

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 16, 2007

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 50 ISSUE 10

Osprey tests capabilities at MCAGCC



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

An MV-22 Osprey airlifts an M777 Howitzer at the Combat Center's Strategic Expeditionary Landing Facility March 7.

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The intense gust from the MV-22 Osprey's rotor wash kicked up dust around the landing strip as the aircraft hovered above an M777 howitzer.

The Osprey was put to the test at the Combat Center's Strategic Expeditionary Landing Facility Wednesday to see if it had the

capability to airlift the M777 and be able to maneuver properly while flying. Prior testing had shown that the Osprey was able to carry the M198 howitzer. Wednesday's experiments were the first involving the M777.

"This is a first for the aircraft," said Staff Sgt. Mike F. Stumpf, a crew chief with VMX-22 Tiltrotor Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron based at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. "This test is to prove the

Osprey can externally lift the M777."

"The test will also help prove the Osprey's versatility," he added.

The test consisted of single-point and dual-point lifts, said Cpl. Brian E. Brosnan, a landing support specialist with Operations Platoon, Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

A single-point lift is four chains connecting the aircraft to one point on the cargo. A dual-point lift connects on two separate points on

the cargo. The dual-point lift is designed to distribute the weight carried by the aircraft more evenly.

According to the USMC Concepts and Programs 2005, the Osprey is a state-of-the-art aircraft that can lift up to 10,000 pounds can reach an altitude of approximately 20,000 feet and a maximum airspeed of 260 knots.

See OSPREY, A5

Conversion program opens doors for LAV crewmen

CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Their first few years in the Marine Corps are spent specializing on the light armored vehicle, and at that pivotal time in a Marine's career when they pick up their first rocker to become a staff noncommissioned officer, they are re-designated as an infantry unit leader.

Now, under Marine Administrative Message 137/07, LAV crewmen, 0313 military occupational specialty, can stay within their field for their entire career, and the Marine Corps is on the search for prior LAV crewmen, as well as other LAV-experienced Marines, to fill the LAV community's Staff NCO ranks.

The LAV Crewmen SNCO Conversion Program is designed to provide Light Armored Reconnaissance battalions with LAV experienced SNCOs. Before the program, once a LAV crewman was re-designated as an infantry unit leader, 0369, they were dispersed

into the vast infantry field, and some LAR battalions would receive inexperienced SNCOs.

"With all the training, education and the additional knowledge a LAR SNCO must know such as vehicle maintenance, employment, and gunnery, the Marine Corps is at a great loss because the community rarely retains the Marine for more than one tour," said Capt. Paul Gillikin, manpower analyst at Plans, Policies and Operations, Headquarters Marine Corps. "The LAR community cannot recoup its investment, as 0369s can be sent to a regular infantry battalion, which greatly outnumber LAR battalions."

Over the past few years, the Light Armored Reconnaissance Operational Advisory Group, consisting of LAR battalion commanders and senior enlisted leaders, voiced their concern to the Ground Combat Element Advocate and the Ground Conference, explained Gillikin.

See LAV, A4



CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

A new Marine Administrative Message calls for the retention of staff noncommissioned officers in the light armored crewman military occupational specialty.

Weekend Weather

Friday  89/52
Very Warm

Saturday  88/53
Very Warm

Sunday  83/51
Very Warm

Inside this issue

• A6: 3/4 Marines bid homage to fallen warrior

• A10: 3/11 Marine awarded for superior performance of duties

• A12: Penny for your thoughts

Observations



The Lt. Dan Band rocked the Sunset Cinema

This Day in Marine Corps History

— 1922 —

Marines guarded the U.S. mail during a national crime wave.

Key Volunteer Network Update

If you've never heard from your unit's Key Volunteer, here's why you need to make five minutes to pick up the phone and get in touch.

- If you've heard any rumors about life in Twentynine Palms or the status of your deployed or deploying Marine or sailor, but don't know if it's the truth.
- If you don't feel like a part of the Combat Center family.

The Key Volunteer -

- * Is the spouse of a Marine in the unit.
- * Must complete Key Volunteer Training.
- * Serves as a communication link between the unit and its families.
- * Assists in developing and maintaining a sense of community within the unit.
- * Is a reliable source of information and referral.

The "Key" in Key Volunteer Network is more than just a name. It's the Key to information and community cooperation.

Get the straight scoop from the Key Volunteer Network.

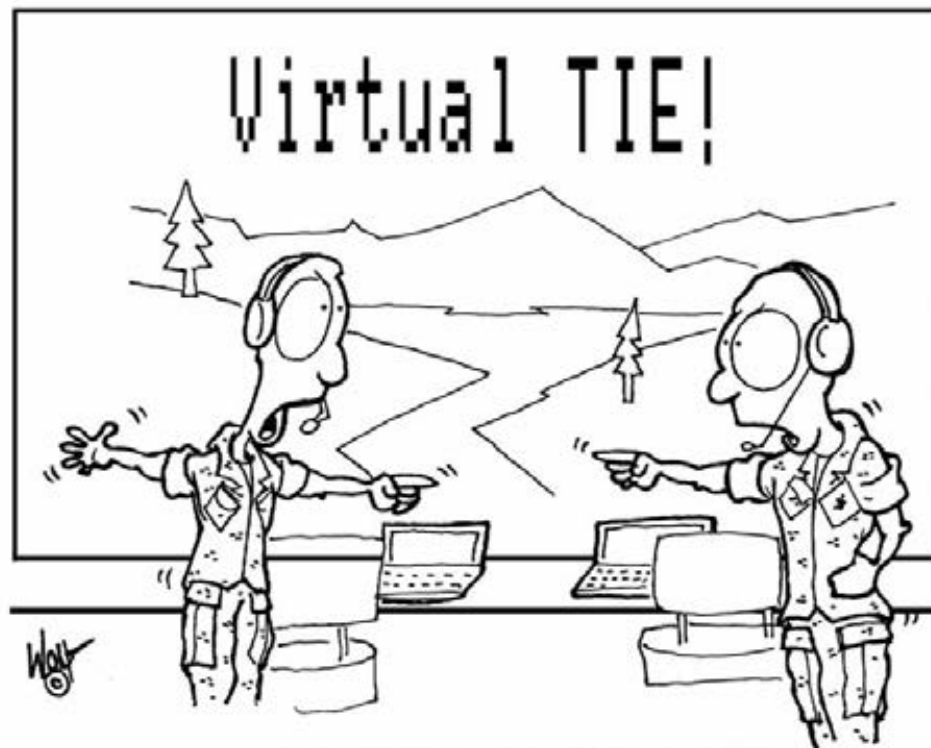
Call Monica McBroom at 830-4163, or Gunnery Sgt. Tim Perez at 830-6613, to find out how to get your own Key.

Visit <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/kvn/index.cfm> to find out more information.

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

I virtually got you first,...NO! WAY!,
I virtually got you first,..NO!,..I virtually got you first,
NO!,... I virtually got you first,



WWW.SEMPERTOONS.COM

MYSFACE.COM/SEMPERTOON

C.O.P. Corner



Community Oriented Policing



The proactive voice of crime prevention

Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

Deterring theft

To this date there have been 35 larcenies on the Combat Center. There is a constant problem with thefts. It can range from a high dollar item, such as a motorcycle, to a small thing, such as a pack of cigarettes.

There are so many ways to put a stop to, or at least minimize the number of thefts. One way is to mark all personal belongings. However, that still may not be enough to stop criminals, therefore you can also log in a note book, or on a note pad, the item description and serial number, along with distinct markings on the item, i.e. a big scratch on the top of a laptop.

Providing police with the above information gives them a much better chance of returning your property. Military Police use this information in reports and check local pawn shops or trading posts for any items that may have been stolen. It is also your responsibility to keep track of the things you use and leave out.

You would not leave your bicycle out all night, nor would you leave your garage door open for a criminal to rummage through your stuff. Not all people are lucky enough to get their belongings back to them in a timely manner. These are just a few ideas to help keep your belongings safe, and to aid law enforcement in the timely recovery of your property in case it does become stolen.

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

U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Are you interested in filling an operational billet with U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command?

If so, contact the MARSOC Recruiting, Screening, Assessment, & Selection team at Marine Special Operations School, or go to the MARSOC Web site at www.marsoc.usmc.mil, or send an email to msos.a&s@usmc.mil and you will be contacted.

We are looking for the following MOS's:

- Ground Combat Arms Officers, (2nd Lt.- Maj.)
- 02xx enlisted and officer, (1st Lt.-Capt.)
- 0311, 0331, 0341, 0351 (Lance Cpl.-Sgt.)
- 0369, (SSgt-Gunnery Sgt.)
- 0621, (Lance Cpl.-Sgt.)

Prerequisites:

- You must be a volunteer.
- You must be a US citizen.
- You must have a minimum GT score of 105 (may be waived for exceptionally qualified personnel).
- You must be medically and physically qualified for duty.
- You must score a 1st class PFT for your age group.
- You must have a minimum of 36 months obligated service upon reporting to MARSOC.
- You must be eligible to possess a security clearance.
- You must be eligible to receive orders, (minimum of 2 deployments with your present unit or 3 years on station, or any first term Marine within 12 months of re-enlistment)

Disqualifiers:

- NO Courts martial convictions.
- NO NJP within the last 12 months or more than 2 in service.
- NO derogative Page 11 entries within last 12 months (may be waived).
- NO drug incidents.
- NO alcohol related incidents within last 12 months or more than 2 in service.
- NO adverse fitness reports within last 12 months (may be waived).

Process for application:

1. If you do not have an email account, call the following numbers: 910-450-2722/2759/2760/2762
2. If you have an email account (.mil or civilian) you may go to the MARSOC Web site (www.marsoc.usmc.mil), and click on the recruiting link or send an email to msos.a&s@usmc.mil. One of our RSAS team members will forward you a Command Screening Checklist.

U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

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

Businesses WE ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
MAKING FOR DRINKING RESPONSIBILITY

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

MC-CES
ARRIVE ALIVE
A Division of the Department of Defense

MC-CES
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A Division of the Department of Defense

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

Centerspeak

“What are you plans for St. Patrick’s Day?”

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



SGT. MICHAEL F. BASCOM
COMPANY B, MCCES



CPL. ROBERT B. CARDWELL
RCT-7



PFC MIKLOS T. KULTSAR
COMPANY B, MCCES

“Cook corned beef and relax with the family.”

“We’re going to San Diego to see some friends.”

“I’m going to try and go to Palm Springs to shop and eat out somewhere.”

What’s on your mind?

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

Call Cpl. Evan M. Eagan at 830-5472

Or e-mail to: evan.eagan@usmc.mil

OBSERVATION POST

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HOT TOPICS

VEHICLE REGISTRATION BUILDING WILL BE CLOSED

The Vehicle Registration Office, Bldg. 900, will be closed today. Normal hours will resume Monday at 6 a.m.

MARINE SECURITY GUARD SCREENING TEAM VISIT

The MSG screening team is coming to the Combat Center March 29. The team will be screening all interested Marines for the demanding duty with the State Department. The screening will be at the Protestant Chapel from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. All Marine to be screened will report in the Charlie uniform and have their Commanding Officers Screening Checklist (Phase 1), Financial worksheet, medical and dental records. For more information, contact the base career retention specialist Gunnery Sgt. Whitaker at 830-6171 or see your unit CRS.

TAX CENTER OPEN

Tax Center hours Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Appointments are recommended. To schedule, call 830-4829. Please bring in the following documents at the time of your appointment:

- All W-2's for yourself and spouse.
- Bank interest or dividend statements.
- Social security cards for everyone on return.
- Proof of your bank account, either MyPay bank printout or blank check, for direct deposit.
- Original power of attorney, if applicable.
- Prior year tax return.

The Tax Center can only prepare returns for active-duty, reserve, retired and dependants of service members.

No rental property or self-employment returns are prepared at the Tax Center. Itemized deductions begin Feb. 15. Please make arrangements for child care.

ROAD CLOSURES

The Bourke Road and Eighth Street intersection will remain closed. This area will be repaved in the near future to correct a drainage problem.

• Del Valle Road will be repaved from Adobe Road to Tenth Street. Stoplights will be installed on Del Valle at the Third and Fifth Street intersections as part of this project. The repaving work will be phased in order to minimize disruptions to traffic flow on Del Valle, but detours onto Mainside will be required. The construction period will be from approximately March 1 to Sept. 1. Please be attentive to all traffic control signs.

CONSTRUCTION AT HOSPITAL EFFECTS PARKING LOT ACCESS

Entering and exiting the hospital patient parking lot will be reduced to one lane due to the construction of new sidewalk and repair of the existing sidewalk to the clinics. A flagman will be on site to direct the flow of traffic to minimize inconvenience. Construction will last approximately three to four weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Entering and exiting the hospital patient parking lot will be reduced to one lane at times, due to the construction of a new sidewalk, from Sturgis Road to the

clinics. A flagman will be on site to direct the flow of traffic, to minimize inconvenience. Construction will last approximately three weeks. We apologize for any inconvenience, these projects may cause.

LEISURE ITEMS

LINCOLN MILITARY HOUSING CURRENTLY HIRING LIFEGUARDS

Lincoln Military Housing is currently hiring lifeguards for the housing area pools. The candidates must be CPR and First Aid certified. All qualified applicants should apply at the Lincoln Military Housing Office between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. The pay range will be between \$9 - \$11/hour depending on experience. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled. For more information, please call Lincoln Military Housing at 368-4500.

THE SAFETY CENTER IS LOOKING FOR MOTORCYCLE ITEMS

The safety center is looking for motorcycle related items to be used as visual aids during the Basic and Experienced Rider courses. Any and all donated items will be used to help aid the MCAGCC Riders awareness about motorcycle rules, regulations, and PPE requirements aboard the base. Remember, if you donate old gear instead of throwing it away, you could be responsible for saving a Marine's life. Some main items we are looking for are:

- Helmets (damaged or not)
- Skid lids (novelty helmets) (damaged or not)
- Riding boots (damaged or not)
- Good examples of winter riding gear
- Good examples of summer riding gear
- Any vests (mil-spec or regular) (damaged or not)
- Or anything else you think would help heighten the MCAGCC's rider awareness

The point of contact is Sgt. Bridges and he can be reached at 830-3000 every weekday except Wednesday, where he can be reached at 830-6154, and 819-2270 during off-duty hours.

DESERT WINDS GOLF COURSE ANNUAL BASE GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Desert Winds Golf Course will host its Annual Base Golf Championship today at 9 a.m. The format is individual stroke play. The cost is \$35 per person and includes greens fee, golf cart, range balls, a steak lunch and prizes. Call 830-6132 to sign-up.

AMERICAN RED CROSS LIFEGUARD TRAINING

The American Red Cross is holding lifeguard training April 2 – April 6 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. The cost of the course is \$75 and can be payed at the Red Cross on Hallee Road in Joshua Tree. Participants must bring receipt to class for verification. Anyone 15 years of age or older may sign up for this training. Bring a swimsuit, towel, sunscreen, and water on the first day. Be sure to also bring lots of warm clothing. Participants must make their own lunch arrangements. The point of contact for this is Mrs. Melville and she can be reached at 830-6212.

Final Notice!

Town hall meeting for Vista Del Sol residents

The town hall meeting will be held for all Vista Del Sol residents. If you haven't attended any of the prior meetings attendance at this meeting is required to be eligible to be issued portable air conditioners. The town hall meeting will be conducted at the Protestant Chapel. It is important to have this information disseminated as installation instructions and demonstrations will be given.

Monday

6 to 8 p.m.



CPL. GRAHAM PAULSGROVE

Marines from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion prepare to leave for Operation Al Fajr in February 2005.

LAV from A1

Finally, the MARADMIN that included the intent of the conversion program, as well as a list of names of qualified SNCOs with a prior

military occupational specialty of LAV crewman was released Feb. 27 Marine Corps-wide. It was only the beginning of the search for Marines to convert back to their original MOS.

Other volunteers with past LAV experience are highly encouraged to apply for the conversion as well, such as those who have served in an LAR battalion and were in the MOS's: 0352, Tube-

launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missileman; 0341, mortarman; and 0311, rifleman/scout.

Reservist in the MOS's tanker and amphibious assault vehicle crewman,

who are drilling with 4th LAR Battalion can also convert, said Gillikin.

A selection process has been designed to verify eligibility and LAR experience that will ensure proper pro-

motion flow and timing. In May, a MARADMIN will be released with selected names, and an involuntary conversion process will follow if needed, according to the MARADMIN.

This is a one-time program to jumpstart the change in the MOS. Then, the Marine Corps manpower system will plan for retention, promotion, accessions, and attrition as needed. Those interested in converting or who would like to apply, should contact their career retention specialist by March 27.

The program is estimated to affect more than 200 active duty Marines and 40 reservists, said Gillikin.

Marines who convert are projected to promote faster, said Gillikin.

"The average 0313 will be promoted about a year and a half before the average 0369 to master gunnery sergeant, two years earlier for master sergeant, a year and a half earlier for gunnery sergeant, and a few months earlier for staff sergeant," he explained.

Master Sgt. Scott Zaehler, operations chief, 3rd LAR, has more than 20 years in the LAV field and was converted to a infantry unit leader when he picked up staff sergeant, he said.

"This program will enable us to keep the experience within the LAR battalions," he said. "I highly recommend the staff sergeants, gunnies, and all staff NCOs to consider this conversion to keep the expertise where it is needed."

For more information on the conversion, log on to <http://www.hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil>.

OSPREY from A1

During the first trial, the hooks connecting the Osprey's cargo chains to the grounding cables broke free of each other before the M777 was lifted off the ground. The landing support specialists reacted quickly and were able to reconnect the chains. On the second attempt, the Osprey successfully hoisted the artillery piece off the ground.

The Osprey flew a lap over the hills surrounding the airfield with the howitzer in tow. When the aircraft returned, it carefully landed the M777 before disconnecting and landing to refuel while the landing support specialists prepared for the next trial.

The Osprey successfully lifted the Howitzers again on the third attempt.

"This proves that the Osprey will play a huge part in the future of the Marine Corps," Stumpf said, regarding the aircraft's heavy-lift capabilities. "We can operate anywhere in the Middle East from Kuwait. It's an awesome aircraft."

On the ground, eight landing support specialists and one Navy corpsman participated in the testing.

The Osprey crew that was



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Marines from Operations Platoon, Combat Logistics Battalion 7 prepare lift equipment so an M777 Howitzer can be airlifted by a MV-22 Osprey at the Combat Center's Strategic Expeditionary Landing Facility March 7.

engaged in the tests is based at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C. They were

operating out of Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. in order to conduct the tests.

An explanation of certain customs and courtesies

LT. COL. MARK A. WERTH
2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING FAMILY
READINESS OFFICER

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. — Have you ever wondered why your Marine stands at attention during the playing of the National Anthem when you are at a sporting event? Or, why he is so stiff? I know I have received those questions. Lots of military customs and courtesies go unknown to a significant portion of this Nation's population particularly, when members of our Corps silently obey those time honored traditions while in civilian clothes. Here is a short list of things you may or may not know:

The National Anthem. When played, the service member will stand at attention and cover his heart with his right hand. If covered while in uniform, the service member will salute the National Ensign (our flag). It is also appropriate for the service member to turn and face the flag during the playing of the National Anthem. The appropriate civilian action is to place your right hand over your heart and stand still while facing the flag.

Passing of the National Ensign. It is fitting to render proper honors to the Nation's symbol by standing when the flag passes. You will see this at parades or during a Command Review. For Marines in uniform and covered, rendering a salute is also proper.

The Salute. Its history dates back a long way and there are several versions of why it exists. All theories agree on one thing, it is a courtesy that is offered when two individuals pass, similar to the tipping of a hat to acknowledge the presence of a lady. In the military, the salute is a greeting between an officer and an enlisted member or between a junior officer and senior officer. All services, to include the Coast Guard, recognize saluting procedures. Some services apply different constraints on when a salute is rendered. For

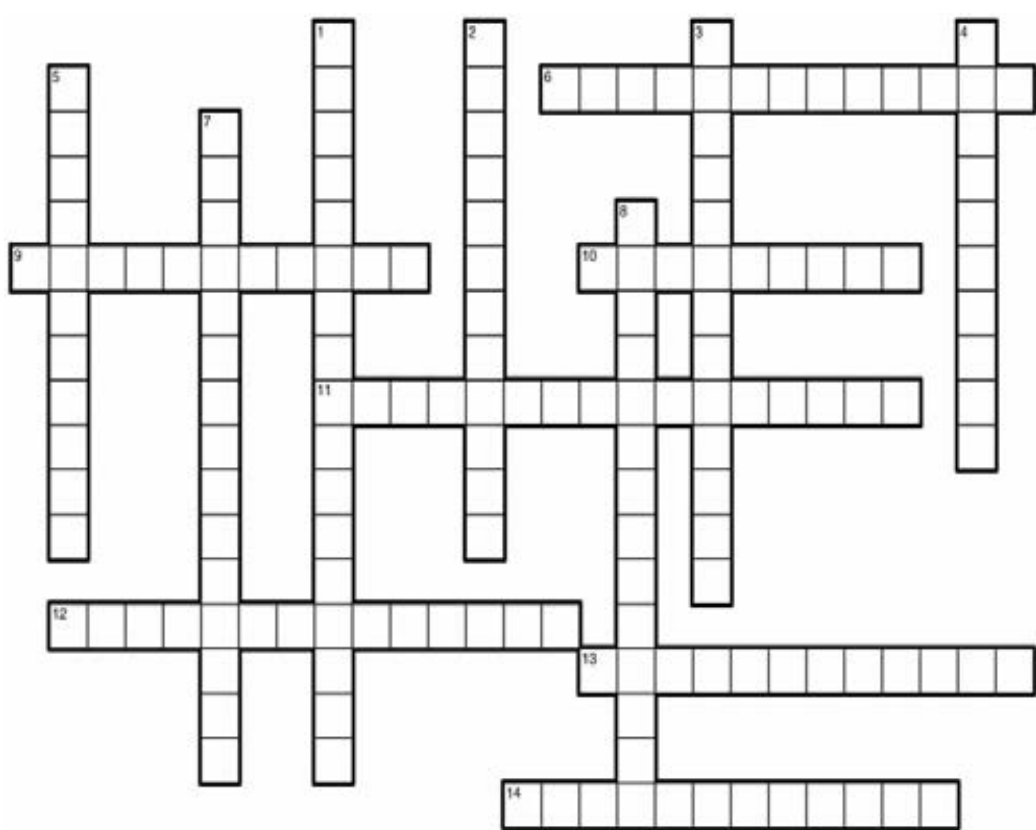
example, in the Marine Corps, a member will only salute while wearing a cover. In the Army, saluting in Physical Training clothing is appropriate although no cover exists. For all services, the salute begins with the junior rendering the salute and the senior returning the salute. The appropriate civilian greeting is to simply say good morning ma'am or good evening sir. This is also the appropriate military greeting for Marines when not covered.

Service Songs. Service songs are as historic as the service herself and most military members take great pride in hearing their song played. For Marines, we consider our "Marine's Hymn" to be a song that tells our lore and for most, it makes us swell up with pride when we hear it. Accordingly, we stand at attention when it is played. We also recognize our service within the Department of the Navy and therefore find it fitting to render the same honor to "Anchors Aweigh". You will hear both songs played at formal settings such as a Sergeant Major Post and Relief or a Change of Command ceremony. Appropriate civilian action during a service song is to sit and listen with pride. Of course, we'd love to see you

stand beside us and know that you too are probably swelling up with pride for the love of your Marine.

I hope this letter has helped you understand just a couple of our Nation's and our Corps' customs and courtesies. Semper Fidelis.

BASKETBALL LEGENDS



ACROSS

- Chicago Bulls' King of Air - known for hanging up in the air on his way toward basket with tongue dangling out of his mouth.
- Hard-working, barely 6 ft. star sometimes know as "Zeke" who retired as Detroit Pistons' all-time leader in points, assists, and steals.
- All-around Celtic legend, especially known for his 3- point accuracy and last-second heroics.
- "Human Highlight Film" - With the perfection of his many skills and individual plays, he made a name for himself with the Hawks and continued the tradition with other teams; 2-time Slam Dunk Champ.
- Stocky Phoenix Suns star known for attitude and controversy and being a little heavy.
- The wondrous DR. J.
- Utah Jazz point guard known for hooking up the Mailman; holds record for career assists as well as career steals.

DOWN

- 7-2, 267 lb. Lakers legend. Time magazine's history's greatest basketball player; best-selling author; actor; flim producer; holds all-time scoring record.
- True Laker star both as player and coach, despite hardships with testing HIV+; surpassed Robertson's record of career assists.
- The Admiral - lean, muscular Spurs star known for his rebounding as well as his community work off the court
- The "Mailman."
- "Big Game James" - known for one-handed swooping dunks for the Lakers, among other things; he was "Worthy" of the Hall of Fame.
- "The Big Dipper" - held several records in his time including career points (once scored 100 pts in one game) and still holds record for career rebounds.
- Nigerian-born Rockets star who jukeed defenders with "Dream Shake" and then denied them on the other end - still holds the record in career.

[Solutions on A8]

3/4 Marines bid homage to fallen warrior in Western Al Anbar, Iraq

CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

WESTERN AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq – Lance Cpl. Brian A. Escalante's best friend described him as a quiet and conservative guy – "that's if you didn't know him," he said. But those who had the honor of being close to Escalante remembered him as outgoing, energetic, professional, competent, smart and a "field Marine."

Escalante's fellow Marines and Sailors gathered at a chapel inside a Marine outpost in northwestern Al Anbar province, Iraq, to remember and celebrate his life during a

memorial service in his honor, Feb. 25.

Escalante, who was a 25-year-old infantry mortarman, died Feb. 17, while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province. The Dodge City, Kan., native, was serving his second combat deployment with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment.

Inside the chapel during the memorial service stood Escalante's comrades, crowded closely together to fit as many Marines and Sailors in the chapel and out of the mild sandstorm that was brewing. Along with the desert colored and slightly worn-out Marine

Corps utilities, all bore a stoic façade for internal torment as they paid their respects and homage to their fallen friend.

As part of a traditional tribute to fallen Marines, Escalante's memorial was represented by his helmet set atop his service rifle with the bayonet stuck into sandbags. From the pistol grip of the rifle hung his dog tags, and in front of the sandbags stood his combat boots. A picture of Escalante stood right behind the memorial – teeth grinning, face full of sweat and his combat protective gear on as he was manning a guard post when the picture was taken.

All who attended listened in silence to those who spoke of Escalante, mostly commenting on what they remembered best about him.

Aside from his "huge smile which was usually hidden behind his big mustache," Escalante was known best for his performance in the field, said his platoon sergeant, Gunnery Sgt. Chad A. Zimmerman, a 30-year-old Onida, S.D., native with Weapons Company, 3/4.

"If we can only keep Escalante in the field, things would be a lot better for us all," said Zimmerman,

describing his first impressions of Escalante. "That's where he performed the best. His attention to detail and his intensity was what made him one of the best all around Marines in the platoon."

His willingness to step up to every challenge he was handed and his dedication to the welfare of his fellow Marines is what his peers admired him for, said Marines here.

"He was a true warrior," said his platoon commander, 1st Lt. Jonathan Joannides, a 26-year-old Eden Prairie, Minn., native. "His proficiency of his job, his passion for the welfare of his Marines, and deep love for his family, especially his son, Escalante is a model for all to live by."

As Escalante embarked on his journey in the Corps during 2004, he made a friend while attending the School of Infantry in Camp Pendleton, Calif., Cpl. Ryan P. Harty. After entry level infantry training, both Marines joined the battalion together during August 2004.

Harty, a 22-year-old from Lindsborg, Kan., remembers their last conversation together, which was about Escalante's son, Aidyn.

"That's actually how most of our conversations start-

ed," said Harty. "Aidyn was always his biggest concern."

While battalion members grieve that Escalante's son will not have his father's guidance as he grows from a boy to a man, he will always have the only thing fallen Marines leave behind to their children – the legacy of his father, said Navy Lt. Alan M. Rogers, 3/4's battalion chaplain.

"In Aidyn's case, we are confident that he will find an example of what it truly means to be a man, and that his father's example will provide him a magnetic north on a moral compass that will keep him on the proper azimuth in life," said Rogers. "Brian Escalante lived and finished well, his mission on this earth is complete and his honor secure."

As the service ended, the Marines and Sailors who joined to honor the life of Escalante were given a moment, individually, to touch his helmet and render a salute.

"I think one of the things that impressed me the most about Escalante, was the respect he received from his peers and the ability to lead those around him," said Weapons Company commander, Capt. Gregory P. Gordon, a 31-year-old Joelton, Tenn., native.

Although his life was cut short, his cause and reason he served in the Marine Corps continues, said Gordon.

The battalion's operations of patrolling the Euphrates River cities that lie here, just miles east of the Iraq-Syria border, continue. The four-time Iraq-deployed battalion is finishing their sixth month of the deployment. Long days and nights of patrolling streets in search of insurgents and terrorist activity are paying off as local leaders are saying this region is the "safest place" in Al Anbar Province. Along with combat operations, the Marines are also working alongside the Iraqi Security Forces, imparting with them military tactics and procedures essential to manning their country on their own.

"We have to always remember that our actions are a direct representation of our lost brother," said Gordon. "We must make certain that our own lives bring honor to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. We do this by not only continuing our operations here and actively pursuing those who would do us harm, but also on our personal lives and our contributions to our society as a whole."

Effective Monday
the Marine Corps Community Services NAF Personnel Office will be relocated to the upper east side of Bldg. 1533 across from Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field. For more information please call 830-6163.



Birth announcements



KENDALL SIERRA FIFE

Daughter of Pfc. and Mrs. Justin Fife
Born Jan. 19, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. and measuring 21.3 inches.

HADEN ABEL RAMIREZ

Son of Lance Cpl. and Mrs. Ernest A. Ramirez
Born Jan. 21, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 13 oz. and measuring 22.3 inches.

MICHAEL EMBERY FULLER

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Aaron Fuller
Born Jan. 24, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 2 oz. and measuring 18 inches.

CHAD CHRISTOPHER LAMB

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Christopher Lamb
Born Jan. 26, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. 11 oz. and measuring 20.8 inches.

HAYDEN TYLER BYRNE

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Kevin T. Byrne
Born Jan. 26, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 12 oz. and measuring 21 inches.

BAILEY CHRISTOPHER KEPNER

Son of Lance Cpl. and Mrs. Ernest A. Ramirez
Born Jan. 29, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 13 oz. and measuring 22.3 inches.

GWENDALYN ROSE SMITH

Daughter of Cpl. and Mrs. Micah Smith
Born Jan. 30, 2007, weighing 9 lbs. and measuring 19.6 inches.

GIULIANI SOFIA MARENGO-BARBICK

Daughter of Mr. and Lt. Cmndr. Antionette Marengo-Barbick
Born Jan. 31, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 8 oz. and measuring 19.1 inches.

AMIEL L. ESCOBAL

Son of Petty Officer 1st Class and Mrs. Alex Escobal
Born Jan. 31, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. and measuring 19 inches.

LILLIAN RUTH ABELSON

Daughter of 1st Lt. and Mrs. Pete Abelson
Born Feb. 1, 2007, weighing 5 lbs. 1 oz. and measuring 18.2 inches.

DARYL DEWAYNE MCVICKER JR.

Son of Seaman and Mrs. Daryl McVicker
Born Feb. 3, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 7 oz. and measuring 18 inches.

RYLEE JUNE BURGE

Daughter of Cpl. and Mrs. Shane Burge
Born Feb. 6, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 15 oz. and measuring 19.5 inches.

RODNEY ALEXANDER FORD III

Son of Capt. and Mrs. Stephen Ford
Born Feb. 7, 2007, weighing 9 lbs. 4 oz. and measuring 20.5 inches.

KATELYNN GRACE SMITH

Daughter of Chief Warrant Officer 2 and Mrs. Jeffrey W. Smith
Born Feb. 7, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. and measuring 19.4 inches.

TOMI LEILANI GUINEVERE TOYAMA

Daughter of Mr. and Capt. Wendi Toyama
Born Feb. 10, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 8 oz. and measuring 19.6 inches.

KIERSTI ANNE CASTLETON

Daughter of Lt. and Mrs. Keith Castleton
Born Feb. 11, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 2 oz. and measuring 19 inches.

VANESSA JADE GALARZA

Daughter of Sgt. and Mrs. Andre Galarza
Born Feb. 11, 2007, weighing 7 lbs.

FIONA MARLEY STEFFENS

Daughter of Gunnery Sgt. and Mrs. Eric Steffens
Born Feb. 14, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 15 oz. and measuring 18.5 inches.

JARED RAY BORING JR.

Son of Sgt. and Mrs. Jared R. Boring
Born Feb. 15, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 1.5 oz. and measuring 19.5 inches.

JOSE NICHOLAS DIEGO

Son of Lance Cpl. and Mrs. Jose Diego
Born Feb. 15, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 13 oz. and measuring 19.3 inches.

JASPER ALVIS PEREZ

Son of Petty Officer 3rd Class and Mrs. Richard Perez
Born Feb. 15, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 1 oz. and measuring 18 inches.

SKYLAR MITCHELL MERSEREAU

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Brandon Mersereau
Born Feb. 17, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. 9 oz. and measuring 20.5 inches.

LAYLA ANNE WELLS

Daughter of Sgt. and Mrs. Justin Wells
Born Feb. 21, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 4.3 oz. and measuring 17.6 inches.

ROBERT JESSE ESCALANTE

Son of Seaman and Mrs. Steven Escalante
Born Feb. 21, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 18.6 inches.

ELISABETH ROSE JUAREZ

Daughter of Mr. and Sgt. Amy Long
Born Feb. 22, 2007, weighing 7 lbs. 3.7 oz. and measuring 18.7 inches.

KONNER WAYLON FARR

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Jeremy Farr
Born Feb. 25, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 19.5 inches.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

ROMAN CATHOLIC SERVICES

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
Sun 7:30 a.m. Rosary
Sun 8 a.m. Catholic Mass*
Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD (Bldg1551)
Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women (Bldg. 1551)
Sun 9:15 a.m. Confessions+
Sun 10 a.m. Rosary
Sun 10:30 a.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 10:30 a.m. Children's Liturgy of the Word
Sun 4 p.m. Choir Practice
Sun 4:30 p.m. Rosary
Sun 5 p.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 6 p.m. Cyrus Young Adult Group (18-35 years of age married or single (3rd Sunday of the month)
Fri 12:15 – 4:30 p.m. Exposition/Adoration Most Blessed Sacrament (1st Friday Each Month)

Ash Wednesday and Holy Days of Obligation Masses

11:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
11:30 a.m. Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital **Village Center**
Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women*
Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD

NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christ Chapel
Sun 8 a.m. Worship*
Tue 7 p.m. Praise and Worship*

TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Christ Chapel
Sun 9:30 a.m. Worship

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST SERVICE

Christ Chapel
Sun 11 p.m. Worship

LAY-LED GOSPEL SERVICE

Christ Chapel
Sun 12:30 p.m. Worship

LAY-LED APOSTOLIC SERVICE

Christ Chapel
Sun 3 p.m. Worship
Christ Chapel
2 p.m. Study of Book of Acts

MID-WEEK EVENTS

MONDAY

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m. Catholic Mass

Ocotillo Housing

7 p.m. Officer's Christian Fellowship
Call Lt. Cmdr. Faunce 830-6654 for location

TUESDAY

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
5 – 7:30 p.m. Catechist Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)
4 – 5:30 p.m. Children's RCIA
6 p.m. Baptism Class 1st Tuesday each month
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. Christian Women Fellowship*
C&E Mess Hall Bldg. 1660
11:30 a.m. Bible Study
Chaplain Flint 830-6187
Base Housing
6 p.m. All Hands Bible Study
Chaplain Taylor 830-7413 for location

WEDNESDAY

Village Center
11:30 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Prayer Room
Chaplain Flint 830-6187
6 p.m. Right of Christian Initiation for Adults*

Immaculate Heart of Mary

6 -7 p.m. Life Teen/Youth Group#
Christ Chapel
5 p.m. IHM Choir Rehearsal
5 p.m. Protestant Choir Rehearsal
5:30 p.m. Catholic Choir Rehearsal
7 p.m. Lay-Led Gospel Bible Study

THURSDAY

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
7 p.m. Knights of Columbus
1st Thursday of the Month

Christ Chapel

7 p.m. Lay-Led Apostolic Bible Study

LEGEND

*Indicates Child Care Provided
+Appointments can be made for Confessions by calling 830-6456/6646
Resumes Fall 2006

Female Marines make mark on history

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The year was 1918. A long and illustrious Corps that had been in existence since Nov. 10, 1775, would soon evolve and expand to provide females the opportunity to excel and be part of the United States Marines.

Women's History Month is a time to recognize the females who have made history and continue to make history. The name Opha Mae Johnson is a name many should recognize from boot camp. She is a female that made her mark on history after becoming the first female Marine.

Today, women serve in 93 percent of all military occupational fields and 62 percent of all billets. Women constitute 6.2 percent of the Corps end strength and are an integral part of the Marine Corps, according to the Web site, www.womenmarines.org.

"I don't see myself as a female Marine. I am a Marine," said Lance Cpl. Semone A. Campbell, a watch clerk for

Mojave Viper Support Detachment. "I am capable of doing any job as my male counterparts that the Marine Corps will allow me to do."

Being a minority can sometimes make it harder for females to excel in certain areas as Gunnery Sgt. Ruby O. Finck, utilities and maintenance chief, has observed throughout her time in the Corps since May 1993 to May 1998 and from March 2000 until the present.

"Always do 110 percent and never, never show weakness," said Finck.

Staff Sgt. Shannon Terriquez, radio chief at Mojave Viper Support Detachment agrees.

"I set high standards for myself and always try and learn three new things about the Marine Corps everyday. Most importantly, I lead by example."

Although women currently are restricted from serving in infantry regiments and certain combat military occupational specialties, they continue to leave their mark and provide stepping stones

for those to follow.

"In general, I am inspired by all the females that have been in the military before me," said Terriquez. "I am here today in the Marine Corps because they have changed the military. Women are able to do a lot more jobs in the military because of women who have pushed for change. They inspire me to do my best everyday because they sacrificed for all of us. Without them I could not be the Marine I am today."

Looking back at the lineage of female "firsts" in history will show the progress women have made.

In 1961, the first female Marine was promoted to the rank of sergeant major. In 1979, the Marine Corps allowed women to serve as embassy guards. In 1993, 2nd Lt. Sarah Deal became the first female Marine selected for Naval aviation training. In 1993, the Marine Corps opened pilot positions to women. In 1994, Brig. Gen. Carol A. Mutter became the first female major general in the Marine Corps and the senior woman on active duty



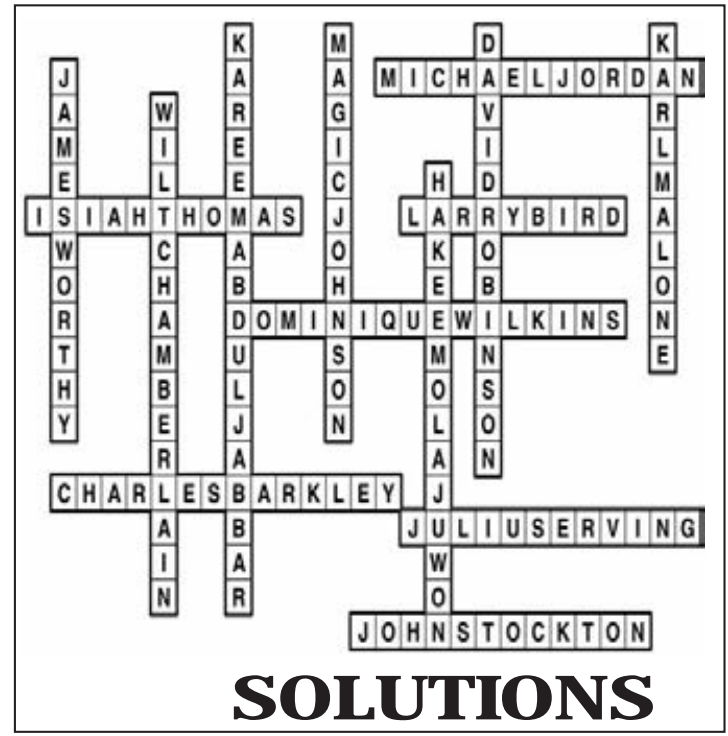
COURTESY PHOTO

These female Marines were the first to staff the Marine Corps Recruit Training Center for women at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in April 1949.

in the armed services. In 1995, the first female Marine pilot pinned on Naval flight wings and in 1996, Lt. Gen. Mutter became the first woman Marine and the second woman in the history of the armed services to wear three stars, according to the Web site.

Women continue to serve proudly beside their male counterparts and are now making history by filling command billets and achieving the same

recognition as male Marines. The long history of female firsts will continue to grow as more opportunities to excel are provided to them.



1/4 integrates virtual reality, convoy training

LANCE CPL. ERIC SCHWARTZ

1ST BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

The three-vehicle convoy slowly passed through the crowded streets of Fallujah, Iraq. The tension rose as the citizens milled around the vehicles carelessly. A celebratory event was taking place at a nearby mosque, adding an uneasy alertness to the Marines in the convoy knowing crowded areas hide insurgents and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. The Marines' daily patrol turned into absolute chaos when an IED exploded 100 meters ahead of the last vehicle.

The convoy halted instantly, dust kicked around the vehicles, while two Marines stepped out of one of the vehicles, rifles at the ready, assessing the situation. The Marines checked under their vehicle for possible IEDs and found none. The Marines were ordered to quickly come back inside the humvee to move the convoy along. They jumped back into the vehicle and after driving another 50 meters, the city instantly disappeared. The buildings, roads, citizens and endless landscape were instantly replaced by white screens surrounding them in a full circle.

This wasn't a scene from a Hollywood movie, but an actual simulation suited for the Marines of Weapons Company, Task Force 1st Battalion, 4th Marines during the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer course.

"It was really great," said Cpl. Adam Bosley, a vehicle commander with Weapons Company. "It was probably the best videogame I've ever played."

The VCCT places Marines in a convoy where they can view the battlefield in a 360 degree interface during a real-time scenario. The program looks like a virtual-reality game found in some higher-end arcades but it is meant to train Marines for patrolling in Iraq.

"The communication was really stressed here because vehicle commanders couldn't just yell at one another," said Pfc. Michael Vanderen, an assault man with Weapons Company.

The vehicle commanders, or VCs, were able to see the other vehicles in the convoy on screen but weren't able to physically view them because each vehicle was in its separate building connected through a local area network system. The VCs only form of communication was through a headset similar to the communication systems used in regular humvees.

The simulation humvees looked similar to regular humvees with tan-coated bodies and a similar shape. There was a turret in place for a gunner and four seats for a driver, VC and two dismounts. But the frame was aluminum and the wheels were stationary. Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer weapons, or ISMT weapons, replaced the traditional rifles and machineguns found in today's combat environment.

Marines normally complete IED Awareness drills, or IA drills in controlled environments without citizens or IEDs. The platoon commander normally sits in a VC position and sends information over their radio system as to where they are taking fire from or which vehicle was hit by an IED. The Marines then respond to the role-play in turn, shooting blanks at an invisible enemy.

"Normally I have to tell my Marines where the fire is coming from," said Lt. Patrick Vanhorne, a platoon commander with Weapons Company. "The VCCT forces them to react to a situation instead of me dictating the situation to them."

The Marines become more alert because the area on screen is new, whereas the normal training areas are on familiar Camp Pendleton roads.

"My Marines know Camp Pendleton like the back of their hand," Vanhorne said. "We're fighting in Iraq and not Pendleton, so this is more geared to where we're going."

"Marines can really feel the situation and participate a lot more because there are actual objects to shoot and they will shoot back at you," said retired Master Sgt. Randy Stevens, a field service representative and advisor for Lockheed Martin.

Each scenario is tweaked individually to that unit's select mission.

"We input the scenarios into the system that the unit commander tells us his Marines need to improve upon," Stevens said.

This type of selective training gives Marines the training needed in much shorter time and in a more interactive way.

"A one day event here is like a week of training in the



Pfc. Michael Vanderen, an assault man with Weapons Company, Task Force 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, searches ahead of his vehicle in the Combat Center's Virtual Convoy Combat Trainer.

field," Stevens said.

The platoon commander can view the convoy in the command center equally critiquing everyone during the exercise.

"I can see all four vehicles in the convoy instead of only seeing the one in front of me and relying on what the VCs said happened during the after-

action report," Vanhorne said.

The Marine Corps needed a way for Marines to train in real-life scenarios without real-life consequences made from mistakes, and the VCCT provides them with just that.

"The Marines pay for their mistakes in a real environment, but in a simulated one they can learn from it and try

again," Stevens said.

Gunners and VCs agree this system works but for some, there is nothing as good as the real thing.

"It's a great tool for leaders and gunners but for scouts and drivers, there's no substitution for being on an actual road," Vanhorne said.

The session ended with

Vanhorne giving his Marines the after-action report explaining what mistakes were made during the convoy and how to fix those mistakes.

Every Marine walked away unscathed by the virtual IED explosion that day and the lessons learned will help convoys during their future deployment.



LANCE CPL. JOSEPH R. STAHLMAN

MARSOC looking for a few good men

A Marine with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, Foreign Military Training Unit constructs a shelter to provide cover and concealment in the Camp Lejeune, N.C., wilderness. Active duty Marines and Navy corpsmen interested in joining MARSOC are encouraged to contact the Marine Special Operations School at (910) 450-2722/2762 or contact them online at <http://www.marsoc.usmc.mil>.

3/11 Marine awarded for superior performance of duties

LANCE CPL. KATELYN A. KNAUER

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

He is known as a man of few words and a lot of action. Staff Sgt. Randall T. McMillion, assistant operations chief for 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with a combat distinguishing device March 1, for his superior performance of duties while serving as a combat advisor in Iraq.

During his recent deployment to the Western Al Anbar province from January 2006 to January 2007, McMillion served as the combat advisor for 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force (forward).

As a combat advisor, McMillion dealt with several different aspects of training. McMillion trained Iraqi soldiers in counter-intelligence, counter-sniper, counter-insurgency, urban warfare and vehicle operations. He also conducted more than 30 live fire ranges and more than 400 hours of instruction in patrolling, detainee handling, cordon and knocks, convoy operations, immediate action drills and esca-

tion of force procedures.

Maj. Jonathan P. Dunne, 3/11 executive officer who served with McMillion in Iraq, highly regarded McMillion's leadership and work ethic.

"Staff Sergeant McMillion was absolutely invaluable during his service with the MiTT [military transition team]," said Dunne. "It takes a unique individual to serve effectively as a MiTT. Not only does it require tremendous amount of tactical and personal patience, but it requires multi-talented, resourceful individuals."

McMillion, who has served in the Marine Corps for more than 19 years and has several deployments under his belt, said working with Iraqis is much different than working with Marines.

"First there is the language barrier that's different, then work ethic," said McMillion. "It's hard teaching foreign military the way to do business when they are pretty much born into war. They fight over bread, land, religion and pretty much anything. It's a lot of work to turn them into an organized military."

Training the Iraqi forces is necessity in fighting the Global War on the Radical Islamic Movement. As Iraq's forces gain stability and con-

trol, the United States will be able to start removing its military and let them resume control. McMillion, who spent a year training those forces, knows the importance of a stable military.

"Being on a MiTT team, you do everything with the Iraqi army," said McMillion. "You're basically an attachment of the Iraqi army. The better trained they are, the better your chances are of getting out of there in one piece."

Even though McMillion accepts his award humbly, Dunne has seen firsthand the capabilities of McMillion, his work ethic, the time he spent with the forces and exactly what kind of Marine he is.

"Staff Sgt. McMillion was awarded for his actions while serving as the combat advisor for the Brigade's Scout Platoon," said Dunne. "Fulfilling responsibilities we often associate with an infantry platoon sergeant or even a Marine Gunner, Staff Sgt. McMillion created a capable war fighting unit within the Brigade. Staff Sgt. McMillion spent over 400 hours providing detailed instruction to this platoon of Iraqi soldiers, covering a myriad of counter-insurgency and combat skills. He remained embedded with this platoon, driving maintenance efforts, and inspecting the conduct of pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections. His spirited leadership and embedded presence during 18 counter-insurgency or combat missions was pivotal, as many of these missions were sustained, Iraqi-led combat operations."

While McMillion is modest and says he was just doing his job, he has built trust with his leaders and has instilled his leadership qualities on the Iraqi forces.

"If I was afforded the opportunity to serve as MiTT again, Staff Sgt. McMillion would be on the top of my list to deploy with me," said Dunne.

NASD: a penny for your thoughts

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Representatives from the National Association of Securities Dealers Investor Education Foundation visited the Combat Center March 9 to share a free financial advice and education seminar at the base theater.

This was the first time NASD visited the Combat Center, said Jany Wasdin, financial management counselor for the base. Wasdin said she felt free financial education and information is always welcome aboard the Combat Center.

"I thought it was a very good thing for them to come here," said Wasdin about the NASD seminar. "Anytime others can come and provide education, it can only do good things and improve knowledge."

NASD is the world's leading private-sector provider of regulatory services, including 5,100 brokerage firms, 171,000 branch offices and more than 660,000 registered securities representatives, according to the Web site <http://www.nasd.com>.

John Gannon, senior vice president of the NASD Foundation, spoke to Marines, sailors, civilian employees and spouses about the importance of financial security.

"We want to provide unbiased financial education for service members and their

families," said Gannon about the purpose of the seminar. "We want to encourage people who didn't attend today to look-up information which is available on our Web site." The Web site, <http://www.saveandinvest.org>, provides information such as definitions of financial terms, details on the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, tax preparations for military families, and more.

Gannon added that the mission of NASD is to provide important, unbiased information to investors who are underserved by the financial services industry.

During the seminar, NASD representatives shared many little-known facts about military members and their families being targeted by loaning companies.

Gannon said a combination of a steady pay check and a tight budget make military service members the second most targeted group for pay day loan scams, next to senior citizens.

Active duty service members are also three times more likely to take out a pay day loan than civilians, said Gannon.

He added that on average,

victims of payday loan sharks pay more than \$800 to borrow only \$325. The high interest rates, climbing as high as 500 percent, and short amount of time to pay back a loan often results in chronic borrowing and more debt.

A pay day loan should be a last resort, after late credit card payments and even bounced checks, said Gannon.

Wasdin said no one should have to suffer alone when going through financial hardships.

"Knowledge is power," said Wasdin. "They have the power to spend their money," she said about military members and their families. "All we want is for them to spend it wisely,"

Wasdin said although some people may think financial security and planning is a complex and drawn-out process, it is actually very simple.

"You have a problem until you come to my door," said Wasdin. "Then you have a solution to the problem and a plan."

If you have questions or need financial advice, do not hesitate to call the personal financial management program office at 830-7342.



LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

A speaker from the National Association of Securities Dealers Investor Education Foundation teaches attendees about sound financial management at the base theater March 9.

OBSERVATIONS

MARCH 16, 2007



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band rocked the Combat Center for the third time Sunday.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Jeff Vezain grabs hold of the microphone while singing during the Lt. Dan Band concert Sunday.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Ben Lewis rocks the keyboard while Gary Sinise jams on his bass guitar during the Lt. Dan Band concert Sunday.

Lt. Dan Band rocks Sunset Cinema

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band put on a free concert for more than 550 service members and their families at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema Sunday.

The tour, which is sponsored by the United Service Organization, plays an average of 10 to 12 shows per year across the country. This is the third time the band has visited



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Gina Gonzalez and Gary Sinise perform during the Lt. Dan Band concert Sunday at the base theater.

the Combat Center.

"We love coming," said Sinise. "It's a great feeling to come out and help our defenders. You guys deserve it."

The show was opened by commanding general, Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone introducing the band.

As the lights dimmed in the theater, singer/guitarist Gina Gonzalez sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" which received a standing ovation and kicked off the concert.

The band performed a wide variety of songs, including some by Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Police, Lee Ann Womack, Linkin Park and Marc Cohn. Gonzalez also sang a song called "A Letter Home," which she had written in support of the troops serving overseas.

As the concert drew to a close, the crowd rose to its feet roaring with applause, whistles and cheers,

which prompted an encore performance from the band. The encore ended with the song "God Bless the U.S.A." which was received by another standing ovation.

Following the encore, Stone and his wife, Kathy, personally thanked Sinise and the band on-stage and presented them with a gift package from Marine Corps Community Services. Each band member was also presented the commanding general's personal coin as a token of gratitude from the Marines and sailors at MCGCC. Sinise was labeled by the commanding general as a "superb and great American."

"I thought it was extremely entertaining, and I think it's good of them to come out and do this for the Marines every year," said Capt. Wayne W. Mai, the commanding officer of Company A, Headquarters Battalion.

"It was a pretty awesome show," agreed Lance Cpl. Brandon M.

Rapp, an infantryman with Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

After the concert, Sinise and the rest of the band signed autographs and posed for pictures for members of the audience.

Aside from the Lt. Dan Band, Sinise, with author Lauren Hillenbrand, founded Operation Iraqi Children, which is a charity that delivers school supplies to Iraqi children. Operation Iraqi Children also assisted in efforts to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina by donating approximately 3,072 school supply kits as of September 2005. For more information about Operation Iraqi

Children, visit <http://www.operationiraqichildren.org>

The band was well-received and the stellar performance was appreciated by the audience.

For more information about the band, visit <http://www.ltdanband.com>.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Gina Gonzalez sings during the Lt. Dan Band concert Sunday at the base theater.



CAROL VONIEDA

2007 Intramural Basketball Standings

As of Wednesday

MCCES A	7-0
3/7	9-1
TTECG	6-2
Tanks	5-2
MWSS-374	4-3
MCCES B	4-4
I&L	4-4
Hospital	3-5
CZY-38 Urban	1-7
3rd LAR	1-8
Magazine	1-9

Jerry Watkins jr. from Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Team A soars to the rim during a game in the Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League.

Students, Marines read across America

ANCE CPL. SEAN P. MCGINTY,
MCB CAMP PENDLETON

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. -- Marines and Sailors from the I Marine Expeditionary Force volunteered to go to the Vista Academy of Visual Performing Arts to read to the children there in order to promote literacy March 2.

Read Across America is meant to promote literacy in children by encouraging adults to read to them.

"Read across America asks that we find a caring adult to read to every child," said Dr. Janet Newman, second grade teacher at the academy. "So what do you do when you have 120 second graders? You call in the Marines."

When Marines heard the call for literacy, the volunteers came running.

"I thought it would be fun to get out and help the community, so I volunteered," said Cpl. Eric B. Horning, motor transport operator, I MEF Headquarters Group.

The 19 Marines and two Sailors arrived at the school nearly half-an-hour prior to the first bell. The children asked the Marines questions about their jobs and their time in the Corps.

As soon as the bell rang, the children assembled into their respective class lines, and the Marines fell into formation. A small Color Guard was formed, and the Marines raised the Colors to the sound of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Every Friday, the Vista Academy of Visual Performing Arts performs a morning exercise disguised as a fun dance. "The Bulldog-Boogie" was in full swing after the Pledge of Allegiance ended, and some Marines joined in the five-minute amusement.

The children were then whisked away to class, and the Marines and Sailors were not far behind. Groups split up into two different classrooms and were paired up with two or three youngsters apiece.

Since National Reading Day celebrates Dr. Seuss' birthday, most of the books read were his classics, such as "The Cat in the Hat," or "Green Eggs and Ham."

After reading to their first class, the Marines and Sailors were treated with a breakfast of green-dyed eggs and ham.

The recess bell sounded as the children were being read to, and the group of Leathernecks thought that it would be a good time to get some physical training. The second graders were more than happy to join them.

As Cpl. Stephanie M. Mendez, combat engineer, MHG, led the formation, she called out cadence written by the school about synonyms, antonyms and homonyms, with a left, right, left and an oohrah thrown in.

The formation lasted for the entire recess, and soon the Marines were back in class reading to a new group of children. After another 30-minute reading session, it was time for the service members to return to Camp Pendleton.

"I had a blast!" Horning said. "It's good to know these kids can read better than I could at their age. I was impressed!"

Before they left, Newman expressed her gratitude for the Marines, thanking them for their generosity and remarking how they impressed the children.

"The kids loved it and had a great time," Newman said. "They'll remember the message the Marines gave; it goes so much further than books."



ANNUAL Base Golf Championships

Friday, March 16th

9 a.m. Tee Time

Cost - \$35.
Includes Greens Fee, Cart, Range Balls,
Steak Lunch & prizes. Format - Individual Play

Call 830-6422 to sign up.



www.mccs29palms.com

No endorsement of the sponsor is intended by the Government or the USMC.





GUNNERY SGT. CHRIS W. COX

Easter Egg hunters scramble to get the most eggs in their basket at last year's hunt.

Easter Egg Hunt 2007

Ages	Time	Where: Dinosaur Park
4 & under	10:30 a.m.	When: April 4
5-6	11 a.m.	Bring your own basket
7-8	11:30 a.m.	For more information
9-10	12 p.m.	contact Tonia Ross at:
11-12	12:30 p.m.	830-3944 or 368-3077

Toastmasters International – A place for learning and growing

D. BULLEN

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

Toastmasters International has a total of 10,500 clubs in 90 different countries. What makes Toastmasters so popu-

lar? Simply put, Toastmasters provides a friendly and supportive environment in which all individuals can learn and grow in developing public speaking and leadership skills. Each meeting provides mem-

bers with several speaking and leadership opportunities.

What happens at a typical Toastmaster's Meeting?

First, the Club President addresses the club with club information, area or district news, or by giving helpful tips in communications and leadership. The control of the meeting is then passed to the Toastmaster who introduces the meeting staff. When called upon, each staff member describes the duties they perform during the meeting. The staff includes: ah/ grammarian counter, table topics master, Toastmaster, timer, general evaluator and trophy master. Next, the Toastmaster introduces each prepared speaker who then gives their speech. Each speaker has an assigned evaluator who will intently listen and write a speech evaluation based on the prescribed criteria provided in the speech manual. Meanwhile, the timer keeps time and signals the speaker at different intervals to ensure the time limits are kept. Next on the agenda is an exhilarating round of table topics. The table topics master provides each volunteer participant with a question and the word of the day. Participants have 1-2 minutes to

speaking off-the-cuff and use the word of the day. Challenging and fun, table topics are designed to provide another speech opportunity and to help you think on your feet. Next, speech evaluators are called on to give a full evaluation of their respective speaker. They give positive feedback as well as areas for improvement. The general evaluator evaluates the overall meeting to ensure continual improvements. Next, the trophy master presents the best speaker, best evaluator and best table topics awards as voted on by the participants. The Toastmaster closes the meeting by asking for any additional announcements and comments from our most welcomed guests.

What makes Toastmasters so popular? Most Toastmasters agree, it is the friendly and supportive atmosphere that provides the environment to learn and grow in. Club 2793, Desert Empire meets the first and fourth Wednesday of each month at the Village Center Classroom, Bldg 1551. For more club information, contact Donna Bullen at 830-6533.



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Erwin C. Demiany M.D.
FABFM

We are proud to announce that Dr. Demiany is a member of our professional medical staff.

Dr. Demiany is a graduate of the University of British Columbia and is Board Certified in Family Medicine

His hospital affiliation: Hi-Desert Medical Center and he resides in Joshua Tree with his wife and three children.

57463 Twentynine Palms Hwy., Suite 203
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228-1855

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day Don't Drink & Drive!

Myth: "Alcohol is a stimulant."

Fact: Alcohol is a depressant. It acts on the central nervous system like an anesthetic to lower or depress the activity of your brain.

Myth: "Drinking coffee sobers me up."

Fact: Coffee cannot rid your system of alcohol. It just makes you a nervous, wide-awake drunk, only time reverses impairment.

Myth: "I always stay away from the hard stuff."

Fact: Alcohol is alcohol. Beer has the same effect as straight scotch. One 12-ounce beer has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of whiskey or a 5-ounce glass of wine.

Myth: "I'm bigger so I can handle liquor better."

Fact: Size is only one factor in how much you can drink. Metabolism, amount of rest, and food intake all play a part in how you handle liquor. Impairment in motor reflexes and judgment can begin with the first drink.

Myth: "Once I roll down the car window, I'm okay."

Fact: No amount of fresh chilly air can reverse impairment. You gain nothing by rolling down a window or turning on the air conditioner.

Myth: "I just drive slower."

Fact: Many people do, believing they can actually compensate for being impaired by creeping along at 22 mph. This can be dangerous. Others race along at 75 mph. The truth is, impaired drivers are unsafe at any speed.

Myth: "All I have to do is splash my face with cold water."

Fact: Splash all you like. You can even take a cold shower, however, it won't sober you up or make you a safe driver.

Myth: "A drink or two make me a better driver."

Fact: Even one drink can cloud your thinking, dim your vision and slow your reflexes. Small amounts of alcohol can impair your judgment and put you and others on the road at risk of death or disabling injury.

Information provided by (www.luhs.org)



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