

OBSERVATION POST

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

AUGUST 31, 2007

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 50 ISSUE 35

Units leave, return to Combat Center

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M.

DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, departed here Aug. 24 - Sunday while 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, returned during that time frame.

The service members of 1/7 left for Iraq for seven months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Embarkation for 1/7 began August 24 at the Combat Center's Unit Muster Area with the departure of Company C, 1/7, otherwise known as "Suicide Charlie." Friends and family of Suicide Charlie said their final goodbyes to the deploying Marines and sailors before the company boarded the buses and began the first leg of their journey to Iraq.

"It's not good for my friends and family, but I'm not too worried about this," said Pfc. Steven Leahy, rifleman, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 1/7. "After all, somebody's got to do it."

Leahy's parents traveled from Whitefish, Mont., to see their son one last time before he left for Iraq. This is Leahy's first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I just want him to be safe and I want him to come home," said Bonnie, Leahy's mother.

Elements of 1/7 departed several other times last weekend. A second

party left Aug. 24, a third on the following morning. The final departure took place Sunday morning.

"This is my first time deploying and leaving a family behind," said Lance Cpl. Joseph B. Orozco, rifleman and radio operator for Scout Sniper Platoon, Weapons Company, 1/7. "I want to go, but I don't want to leave them."

Orozco's wife, Alisha, and 13-month-old son, Riley, were there to see him depart. Alisha stated she was very proud of what her husband is doing.

Despite the somber mood during their departure, spirits were lifted by the return of 2/7. Elements of 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, who were attached to 2/7 also returned home. A crowd of friends and family anxiously awaited the return of their loved ones at the Combat Center's Victory Field.

"I'm happy and excited," said Lisa Long, wife of Lance Cpl. Jonah Long, rifleman, Weapons Company, 2/7. "Seven months is a long time and it's good to have him home."

Long's wife, along with his mother, father and brother, traveled from Salt Lake City to welcome him home.

"I'm so relieved," said Tana Johnson, Long's mother. "The hardest thing a mother can do is send her son over there."

Retired Master Sgt. Roger Akins,



The family of Cpl. Jason Brown, a TOW gunner for Weapons Company, 2/7, holds up a banner they made to welcome him home at Victory Field Friday. IMG_8012 – The family of Cpl. Jason Brown, a TOW gunner for Weapons Company, 2/7, holds up a banner they made to welcome him home at Victory Field Aug. 24.

Vietnam veteran and resident of Twentynine Palms, Calif., stood tall and proud in his dress blue uniform awaiting the arrival of 2/7 Friday.

"My friends are coming home – a lot of young Marines," said Akins. "I

promised if they came home, I'd wear my blues for them."

For some of the Marines who returned home, like Cpl. David Carnes, machine gunner, Weapons Company, 2/7, there were new addi-

tions to their families waiting to meet them for the first time. Carnes held his two-month-old daughter, Ashlyn, for the first time Aug. 24. He was also

See UNITS, A8

Combat Center gears up for annual challenge

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The annual Combat Center Challenge draws nearer every day. This year's event will take place at Victory Field from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sept. 7.

The Combat Center Challenge's mission is to educate and inform attendees of the harmful impacts of drug and alcohol abuse, according to the July, August and September editions of the Stomping Ground magazine.

"There will be many prevention booths set up on the field for the event," said Dougwillo. "This is a great chance for commanders to put a check in a box for prevention programs."

Some of the booths include the Los Angeles Police Department, Drug Demand Reduction, and health promotions sponsored by the Naval Hospital.

In addition to information booths, patrons will have the opportunity to donate blood at the Red Cross blood drive.

"Since blood banks are low in this area, I suggest Marines and sailors get out there and donate blood," said Dougwillo.

The events this year are very similar to last year with a few exceptions.

"We'll be holding a water polo competition this year," said Dougwillo. "It didn't happen last year because the training tank was closed."

The competition will take place at the training tank near the Sunset Cinema Base Theater.

There will also be a First to Fight videogame tournament held at The Zone during lunch hours.

"The point system is a little different this year,"

said Dougwillo. "This year, the humvee pull is counted as double points. The tug-of-war, which I'd say is the most popular, counts as triple points."

Each event will give its first and second place winners Marine Corps Exchange gift certificates and T-shirts, said Dougwillo.

"The competition will help further the Marines' and sailors' skill development and provide valuable information on programs like the Drug Demand Reduction," said Dougwillo.

"This year the Combat Center Challenge is wide open since 3/7 [3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment] is not here to defend their title," said Dougwillo. "The more teams a unit puts in the better chances they have at winning the title."

In the case two or more teams tie, a basketball tournament will be held at the east Gym Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. as a last challenge to determine the winner.

It was 3/7's victory in the basketball tournament last year that named them the Combat Center Challenge champions against the previously undefeated 1st Tank Battalion, according to the Stomping Ground magazine.

The local radio station Z107.7 will be there to make announcements and a disc jockey will play music.

Kevyn Major Howard, professional photographer and actor, will also make an appearance with his Marine Memorial Race Cars to show his support of military service members and their families.

This Combat Center tradition offers Marines and sailors a chance to pull together as a team, test their limits and earn a year's worth of bragging rights.

For more information about the Combat Center Challenge, call the sports office at 830-6857 or Dougwillo at 830-5386.



CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Marines from Headquarters Battalion take part in the tug of war against the Naval Hospital in the Combat Center Challenge 2006. Headquarters Bn. won.

Weekend Weather

Friday



102/79
Sunny

Saturday



103/82
Partly Cloudy

Sunday



106/81
Mostly Sunny

Inside this issue

- A5: 3rd LAR leader takes on many roles
- A8: Retired Sgt. Maj. joins LAPD
- A10: Employee spotlight

Observations



Appreciation sent from Iraq from 3/7

This Day in Marine Corps History

— 1950 —

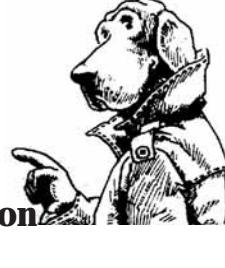
North Koreans swarmed across Nakdong River against the 1st Marine Brigade.



C.O.P. Corner

Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention



Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office Crime Prevention Section

What is your child doing?

Did you know that in this past year an estimated 6.2 million American children age 12 years old and over are binge drinkers, which is drinking 5 or more drinks in one sitting, and an estimated 2.6 million American children, 12 years of age and over, are currently using illicit drugs.

Does your child know what drugs and alcohol can do to them and ways to stay away from them?

In today's world more and more drugs are getting introduced into school and drinking starts at younger ages. Here are some tips to help you and your child discuss drugs and alcohol.

Kindergarten to 3rd Grade is when to begin to explain what alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are. Also how some people use them even though they are harmful, and the consequences of using them.

- Discuss how anything that is not food or prescribed by the doctor can be extremely harmful.

- Tell them that drugs interfere with the way our bodies work, can make a person very sick, or even cause them to die.

- Explain the idea of addiction—that drug use can become a very bad habit that is hard to stop.

Grades Four through Six (ages 9-11 years old) your child should know:

- the immediate effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on different parts of the body, including risks of coma or fatal overdose;

- the long-term results of addiction and the loss of control over their lives that users experience;

- the reasons why drugs are especially dangerous for growing bodies;

- the problems that alcohol and other illegal drugs cause not only to the user, but also to the user's family and world.

Grades Seven through Nine (12-14 years old) is the adolescence stage and can often be a confusing and stressful time. As teens struggle to figure out whom they are and how to fit in, while establishing their own identities. Parents may not realize that their young teens feel surrounded by drug use. Nearly 9 out of 10 teens agree "it seems

like marijuana is everywhere these days." Teens are twice as likely to be using marijuana as parents believe they are, and teens are getting high in the places that parents think are safe havens, such as around school, at home, and at friend's houses. Parents profoundly shape the choices their children make about drugs.

Teens need to know the immediate, distasteful consequences of tobacco and marijuana use—for example, that smoking causes bad breath and stained teeth and makes clothes and hair smell. As a parent you should discuss drugs' long-term effects:

- The lack of crucial social and emotional skills ordinarily learned during adolescence;
- The risk of lung cancer and emphysema from smoking;

Grades Ten through Twelve (ages 15-17 years old) is when your child needs to understand how to resist peer pressure. Teens need more than a general message not to use drugs. They need to hear from a parent that anyone can become a chronic user or an addict and that even non-addicted use can have serious permanent consequences.

Most high school students are future-oriented so they are more likely to listen to discussions.

- Discuss how drugs can ruin chances of getting into a good college or being hired for a job.
- Talk about how fatal or crippling car accidents and liver damage are some of the causes from heavy drinking;
- Let them know that addiction, brain damage, memory loss, coma, and death are the consequences from heavy drug and alcohol use.

For more information on how to discuss related topics with your child, go to <http://www.yic.gov/drugfree/childknow.htm> or www.safestate.org.

The following services are available to on-base personnel and residents through the crime prevention section:

Literature, Briefings, Education, Crime Assessments, Safety Tips, Operation Identification (Property Identification), Child Identification and Fingerprinting.

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

Centerspeak

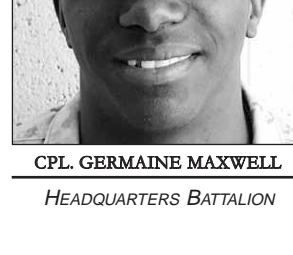
What are you doing for Labor Day?

Opinions expressed in Centerspeak

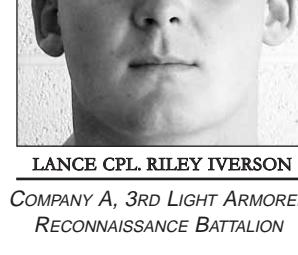
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GUNNERY SGT. J.K. FIZER
COMPANY B, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION



CPL. GERMAINE MAXWELL
HEADQUARTERS BATTALION



LANCE CPL. RILEY IVERSON
COMPANY A, 3RD LIGHT ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION

"I'm going to enjoy the holiday with my family and friends."

"I'm going to sit at my house, go for a couple of bike rides, barbecue and spend some time with my family."

"I'm going to Lake Havasu."

Attention writers

The OP is looking for newspaper stringers. Once you get the "scoop" on a story inform the post newspaper editor. Either the OP can send a reporter, or you can write it yourself. The submission deadline is Friday the week prior to the next publication. For more information, call (760) 830-5472.

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf



IRS warns of new e-mail scam offering cash for participation in "Member Satisfaction Survey"

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

PRESS RELEASE

SAN DIEGO – The Internal Revenue Service today issued a consumer alert regarding a new, two-step e-mail scam that falsely promises recipients they will receive \$80 for participating in an online survey.

In the scam, an unsuspecting taxpayer receives an unsolicited e-mail that appears to come from the IRS. The e-mail contains a URL linking to an online "Member Satisfaction Survey."

"We have seen many e-mail scams using the IRS name," IRS Deputy Commissioner for Operations Support Linda Stiff said. "The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers through e-mail. Taxpayers should always use caution when they receive unsolicited e-mails."

In this case, the e-mail notifies the recipient that he or she has been randomly selected to participate in a survey. In return, the IRS will credit \$80 to the taxpayer's account. There are references to the IRS in the "from" line and the "subject" line of the e-mail. The link to the survey and a copyright statement at the bottom of the e-mail also reference the IRS. The survey form features the IRS logo.

In addition to standard customer satisfaction survey questions, the survey requests the name and phone number of the participant and also asks for credit card information. Once the fraudsters have a name and phone number, they will presumably call and attempt to retrieve other financial information.

The apparent objectives of this scam are the participant's name and financial data to withdraw funds from the taxpayer's bank account, run up charges on a credit card or take out loans in the taxpayer's name.

Taxpayers should be aware that the IRS does not send unsolicited e-mail, nor does the agency ask for PINs, passwords or similar secret access information for credit card, bank or other financial accounts. Recipients should not open any attachments or click on any links contained in the e-mail. Instead, the e-mail should be deleted or forwarded to phishin@irs.gov.

Adult medical care clinic

PREVENTIVE HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROCESS

To comply with DOD 6200.4 and OPNAVINST 6120.3, all permanent party active duty members of Headquarters Battalion and MCES must schedule a Preventive Health Assessment (PHA) with the Adult Medical Care Clinic (AMCC) during their birth month. The PHA process takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. Adult Medical Care Clinic maintains a database of PHAs performed and provides reporting of monthly compliance to unit commanders. To schedule a PHA, call 830-2621, email Bradley.Wiens@med.navy.mil, or stop by the clinic. PHAs are not performed on Thursdays.

OBSERVATION POST

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LIBERTY CALL

5th Annual COMBAT CENTER CHALLENGE

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

West Gym & Victory Field • Friday, September 7th • 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Climbing Wall
Jousting
Big Glove Boxing
Inflatable Games
Sand Volleyball
M16 Rifle Assembly
Biathlon
Hummer Pull
Impaired Goggles w/Tricycles
Football Toss
Tug of War
Basketball Tournament
Corpsmen Relay
Ironman/woman PFT
Water Polo
Blood Bank
Dummy Grenade Toss

If you are **ACTIVE DUTY personnel**

Participate in this annual event to prove your units abilities. Feed your appetite with a Barbeque from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., while listening to a live D.J. Award ceremony is at 2 p.m.

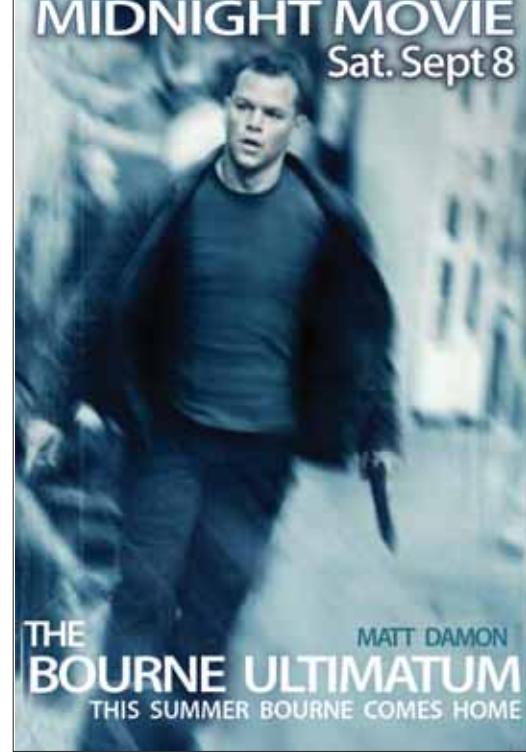
Both MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) and the Marine Corps "Memorial Car" will be in attendance; stop by for a visit.

American Friends AFAC Aaron's Sprint Together with NEXTEL
MCAGCC Career Blazers Learning Center
MCAGCC MCAGCC

Contact the Sports Office, 830.4092, to sign up

ONTARIO MILLS MALL TRIP MON., SEPT. 3

9 a.m. \$5



Movies and recreation for the upcoming week at the Sunset Cinema

Friday I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry 6 p.m (PG-13)	Transformers 9 p.m. (PG-13)	I Know Who Killed Me 9 p.m. (R)
Sunday I Know Who Killed Me 9 p.m. (R)	Underdog 2 p.m (PG)	Tuesday No Reservations 7 p.m (PG)
Saturday Free Matinee Meet the Robinsions 11 a.m (G)	No Reservations 6 p.m.(PG)	Wednesday Hairspray 7 p.m. (PG)
Harry Potter Order of the Phoenix 2 p.m (PG-13)	The Simpsons Movie 9 p.m. (PG-13)	Thursday Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix 7 p.m. (PG-13)
License To Wed 6 p.m (PG-13)	Monday The Simpsons Movie 2 p.m. (PG-13)	Chuck & Larry 6 p.m.(PG-13)

Cinema 6
MOVIE TIMES 365-9633

Halloween (2007) (R) Fri-Sun: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00 Mon-Thur: 2:00, 4:30, 7:00	Balls Of Fury (PG 13) Fri-Sun: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00 Mon-Thur: 2:00, 4:30, 7:00	Superbad (R) Fri-Sun: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00 Mon-Thur: 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
War (R) Fri-Sun: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00 Mon-Thur: 2:00, 4:30, 7:00	Coming Sept. 8 • 3:10 to Yuma •	ALL SHOWS • ADULTS \$8.00 • SENIORS \$6.00 6:00 PM \$6.00 • CHILDREN \$6.00 www.Cinema6theatre.Com
U-HAUL RENTALS		



Saturday	September 1	Sunday	September 2	Monday	September 3
Farmer's Market, 8 a.m. to noon: Kickapoo Trail and Twenty-nine Palms Highway.	First Saturday Breakfast, 8:30 to 11 a.m. at the Copper Mountain Mesa Community Association; 65430 Winters Road, Copper Mountain Mesa.	Sky Village Marketplace and Swap Meet, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Old Woman Springs Road, behind Barr Lumber, 365-8999.	"Sing Me Your Story, Dance Me Home" through Sept. 16 at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum; open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday; Dumosa Avenue north of Twenty-nine Palms Highway, 363-7461.	Jazzercise, 5:45 p.m. at the Yucca Valley Community Center; Dumosa Avenue north of Twenty-nine Palms Highway, 363-7461.	"Sing Me Your Story, Dance Me Home" through Sept. 16 at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum; open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday; Dumosa Avenue north of Twenty-nine Palms Highway, 363-7461.
Pioneer Posse Old West shows, 2:30 p.m. on Main Street in Pioneertown.	"Romeo and Juliet," 7 p.m. at Luckie Park soccer field; Utah Trail, Twenty-nine Palms, 367-7562.	Beverly Derby and Bill Church, 7 to 10 p.m. at the Twenty-nine Palms Inn; 367-3505.	"Mindrip with special guests Ultralord Arbitrator, 8 p.m. at McElhaney's; 57045 Twenty-nine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley.	Thrift Store Allstars, 7 p.m. at Pappy and Harriet's in Pioneertown; 365-5956.	Nathaniel Stanton plays the title role in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" performed by the IndependANT Players at 7 p.m. Sunday in Luckie Park in Twenty-nine Palms.
Callan, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Chris Walters, 6:30 p.m. at Twenty-nine Palms Inn; 367-3505.	JT Sportsman's Club Bingo, early birds at 5:30 p.m., others at 6 p.m. at the Sportsman's Club; 6225 Sunburst Avenue, Joshua Tree, 366-2915.	"Julius Caesar," 7 p.m. Luckie Park soccer field; Utah Trail and Joe Davis Road, Twenty-nine Palms, 367-7562.	IndependANT Players		

SMP EVENTS
August 31 - September 6

You're here. You're single. You're in.

SATURDAY	MONDAY	SIGN UP NOW
SMP Trip to K1 GoCarts & North County San Diego Shopping Depart The Zone @ 8 a.m. Cost: \$38	SMP Trip to Ontario Mills Mall Depart The Zone @ 9 a.m. Cost: \$5	September 28-30 SMP Trip to Las Vegas Depart the Zone @ 9 a.m. Cost: \$160

CHOOSE 3 TASTY FAVORITES!

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ULTIMATE TRIOS

Yucca Valley:
57796 29 Palms Highway
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Hospital increases outpatient services

DAN BARBER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
ROBERT E. BUSH NAVAL HOSPITAL

To maintain high quality medical care and increase the business efficiency of delivering care to patients, the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital will be changing its hours of service in ancillary care and increasing the number of available appointments.

How is that possible, you ask, when the hospital is already open 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, 365-days a year? It's true some sections of the hospital never close such as the Emergency Medicine Department and the Inpatient Care wards; however, there are services which are open only during the normal working hours for routine service, such as the outpatient clinics and some ancillary services



The hospital's practice of closing clin-

ics in the Laboratory, Radiology and Pharmacy. The hours of these services will now begin at 7:30 a.m. and close at 4:30 p.m.

When the namesake of this hospital, Robert E. Bush, was starting out in business, following his military service, he and his partner decided that they needed to add an additional day to their already 7-day work week... According to Bush, they accomplished this seemingly impossible task by each taking turns one day a week of working a 24-hour shift. It worked for them, but for the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, we don't have to take such drastic measures and our new working hours will be from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and will continue with some exceptions.

The Emergency Medicine Department will remain open 24-hours a day, 7-days a week with supporting ancillary services from the duty sections of Radiology and Pharmacy services. Our inpatient care in the Desert Beginnings, and Multi-Service wards are always open.

Starting Oct. 1, the first appointment in all outpatient clinics will be offered beginning at 8 a.m. The last appointment offered in the morning will be at 11:40 a.m. The first appointment in the afternoon will start at 1 p.m., and the last appointment for the day will be available at 4 p.m.

The staff at the hospital are very proud of their accomplishments to date, but during the year they are constantly reviewing the internal processes to improve overall patient satisfaction. If you have suggestions on improving hospital services, contact one of the Customer Services representatives available to you in each clinic of the hospital or call 830-2475.

ics on Wednesday afternoons for training and meetings will be discontinued. That training and meeting time will now be reserved for Thursday mornings up to 9 a.m. when the first appointments for the day will begin.

Also, normal appointments will increase from 15 minutes to 20 minutes.

To schedule an appointment at the hospital, call Central Appointments at 830-2752, during normal working hours. The hospital is not a walk-in clinic. The clinics are run on an appointment basis, and try to stay on schedule. If you wake up feeling ill, in most cases, you can call the appointment line and obtain a same-day appointment. Please call 830-2752 to cancel appointments if you know you won't be able to make it, so the appointment can be scheduled for someone else.

For after hour's non-emergent medical information, call 830-2190 and a duty physician will return the call. For medical emergencies, on base 830-3333/3334 or 911.

The staff at the hospital are very proud of their accomplishments to date, but during the year they are constantly reviewing the internal processes to improve overall patient satisfaction. If you have suggestions on improving hospital services, contact one of the Customer Services representatives available to you in each clinic of the hospital or call 830-2475.

How to get an appointment at the hospital

To avoid the peak calling time at the Naval Hospital's appointment line, the best time to call for an appointment is after 9 a.m., Monday through Friday. If possible, avoid calling in the early morning when the phone lines are the busiest.

When the number of callers in the queue exceed the maximum number allowed, other callers trying to get through will hear a busy signal or get disconnected.

One of the hospital's largest problems with the phone system is that some callers are being disconnected once connected to a clerk. This problem is compounded by callers using a cell phone instead of a land line to make the call. When cell phone reception experiences fluctuation in signal strength, calls are more likely to be disconnected.

Patients also have the option of making an appointment in person at the central appointments desk in the hospital Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

When connected to the hospital's telephone system please enter the correct information when prompted by the phone system. For example, enter the sponsor's full social security number.

HOT TOPICS

COMMISSARY BACK TO SCHOOL SIDEWALK SALE.
Today from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Lunch box items will be on sale!

HOSPICE VOLUNTEER TRAINING

TUESDAY & THURSDAY EVENINGS
6:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
Sept. 11-25

"Come & See What Makes Hospice So Special!"

Hospice of Morongo Basin
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JANET M. STOUT

(12 year resident of Morongo Basin & 15 years legal exp.) Legal Document Assistant, Reg#133 SB Cty P.O. Box 2654, Yucca Valley, CA 92286-2654

I am not an attorney. I can only provide self-help services at your specific direction. By using our service, you will ALSO retain an experienced Attorney, receive an Attorney consultation and all documents are Attorney supervised.

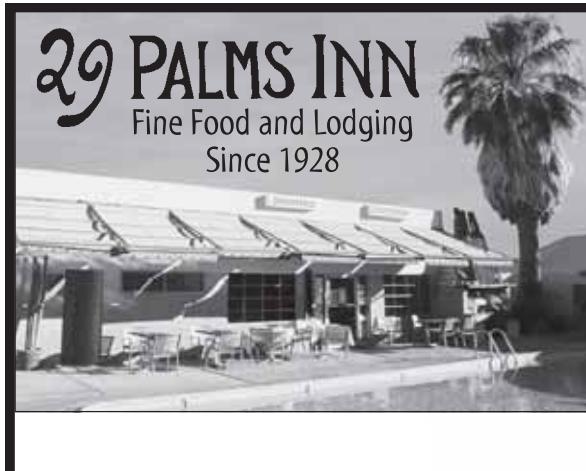
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- Heated Swimming Pool
- Available for Special Events

LEISURE ITEMS

FAMILY SPLASH NIGHT

The Combat Centers Officers' Club is hosting "Family Splash Night" at the SNCO/Officers Pool Sept. 7 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. This pool party is for the entire family! BBQ chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, potato salad and all the fixings. The bar will be available on the patio. Cost is \$5 for members and \$6 for all others. Officers', SNCO and equivalent are invited to bring your families. For more information, call 830-6610.

WARRIOR BURGER COOK-OFF

Sandy Hill Lanes will host a Warrior Burger Cook-Off Sept. 9 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Show off your culinary skills. Create a winning recipe for a burger and side item. Product/supplies, grills, coolers and cleaning supplies will be provided by Sandy Hill Lanes for your use. Great prizes will be given out! Get your "Grill Team" together. Visit the bowling center for the rules list and application. For more details, call 830-6422.

Leader takes on new roles, motivates Marines

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Part of being a Marine is being able to rise to any challenge no matter how overwhelming the odds are against you.

For 1st Lt. Michael C. Petit, communications platoon commander, Headquarters and Support Company, 3rd Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion, rising to challenges is a part of his life.

Petit decided to enlist in the Marine Corps as a ground radio repairman instead of going back to school after recovering from a serious illness. He enlisted in July 1999 and left for recruit training one month later.

"I was attracted to the idea of being part of an organization that is still very idealistic," reasoned Petit. "Virtues the Marine Corps holds aren't really talked about in other organizations. Not only do I get a chance to see the rest of the world, I can also grow as a person."

The Hartford, N.Y., native was born Nov. 7, 1979. He spent his early years in his hometown, but attended a boarding school in Kansas from eighth through 10th grade. After boarding school, he returned to New York to finish high school, where he played soccer, baseball and football.

In the fall of 1998, Petit began attending Boston College in Massachusetts. One week after he left for college, he contracted viral meningitis and was forced to take a medical leave of absence from school.

Petit was stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., following recruit training and Marine Combat Training, where he was assigned to Systems Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Intelligence Battalion. Soon after reaching Camp Pendleton, Petit said he began to have other ideas for his career.

"I was there for about a year before 9/11 and I decided I wanted to stay in the Marine Corps, but play a larger role," he said. "I applied to a Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at a civilian college to become an officer."

Once he was re-enrolled at Boston College, Petit was released from active duty in September 2001, approximately one week before the September 11 attacks.

"It was kind of weird coming off of active duty and being in college when your country is being attacked," he recalled. "I was just starting school and everyone I knew was going to Afghanistan."

Even though his friends were deploying to Afghanistan, Petit pressed on in school and attended Officer



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
1st Lt. Michael C. Petit, communications platoon commander and Police Training Team officer-in-charge for Communications Platoon, H and S Company, 3rd LAR is a 27-year-old Hartford, N.Y., native.

Candidate School in 2004. He graduated from Boston College in May 2005 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and was commissioned as a Marine Corps officer. He attended The Basic School at Camp Barrett, Va., from November 2005 to June 2006, was selected to be a communications officer and attended the Communications Officer School at Quantico, Va., from June to December 2006.

After graduating, Petit was again stationed at Camp Pendleton with the 1st Marine Division. He received Temporary Assigned Duty orders to the Combat Center in May 2007 to 3rd LAR in order to bolster their numbers for their

upcoming deployment in September.

Since he arrived here, Petit has distinguished himself as an effective and responsible leader amongst both his superiors and his junior Marines. He was also recently tasked with being the leader of 3rd LAR's Police Training Team when the unit deploys to Iraq next month.

"It's a tough position they put him in," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David M. Jones, communications-elec-

tronics management officer, 3rd LAR. "He came straight from Camp Pendleton and just started getting acquainted with Twentynine Palms when they told him he was going to be the PTT team leader. Every lieutenant has to be proficient as an infantry platoon leader and he serves that billet very well."

Petit said he feels his leadership style was greatly affected by his study of philosophy while he was in college.

"As an enlisted Marine, I

was sort of swept off my feet by the whole 'my way or the highway' mentality," he said. "I feel you have to find ways to make people want to achieve their goals."

"The drill instructor style can work in a hierachal society like the military, but I think my style was molded mostly through my experiences in the civilian world and in my academic studies," he added.

His leadership style is also admired by his peers and jun-

iors in his platoon that he interacts with daily.

"He is outstanding on all accounts," said 1st Lt. William Gibbs, S-6 officer, 3rd LAR. "He really epitomizes the whole Marine concept."

Sgt. Derek Evans, radio supervisor, 3rd LAR, added that Petit is very dedicated to his Marines.

Petit will deploy to Iraq in September with 3rd LAR in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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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. 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 p.m. Life Teen/Youth Group
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)

Holy Days of Obligation Masses

12:30 p.m. Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

VILLAGE CENTER

Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women*

NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE
Christ Chapel

Sun 8 a.m. Sunday School*
Sun 9 a.m. Worship*

PROTESTANT LITURGICAL SERVICE
Christ Chapel

Sun 11 a.m. Worship

LAY-LED INDEPENDENT BAPTIST SERVICE
Christ Chapel

Sun 11 a.m. Worship

LEGEND

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

LAY-LED GOSPEL SERVICE
Christ Chapel

Sun 12:30 p.m. Worship

MID-WEEK EVENTS
MONDAY
Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m. Catholic Mass

TUESDAY
Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

5 - 7:30 p.m. Catechist Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)
6 p.m. Baptism Class 1st Tuesday each Month

C&E Mess Hall Bldg 1660

11:30 a.m. Bible Study
Chaplain Flint 830-6187

WEDNESDAY
Village Center

11:30 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Prayer Room contact Chaplain Flint 830-6187

Christ Chapel

5:30 p.m. Catholic Choir Rehearsal
6:00 p.m. Praise & Worship Rehearsal
6:00 p.m. Pre-Service Food/Fellowship
7:00 p.m. Lay-Led Gospel Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Praise & Worship Service

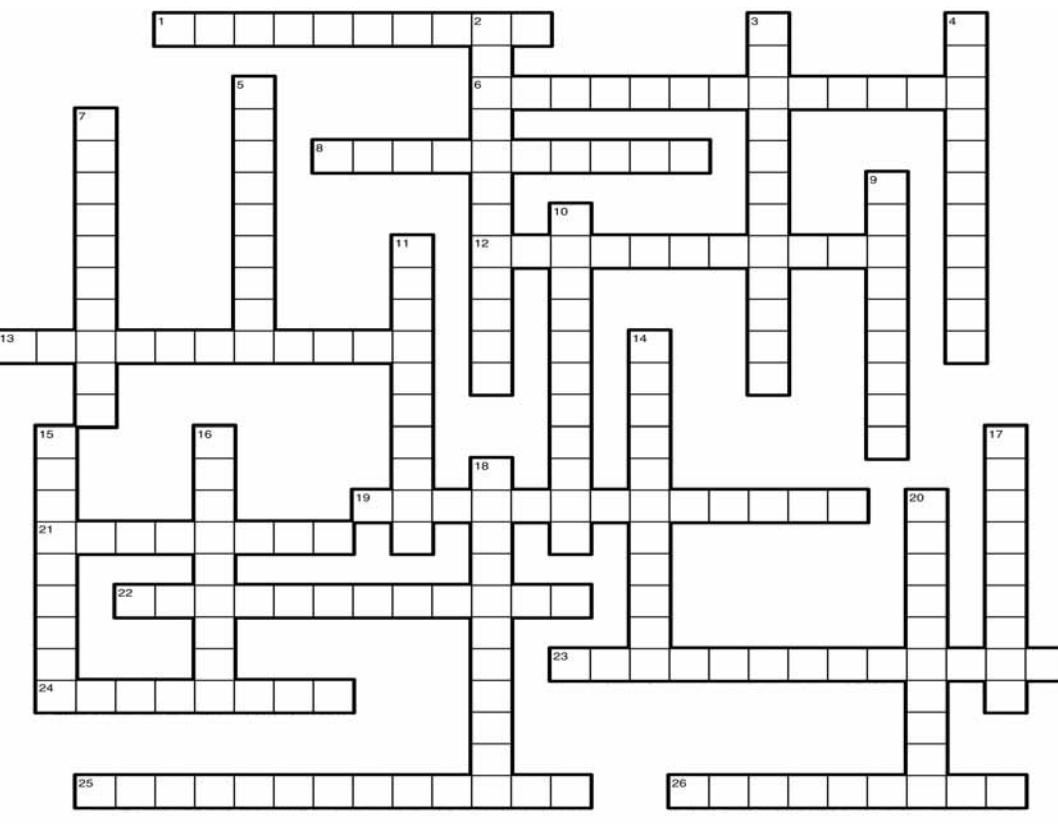
1ST THURSDAY EACH MONTH

7 p.m. Knights of Columbus

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN
Christ Chapel

9 a.m. June 19, July 17, & August 21

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17. 1st WR to win Superbowl MVP
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[Solutions on A8]

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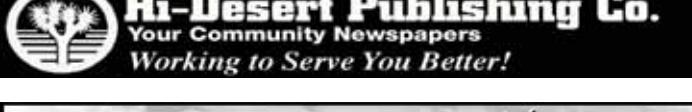
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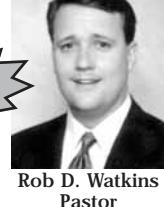
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Evening Service.....6:00 P.M.

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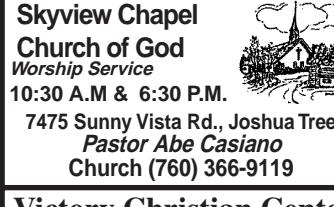
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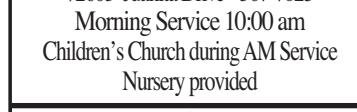
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6:00 pm Evening Service

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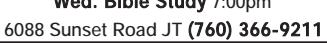
Sun. Worship 10:45am - 6:00pm

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Former 3/11 sergeant major remembers love of Corps, continues to serve community

LANCE CPL. NICOLE A.
LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

For those who may be skeptical about whether the Corps equips its Marines with the tools for success they need only to look in the Transition Assistance Management Program archives.

There, one can find endless success stories about Marines, like Jan Robert Miller Jr., a former 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment sergeant major who now serves as an officer in the Los Angeles Police Department.

Miller said his three sons, ages 18, 16 and 14, were a major reason he decided to retire.

"My sons were reaching a critical point in their adult lives, and I wanted to make sure I was around to make sure they made good decisions," said Miller. "They are all good boys."

Prior to Miller's retirement in June 2006, he had built an impressive resume.

He served his first permanent assignment as a gunner and squad leader in Bravo

Company, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan.

He re-enlisted September 1986 as a corporal and received his first post assignment orders to Marine security guard to Islamabad, Pakistan, that October.

It was there that Miller met his future wife, Kim, the daughter of a Defense Attaché Officer working in the American Embassy there.

After Miller left Pakistan in March 1988, he resumed his duties as an MSG in San Jose, Costa Rica, until his tour ended June 1989.

He made several deployments overseas with 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C., including a tour in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Miller also spent three years as a drill instructor aboard the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., from February 1992 to June 1995.

In 1997, he received orders to the University of Arizona as assistance Marine officer instructor for the Naval Recruit Officer Training Candidate unit in the university. It was there Miller earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in geography and minored in history.

The degree gave Miller the chance and inspiration to teach, he said.

"I wanted to coach football and be a high school teacher," said Miller. "Then



Jan Robert Miller Jr., retired sergeant major, stands proudly in the 6-06 graduation class formation June 26

KIM MILLER

someone gave me the idea of being an LAPD officer. At first, I said 'no.'

Miller said he was nervous when he thought about having to compete with younger men at the academy.

"I figured I was going to be up against young, physically fit recruits," he said. "When I thought of young men, I still automatically thought about Marines. That's the level and mindset I was used to. But I was not up against Marines, so it was pretty easy."

Aside from keeping up with his younger counterparts

during training, Miller was also appointed as a class leader and graduated at the top of Class 6-06, June 26.

Miller now works as an officer for the Rampart Division in Los Angeles. He is slated to be transferred to another division this December.

He said the transfer does not concern him because the Marine Corps has helped him adjust to moving from location to location.

"Being a Marine, the transfer is only mildly interesting," said Miller.

Kim said she and their sons are very proud of his accomplishments as a Marine, police officer, husband and father.

"I am so proud of him," said Kim. "He always gives 110 percent. I am very proud to even be his wife."

Kim added that, although she knows her husband is happy with his decision, she also knows he gets a little heart-sick when he steps foot

on any Marine base.

"He misses it a lot," said Kim. "He loves the Marine Corps."

Cpl. Nam L. Nguyen, administration clerk, Headquarters Battery, 3/11, and native of Seattle, Wash., said Miller was the man who got him promoted.

"He loves his Marines," said Nguyen. "He left the Marines to do their own decision-making. He wanted to develop NCO [noncommissioned officer] leadership. He was just awesome."

Miller said he owes everything he is today to the Marine Corps and wishes to enlighten other Marines on the opportunities available to them.

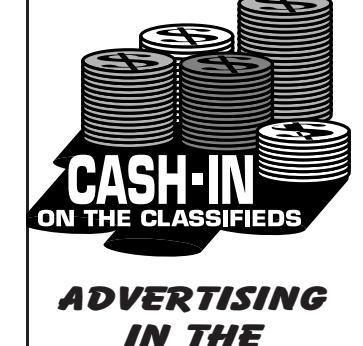
"I don't think Marines really realize how much they are respected by civilians," said Miller. "I understand that it's scary to transition into the real world, but their maturity, discipline, respect, outlook on

life and experiences are years ahead of their civilian counterparts. The civilian world wants and needs them."

LAPD is always keeping their eyes open for service members who are not re-enlisting or retiring. They are a prior military and reservist friendly employer who pays incentive bonuses for military experience.

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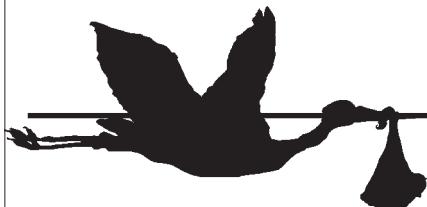
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Birth announcements

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NATALIE PAIGE YABUT

Daughter of Staff Sgt. and Mrs. Dave Yabut

Born Aug. 1, 2007, weighing 6 lbs, 8.9 oz and measuring 18.9 inches

KALIANA SENAYA MICHEK

Daughter of Cpl. and Mrs. Joshua Michek

Born Aug. 2, 2007, weighing 7 lbs, 11.7 oz and measuring 19.4 inches

JACK DAVID GUTKE

Son of Cpl. and Mrs. Bart Gutke

Born Aug. 2, 2007, weighing 4 lbs, 14 oz and measuring 18 inches

HUNTER SAGE FACTEAU

Son of Sgt. and Mrs. Scott Facteau

Born Aug. 2, 2007, weighing 8.2 lbs and measuring 20.6 inches

CICELY EFFIE CAY TEEGARDEN

Daughter of Pfc. and Mrs. Teegarden

Born Aug. 3, 2007, weighing 6 lbs, 6 oz and measuring 20.1 inches

MADDOX GUILLEN

Son of Staff Sgt. and Mrs. Guillen

Born on Aug. 4, 2007, weighing 7 lbs, 2.5 oz and measuring 19.8 inches

SEAMUS JUDE NEWMAN

Son of Staff Sgt. and Mrs. Malek

Newman Born on Aug. 5, 2007, weighing 8 lbs 8 oz and measuring 19.3 inches

KYLIE ELIZABETH SHEA

Daughter of Sgt. and Mrs. Rober Shea III

Born on Aug. 8, 2007, weighing 7 lbs and measuring 20 inches

CHRISTOPHER ORNELAZ-PEREZ

Son of Gunnery Sgt. and Mrs. Timothy Perez

Born on Aug. 8, 2007, weighing 8 lbs, 12 oz and measuring 20.4 inches

ESMERALDA ADA SOSA

Daughter of Cpl. and Mrs. Sosa

Born on Aug. 8, 2007, weighing 6 lbs, 7 oz and measuring 18.5 inches

TERESA LILLIANA RIOS

Daughter of Cpl. and Mrs. Cecilia Rios

Born on Aug. 9, 2007, weighing 6 lbs, 8 oz and measuring 18.7 inches

BROOKLYNN GRACE PENROSE

Daughter of Gunnery Sgt. and Mrs.

Penrose Born on Aug. 10, 2007, weighing 7 lbs, 10 oz and measuring 20 inches

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Saints in 29 Palms. Visitation 8
a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Funeral Services
at 10:30 a.m. Graveside Service to
follow at 29 Palms Cemetery

Thomas Meath
Private Inurnment

David Coe
Services are Private

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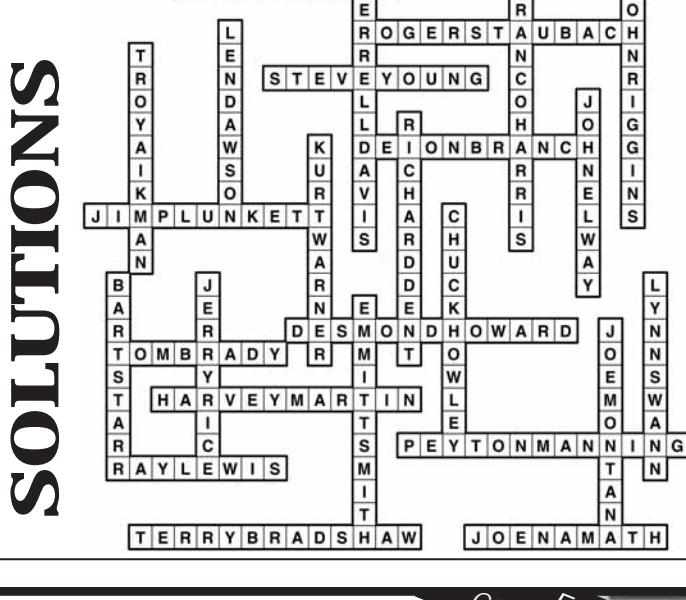
Nancy Embry
Funeral Service,
Aug. 28, Tues, Noon at Mt. Valley
Memorial Park Interment follows at
Joshua Tree Memorial Park

Herbert Sattler
Visitation Fri., Aug. 31 at Mountain
Valley Memorial Park Cryptside
Service follows at Joshua Tree
Memorial Park

Martha Thomas
Funeral Service Sat., Sept. 1, 1 pm,
at Mountain Valley Memorial Park
Graveside Service to follow at
Joshua Tree Memorial Park

Myron Foland
Visitation Sun., Sept. 2, 1 pm at
Mountain Valley Memorial Park

Aubrey Hodges
Services are Private



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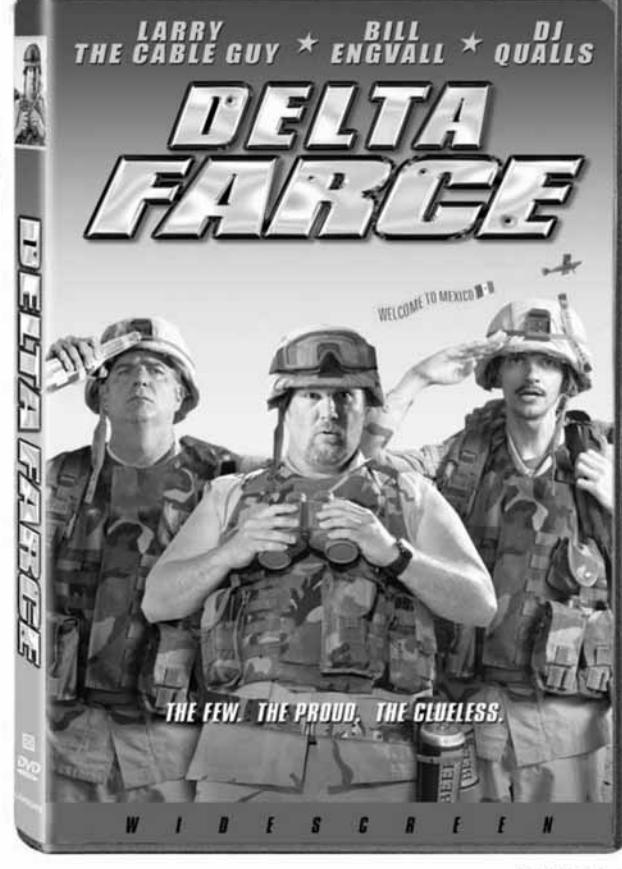
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LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Lance Cpl. Joseph B. Oroscro, a rifleman and radio operator for Scout Sniper Platoon, Weapons Company, 1/7, bids farewell to his wife, Alisha, and 13-month-old son, Riley, at the Unit Muster Area Sunday.

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Employee Spotlight



Employee: Larry E. Stratton
Organization: Marine Corps Family Building Team

Billet: Personal readiness and community support branch head and Marine Corps Family Building Team director

Job Duties: to improve the quality of life for our service members, their families and the military retired community by providing reliable, high quality programs and services that promote healthy lifestyles and improve morale, unit, personal, deployment readiness and retention.

Hometown: Marysville, Calif.

Hobbies: Golf, Spending time with his wife and traveling

What I like most about my job: I still get to interact with the Corps and take care of Marines. I really enjoy working for MCCS.

One of the most significant achievements since you've been here: Was the Marine recipient of the GEICO Military Service Award for Substance Abuse Prevention and Education in 1994.

Have you ever served in the military? Retired Marine master sergeant

Time in military service: 21 years

Time employed at MCAGCC: 17 years

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OBSERVATIONS

AUGUST 31, 2007

AWANA BBQ brings children, religion together



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Parents and children gathered together for a day of fun at the Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed Registration Barbeque Saturday at Felix Field from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

AWANA normally meets Wednesdays at the Palms Baptist Church, but was given the chance to come aboard the Combat Center.

The Religious Ministry on base has joined with the community-wide AWANA program and will be paying the registration fee this year for military families aboard the Combat Center.

"I think that the AWANA program is a good way to change kid's lives," said Cheryl J. Hyde, the AWANA

Spark. "It is another tool to help give our youth a good solid moral foundation and principles for life."

Children will be introduced to biblical teaching appropriate to their age and experiences. They will have an adult leader helping and guiding them throughout the AWANA program.

"It's so amazing how we not only teach the kids, but they teach us also," said Hyde.

Around 12,000 churches in the United States and more than 4,000 churches overseas offer the AWANA program, making it the leading ministry to help local churches reach children with the Gospel and train them to know, love and serve Christ.

Children registered with AWANA are given a handbook to help with their studies

throughout the program. The difficulty of the handbook is determined by the child's age.

The AWANA program continues throughout the school year, starting when school begins and ends on or near the last day of school.

"Our youth are faced with so many challenges and influences today, so if this program can touch one heart of just one child, that one can make a difference in the world," said Hyde.

Children interested in joining the program can sign up on Wednesday's at Palm Baptist Church or by contacting the Religious Ministries Directorate at 830-6464.

For more information, contact Spencer Felder at 830-3076, or contact his email SpencerFelder@hotmail.com.

Twin hula hoopers, Amber and Holly Diaz, enjoy the laid back atmosphere and fun games at the AWANA barbecue Saturday at Felix Field.

Single Marine Program Coordinator
LaVonne Lessard
Box 788150 (Bldg 1531)
Twentynine Palms, Ca 92278
LESSARDLR@USMC-MCCS.ORG

Ms. Lessard,

Thank you so much for your continuing support of our Marines and Sailors deploy all over the world. Your efforts and considerations is greatly appreciated. It is this kind of support that keeps the Marines Motivated and proud to serve our country.

The items you sent were needed and all put to use by our Marines. Some items are taken on patrols to help us with our civil military operations. It is great seeing the smiles on the kids whenever we go out of the wire and have stuff to hand out. I really feel that we are making a difference here and the Marines are embracing the concept of no better friend and no worse enemy.

Please know that your support have significantly raised the morale of our Marines and have put smiles on many Iraqis. It would be great if we could get more golf balls. We have plenty of golf clubs but ran out of the balls. Thanks again for your thoughts and consideration.

Sincerely and SemperFi,
1stSgt Mike Lanpolsaen
Weapons Co.
Hurricane Point, Ar Ramadi, Iraq

SMP donations appreciated by deployed 3/7 Marines



COURTESY PHOTO

Chief Petty Officer Melvin Harris, corpsman, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, hands out soccer balls that were donated to the unit from the Combat Center's Single Marine Program.

CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Part of the Single Marine Program's mission is to improve the quality of life for Marines and sailors by boosting morale, whether aboard an installation or deployed to different parts of the country.

A heartfelt thank you letter was sent to SMP coordinator, LaVonne Lessard, from 1st Sgt. Mike Lanpolsean, Weapons Company first sergeant, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, currently deployed in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, for the program's donations sent to his unit.

SMP's Desert Mail Call collects donations of non-perishable food, hygiene and recreational items, along with letters of appreciation, to send to deployed units.

Donations are received from individuals, local churches,

schools and other goodwill organizations.

School children write thank you letters and draw pictures to show their gratitude for the Marines and sailors.

Lanpolsean described the appreciation he and his Marines felt for SMP's efforts and support. All items were put to good use and spread many smiles, he stated in the letter.

"The number one requested item from the field is letters," said Lessard. "They love letters of appreciation and paintings from children. They can't seem to get enough of those things!"

The program continues to collect items for deployed Marines, sending monthly care packages and many letters.

Due to facility issues, SMP requests food and non-food items be segregated from each other for storage purposes.

For more information about the SMP's Desert Mail Call program or to donate, call 830-4767.

Jamboree football games kick-off season

Marines from Marine Corps Communications Electronics School battle through a wall of 1st Tanks Battalion defensive players in the Commanding Generals Tackle Football league.

The Jamboree football game brought four teams together to participate in the game. Headquarters Battalion, Combat logistics Battalion 7, 1st Tanks, and MCCES all took turns playing against each other.



Honoring heroes with touch of a pencil

CPL. LUCIAN FRIEL

2ND MARINE DIVISION

EDMONDS, Wash. — It's about two in the morning on the West Coast. While many people are just going to bed or have been asleep for a few hours now, one man, with coffee on the pot and the sounds of the '60s echoing in the background of his den, is setting up his drawing board and pencils preparing to start the day's work. He knows he has a lot to accomplish today.

His job is one that not too many people have the heart or the skill to do. The work he does is non-profit in the monetary sense. Instead, the reward for his efforts is a phone call or a letter from a person whose loved one made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country, thanking him for giving them a lasting memory of their brave hero.

Three and a half years ago, veteran Marine Cpl. Michael Reagan, 60, from Seattle, dedicated his life to draw portraits free of charge for any family of

a fallen service member.

Reagan has produced more than 800 portraits of these heroes and continues to touch more lives than he ever thought possible and could ever comprehend.

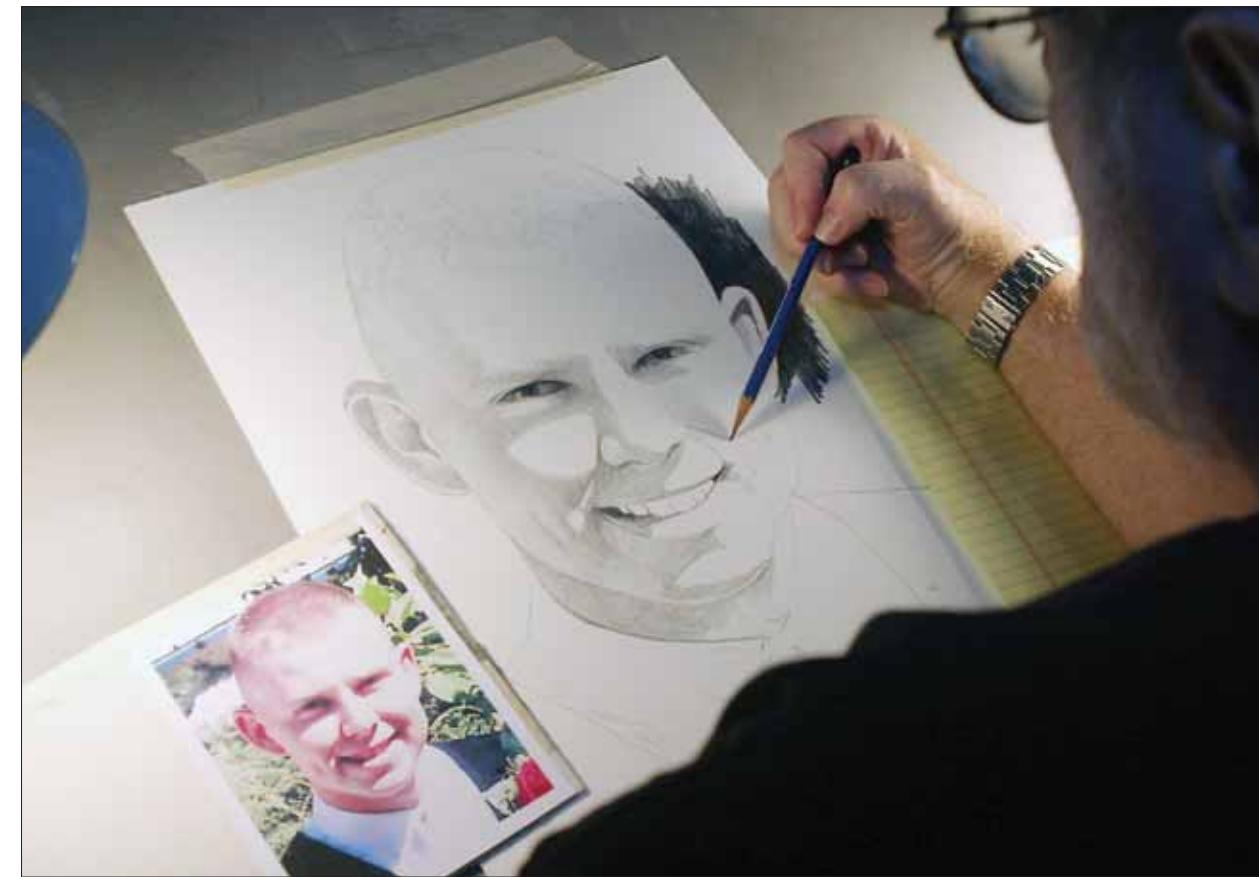
"This is something that I have to do," Reagan explained. "I have to do it. These portraits are doing something incredible when they get back to their families and that's wonderful."

Reagan, who is no stranger to combat himself, joined the Marine Corps in 1966 and deployed to Vietnam with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, in 1967. He spent the majority of his time close to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in the area near Con Thien.

During his tour there, he spent a lot of his downtime drawing portraits of some of the other Marines deployed in the fight with him.

"(Drawing) is something I've always enjoyed doing," he said. "In

See PORTRAITS, B3



CPL. LUCIAN FRIEL

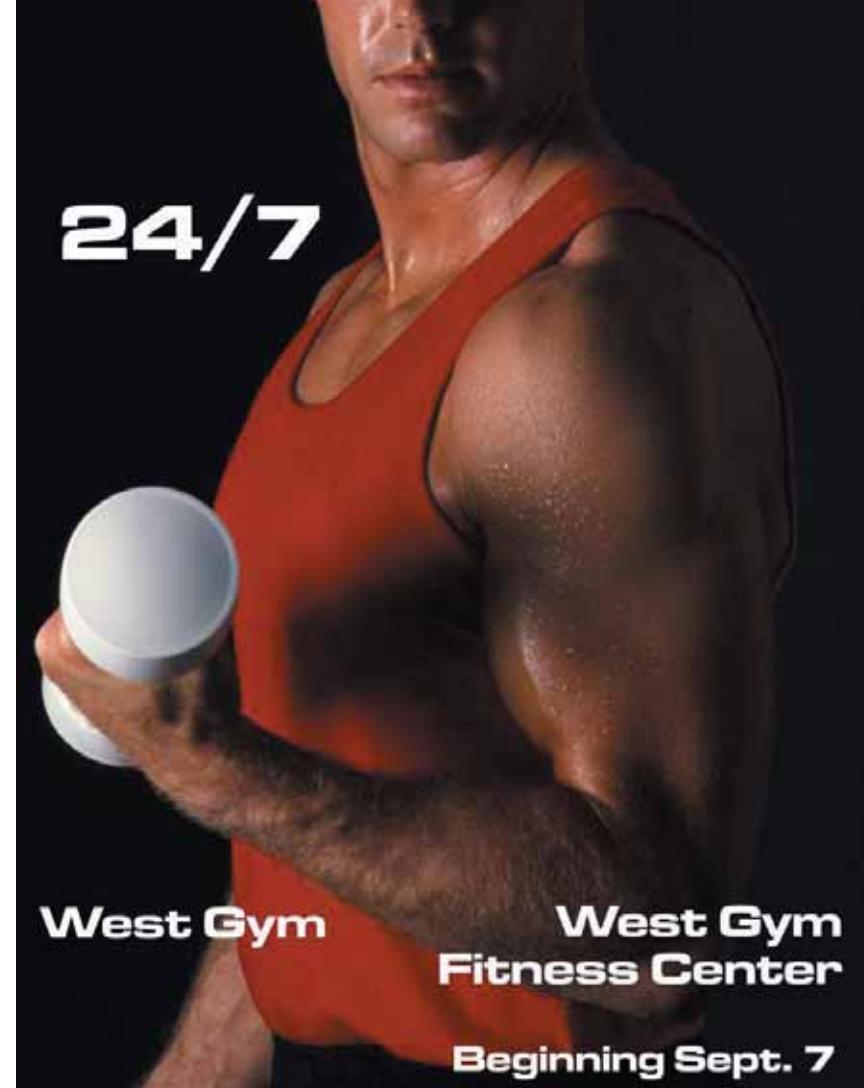
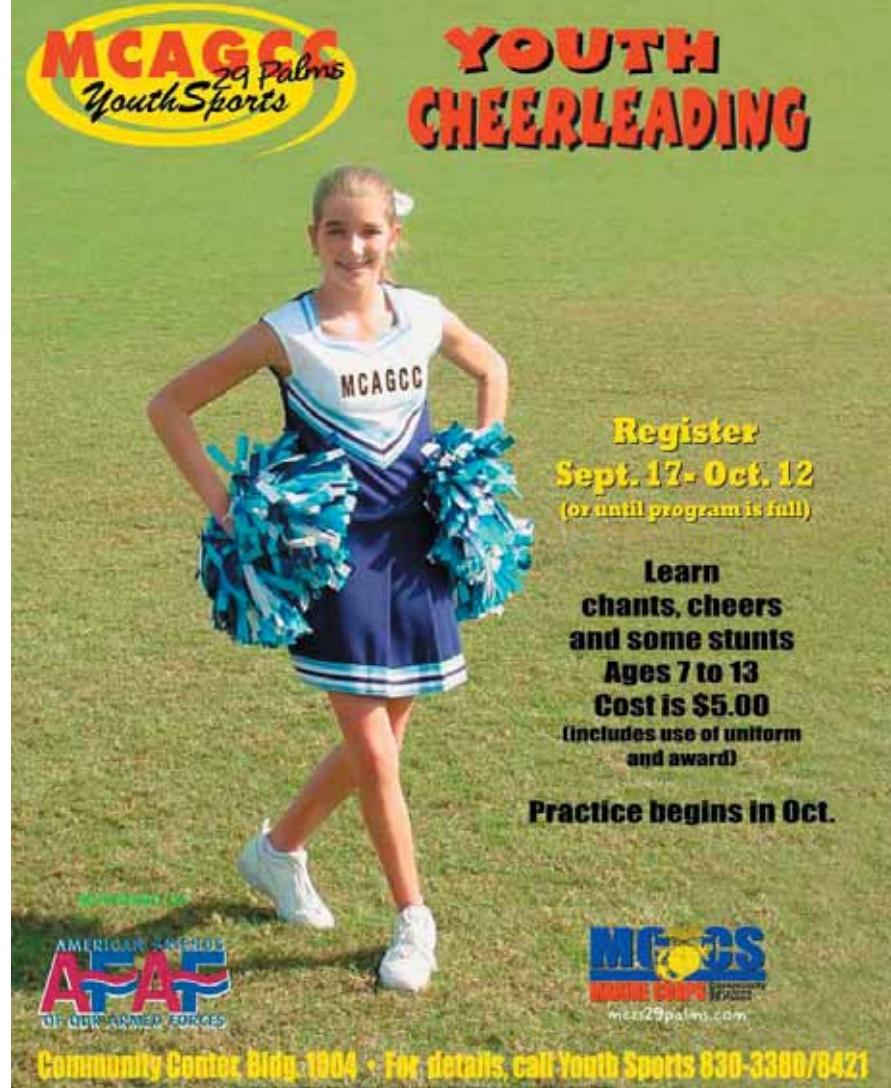
Michael Reagan, 60, a Seattle native, sketches a portrait of Army Pfc. Jeffrey A. Avery, a soldier who died while serving in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The former Marine and Vietnam veteran has drawn more than 800 portraits free of charge for the families of fallen service members.

MCCS weekly CONNECTION

AUG 31, 2007

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	All hands Lunch Monday-Friday beginning Sept. 10 The Officers' Club Bldg. 1573 • 830-6610		HUMP DAY POOL TOURNAMENTS @ Blood Stripes NCO Club Wed. nights, 5 p.m. Bldg. 1532 • 830-6608
			MIDNIGHT MOVIES begin Sept 7 Sunset Cinema 830-7269

MOVIES

WEEKLY MOVIE SCHEDULE

31 Friday	1 Saturday	2 Sunday	3 Monday	4 Tuesday	5 Wednesday	6 Thursday
CHUCK & LARRY 6 p.m. 115 min. PG-13	MEET THE ROBINSONS FREE @ 11 a.m. G HARRY POTTER: THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX 2 p.m. 138 min. PG-13	UNDERDOG 2 p.m. 84 min. PG	THE SIMPSONS MOVIE 2 p.m. 87 min. PG-13	NO RESERVATIONS 6 p.m. 104 min. PG	NO RESERVATIONS 7 p.m. 104 min. PG	HAIRSPRAY 7 p.m. 117 min. PG
I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 9 p.m. 106 min. R	LICENSE TO WED 6 p.m. 91 min. PG-13	THE SIMPSONS MOVIE 9 p.m. 87 min. PG-13	CHUCK & LARRY 6 p.m. 115 min. PG-13	I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 9 p.m. 106 min. R		HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX 7 p.m. 138 min. PG-13
TRANSFORMERS 9 p.m. 144 min. PG-13						

Bldg. 1510, across from the Main Exchange • R-rated movies require proper ID. Must be 17 or older, no exceptions. • 830-7269

PORTRAITS from B2

school I was always the guy who got in trouble for drawing on the desks."

Reagan's skill became an asset to his unit as he was able to draw out maps of areas they patrolled on the ever-changing battlefield. Unfortunately, like many service members who served in Vietnam, Reagan continuously engaged the enemy and witnessed fellow service members die next to him. After his return home from the war in April 1968, he did not really understand why he was spared or what his purpose was in life.

"When I came home from Vietnam I believed I was okay, I had no Purple Hearts or scars and I was in the DMZ when a lot of the bad stuff was going on," he explained. "I had no idea why I made it through when the guys to the left and right of me were dying."

He said it wasn't for another 35 years that he would finally discover that purpose.

After honorably serving his country, Reagan got out of the Marine Corps in 1969. He attended the Burnley School of Professional Art in Seattle a year later and graduated with a degree in commercial art in 1972. Shortly after, he got a job with the Seattle School District doing software programming and graphics. Then in 1979, he got a job as the director of trademarks and licensing at the University of Washington, where he worked for the next 27 years.

He continued to draw portraits throughout his career and became a well-respected and successful artist.

"I was voted the most commercial artist in my class," he explained. "I knew how to make money out of rocks, so to speak. I was always working two jobs trying to make a living as an artist."

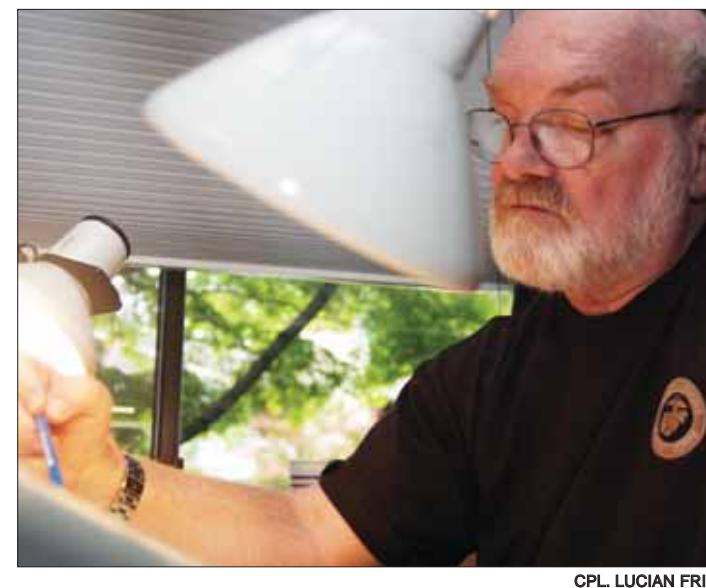
Reagan has drawn more than 1,600 portraits of celebrities and notable personalities including Elizabeth Taylor, Katherine and Audrey Hepburn and Harrison Ford. He has drawn every Heisman Trophy winner and a majority of the National Football League's Hall of Fame members. Almost every portrait is signed by the celebrity and Reagan would have them sign multiple drawing boards so he could sell more. A lot of his profits went to charity organizations. He has raised over 10 million dollars for charities across the country.

He has also drawn portraits of six U.S. presidents, including President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush. Reagan personally presented the original portraits to them in 2002, and they currently hang in the White House.

Reagan knew how to market his work and made a lot of money doing it. He owned a few of his own art studios throughout the Edmonds community. His life was, as he thought at the time, going in the direction he wanted it to be "the" great artist.

But it was an unexpected meeting with a service member's widow a year and a half later that would change Reagan's life forever.

Cherise Johnson, from Boise, Idaho, and wife of Michael Johnson, a soldier who died during the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, heard about



CPL. LUCIAN FRIEL

Michael Reagan sketches a portrait of a service member who died while serving in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Reagan's work in an NBC broadcast of the story of Reagan's work with charities. She found his email address through his website and asked him one simple question.

"She asked me 'how much would it cost for you to do a portrait of my husband?'" Reagan explained. "I told her that I would do it for free."

Reagan had found his purpose. Before he knew it, more requests started to come his way.

"I decided that I had to do them all," he said.

As the war continued and word of Reagan's project spread, the requests from families asking for portraits multiplied.

In June 2005, Reagan decided it was time to devote himself to these portraits full-time and retired from his job with the University of Washington.

"There was no way I could do what I was doing and still have time to keep working," he explained. "This is my duty now."

On average, Reagan completes two portraits per day. Each drawing can take up to five hours to finish.

The veteran doesn't just draw a portrait of the service members, he learns about their lives and who they were.

"Their families will send me videos and pictures and tell me stories, and I take this all in before I draw their picture," he said.

As one can imagine, a task like Reagan's can be emotionally draining. So Reagan takes regular walks around his quaint, evergreen-covered neighborhood. The walks help him relax and deal with the raw emotions he endures on a daily basis.

From the time he receives a request until the time he finishes a portrait, Reagan feels the service member's presence with him.

"I'm not a real religious person, but I can feel their energy as soon as I start on their portrait until I put it in the mail to be sent to the family," he said. "When I send a portrait to a family, that person's energy goes with it, and when the family opens that package, it's there with them."

Reagan makes himself available to every family member he speaks with and stays in contact with them even after they receive their portrait.

On May 11, 2007, Marsha Mattek, the mother of Lance Cpl. John Mattek Jr., a 24-year-old Marine with 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C., who died in Iraq after wounds received on June 8, 2005, in the Al Anbar Province, sent Reagan a letter after receiving the portrait of her son.

"I just received the portrait of our son, Johnny," she wrote. "There truly are no words to express to you the beauty of this portrait. You

brought out the magic that Johnny held so well in his smile. Instead of tears, when I opened the portrait your beautiful work brought a smile to my face and warmth to my heart, as you truly captured what our son loved doing and that was serving his country."

Reagan said he has received letters similar to Marsha's from almost every family whose loved ones' portrait he has done.

"When somebody says to me 'thanks for bringing my son home' or 'thanks for bringing my husband home,' I know that something special is happening," he said.

He recalled a recent conversation with a mother of a fallen hero.

"I just had a family whose son's coffin came home screwed shut," he explained, becoming slightly choked up. "I know what that means. I know what she is talking about. So the portrait is going to be the next time she sees her son. It allows them to believe a piece of them is still here."

His wife, Cheryl, with tears in her eyes added, "What Mike does starts the healing process for a lot of these families, his portraits give them a place to focus and begin healing."

Reagan credits the beginning years of his art as the stepping stone that needed to be crossed to give him the ability and skill required for this tremendous task.

"All of that happened so I could do this project," he said. "There has never been anything in my life more rewarding than this. I would do it all over again."

The unbelievable amount of love that goes into each portrait is evident by Reagan's unending commitment to the families and to their loved ones.

"I'm a Vietnam veteran Marine doing portraits with every bit of love and respect I have inside of me," he explained. "I will do this as long as I may have to, as long as families keep asking for them."

Throughout his 35 years of drawing, Reagan said the last three and a half have given him back the ability to feel and has changed his outlook on life.

In Vietnam, he served his country when it called upon him. Now he is answering his calling by giving back to those who have suffered and sacrificed so much.

So every morning, for as long as it takes and as long as he can, Reagan's pot of coffee will be brewing. He will sharpen his pencils and set up his illustration boards, preparing to emotionally engage another hero's story and their presence. And as long as he has a breath in his body, the faces of the men and women that give America freedom will never be forgotten.

For more information, visit <http://www.fallenheroesproject.org>.

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