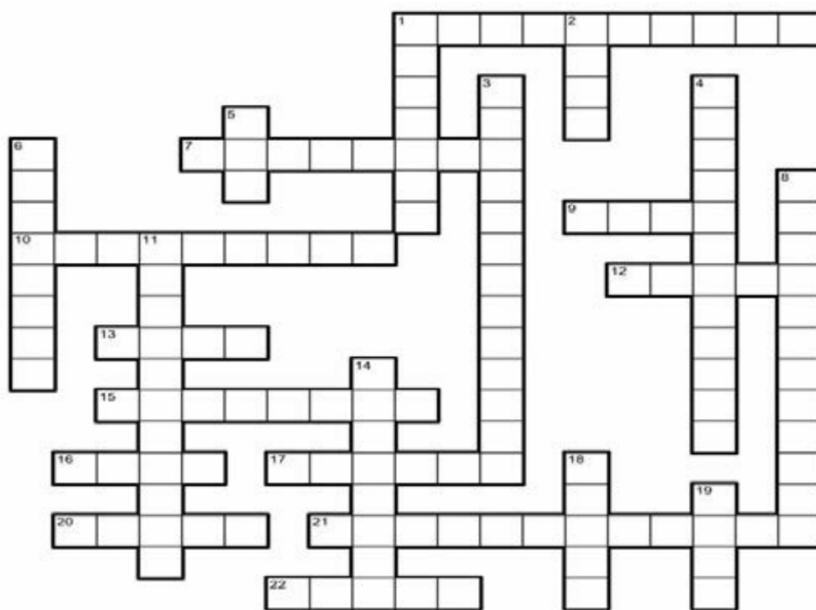
- Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack
- Shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- Bag of salt or cat litter
- Tool kit

For more information on how to get your vehicle winterized for the holidays, go to <http://www.weather.com/activities>

Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

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.

CAMPING



ACROSS

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

DOWN

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

[Solutions on A7]

Centerspeak

What is your favorite holiday and why?

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



CPL. JOSEPH LITTLE

2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINES



LANCE CPL. TAYLOR HARMON

1ST TANK BN.



PFC. KRISTIE SCINTO

1ST TANK BN.

"New Years, because it's the beginning of the new year and it's a time to set goals you want to achieve."

"Thanksgiving, because you get to eat a lot of food."

"Christmas, because I love the whole season, winter and being with family."

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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Sgt. Robert L. Fisher III

Cpl. Evan M. Eagan

Cpl. Michael S. Cifuentes

Cpl. Brian A. Tuthill

Lance Cpl. Katelyn A. Knauer

Lance Cpl. Nicole A. LaVine

Lance Cpl. Regina N. Ortiz

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Toys for Tots looks forward to big events

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The local 2006 Toys for Tots campaign has been in full swing since Oct. 1, but many of its most popular annual events have yet to happen.

The local campaign takes part in more than 80 toy collecting events per season, and has been part of more than 20 events so far this year, said Gunnery Sgt. Mario Morones, Toys for Tots coordinator.

Businesses and organizations request Toys for Tots representatives to attend their holiday parties, luncheons, parades, socials and sporting events, with barrels to collect toys.

They also have the option of supporting the program by maintaining a collection barrel at their business site. There are more than 200 barrels throughout the Coachella Valley and Morongo Basin area, with businesses still contacting Morones to request barrels for their location, he said.

Big upcoming annual events, when Toys for Tots receives a large share of donations, include a Palm Springs/Palm Desert softball tournament, the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School's Toys for Tots Run and the Palm Springs Festival of Lights.



The softball tournament will be held in the Palm Springs area Dec. 8 and 9, between local teams that usually bring in close to 3,000 toys, said Morones.

The MCCES run, here at the Combat Center, brought in more than 1,100 toys last year and is scheduled for Dec. 8.

Each year, the committee aims to better the campaign and reach as many children as possible. Advertising on television and radio has been the key to getting the word out about the program to the families in

the area, said Morones.

The Toys for Tots Hotline will be open for calls beginning Nov. 27 until Dec. 12, Monday thru Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to answer any questions about the campaign, or to submit an application for toys. The numbers for the hotline are 830-3803 or 830-7672.

All families that have any doubts about providing toys for their children during this holiday season are urged to make the call for more information, said Morones.

Toy distribution begins Dec. 14 for the

Yucca Valley area, so it is important that all applications are in by the last day of the hotline, Dec. 12 by 5 p.m. The program's goal is to have no needy children left out of the toy giving season, said Morones.

"The key thing about Toys for Tots is building a foundation of confidence and awareness in children to be patriotic and productive Americans," he explained.

The local Toys for Tots is a base-wide effort program. Without the volunteers from the base and the local community, the program could not be as successful, said Morones.

"The volunteers are the backbone of the program," he explained.

Anyone may volunteer for the program to collect toys at events, pack toys for distribution or to accept calls to the hotline. Toys for Tots volunteers are part of a big nationally accepted program that aids in giving needy children toys, said Morones.

The Toys for Tots season is in full bloom and there are anticipated events right around the corner. The Palm Springs Festival of Lights is scheduled for Dec. 2 from 3 to 7 p.m.

For more information, log on to the Morongo Basin/High Desert Toys for Tots Web site, <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/tft/>.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Lance Cpl. Erick Newcomb hugs a fellow Marine during a memorial held for 1/7 Combat Center heroes at Gray's Field Nov. 16.

MEMORIAL from A1

"The Marines built the trust of the local people one Iraqi at a time," he said. "The Marines defended the local people from the terrorists who hid in their midst and demonstrated the ultimate truth that freedom is indeed not free."

Marano also made it a point to honor, not only the lost warriors, but also the families of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

Maj. Mark D. Dietz, the battalion's executive officer, expressed the importance of getting the families together with the men who served with their fallen loved ones.

"This is a great opportunity for the families to meet the Marines who were responsible for their sons and were with them the last months of their lives," Dietz said. "It gives them a chance to talk, tell stories and receive real closure."

Many stories of sorrow and valor were shared that day.

A story shared about Lance Cpl. Aaron W. Simons demonstrated his compassion for the lives of those he didn't even know. As he lay injured in his hospital bed, all Simons thought of was an Iraqi family who had lost several children to a rare kidney disease. Now, the one daughter who was still alive had also fallen victim to the illness. It was the young Iraqi girl, not himself, whom Simons focused his thoughts on in the midst of his own suffering. Simons' wishes for her health were later granted when the little girl was able to get the treatment she needed to survive.

Another story shared by Marano revealed the sacri-

fications made were not one-sided. Two Marines who attended the memorial came home alive because of the valiant actions of an Iraqi soldier at a check point. An insurgent wearing a bomb vest approached the check point, threatening the lives of the men. The Iraqi soldier, with no hesitation, ran to the insurgent and bear-hugged him as he detonated the bomb. The soldier died in order to save the lives of the Marines behind him.

Gallantry knows no race, creed, gender or nationality. All heroes are united by the sacrifices they made without hesitation or regret for the sake of their country and brothers-in-arms.

Let it be through the telling of their stories that we may pay tribute to their lives.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

Stefanie Flaishans cuts the first piece of cake during a L.I.N.K.S. C.A.X., Nov. 16 symbolizing she has had the longest marriage.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

They filed into the 7-ton one after the other. They had their flaks, Kevlar's and goggles on ready to go. Only it wasn't Marines getting ready to train. It was their spouses.

The Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills program held their fifth combined arms exercise for military member spouses on Nov. 16 at the Expeditionary Airfield. This year's CAX was sponsored by Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

The 39 participants started the day at Victory Field learning about the history, rank structure, uniforms, customs and etiquette associated with the Marine Corps. The spouses also listened to the Combat Center band play the Marines Hymn and afterwards joined together in the first verse, some singing louder than others, some urging to go to the next verse. The day was not about the rank of their husband but about a bonding experience and a glimpse into what their husbands' experience on a day to day basis is like.

"L.I.N.K.S. empowers spouses with knowledge and resources to navigate the military lifestyles and it is also fun," said Larry E. Stratton, Personal Readiness and Community Support Branch Head.

When the spouses arrived at the airfield they competed in an obstacle course race. When they were done they got the chance to sit and talk with Headquarters Battalion chaplain Lt. Karen Rector about the stresses of deployments and marriage enrichment retreats.

The spouses also rotated through classes. The second class on deployments talked about who to turn to when spouses were away such as friends, key volunteers, and local community and unit activities. The class also went over different ways for the wives to stay in touch with their husbands.

Spouses talked with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines career planner, Staff Sgt. Andrew Wohlgemuth. They discussed military occupational specialties, lateral moves, duty stations and how their husbands are promoted.

When it was time for lunch the spouses turned to Marines who were participating to see what meal, ready-to-eat they should get. Sitting around the table, Marines with MWSS-374 showed the spouses how to prepare the

MRE main meal. Many spouses agreed the meal was not as bad as their husbands had made it out to be, but agreed that they would prefer to have a home-cooked meal.

After lunch, the spouses got the chance for a hands on event where they went through different stations experiencing different problems and situations that might occur when their husband comes home with a new set of orders and it's time to move.

The last class of the day was a financial management class. The spouses were taught how to read a leave and earning statement, different benefits thorough the Marine Corps and tips on handling bills while their husbands were deployed. This class seemed to be the most beneficial.

"The finance class was the best part of the day," said Susanna Smith wife of Cpl. Kevin Smith, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines. "It was definitely the most educational part of the day."

When the classes were done, the wives loaded back on to the 7-ton for a tour around the base then a trip back to Victory Field where they experienced a cake cutting ceremony Marine Corps style. The cake was cut by the wife who had been married the longest and a piece was passed from her to the wife who had been married the least amount of time.

The longest married couple was Stefanie Flaishans wife of Master Sgt. David Flaishans, MWSS-374. David and Stefanie have been married 17 years. The youngest couple was Melissa Brown and Lance Cpl. Steven Brown, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. Melissa and Steven have been married three weeks.

The event, which proved to be a success, went off without a hitch thanks to the assistance of Marines all over base.

"We want to thank Lt. Col. [James] Hanlon[, commanding officer of MWSS-374 for his assistance with L.I.N.K.S. C.A.X., and a special thanks to Gunnery Sgt. [Erik] Steele for his efforts," said Stratton. "He made things happen quickly and effectively and efficiently. The Combat Center band and Headquarters Battalion Color Guard also made the day special as well."

The event, which was a combined effort from different units aboard the Combat Center, was an educational opportunity for the wives to get out and learn about something they live so closely to but might not fully understand from the outside looking in.

Former Devil Dog builds 'Devil Hogs'

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Donald Drake, a former Marine who came to the Combat Center for the 1st Tank Battalion birthday Nov. 1 at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray's Field, brought his most recent project with him; a beautiful 1993 Heritage Softtail motorcycle, which he scraped and rebuilt with the help of his fiancé.

The bike had a giant wooden Eagle, Globe and Anchor on the right side of the bike with mirrors shaped like horns, and a wood-impression gas tank with the Company C seal of another faded image of an Eagle, Globe and Anchor, gradually growing sharper as the image frayed outward. The seat was genuine brown leather and the kickstand was shaped like an M16A2 service rifle with a belt of ammunition attaching it to the bike. Across the handle bars read the letters USMC. It's a very personal piece of work to Drake.

Drake has been building his own motorcycles for almost two-and-a-half years now. Before that, he served four years with Company C, 1st Tank Battalion. Drake joined the Marine Corps Aug. 16, 1998.

"I joined because we were about to get evicted from our apartment, I didn't want to go home, and my job was pretty much shot," Drake said. "I didn't know what I wanted to do with life."

"If there is one thing I learned from the Corps, it's whatever can go wrong, will go wrong," he added. "But you just have to suck it up and keep moving along."

Drake spent his entire enlistment in Twentynine Palms before getting a job as a survey technician for railroads

around the United States.

After transitioning back into the civilian world, he discovered his new passion and hobby.

Drake bought his first bike with \$55,000 he saved up from his time in the Corps. His friends, most of which are

also former Marines, owned their own hogs. They constantly pressured Drake to buy one of his own so he could go riding with them.

Drake, deciding it was money well-spent, gave into the pressure of his former Marine friends and bought a 1993 '01 Harley Davidso Fatboy off Ebay in July 2004.

"It looked like everyone else's bike at first," said Drake. "But then I started putting my own personal touches on it."

It wasn't long after that Drake found himself hooked on the prospect of bike-building and repair.

Donald, a native of Paonia, Colo., met his fiancé, Althea Hatfield, before he began his hobby as a bike builder. She was around when he bought his first bike, and she was a witness to his growing passion for the hobby. Hatfield became drake's co-worker and helped Drake strip the bikes down to their skeletal frames, where they were then re-constructed. Hatfield is also Drakes' parts manager.

After his first bike, Drake said his buddies helped him get started with another project.

"Three other of my jar-

head friends helped me with the next one," Drake said. "I was pretty much hooked at that point."

Hatfield, who rode dirt bikes as a kid, shares her love for Drake's projects. "It's something that is very relaxing to me," said Hatfield. "I have a pretty stressful job, so it's really cool how I can just come home and tear down a bike."

Because Hatfield is Drake's parts manager, she is responsible for the ordering of parts and negotiating prices. "Negotiating is part of my job in real estate, so that's not hard," said Hatfield.

She revealed finding the right parts is another story.

"There are so many things that go into the performance of a bike," said Hatfield. "You need to find the best parts for the best engine and see how it all works together."

"Sometimes I do get lost," she added with a laugh.

The parts, although ordered separately, make an ensemble of metal, chrome and leather.

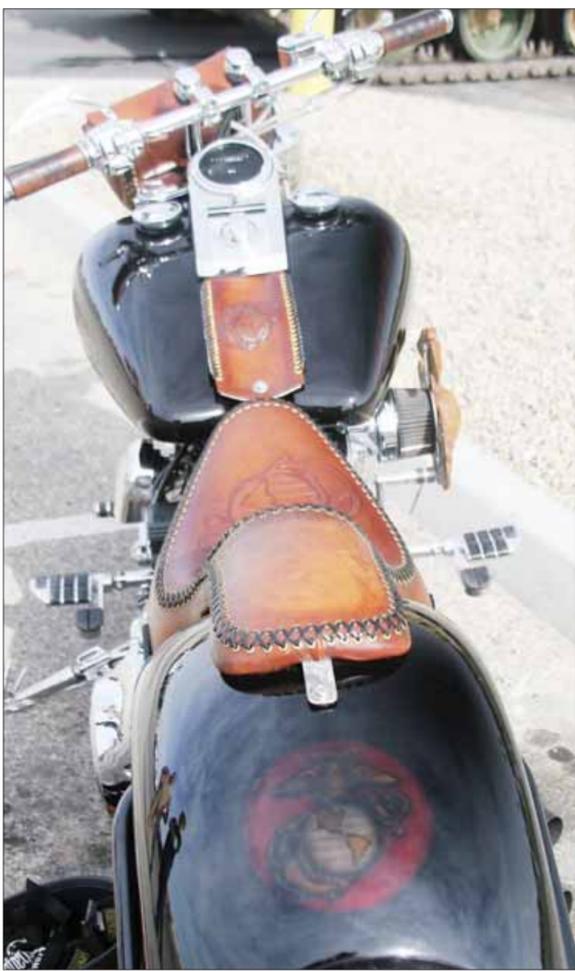
Drake said he gets most ideas for his bike designs from magazines, TV shows, and other bikes he sees driving around. "I don't want my bikes to look like anyone

else's," said Drake.

Despite Drake's passion for his bike projects, he said he won't make a career out of it because of time and money limitations. "This is my fifth bike, but it might be my last one for a while," said Drake.

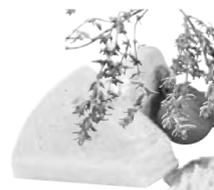
Drake and Hatfield are about to buy a house, so that is where all their money will be going for a while, Drake said. In addition to limited funds, Drake's job requires much traveling, so his time is also limited.

If Drake sells one of his bikes, however, he said he will use that money to fund another project.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Donald Drake's 1993 Softtail sits on display at the 1st Tanks Battalion's birthday ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Nov. 1.



LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

What does it take to be a hero?

One simple decision can save the lives of more than 50,000 people each year, and it doesn't take superhero powers, a doctorate degree or magic.

All that is needed is a driver's license and the ability to remain sober for one full night.

Designated drivers are saving lives and preventing injuries across the world.

But there are still too many people taking the risk of getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol.

More than 16,700 people died in alcohol-related car accidents last year in the U.S. This was only the second consecutive year the number has dropped, and the first time the number has been below 17,000 in five years, accord-

ing to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Web site <http://www.dot.gov>.

The holiday season has begun and parties and celebrations are back-to-back, giving more tests to those under the influence of alcohol to get behind the wheel and drive. People are urged to step up, take the keys into their own hands and be designated drivers.

Since designated drivers are hard to find, David Roman, Combat Center drug demand reduction coordinator, challenges Marines to look at the advantages of remaining sober to help others.

Friends appreciate it. Once they've realized they were saved from humiliation, an accident or a whole series of events that may happen after a charge of driving under the influence of alcohol, friends will thank the designated driver, Roman explained.

Many establishments provide free non-alcoholic drinks to designated drivers.

There is more than getting home safely to consider as a designated driver. Remaining sober during an outing can also ensure nothing gets out of control. Keeping friends from doing things they will regret the next day is also part of the designated role, explained Roman.

The concept of a designated driver is easy to understand, is free and can save

lives. It just takes someone to step up to the plate, he said.

The designated driver plan should be set before reaching the drinking area. Friends should be considerate and agree to cooperate with the designated driver when they say it is time to go, or when someone has had too much to drink.

Sometimes the plan doesn't run as smoothly as it should. Sometimes a designated driver is faced with a confrontation when reaching for the keys. How do they get keys?

Roman made sure to answer this question.

"Take them," he said. "You have to convince them it is the right thing to do and they will face serious consequences if they drive drunk."

"They will thank you later," he added.

Cpl. Steven R. Martin, an administration clerk at the Installation Personnel Administration Center, agrees.

"I'm usually the designated driver when I go out with my friends," he said. "They appreciate it, and they buy me dinner and give me gas money, but I like to do it so I know everyone gets home safely."

"It's worth being the odd guy out, staying sober, so there is someone to look out for the whole group. We take turns and do it for each other," he continued.

It doesn't take much to be a hero. Just a little responsibility.

**MAGTFTC/MCAGCC
 SAFETY
 ACCIDENT PREVENTION**
 Safety office: (760) 830 8465
THANKSGIVING SAFETY

General George Washington proclaimed the first official military Thanksgiving in December 1777 to celebrate the defeat of the British at Saratoga. Since that time military members and their family's take the Thanksgiving day holiday period as a time to give thanks, enjoy bountiful feasts, and take to the American highways to visit distant friends and family.

In fact, the Thanksgiving holiday season is one of the busiest for private motor vehicle travel. According to the American Automobile Association, 37 million Americans will be on the road during the four day period, about 40 percent of this will be on Thanksgiving Day. Remember seat belts save the most important people in the world,
You and Your Family.

**HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE
 THANKSGIVING**

**Accidents are an unacceptable risk to
 mission accomplishment!**

"MAGTFTC/MCAGCC Safety - Be Relentless with Safety"

<p>Marines, Sailors, and cab drivers: MCOS 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.</p>	<p>MCOS MARINE CORPS ARRIVE ALIVE A Combat Center Car Company 367-7433 Top's Taxi 361-6748</p> <p><i>Budweiser</i> WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TRAPS FOR DRINKING RESPONSIBLE</p>	<p><small>As indicated on the poster is provided by the United Department of the State.</small></p> <p>MCOS ARRIVE ALIVE MARINE CORPS</p>	Name _____
			ID # _____
			Pick up at _____
			Destination _____
			Total fare _____
			Driver _____
			Date/Time _____
			Customer _____
			Signature _____
			Signature _____



HERE COMES THE BOOM

Third Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment assaultman Lance Cpl. Omar Corral, fires a Javelin missile during a training session in an open region in Al Qa'im, Iraq, as assaultman Lance Cpl. Gabriel Rodriguez provides look-out to the rear. Cpl. Jaime Lima-Martinez and Cpl. Park F. Smith assist the Marines in using the weapon system.

CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

SPORT SHORTS

YOUTH BASKETBALL
REGISTRATION
DEADLINE

Youth Sports is offering basketball for ages 4 to 14. The cost is \$30 and includes a uniform and award. Register from now until Dec. 20, or until the program is filled. You can register at the Community Center building 1004. For further information call 830-8421 or 3910.

YOUTH WRESTLING
REGISTRATION
DEADLINE

Youth Sports is offering wrestling for ages 4 to 14. Cost is \$10 and includes a T-Shirt and award. Youth Sports provides the use of uniforms and headgear. Tournament fees and all other cost are the responsibility of parents. Register at the Community Center now until Dec. 20, or until the program is filled. For more information call 830-3910 or 8421.

LEISURE

SEND YOUR
OVERSEAS MILITARY
FRIENDS AND FAMILY
A HOLIDAY MESSAGE
FOR FREE

Stars and Stripes is hosting a free online message board until Monday. Messages submitted online will be published in the Dec. 16 edition of Stars and Stripes and online at <http://www.Stripes.com>. Messages may be entered by visiting the Holiday Messages page.

ADULT MEDICAL
CARE CLINIC OPEN
HOUSE

The Adult Medical Care Clinic will host an open house Dec. 1 from 1 to 4 p.m. Marines from Headquarters Battalion and Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School are invited to come to the clinic for tours. Staff will be available to answer questions about the clinic.

PENNY-A-PIN-SPECIAL
AT SANDY HILL
LANES BOWLING
CENTER

During this special, bowlers only pay for what they score. Bowl a 200 or higher and your game is free. Enjoy this limited-time special with the entire family. Shoe rental is additional. Reservations are not available. For details please call 830-6422.

Did You Know?

The temperature on the sun can reach 15,000,000 degrees.

Ugly Gown Ball: Spouses celebrate Marine Corps' birthday not in style



Marine spouses do the Ugly Gown Macarena during the judging portion of the ball Nov. 18.

LANCE CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

LANCE CPL. REGINA N.
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COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

As the Marine Corps finishes celebrating its 231st birthday, ladies from the Combat Center community put on their ugliest gowns, make-up and accessories for a ball all their own.

More than 100 Marine spouses and family members attended the 2nd annual Ugly Gown Ball at the Combat Center Officer's Club Saturday.

The ball was similar in many ways to a traditional Marine Corps birthday ball celebration, complete with a guest of honor, reading of the birthday messages, a cake-cutting ceremony and dancing.

But instead of trying to find the most beautiful dress,

with matching make-up and accessories, the ladies went to thrift shops to find the ugliest dress, wackiest make-up and craziest jewelry for the ball.

The ball was funded by Marine Corps Community Services as an Operation Enduring Families event for spouses of deployed Marines and sailors, said Ann Woods, this year's ball coordinator and wife of Maj. Arthur Woods, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, who is deployed to Iraq.

"This is just a great chance for the wives to get out and have a good time — celebrate the Marine Corps birthday without spending too much money while their husbands are deployed," she said.

The spouses married to their Marine the longest and

shortest amount of time took part in the evening's cake-cutting ceremony, alongside the guest of honor.

This year's guest of honor was Stephanie Stratton, the wife of Larry Stratton, who spent all 21 years in the Marine Corps by his side. She spoke to the crowd about how she realized she didn't just marry Stratton, but also the Marine Corps and about her experiences as a Marine's spouse.

Stratton urged spouses to reach out to each other and although the friends she had made aren't the ones she talks to on a daily basis, they are the friends that help her during tough situations, like family does, she explained.

Soon after the speech by the guest of honor, the ladies

were invited out to the dance floor to dance and strut their stuff for the judges who were looking for the ugliest gown of the evening.

There were awards for the ugliest gown runner-up, ugliest gown, best accessories, makeup and hair and best of the 60's, 70's and 80's. There were also two honorable mentions for originality for gowns made with camouflage motif, said Woods.

"The judges had their work cut out for them," she said. "There was a great showing compared to last year and a lot of great gowns."

Krista Ferguson, wife of Staff Sgt. Robert Ferguson, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, had a great time at last year's ball and was excited to go to this year's, she said.

Her husband was deployed during last year's ball season, as well as this year.

"There's a lot more people this year than last year," she explained. "This is just a good way to take your mind off of him being away and to have a good time."

"This base has such a tight-knit community and I think it's good that we get out together while our husbands are deployed," she continued.

It's known that in the military community, families come and go, but the Marine Corps keeps families tied by its traditions. The ladies of the Combat Center community seem to have added a new tradition to the Marine Corps' legacy, keeping spouses of the frequently deployed intact and in good company.

Toys for Tots golf tourney, a chance to have a little fun and raise a little money

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A.
KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It didn't matter if you were a professional golfer or you couldn't even hit the ball on the third swing, the day was about having fun and supporting the Toys for Tots program.

More than 110 players showed up for the 4th annual Toys for Tots Golf Tournament at Desert Winds Golf Course Nov. 17. Installation and Logistics sponsored the scramble shotgun start tournament.

Suited up in dress blues, two Marines accepted toys and donations and sold raffle tickets as players arrived. Items such as golf for two at a Professional Golf Association West or Trilogy Golf Club and various gift certificates were raffled off.

"The event was outstanding," said Gunnery Sgt. Mario Morones, Toys for Tots coordinator. "We collected \$1,024.30, \$53 Santa silvers and 109 toys for the program."

The event, for many was a way for some to get off work and spend a little time with coworkers having fun while also allowing them to donate.

"The tournament was a success," said Fred Bryant, deputy, Exercise Support Division, I&L,



Cpl. Paul Walker accepts donations for the Toys for Tots program at the Combat Center's 4th annual Toys for Tots Golf Tournament Nov. 17.

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

Drink milk, it can do your body good

LT MICHAEL J. MERO, MS, RD

DEPARTMENT HEAD, NUTRITION MANAGEMENT

Did you pay attention to the Halloween Costumes this October? Wherever you looked, there were vampires, ghosts, or bony skeletons grinning back at you. Vampires and ghosts don't really exist, but skeletons sure do! Every single person has a skeleton made up of many bones. These bones give your body structure, let you move in many ways, protect your internal organs, and more. It's time to look more closely at your bones and their health — the adult human body has 206 of them!

If you've ever seen a real skeleton or fossil in a museum, you might think all bones are dead. Quite the opposite! The bones that make up your skeleton are all very much alive, growing and changing all the time. A baby's body has about 300 bones at birth. These eventually fuse and grow to form the 206 bones

that adults have.

During childhood and adolescence, a process occurs called modeling in which bones gain mass and undergo structural modifications. Bone formation continues at a faster pace until around 30 years of age. Throughout the remaining life span (about every 10 years), bone is continuously subjected to remodeling, a dynamic process of resorption and subsequent formation. Remodeling maintains the mechanical integrity of bone tissue by replacing fatigued-damaged older bone with new bone.

Many things can interfere with the development of a strong and healthy skeleton. Genetic abnormalities can produce weak, thin bones, or bones that are too dense. Nutritional abnormalities can result in the formation of weak, poorly mineralized bone. Many hormonal disorders can also affect the skeleton. Lack of exercise, immobilization, and smoking can

also have negative effects on bone mass and strength.

Achieving recommended levels of intake for calcium, vitamin D, and other nutrients during infancy, childhood, and adolescence is critical to maintaining healthy bones throughout life. Approximately 99% of total body calcium is found in the skeleton; therefore, the primary need for dietary calcium is for bone mineral deposition. The active process of calcium absorption in the intestines requires vitamin D, which emphasizes the fact that good bone health requires satisfactory intakes of both calcium and vitamin D.

Below are the dietary requirements for calcium (Ca) throughout the lifespan:

- Infants 0-6 months = 210 mg (Ca)/day
- Infants 6-12 months = 270 mg (Ca)/day
- Children 1-3 years = 500 mg (Ca)/day
- Children 4-8 years = 800 mg (Ca)/day
- Children 9-18 years =

1300 mg (Ca)/day

- Adults 18-50 years = 1000 mg (Ca)/day
- Adults 51-70 + years = 1200 mg (Ca)/day

The proportion of children who actually achieve the recommended calcium intake declines after the age of 2, reaching its lowest point between the ages of 12 and 19 years. That time during a child's life is when the calcium requirement is highest because the accumulation of bone mineral is at its peak. The suboptimal intakes of calcium may be related to the replacement of milk intake by soft drinks and fruit drinks.

A registered dietitian should be consulted for a more thorough assessment of diet and to make the necessary recommendations to improve calcium intake. The RD will also instruct you on reading and interpreting food labels; most importantly, how to translate the calcium percentage on the nutrition fact panel.

Below is a list of some common foods that are good sources of calcium:

Dairy foods:

- Nonfat milk – 1 cup = 223 mg
- Yogurt – 6 oz = 258 mg
- Cheese – 1 oz = 202 mg

Nondairy foods:

- Salmon – 3 oz = 203 mg
- Tofu – 1/2 cup = 204 mg
- White beans – 1 cup = 161 mg
- Broccoli, cooked – 1 cup = 62 mg
- Collards, cooked – 1 cup = 266 mg
- Baked beans, canned – 1 cup = 127 mg
- Tomatoes, canned – 1 cup = 87 mg

Foods fortified with calcium:

- Calcium-fortified orange juice – 1 cup = 300 mg
- Fortified breakfast cereals – 3/4 -1 cup = 100 mg
- Instant oatmeal – 1/2 cup = 65 mg
- Calcium-fortified soy milk – 1 cup = 200-500 mg

Another important factor in achieving optimal bone health is physical activity. Programs that have demonstrated skeletal benefits have included impact activities or

resistance-training exercises, including walking, jumping, jogging, running, soccer, racquet sports, weight lifting, dancing, hiking, and stair climbing. To promote bone and overall health, children should accomplish 60 minutes per day and adults should achieve 30 minutes per day of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.

In recognition of the importance of promoting bone health, on March 21, 2002, President George W. Bush proclaimed the years 2002 to 2011 as the Decade of the Bone and Joint. During these years, health professionals have a responsibility to assess calcium and vitamin D intake, physical activity, and adverse behaviors such as smoking and excess alcohol intake. It is important to promote the consumption of a healthful balance of nutritious foods and to adopt a quality exercise regimen.

Your bones help you out every day, so make sure you take care of them. Here are some everyday tips:

- Protect those skull bones by wearing a helmet
- When you use a skateboard, skates, or a scooter, wear wrist supports and elbow and knee pads
- Always wear the right equipment when participating in a contact sport
- Take caution when playing on a trampoline – you could end up with broken bones from jumping on them
- Strengthen your skeleton through adequate dietary calcium intakes

- Be active!

Be kind to your bones, and they will treat you right!

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your Primary Care Manager to obtain a referral to see the Registered Dietitian.

EFMP and TASKMil helps military families with special needs children

JILLIAN KING, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM

Frequent moves, changing schools and school districts, and finding new doctors are all just a part of what Military families with children handle as part of the military lifestyle. Add into the mix a child with special needs and the normal stresses and anxieties can double for families who are also trying to transfer not just medical specialty care, but also maintain their children's educational needs. The Exceptional Family Member Program and Team of Advocates for Special Kids, Military Outreach promote the idea that a well informed parent is the best advocate for their children, and that parents should be pro-active partners in the education process.

EFMP works closely with TASKMil to help military families who have children with special needs to lessen those stresses. Such families can turn to TASKMil for assistance and support in seeking and obtaining early intervention, educational, medical, and therapeutic support services for their children. The goal of TASKMil and their Web site is to give the military family the tools needed to have a smooth transition to California and give the military families additional support into receiving the vital services they need to help their children.

One of the ways TASKMil does this is through free educational workshops throughout California at various military installations. These workshops, which vary from four to eight-hours, help explain the California Special Education System, and address many military issues such as SSI, surviving a deployment, impact funds and transferring with an IEP. Advocates from TASK will also cover topics to include military resources, Tricare West information, resources available in California, information about Regional Center, how California Schools are structured, and intense training on California Special Education laws. They also share valuable information on transferring with an IEP plus deployment survival tips.

The workshops are presented at each base at least once a year although families are welcome to travel to and attend workshops at other bases. This year TASKMil will be offering workshops aboard MCAGCC on Dec. 1 and 2. Parents can pre-register by calling TASKMil at 1-866-609-3218 or by calling the Exceptional Family Member Program Office at 830-7740.



LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
Kathy Catlin drives the ball down the fairway during the Toys for Tots Golf Tournament Nov. 17.

GOLF from B1

and coordinator for the event. "Last year we had 22 teams signed up.

"This year, we had 28 teams that played in the tournament. The response to this tournament was great. Largest number of participants since Installations and Logistics Directorate started sponsoring the Toys for Tots Golf Tournament," she said.

Before the game started Col. Michael Weber, I&L director, went over what the day was about and the importance of being involved. The event, allowed participants to golf with coworkers, take a break from the everyday routine and even have a tri-tip steak meal at the end of the tournament.

"Great weather, great food, day off work, didn't lose a golf ball, so it was a great time" said Billy Fleig, M1A1 Abrams tank mechanic.

The winning teams for the first flight of players was Jess Cook, Mark Carrington, Mike Hannasch and Karl Nugent. The winners for the second flight of players was Jim Sanderson, Mike Curtin, John

Kosa and Jim Sanderson jr.

Many of the golfers hold strong feelings for the Toys for Tots program, the central focus of the tournament.

"The Toys for Tots program is very important," said Bryant. "The work that the Marines do to successfully gather and distribute all those toys to hundreds of children is nothing short of outstanding. I am hoping that next year's Toys for Tots Golf Tournament will be an even bigger success."

Fleig agrees that the program is beneficial, "Kids shouldn't have to suffer and receive nothing because of their parent's situation while their friends are getting a lot of presents, so I think it is a great deal. It also puts the Marines in a public environment with their dress blues on, which makes little kids dream of growing up and being a Marine and helping others out."

Volunteers are still needed for the Toys for Tots campaign. For more information or to become a volunteer, contact Gunnery Sgt. Mario Morones at 830-6861 or e-mail mario.morones@usmc.mil.

