

OBSERVATION Post

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MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

JANUARY 23, 2008

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 51 ISSUE 4

HOT TOPICS

OCOTILLO GATE CLOSURE

Ocotillo Gate will be closed until Jan. 25 for road paving. Residents affected by this are encouraged to use the Main Gate and Condor Gate for base access. Traffic will be delayed during the days of gate closure so residents are requested to be patient through the necessary road work. For further information log on to www.29palms.usmc.mil or tune in to CCTV-6.

RECRUITING SCREENING TEAM VISIT

The Headquarters Marine Corps Recruiting screening team is coming to the Combat Center on January 24th. The team will be screening all pre-designated Marines for this demanding special duty assignment. The screening will be at Building 1707 Classroom A 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All Marines pre-selected per CMC msg R 240226Z NOV 07 will report in the Service "C" uniform for the informational briefing at 8 a.m. and subsequent screening sessions. Marines not pre-selected for screening but interested in assignment to Recruiting Duty should see their unit Career Retention Specialist. For more information, contact the Combat Center CRS GySgt Mintz at 830-6171 or see your unit CRS.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Applications are now being accepted for the Officer Spouses Club Scholarship program. Applicant must be a spouse or child of an active duty, retired, or deceased military service member. Applicant and military service member, or surviving parent or spouse if military service member is deceased, must live in the Morongo Basin at the time of application. Applicant must be working toward a first AA, BA, or BS degree. Deadline for entry is March 15, 2008. For more information about the scholarship program, or to get an application, e-mail OSCScholarship@hotmail.com.

Assistant SecNav tours Combat Center, reviews future development plans

LANCE CORPORAL NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center was honored by the presence of a unique guest from the Department of the Navy in Washington, D.C., Wednesday.

The Honorable Mr. B.J. Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Environment, toured the Combat Center, and reviewed the base's future plans to improve quality of life, accommodations for troop increases and environment-friendly energy projects.

Penn arrived at the Combat Center Tuesday evening and was cordially invited to dinner at Quarters One, the commanding general's residence, in the Ocotillo Heights housing

See TOUR, A7



PFC. KELSEY J. GREEN

B.J. Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Environment, shakes hands with Maj. Milton Clausen, National Resources and Environmental Affairs director, at the Tortoise Research and Captivity Rearing Wednesday.

Lima Battery departs for MEU mission

LANCE CORPORAL NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When Marine Corps units deploy in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, they are sent to Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively.

However, some units will deploy as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit to the Western Pacific on what is known as a WESTPAC deployment.

The Marines and sailors of Lima Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, departed for their WESTPAC deployment with the 31st MEU Jan. 12 at approximately 6 a.m.

The 31st MEU will be deployed to Okinawa, Japan, for six months and will conduct operations throughout the Western Pacific.

Friends and family members of Lima Battery braved the cold, winter air to bid their loved ones farewell one last time before the deployment.

Jamie Allen, wife of Cpl. Troy Allen, cannoneer, Lima Battery, 3/12, waited

with their two sons, Michael and Mason, until Allen and the rest of the battery boarded the buses and left for March Air Reserve Base, Calif.

"I hate that he's gone, but I know it's for a good reason," she said.

Lima Battery traveled by bus to March ARB, where they met with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. The battery will be attached to 2/4 as part of the 31st MEU's battalion landing team during their deployment.

From March ARB, the BLT will fly to Okinawa and meet up with their respective advance parties. The ten Marines of Lima Battery's AP left for Okinawa Dec. 13 and have since been preparing for the arrival of the rest of the battery.

"The AP has a good plan that will set the battery up for success," said Capt. Waco Lane, battery commander, Lima Battery, 3/12. "They've done exactly what was expected of them."

While attached to the MEU, Lima

See LIMA, A8



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Cpl. Troy Allen, cannoneer, Lima Battery, 3/12, says goodbye to his wife, Jamie, and son, Mason, before departing for the 31st MEU Jan. 12. His older son, Michael, was also present for his departure.

This Day in Marine Corps History

-January 23, 1968:-

All crew members of USS Pueblo, 79 Sailors and two Marines, were awarded the Purple Heart after fighting against North Korean forces who captured their vessel in the Sea of Japan.



6 11th MEU Recon gets SPIE high



7 Officer's Club offers more for all ranks



9 Personal trainers offered at fitness centers



10 Fallen Heroes Run supports MCAGCC Marines, sailors



C.O.P. Corner Community Oriented Policing

The proactive voice of crime prevention • Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office, Crime Prevention Section
Information current as of Jan. 6.



Larcenies aboard MCAGCC

Larcenies have always been a big problem across the U.S. There has been an increasing problem of thefts aboard the base and especially in the barracks, which is an issue we have to strongly look at and find a way to address.

Out of the 4 larcenies, almost all of them could have been prevented or been easier to solve if the person would have secured the items properly, kept receipts of merchandise or marked or engraved their property for identification purposes. Also ensure that you write down and keep a record of all serial numbers and other identifiers of merchandise and keep that list in a secure location. Most pawn shops will not take property that has engraving markings on them.

Unit	Larcenies
7th Mar	1
1/7	1
2/7	0
3/7	0
3/4	1
3/11	0
3rd LAR	0
1st Tank Bn	0
3rd AABN	0
MWSS-374	0
CLB-7	1
VMU-1	0
MCCES	0
HQBN	0
NAV HOSP	0
23rd Dental	0
Staff Housing	0
Other	0
Grand Total	4

DUI / DWI Update

Here are the stats on how many DUIs/DWIs that we have had aboard MCAGCC and off the installation:

Unit	Totals	On Base/Off Base	Ranks
7th Mar	0	0/0	
1/7	0	0/0	
2/7	1	0/1	1LCpl
3/7	0	0/0	
3/4	0	0/0	
3/11	0	0/0	
3rd LAR	0	0/0	
1st Tank	1	1/0	1Cpl
3rd AABN	0	0/0	
MWSS-374	1	1/0	1 Pfc
CLB-7	0	0/0	
VMU-1	0	0/0	
MCCES	0	0/0	
HQBN	1	1/0	1LCpl
Nav Hosp	0	0/0	
23rd Dental	0	0/0	
Other Mil	0	0/0	
Mil Dep	0	0/0	
DOD Civ	0	0/0	
Other	0	0/0	
Grand Total	4		

The total number of Marine-related DUI's so far this year are 4, through Jan. 6.

All of them have lost or will lose their driving privileges for a minimum of one year.

For more information on DUI/DWI and convictions go to:

- http://criminal-law.freeadvice.com/drunken_driving/california- DUI.htm
- <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/pgs73drinkcostchart.htm>

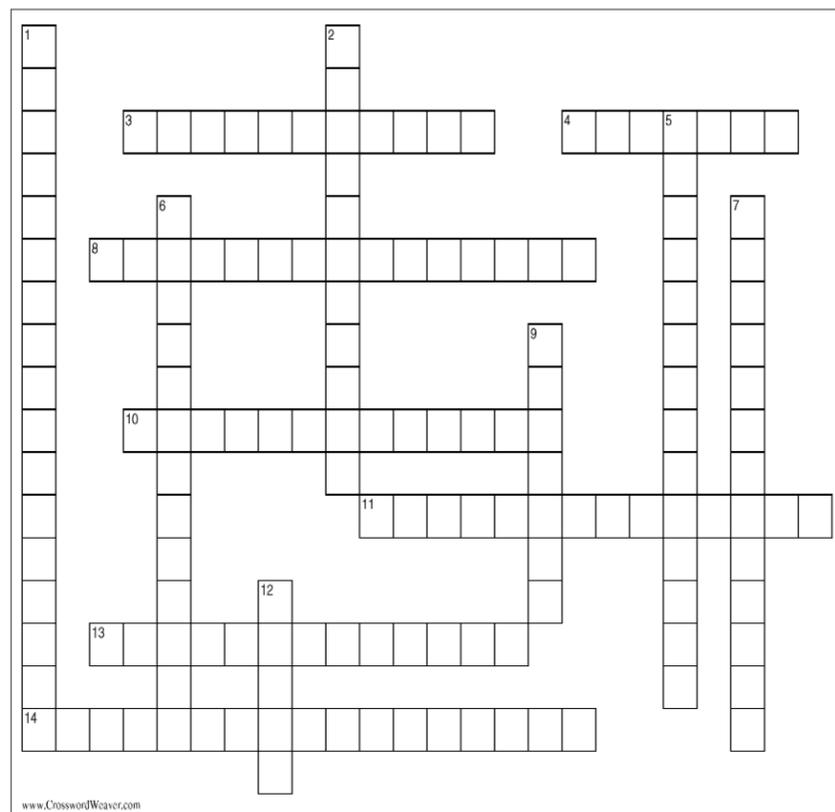
The following services are available to on-base personnel and residents through the Crime Prevention Section:

Literature, Briefings, Education, Crime Assessments, Safety Tips, Stranger Danger Program, McGruff the Crime Dog, Officer Friendly Program, Operation Identification (Property Identification), Child Identification and Fingerprinting.

For more information about the above services, contact the PMO Crime Prevention Section at 830-4561 or 830-6094.



AMERICAN WAR FILMS



ACROSS

- Howard Hughes' first film
- Sheen stars in this Vietnam film, but not Martin
- R. Lee Ermey's most famous role
- Made Russian Roulette infamous
- The Army doesn't use Taxi messengers anymore
- "I love the smell of napalm in the morning!"
- Known for the D-Day scene

DOWN

- Told the story of the flag raising on Iwo Jima
- Nicholas Cage guards a Navajo code talker
- Woody Harrelson lost his behind
- Josh Hartnett tears up the streets of Somalia
- The hill you can't eat
- Points out down time in the Middle East
- Recognizes the race battle of the Civil War

[Solutions on A11]

Centerspeak

What is the most embarrassing moment you've ever had?

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



PVT. DANE METTAN
STUDENT, ALPHA COMPANY, MCCES

"I mooned a soccer field while there was a game."



CPL. JAMES FLORES
RIFLEMAN, GOLF COMPANY, 2/7

"When I was 11, I fell into the Sacramento River in a tuxedo after a wedding."



STAFF SGT. DANIEL FORTNER
MCCES

"I was taking the platoon sergeant's position in a formation and I stepped front of the wrong platoon."

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

...or
Join the MARINES and be TOUGH FOREVER!

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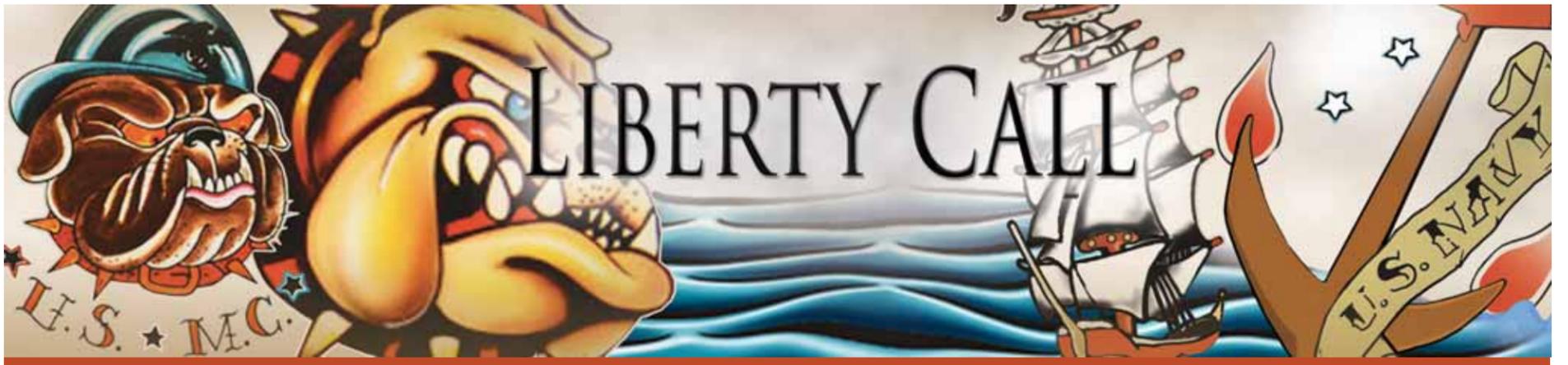
RECRUITING OFFICE

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	<p>THURSDAY</p> <p>Evening with Chapparral; Art Presentation & Refreshments Where: Tumbleweed Photos, 57490 29 Palms Hwy., next to Cactus Flower in Yucca Valley Time: 6 – 8 p.m. For more info. call 365-0661</p>	<p>FRIDAY & SATURDAY</p> <p>Theater 29 is currently presenting Neil Simon's comedic hit "Rumors" Where: 73637 Sullivan Rd., 29 Palms Fri. & Sat. 7 p.m. until Feb. 2 For info. call 361-4151</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Viscosity Printmaking Workshop, Jan. 26 Color Lovers! Experience the magic of printing with viscosity inks. Please call ahead. Where: 29 Palms Creative Center & Gallery, 6847 Adobe Rd., 29 Palms www.29palmscreativecenter.com For more info. call 361-1805</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>The Thriftstore Allstars Band Where: Pappy & Harriet's, 53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown www.pappyandharriets.com Time: 6 p.m. For info. call 365-5956</p>
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Movies for the upcoming week at the Sunset Cinema

WEDNESDAY
 This Christmas 7 p.m. - PG-13

THURSDAY
 Hitman 7 p.m. - R

FRIDAY
 I Am Legend 6 p.m. - PG-13
 No Country for Old Men 9 p.m. - R
 The Mist
 Midnight - R

SATURDAY
 TBA - FREE 11 a.m. - G
 Alvin & The Chipmunks 2 p.m. - G
 National Treasure: Book of Secrets - 6 p.m. - PG
 FREE SNEAK PREVIEW 9 p.m. - R
 Hitman
 Midnight - R

SUNDAY
 National Treasure: Book of Secrets - 2 p.m. - PG
 I Am Legend 6 p.m. - PG-13
 Charlie Wilson's War 9 p.m. - R

MONDAY
 Hitman 7 p.m. - R

TUESDAY
 The Mist 7 p.m. - R

STAFF NCO CLUB SUPER BOWL PARTY

Meet THE BUD GIRLS! Win PRIZES!

ALL Staff NCOs, Officers, Navy and civilian equivalents: watch the Super Bowl at the Club! Doors open at 12 p.m. for the pre-game show. Enjoy drink specials and heavy hors d'oeuvres! For more information about this FREE party, call 830-6610! See you there!!!

SUN., FEB. 3
 Starting at **12 noon**

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 • SENIORS \$6.00
 • CHILDREN \$6.00

Get To Palm Springs!

RIDE MBTA

15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday							
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Stater Bros WalMart	Palm Springs Airport
5:00	5:25	5:30	5:40	5:45	6:00	6:10	7:00
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday							
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WalMart	MCAGCC			
7:00	7:10	7:15	7:50	8:30			
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*							
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Stater Bros WalMart	Palm Springs Airport
10:00	10:25	10:30	10:40	10:45	11:00	11:10	11:45
4:00	4:25	4:30	*4:40	*4:45	*5:00	*5:10	*5:45
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*							
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WalMart	MCAGCC			
12:00	12:10	12:15	12:50	1:35			
*6:00	*6:10	*6:15	*6:50	*7:35			

*SUNDAY SERVICE BEGINS AT 29 PALMS COMMUNITY CENTER. All weekend service is for Saturday only except for the final return trip which includes both Saturday and Sunday service.

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SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM

2007 29 PALMS, CA 2008

SMP EVENTS

FRIDAY
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 6 P.M.

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FREE admission
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\$5 TRANSPORTATION
 BUS LEAVES THE ZONE AT 8 AM
 Deadline to sign-up is **Wed., Jan. 23**

Sign-up TODAY at The Zone

TRICARE offers new programs to health care recipients

LANCE CORPORAL
NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

TRICARE, the military's health care provider, is constantly changing to adapt to the needs of their recipients.

Since the beginning of fiscal year 2008, TRICARE has updated their health care plans numerous times and has made their plans more user-friendly.

TRICARE RESERVE SELECT HEALTH CARE PLAN AVAILABLE TO MORE MEMBERS OF THE SELECTED RESERVE

As of Oct. 1, 2007, the TRICARE Reserve Select health care plan has become easier for reservists and National Guardsmen to use. Complicated qualifications, service agreements and varying premium payment levels are now a thing of the past.

Now, service members who receive TRS benefits pay a premium of \$81 per month for individual plans and \$253 per month for family plans.

For more information about the new TRS coverage, service members can log on to <http://www.tricare.mil>.

However, one major exclusion has been made to the TRS plan that may affect some service members. If service members qualify for Federal Employees Health Benefits, either through themselves or a family member, their TRS benefits cannot be extended.

Qualified service members who wish to extend their coverage under the new TRS plan can fill out a new TRS request form at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs>.

NEW ONLINE RESOURCE CAN HELP TRICARE BENEFICIARIES DEAL WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES

A new online educational resource offers TRICARE beneficiaries a secure, safe environment to seek information, educational materials and self-assessment tools

on behavioral health, addiction and recovery, life events and daily living skills.

A recent Department of Defense survey concluded that 74 percent of service members cope with stress by talking to a friend or family member about their problems. TRICARE has acknowledged the need to help those service members and dependants suffering from stress.

"It is critical we recognize that our service members and families face enormous stress, and that stress can affect physical as well as mental health," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director, TRICARE Management Activity, in a recent TRICARE press release. "We support all efforts to reach out and offer help and advice on dealing with life's challenges."

The "AchieveSolutions" program on the Web site features more than 6,000 articles, which cover more than 200 areas of research such as information on advocacy, emotional well-being, family concerns, dealing with illness, loss and grief, and alcoholism and substance abuse. The program is also offered in both English and Spanish.

To access "AchieveSolutions," log on to <http://www.humana-military.com> and clicking on the behavioral health link.

TRICARE TO MAKE ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE EASIER OVERSEAS

Due to reduced staffing in military dental facilities overseas, military families have been forced to seek out dental treatment from practices in their host nation.

However, host nation dentists often require military families to make a full payment up front and wait for reimbursement from United Concordia, the administrator of the TRICARE Dental Program.

Although the TDP will reim-

burse service members for these out-of-pocket dental expenses, paying in full up front often creates hardship for them. The result is necessary dental care being postponed or ignored.

We recognize that dental care is expensive, and paying the full bill can represent a serious hardship for military members," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director, TRICARE Management Activity, in a recent TRICARE press release. "No service member



should have to wonder if he can afford to get his family the dental care they need, so we're finding dentists who will provide needed treatment and then file claims with United Concordia for payment."

The TDP has formed an alliance with United Concordia to seek out host nation dentists who will agree to be listed as TRICARE Preferred Dentists. These dentists will require only the beneficiary's cost share at the time of care, meaning that beneficiaries can get dental services like examinations and cleanings done with little or no out of pocket expense.

In light of this change, TRICARE encourages beneficiaries to remain enrolled in the TRICARE Dental Program when they move overseas. In the near future, beneficiaries will be able to see the list of TRICARE Preferred Dentists on the United Concordia Web site, at <http://www.tricare dentalprogram.com>.

SHINGLES VACCINE AVAILABLE TO TRICARE BENEFICIARIES AGE 60 AND OLDER

Following a recommendation from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Oct. 19, 2007, TRICARE now covers the shingles vaccine, Zostavax.

The vaccine is designed to prevent shingles for TRICARE recipients who are age 60 and older.

Shingles, a painful viral disease caused by the same virus that is attributed to chickenpox in children, affects more than one million Americans every year, more than half of whom are above the age of 60.

"Offering this vaccine to our beneficiaries is further evidence of TRICARE's commitment to provide first-rate health care to uniformed service members and their families," said Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, deputy director,

TRICARE Management Activity, in a recent TRICARE press release. "We cover all immunizations recommended by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and formally endorsed and adopted by the CDC."

If you are a TRICARE recipient and receive the vaccination after Oct. 19, 2007, you must receive it at a provider's office. Zostavax is now covered by the TRICARE medical benefit and will no longer be reimbursable under the pharmacy benefit.

Any questions regarding coverage or claims should be directed to the TRICARE regional claims processor found on the explanation of benefits form. For overseas beneficiaries, contact the local TRICARE Service Center or TRICARE Area Office.

For more information regarding shingles or the vaccine, log on to the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/vis-shingles.pdf>.

NEW WEB SITE ALLOWS TRICARE BENEFICIARIES TO MANAGE HEALTH CARE INFORMATION FROM HOME

Now, TRICARE beneficiaries can log on to <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bew/> to manage all their health care information.

This makes TRICARE health care plans more user-friendly for beneficiaries. The only plan not available on the Web site is the U.S. Family Health Plan, a TRICARE Prime option.

BENEFICIARIES CAN LET TRICARE DO THE TALKING WHEN IT COMES TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

TRICARE has made behavioral health care access simpler for Prime beneficiaries by offering

assistance with appointments.

The Behavioral Health Provider Locator and Appointment Assistance Service assists active duty service members and their families living in the U.S. who need help locating and making appointments with behavioral health care providers.

For more info about TRICARE and the behavioral health appointment assistance service, visit the mental health and behavior section at <http://www.tricare.mil>.

NEW ADVOCACY PROGRAM ASSISTS WOUNDED WARRIORS IN TRICARE'S SOUTHERN REGION

TRICARE has established the Warrior Navigation and Assistance Program to provide guidance to active duty, reserve and National Guard service members transition through the Military Health System.

The WNAP offers one-on-one assistance with many unique health care challenges service members may face.

Four key elements make up the WNAP – tools and information for service members to use, program management, clinical programs, and education and resource providers.

A dedicated toll-free phone number has been established to assist service members and their families. The number is 1-800-4GO-WNAP.

"The military's operational tempo, including the activation and deployment of Guard and reserve forces, creates special challenges for service members in transition and their loved ones," said Dave Baker, president and chief executive officer of Humana Military Healthcare Services, in a recent TRICARE press release. "We're here to assist these American heroes and their families in obtaining access to high quality health care services and ensuring they have actionable information about the full range of their medical benefits."

For more information about the WNAP, call 1-800-4GO-WNAP or log on to <http://www.humana-military.com>.

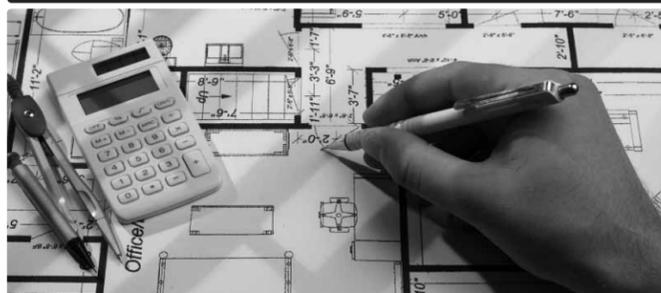
TRICARE FOR LIFE "EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS" GOES DIGITAL

TRICARE for Life beneficiaries can now print copies of their Explanation of Benefits from the convenience of their own homes.

Starting in January 2008, the only paper EOB's TFL beneficiaries will receive are monthly summaries. However, once beneficiaries sign up for the online service, they will no longer receive paper summaries.

TFL recipients can log on to <http://www.TRICARE4U.com> to view and print their EOB's.

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** The loan fees, which generally total between \$300-\$600, will be waived provided the line-of-credit is not closed within 3 years. Borrowers may be subject to incidental third party fees related to the subordination of any existing liens. If you pay this in full, and close the line-of-credit, you will be required to pay any fees waived in addition to any fees required to reconvey the security on the loan. Other restrictions may apply. Rates, terms, and conditions may change without notice.



Marines, sailors, fill ETT roles in Afghanistan

STAFF SGT. LUIS P. VALDESPINO JR.

COMBINED SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND - AFGHANISTAN

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Jan. 13, 2008) -- Embedded training team Marines and sailors in eastern Afghanistan fill multiple roles while serving as mentors to the Afghan National Army.

From the senior officer to the junior enlisted Marine and sailor on the 20-man team, ETT 7-2 leathernecks take on jobs that go well beyond their military occupational specialties and job titles. The ETT was divided to mentor two ANA kandaks (Afghan battalions), which requires each team member to use all of his knowledge, skills and experience.

The team deployed to Afghanistan from Okinawa, Japan, and was assigned to mentor the 3rd and 5th Kandaks, 3rd Brigade, 201st ANA Corps. As teams of 10, each Marine and sailor needs to work with several ANA soldiers. The small teams work in remote locations, which means the Marines and sailors must count on each other to take care of all the team's basic operational needs.

Three Marines and one sailor from one of the two groups work with the 3rd Kandak (Armored) headquarters at Forward Operating Base Naray.

"You just don't always know what's going to be next. You just have to use your experience and knowledge," said 1st Sgt. Matthew S. Seamans, 42-year-old Shorewood, Minn., native and

senior enlisted mentor with ETT 7-2.

The team chief, Lt. Col. James F. Werth, a former intelligence battalion commander, sets the standard by mentoring the 3rd Kandak (Armored) commanding, intelligence, operations and executive officers. Werth also personally tends to several mandatory administrative reports and other paperwork of his own.

Seamans mentors the kandak sergeant major, and administration and logistics officers. He also spends time with flight arrangements, community construction projects as well as ANA and ETT budget issues. And if a Marine or sailor on his team needs a haircut, Seamans quickly becomes the ETT 7-2 barber.

"I can't always be in three places at one time. What I have to

do is rely on Sgt. (Will D.) Craig, doc and others," Seamans said.

Craig, a 26-year-old Culleoka, Tenn., native, is the team communications chief. He also mentors the ANA communications officer, manages the ETT computers and operates an M2 .50 caliber machine gun from a Humvee turret.

"We've all had our time up in the turret and behind the wheel (of a Humvee)," Seamans added.

"Where else does a lieutenant colonel get to drive and gun? Where else does a first sergeant get to drive and gun?" Werth asked.

Petty Officer 1st Class Reynaldo S. Datu, a 42-year-old hospital corpsman, mentors the ANA medical doctor and medic soldiers. He also ensures the ETT Marines have adequate medical

care during their deployment and he regularly drives one of the Humvees.

The team is supported by two security forces soldiers, Army Cpl. Kelly A. Richardson of Columbia, S.C., and Spc. John W. Francisco of Akron, Ohio, who alternate roles as gunner and driver. Along with Craig and Datu, they also ensure the vehicles are maintained well on a weekly basis. Richardson and Francisco are deployed to Afghanistan with the South Carolina Army National Guard.

The many roles for each ETT mentor keep them occupied in garrison and in tactical situations, but the mentors take their roles in stride.

"The Marines and corpsmen just step up beyond their expectations," said Seamans.



STAFF SGT. LUIS P. VALDESPINO

Sgt. Will D. Craig (top), and Petty Officer 1st Class Reynaldo S. Datu prepare for a convoy from Forward Operating Base Naray, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. The two are assigned to Embedded Training Team 7-2, deployed to Afghanistan from Okinawa, Japan, to work with the Afghan National Army.

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11th MEU Recon gets SPIE high

CPL. SCOTT M. BISCUITI
11th MEU

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait (Jan. 13, 2008) -- Dangling from a single rope attached to a helicopter flying more than 250-feet above ground isn't how most people get around. But Reconnaissance Marines aren't average, in fact for them, it's just another day at the office.

The Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, got to practice their aerial acrobatics Jan. 13 at Camp Buehring in Kuwait during a special purpose insertion/extraction (SPIE) refresher.

"SPIE rigging is an easy way to get in and out of a location if there is no way to land a helicopter or if there is an obstacle too

high," said Sgt. Shawn Reynolds, a helicopter rope suspension training, or HRST, master and Reconnaissance Marine with Recon Platoon.

Marines and sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their current deployment to the Arabian Gulf.

For more information on the 11th MEU, visit www.11meu.usmc.mil.



CPL. SCOTT M. BISCUITI

Reconnaissance Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit move toward a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter Jan. 13 as the helicopter slowly rises to take them 250-feet from the ground to conduct special purpose insertion/extraction (SPIE) training at Camp Buehring in Kuwait. The Marines and sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their six-month deployment throughout the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf region.



CPL. SCOTT M. BISCUITI

Soaring 250-feet above ground, Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit get a bird's eye view of the surrounding area during a special purpose insertion/extraction refresher Jan. 13 at Camp Buehring in Kuwait. The Marines and sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their six-month deployment throughout the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf region.

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CPL. SCOTT M. BISCUITI

Marines unhook themselves from a special purpose insertion/extraction (SPIE) rope Jan. 13 as a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter makes its descent after completing SPIE refresher training at Camp Buehring in Kuwait. Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted the training with support from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166 (REIN), 11th MEU. The Marines and sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their six-month deployment throughout the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf region.

Officer's Club offers more for all ranks

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Officer's Club is open to all ranking Marines, sailors and their family members for lunch and dinner throughout the week.

Lunch is offered Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and dinner is offered every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Monday night is steak night where the Officer's Club has upgraded their quality of steak and has doubled their steak sales.

"We are really excited about the upgraded steaks," said Tracy Hatch, Marine Corps Community Services duty operations for the Officer's Club. "They are absolutely wonderful."

Wednesday night is spaghetti night. The club has a new, homemade spaghetti sauce and meatballs and improved garlic bread made with rosemary.

"Spaghetti night is becoming very popular for families with little children," said Hatch. "The night is all you can eat with salads, garlic bread and the spaghetti."

Thursday night is seafood night where crab legs have been recently added to the menu. The seafood is cooked fresh to order.

Denise Carrier, MCCA manager for the Officer's Club, said the seafood menu has variant items to choose from, including mixing and matching items or simply ordering the General's Platter.

The Officer's Club has also implemented the Sunday Champagne Brunch starting at 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Sunday.

"It has been such a huge success," said Hatch. "When you walk in, you are greeted at the door with a glass of champagne while a pianist is playing throughout the whole brunch."

Decorating the room is two new giant ice sculptures that focus on the theme of the brunch.

The brunch consists of

omelet and waffle stations, seafood, extra breakfast items, prime rib or fresh fruit.

"I am excited about being a part of taking the rest of MCAGCC [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center] to the next level," said Carrier. "It is so much more with the better food quality, better service, and I love getting to know the families that come in here."

"I have families come in here to see me personally, they call me their grandma and I love it," Carrier added.

The Officer's Club can be used for parties, ceremonies, meetings or special themed nights for the units aboard the Combat Center.

"If enough people say they want an event, by all means we'll throw the event," said Hatch.

Carrier agreed, stating she doesn't like to say no to patrons wanting to hold an event.

A major event held at the Officer's Club is Bingo and Bunko



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Cecilia Comer, Marine Corps Community Services waitress at the Officer's Club, serves Petty Officer 3rd Class Bruce Linnartz, with 23rd dental company, his dinner Jan. 17, for seafood night.

Night open to anyone able to get on the base.

"It is funded by Operation Enduring Freedom," said Hatch. "It helps with spouses

and friends having to endure being away from a loved one while they are deployed."

Bingo and Bunko Night gives

away free Coach purses, tickets to any upcoming events, designer perfumes and many smaller prizes.

For more information regarding the Officer's Club contact Carrier or Hatch at 830-6610 or visit the MCCA Web site at www.mcca229palms.com.

TOUR from, A1

area.

Wednesday, Penn began the day with breakfast at Phelps Hall and then met with Brig. Gen. Melvin G. Spiese, Combat Center

commanding general, at the installation headquarters building.

The first stop on Penn's installation tour was the Expeditionary Air Field. Lt. Col. Timothy B. Seamon, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 commanding offi-

cer, led Penn and his entourage around the EAF.

Penn was then led to the Tortoise Research and Captivity Rearing, which is maintained by the National Resources and Environmental Affairs group. There, Penn was able to see firsthand what the Combat Center and the TRACR have done to preserve and protect the desert tortoise, an endangered species in the Mojave Desert.

After his tour of the TRACR, Penn proceeded to the Combined Arms Military Operations on Urban Terrain facility. The tour was conducted by Bryan Robertson, CAMOUNT project officer.

Penn also learned about the Marine Corps' pre-deployment training package, dubbed Mojave Viper, when he visited Camp Wilson. Col. Thomas Quoss, Mojave Viper officer-in-charge, Sgt. Maj. Enrique Borgzinner, Mojave Viper sergeant major, and several Marines from the Mojave

Viper Support Detachment joined Penn for lunch at Camp Wilson.

Following lunch, Penn attended a brief at the Battle Command Center, which is the commanding general's conference room. Lt. Cmdr. Yvonne R. Lyda, Facilities Management Division director, and Valerie L. Hodgson, G-5 range project coordinator, briefed Penn about upcoming G-4 projects.

The projects outlined in the brief mainly revolved around improving quality of life, making accommodations for troop increases and constructing environment-friendly energy projects.

A surprise was arranged for Penn and his entourage after the G-4 brief. A pistol shoot was set up for Penn at the Marksmanship Training Unit pistol range. Ed Folts, Range Chief, MTU, instructed Penn on how to operate the M9 Beretta 9mm pistol.

"I loved shooting the nine-mil," said Penn. "I used to shoot the Glock, which is a little different, but this was nice."

The pistol shoot was the culminating event of the day. Following his surprise trip to MTU, Penn returned to the installation headquarters building before leaving for Palm Springs, Calif. Penn expressed his enjoyment of the tour and his impression of the Combat Center at the headquarters building.

"I'm pretty impressed with the base," he said. "It's a great base as it is, but once we get some of those plans put in place, it will be more fantastic."

"It's very important for the Marines to have the best equipment and training possible, especially before they go into harm's way," added Penn. "They are America's first line of defense and a national asset."

Penn departed the Combat Center for Palm Springs Wednesday evening, where he enjoyed a meal and a night's rest before flying back to Washington, D.C. to continue his service to the Department of the Navy.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Ed Folts, range chief, Marksmanship Training Unit, teaches B.J. Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Environment, how to operate an M9 Beretta 9mm pistol at the MTU pistol range Wednesday.

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LIMA from, A1

Battery will conduct operations in several locations throughout the Western Pacific. Their first mission will take them to the Philippines for several weeks. After the Philippines, the battery

will venture to Camp Fuji, which is on the mainland of Japan. Their final mission will be conducted in Thailand. Each mission will last several weeks. The MEU will return to their port in Okinawa in between operations. "In the past, 2nd Battalion,

11th Marines, normally supported 5th Marines on 31st MEU deployments," said Lt. Col. James C. Lewis, 3/11 commanding officer. "Because of 11th Marine's operational tempo, this is the second time since 2005 that we have supported the 31st MEU. Doing so presents unique challenges given the separation between 5th

Marines and 3/11." "However, Capt. Lane and Lima Battery have done a great job getting ready for deployment," added Lewis. "Lt. Col. Christian F. Wortman, BLT 2/4 commanding officer, has made every effort to involve the battery in their pre-deployment training plan. They will provide artillery

fire if needed, but are also trained to provide a non-lethal continuum to support BLT 2/4." Following the mission on Thailand, the MEU will return to Okinawa one final time before setting a course for home. "I'm really excited for this deployment," said Lane. "We get to get out and see a completely different part of the world besides the desert."

Overall, the Marines and sailors of Lima Battery seem to be excited to deploy with the 31st MEU. "Me, I don't mind deploying - it's my job," said Cpl. Rodrick Stone, cannoneer, Lima Battery, 3/12. "My wife hates it, though, but she knows I have a job to do and that I have to go do it."

Stone's wife, Marcy, said she's relieved by the fact her husband is not going back to Iraq. This will be Stone's second deployment during the tenure of their marriage.

Lewis said he feels Lima Battery has been given a good opportunity by being attached to BLT 2/4 and the 31st MEU.

"Deploying with the 31st MEU and BLT 2/4 provides Lima Battery a good opportunity to work closely with maneuver forces in a more traditional way than what we have done in Iraq over the past few years," he said.

The Marines and sailors of Lima Battery, 3/12, will continue to serve the Marine Corps and their country on their deployment with the 31st MEU. They are scheduled to return from the MEU in June of this year.

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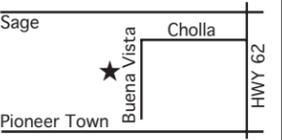
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Personal trainers offered at fitness centers across the Combat Center

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Personal trainers and new aerobics classes are available at the fitness and community centers aboard the Combat Center for Marines, sailors and their family members.

Available at the East and West Fitness Centers are three Marine Corps Community Services personal trainers that are on hand to work with individual patrons Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"I feel it is necessary to use a

personal trainer depending on the person themselves," said Zack Jones, athletic assistant for the East Fitness Center. "Using a personal trainer gains motivation and can teach someone how to eat right."

Personal trainers perform fitness assessments to find baseline fitness level and body composition. The fitness assessment will measure weight, body fat percentage, bicep strength, back flexibility and the ability to sustain cardiovascular exertion.

After viewing the fitness assessment, the personal trainer will develop an exercise plan tailored to the needs and guides through a personalized plan.

"I have noticed a huge difference in people after they work with a personal trainer for a couple of months," said Jones. "They are way more motivated. Some have said they feel a lot better when they wake up in the morning."

The trainer will also advise patrons on changes in eating habits

that may need to be modified.

Trainers will also assist in conditioning previously injured Marines and sailors to ensure a full recovery.

"Personal trainers help in assisting family readiness by providing education for a healthy lifestyle," said Yvonne Warfield, MCCA aerobics coordinator. "Some of the effects that are seen are lowered stress, decreased illness, and decreased risk for injury, increase mission readiness and incorporate functional fitness for daily living."

Also available through the fitness and community centers are many aerobics and training classes.

The MCCA Web site also shows some aerobics classes offered through the East and West Fitness Centers and community center, including step and spinning classes. Yoga, kickboxing and pilates are available throughout the month as well.

Step classes are usually com-

bined with abdominal workouts, stretching technique classes, and muscle toning and sculpting.

Dancing aerobics and yoga fusion are available once a month for more recreational and alternative workouts.

"We have a new schedule every month that is at the East and West gym and the community center," said Warfield. "The aerobics classes are open to all authorized patrons."

Warfield continued to explain that to participate in the classes people only need to show up before the classes begin.

"The classes are all different and hopefully appeal to many different people," said Warfield.

Unit physical fitness is accessible to units wishing to participate in an aerobics class.

"The unit can request any kind of aerobics class that we have to offer at a time that might be better for the unit," said Warfield.

For more information regard-



CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
Gisela Hench, supervisor and aerobics instructor at the Combat Center's West Gym, poses in front of the West Gym's aerobics room Jan. 18. Hench instructs some of the new fitness programs put on at the East and West gyms.

ing personal trainers or the aerobics class please contact the East or West Fitness Centers at 830-6440 or 830-6451.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Roman Catholic Services Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

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Sun 8 a.m. Catholic Mass*
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Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD (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 Grp.
Sun 4:30 p.m. Rosary
Sun 5 p.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 6 p.m. Cyrus Young Adult Group age 18-35, married or single (3rd Sunday of the month)
Fri 12:15 - 4:30 p.m. Exposition/ Adoration
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Holy Days of Obligation Masses

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

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Sun 8 a.m. Sunday School*
Sun 9 a.m. Worship*
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Sun 11 a.m. Worship

Lay-Led Independent Baptist Service Christ Chapel

Sun 11 a.m. Worship

Lay-Led Gospel Service Christ Chapel

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Midweek 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 (2nd Tues. of the month)
6 p.m. Baptism Class 1st Tuesday each Month

Wednesday
Village Center
11:30 a.m. Prayer Meeting in the Prayer Room contact Chaplain Flint 830-6187
6 p.m. RCIA, building 1551

Christ Chapel
5:30 p.m. Catholic Choir Rehearsal
6 p.m. Praise & Worship Rehearsal
6 p.m. Pre-Service Food/Fellowship
7 p.m. Lay-Led Gospel Bible Study
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Fallen Heroes Run supports MCAGCC Marines, sailors

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Marines, sailors and family members lined the streets Jan. 11 at the Combat Center's Desert Winds Golf Course in support of the Combat Center's fallen Marines and sailors from in the Fallen Heroes Run.

The run was sponsored by 7th Marine Regiment and the Knights of Columbus with a \$15 charge per participant. All proceeds will go to the Knights of Columbus Iraqi Fund.

"There were a lot of people that came together for this run," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Theodore Drennan, with Marine Corps Communications-Electronic School. "This was a community

effort and the support of the base was amazing with 7th Marine Regiment."

The run kicked off at 8 a.m. Runners had the option to participate in one of two different courses. The shorter course was a 5-kilometer run where many spouses wanting to show support for their family members currently deployed ran or walked.

"I ran the 5K with a bunch of Marines from IPAC [Installation Personnel Administration Center] because we felt showing our support for our fellow Marines who have passed away or are deployed," said Pfc. Sarah George, administrations separations clerk. "It was really motivating seeing this many people show

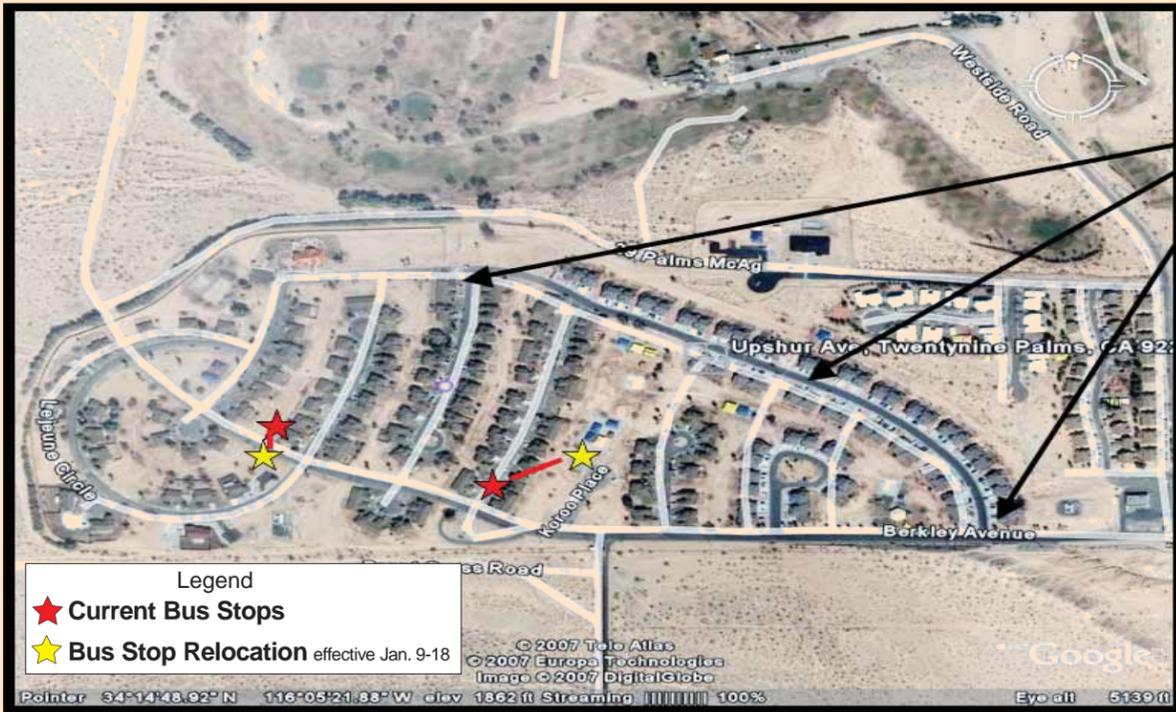
See RUN, A12



Marines, sailors and family members run down Berkley Street for the Fallen Heroes Run Jan. 11 at the Combat Center Desert Winds Golf Course to show support for the Marines and sailors who have fallen during deployment.

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Ocotillo Gate closes for road paving until Jan. 25



Upshur

Ocotillo Gate will be closed Jan. 21-25 for road paving on Berkley Avenue. Housing residents affected by this and future road or gate closures are encouraged to be patient through the necessary road work.

Lincoln recommends that all residents use Upshur Avenue from Jan. 7 - 25 between 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Travelers can expect delays on remaining roads during these hours.

Flyers will be disseminated to housing residents affected by future changes due to road and gate closures. The flyers will also include the remaining work schedule including necessary traffic/parking shifts, and school bus stop moves.

For further information, call Lincoln Military Housing at 368-4021 or log on to www.29palms.usmc.mil.

- Road work on all roads except Upshur Jan. 7-25, use Upshur
- Expect delays on remaining roads between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Ocotillo Gate will be closed Jan. 21-25



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Breaking the language barrier



CPL RAMONA MARIE PEÑALA

Petty Officer 1st Class Xavier Rivera, a U.S. Navy corpsman attached to Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, uses the new IBM Speech to Speech Translator Laptop, at a simulated medical aid station, aboard the Combat Center's training area Jan. 16. This training allows Marines and sailors to work through communication barriers that they could encounter during deployments in foreign countries.

RUN from, A10

up to show their support. I absolutely loved seeing the little kids running, and even the older people because you know they care about us and our mission."

Competitive runners raced in the 10K and were timed to name the top three males and top three females, who received 7th Marine Regiment coins for their efforts.

"It went really well," said Drennan. "This run was set up for those who have fallen and people showed up. They showed their support."

After the run, free food and beverages donated by the Knights of Columbus, were offered. The Knights of Columbus cooked hamburgers and hotdogs as the runners passed the finish line.

The Knights of Columbus plan to use the money earned from the run to purchase health and comfort items that are sent to the chaplains of units deployed. The chaplains will distribute the

items throughout the units.

"You always see World War II veterans always talking about their buddies killed in action," said Drennan. "This is kind of the same connotation."

According to Alan Turk, Grand Knight with Knights of Columbus, the run had raised more than \$750 that will be sent to Iraq.

"This run was a great idea," said Turk. "It really helped bring attention to the Marines that have fallen."

"We knew a lot of those Marines and went to church with a lot of those Marines on that board," continued Turk, mentioning a poster with Marines from the Combat Center who have fallen during deployment.

The Knights of Columbus are continuing to work with the Combat Center to ensure the Fallen Heroes Run becomes an annual event to show their support for Marines who have fallen or are currently deployed.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Participants take off on the starting line for the Fallen Heroes Run Jan. 11. The Knights of Columbus donate the money gained from the run to units from the Combat Center who are currently deployed.

Food, Beverages, & Beer Available

Doors Open at 1pm for Pregame Show with Kick Off at 4:18pm
 Tickets on Sale at ITT & MCCS Clubs
 Shuttle Service Available for Patrons who reside on base

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\$5 includes your choice of T-shirt with AFC or NFC Champion's Logo!
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