

OBSERVATION Post

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MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 5, 2008

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 51 ISSUE 10



6 Creating a masterpiece



7 Take it to the hole!



9 Contact left!



10 Carrying the torch of dedication

This Day in Marine Corps History

-March 6, 1932-

John Philip Sousa, the composer of the Marine Corps' official march, "Semper Fidelis," and one of America's most famous marches, "Stars and Stripes Forever," died in Reading, Penn.



'Darkside' deploys to western Al Anbar for 5th time

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, departed the Combat Center Feb. 25 through 28, on a seven-month deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

3/4, also known as "Darkside," for their call sign, has deployed to Iraq a record-setting five times, said Staff Sgt. Edward A. Little Jr., family readiness officer, 3/4, and a Tucson, Ariz., native.

"I am really excited to get over there," said Lance Cpl. Troy Arentz, rifleman, Kilo Company, 3/4 and a North Field, Minn., native. "This is my second deployment, so I am eager to see the changes from the end of the last deployment to this deployment."

Lance Cpl. Michael Ward, a squad automatic weapon gunner, Kilo Company, 3/4, is deploying for his first time. He said he is excited to witness the difference in cultures and experience Iraq first-hand.

"It's going to be a great experience," said Ward, a Brooklyn Park, Minn., native. "As long as we all do our job so every Marine comes home with us."

Ward said he was looking forward to deploying ever since he started Mojave Viper, the month-long pre-deployment training evolution geared toward combat deployments.

"Mojave Viper brought us together," said Ward. "It taught us to be a team, so we can do our jobs without problems while deployed."

3/4 will be replacing 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, continuing their mission of maintaining security, training the Iraqi security forces, and helping their local leaders

See DARKSIDE, A5

Heroes campaign kicks off for Red Cross



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The American Red Cross has been a hero to thousands of service members and their dependents aboard the Combat Center for more than 30 years. Seeing to the welfare of military families, providing volunteer opportunities, lending aid during times of disaster and providing citizens with lifesaving

CPR and first aid skills are a few of their selfless services offered.

Beginning Monday through March 28, members of the base are being asked to be "heroes" for the American Red Cross.

"Heroes for the American Red Cross" is a three-week campaign where units, organizations, church groups, civic clubs, individuals and businesses pledge to raise or donate at least \$1,000 to keep the

vital services of the American Red Cross alive and well aboard the Combat Center.

The campaign is four years old, and it is the first time the American Red Cross has kicked off the campaign on base.

American Red Cross Development Manager Kathleen Perkins said units on base can do

See RED CROSS, A4



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 Feb. 25.



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 12 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	2
2/7	1
3/7	0
3/4	6
3/11	0
3rd LAR	0
1st Tank Bn	0
3rd AABN	0
MWSS-374	0
CLB-7	2
VMU-1	0
MCCES	0
HQBN	0
NAV HOSP	0
23rd Dental	0
Staff Housing	0
Other	0
Grand Total	12

DUI / DWI Update

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

Unit	Totals	On Base/Off Base	Ranks
7th Mar	1	0/1	1Sgt
1/7	0	0/0	
2/7	1	0/1	1LCpl
3/7	4	2/2	2LCpl/2Cpl
3/4	1	0/1	1Cpl
3/11	2	0/2	2Cpl
3rd LAR	1	1/0	1Pvt
1st Tank	3	3/0	1LCpl/2Cpl
3rd AABN	3	2/1	1LCpl/1Cpl/1Sgt
MWSS-374	2	2/0	1Pfc/1LCpl
CLB-7	1	1/0	1Pvt
VMU-1	0	0/0	
MCCES	4	4/0	2Pfc/1LCpl/1GySgt
HQBN	6	3/3	1Pvt/2LCpl/3Cpl
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	2	2/0	1Sp4, 1unknown
Grand Total	31		

The total number of Marine-related DUI's so far this year are 31, through Feb 25.

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

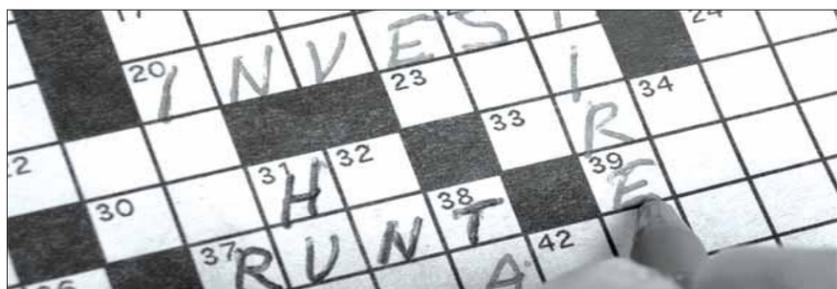
For more information on DUI/DWI and convictions go to:

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

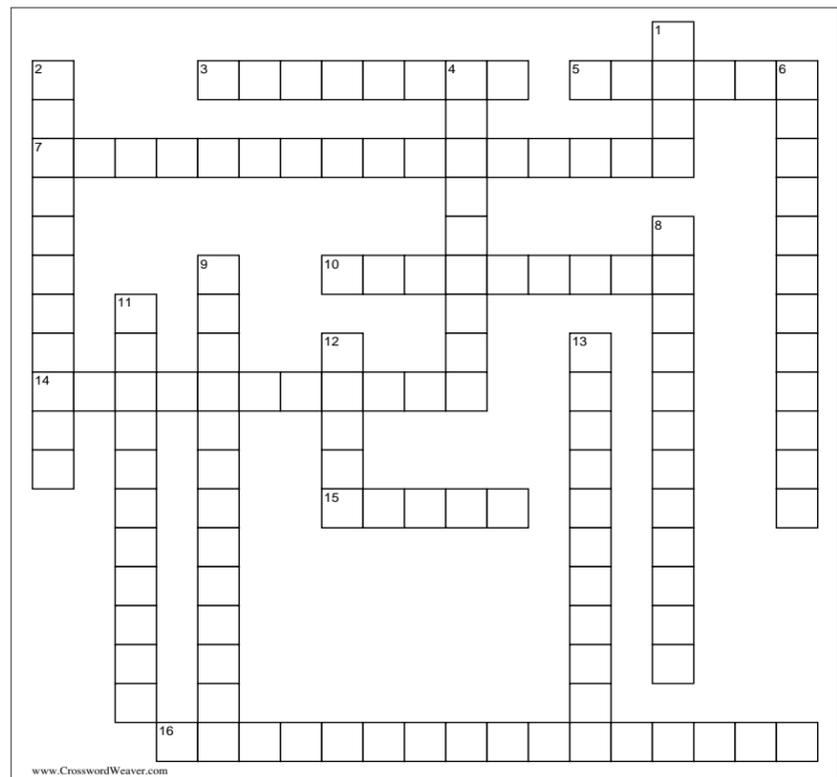
The following services are available to on-base personnel and residents through the Crime Prevention Section:

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.



FAD TOYS



ACROSS

- Digital pets you can keep in your pocket
- Had crazy hair and belly buttons made of jewels
- Pleasant relatives of the children of the corn
- Star lite, Star bright
- Future construction workers start here
- Gave a whole new clean meaning to the X-Brain
- His stretching ability only works in room temperature environments

DOWN

- Little collectible cardboard circles
- 2 knobs can make it, a shake can break it
- Finger skateboards that were hot when extreme sports were up and coming
- The monopoly of squirtguns in the 1990's
- Glorified miniature stuffed animals
- The worst gaming system of all time
- Log cabin architects start here
- The toy pet that would never shut up
- Every child's first step to driving

[Solutions on A5]

Centerspeak

Who is your role model and why?

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



PFC. JUSTIN JAMERSON
MOTOR TRANSPORTATION OPERATOR, 3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

"My dad, because he's the hardest worker I've ever met, and he's an all around good guy."



SGT. ETHAN ARGUELLO
RAMP CHIEF, DELTA COMPANY, 3RD LAR

"It would have to be the ideal Marine who strives continuously for perfection."



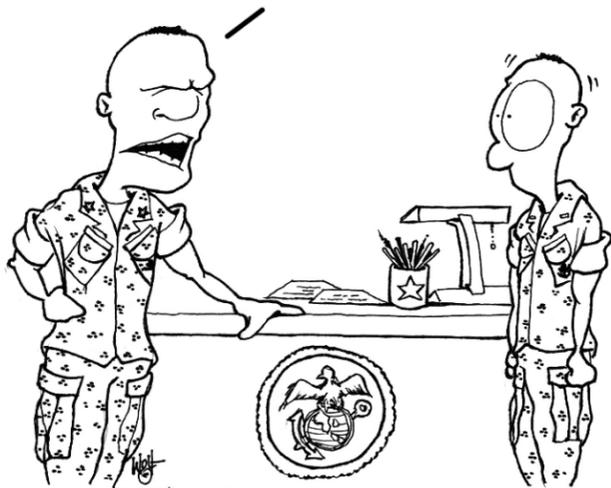
1ST SGT. TIMMIE LEGGETT
COMPANY FIRST SERGEANT, DELTA COMPANY, 1ST TANK BATTALION

"My mother, because she raised five kids on her own."

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

"There's nothing to understand son, you just need to get my prioritys straight!"

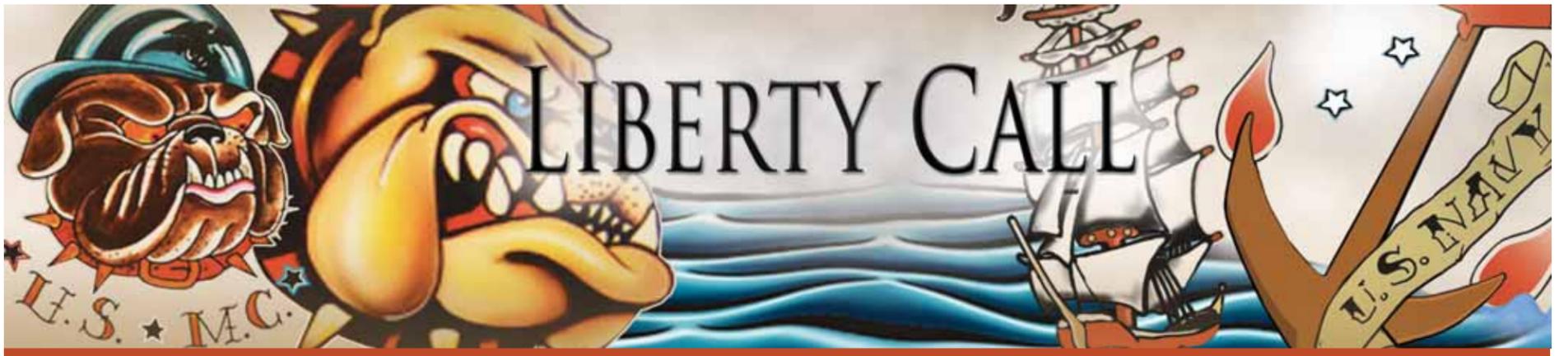


OBSERVATION POST

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	<p>TODAY-SUNDAY</p> <p>Gypsy, one of Broadway's greatest musicals Time: 8 p.m. Where: McCallum Theatre 73000 Fred Waring Dr. Palm Desert For more info call (760) 340-2787</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>First Wednesday Art Walk Time: 6-8 p.m. Where: Backstreet Art District Cherokee Way and Matthew Dr Palm Springs For more info call (760) 328-1440</p>	<p>THURSDAY</p> <p>Desert in Bloom Exhibit Time: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum 57090 29 Palms Highway Yucca Valley For more info call (760) 369-7212</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Chelsea Handler Time: 8 p.m. Where: Spotlight 29 Casino 46200 Harrison St Coachella For more info call (800) 585-3737</p>
<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Chris Rock Time: 8 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino Special Events Center 84245 Indio Springs Pkwy Indio For more info call (800) 827-2946</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Guitar Hero Tourney Time: 1 p.m. Where: Palm Springs Public Library 300 S. Sunrise Way Palm Springs For more info call (760) 323-8199</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Magical Mystery Tour, a Beatles tribute band performs FREE Time: 2-4 p.m. Where: La Quinta Community Center 77865 Avenida Montezuma La Quinta For more info call (760) 564-9921</p>	<p>MONDAY</p> <p>American Friends of Our Armed Forces Golf Tournament Time: 8 a.m. Where: Terra Laga Club 84000 Terra Laga Pkwy Indio For more info call (760) 340-0392</p>	<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>Indio Old Town Streetfest Time: 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. Where: Along Miles beginning at Smurr Street Old Town Indio For more info call (760) 775-5200</p>

THE MUSEUM TRAVELS TO..
 Hidden Museums and Funky Places
 March 8th, 2008
 Meet at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum at 7:45 a.m.

Join us on a fun trip to the Coachella Valley Museum in Indio, Salvation Mountain and the Thousand Palms Oasis in the Coachella Valley Preserve.

The Coachella Valley Museum & Cultural Center, the former home of Dr. Harry Smiley, features Native American basketry and artifacts, an extensive collection of household memorabilia from Coachella Valley's pioneer families, a Southern Pacific exhibit about the railroad years in Indio, and water and agricultural exhibits.

Salvation Mountain must be seen to be fully appreciated as those who have made the journey will attest. Its 50 foot height and 150 foot breadth is made totally of local adobe clay and donated paint and is truly unique in the United States and probably the world. From its Sea of Galilee at the bottom, to the big red heart in the middle, to the cross at the very top, the recurring theme of "Love" is everywhere at Salvation Mountain.

The Coachella Valley Preserve system was designed to protect the threatened Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. Found nowhere else in the world, this lizard is an indicator for a rich array of organisms specialized to live on sand dunes. In fact, desert sand dunes harbor one of the most species rich communities found in our southwestern deserts.

Picnic stop at the Oasis Date Gardens in Thermal.

BUS TRIP
 Date: March 8th, 2008
 Price: non-members \$ 48.00, members \$ 45.00
 Includes: Museum entrance fee
 Sack lunch
 Good company
 Valley Community Center

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SMP EVENTS

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FRIDAY-SUNDAY
 SMP TRIP TO
LAS VEGAS
 DEPART FROM THE ZONE AT NOON COST \$165

SATURDAY
 SMP TRIP
PAINTBALL AT CAMP PENDLETON
 DEPART FROM THE ZONE AT 7 A.M. COST \$20

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19
 DESERT MAIL CALL AT 5 P.M.
 CARE PACKAGES WILL BE SENT TO SUPPORT OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

Movies for the upcoming week at the Sunset Cinema

<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>The Bucket List 7 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>THURSDAY</p> <p>Juno 7 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>FRIDAY</p> <p>First Sunday 6 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>The Great Debaters 9 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>Cloverfield Midnight PG-13</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p>Muppet Treasure Island 11 a.m. - G</p> <p>The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything 2 p.m. - G</p> <p>27 Dresses 6 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>Mad Money 9 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>Sweeny Todd Midnight - R</p>	<p>SUNDAY</p> <p>Meet the Spartans 2 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>There Will Be Blood 6 p.m. - R</p> <p>Rambo 9 p.m. - R</p> <p>MONDAY</p> <p>Juno 7 p.m. - PG-13</p> <p>TUESDAY</p> <p>The Bucket List 7 p.m. - PG-13</p>
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Volunteer program gives free rides to Marines

PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Ever been stuck at Palm Springs International Airport or the Greyhound station without a ride back to the Combat Center?

Soldiers Organized Services offers free rides to service members and their families from the airport to the Combat Center.

In January 2007, while working as a volunteer for the United Service Organizations, SOS founder Erica Stone, encountered an injured Marine who had just been released from the hospital and was returning to the Combat Center.

"I couldn't bear to leave him stranded in the airport like that," said Stone. "So I offered to drive him [to the Combat Center] in my own car, and that's how the program started."

SOS was officially established in May 2007. Since then, almost 3,000 Marines and their spouses have participated in the program.

"We want to help as much as we can and show we care about the Marines here as well as overseas," said Stone, a Palm Springs, Calif., native. "We'll help any soldier who needs a ride."

When the organization first began, Stone had 18 volunteers who donated their vehicles, gas and time to provide the service. Since then, the number of volunteers willing to help has sky-rocketed, said Stone.

"We currently have 65 weekly-scheduled and 30 on-call volunteers," said Stone. "A lot of our drivers are prior war veterans who just want to help any way they can. A cab ride from the airport to the base can cost well over \$100."

Stone's suburban with bull

horns on the hood is starting to be well known aboard the installation.

"The military's motto is 'leave no service man behind', the SOS motto is 'leave no service man stranded at the airport,'" said Stone. "This is the least we can do for someone's son or daughter who has seen or will see combat and strife and who is willing to protect us at all costs."

Each volunteer has their own reasons for participating in the program.

"It is my honor to act as a volunteer to drive Marines and corpsmen from the airport to Twentynine Palms [Calif.]," said Robert Roche, SOS volunteer and Indian Wells, Calif., native. "I remember receiving rides by hitch-hiking when I was a Marine."

Roche is husband to Indian Wells mayor Mary Roche.

"Coming to the base for the first time can be stressful for a Marine or corpsman," said Roche. "Having someone who knows the base or can be a guide to help when reporting to a new duty station relieves some of the pressure."

"The pride I feel being in the presence of a young Marine or sailor is amazing," said Roche. "Knowing the training they have experienced and the job they have undertaken as well as their willingness to serve fortifies my pride."

"No one has ordered me to volunteer to drive," continued Roche. "I have a sense of duty to help in this way. Fortunately, I have the time and resources to lend a hand."

For more information, or to become a volunteer, call Erica Stone at (760) 799-5488 or visit <http://www.sosride.org>.

HOT TOPICS

BASKETBALL AND SOFTBALL TRYOUTS

Varsity men/women basketball tryouts are ongoing. Varsity men's softball tryouts are from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays until further notice. Contact Skip Best at 830-4092 for more information.

MARINE SECURITY GUARD SCREENING TEAM

The MSG screening team is coming to the Combat Center Monday. The team will screen Marines for assignment opportunities in building 1707 Classroom C from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All interested Marines are encouraged to see their unit Career Planner for eligibility requirements. For more information, contact the Combat Center Career Planner, Gunnery Sgt. Daniel L. Mintz, at 830-6171.

MOAA SCHOLARSHIPS ON BASE

The Military Officers Association of America is pleased to offer Base/Post Scholarships again this year. This MOAA program provides grants of \$1,000 each to 25 dependent children of military personnel. MOAA's immensely successful scholarship grants and zero-interest loans are currently helping over 1,600 uniformed service dependents to meet their college expenses. The scholarship is part of MOAA's ongoing effort to assist young members of military families. For more information visit www.moaa.org or call Mandi Rumble at 1-(800) 234-6622 x 816.

ADULT MEDICAL CARE CLINIC PHA ASSESSMENTS

To comply with DOD 6200.4 and OPNAVINST 6120.3, all permanent party active duty members of Headquarters Battalion and MCCES must schedule a Preventive Health Assessment with the Adult Medical Care Clinic 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, e-mail Bradley.Wiens@med.navy.mil, or stop by the clinic. PHAs are not performed on Thursdays.

MCCES FUN RUN

The fifth consecutive Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Fun Run is scheduled for 7 a.m. March 21. This event will include a 5K St. Patrick's Day costume contest fun run, a 10K race, an individual half-marathon, and a 5-person team half-marathon. The start/finish line is in front of MCCES building 1831. The registration tent will open at 5:30 a.m. March 21. For more information please call Capt. Jason K. Roberts at 830-6786.

The boys are back in town



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

Staff Sgt. Brendan Fitzpatrick, intelligence chief, Headquarters and Services Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, embraces his 5-month-old daughter, Keira, Feb. 27, after returning from a seven-month deployment to Iraq. Fitzpatrick met his daughter for the first time that evening. The Fitzpatricks are natives of Gresham, Ore.

Transitioning active duty, reserve Marine officers: Seeking a new challenge?

4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, Marine Forces Reserve, West Palm Beach, Fla., has opportunities for company grade officers in any military occupational specialty to serve as artillery officers and joint tactical air controllers. Training is available. Air officer/FAC billets are also available for both company and junior field grade officers who currently hold a 75XX MOS. Schools available are: Artillery, Jump, Survival Escape Resistance and Evasion (SERE), High Risk Personnel, Summer/Winter Mountain Leader's, JTAC and more. Opportunities are available to participate in annual exercises in Europe, South America and the Caribbean. Officers in MOS' 03XX, 0802, 75XX are especially welcome.

\$10,000 selected Marine Corps reserve company grade officer affiliation bonus is available to officers affiliating within 36 months of their end of active service date (must receive prior approval from Headquarters Marine Corps). See Marine Administrative message 690/07 for details.

Deployment deferment with bonus (in lieu of above bonus) is available to company grade officers and 75XX majors. See MarAdmin 253/06 for details.

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Raymond Lanese at raymond.lanese@usmc.mil or (800) 267-5451 or (786) 282-8364.

RED CROSS, from A1

pretty much anything to get their troops to donate.

"A great suggestion for units on base would be to buy their way out of PT [physical training] for one day," said Perkins. "Heroes can also come by the office and pick up Red Cross dollars to sell."

The American Red Cross has set its sights on raising \$30,000 during this year's campaign.

"This is a critical program because our office runs solely off the funds raised on base," said

Nikki McBain, American Red Cross station manager. "We plan to make it an annual event."

The funds raised by the campaign will be used to support Red Cross services, such as emergency military communications, first aid and CPR training, childcare for volunteers, the dental assistant training program and the Youth Leadership Program.

All money raised will be used to support Combat Center service members and their families.

You can contact the American Red Cross office on base at 830-6685 for more information.

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Disabled American Veterans: Your one-stop shop for veteran's benefits

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Have you decided to end your active-duty enlistment in the Navy or Marine Corps? Even more importantly, have you suffered injuries while on active duty, which would qualify you for veteran's benefits?

Whether you're leaving the military after four years or 20, and have suffered such injuries, Disabled American Veterans can help you obtain the benefits you qualify for at no cost to you.

"We're here to assist service members file their Veterans Affairs Benefits Claim," said Allen Pagdilao, transition service officer, DAV. "We've been providing assistance for the Combat Center since 1984 through the Transition Assistance Program classes."

"We want to give these services to the community," he added. "There are many disabled veterans who are still here and on active duty."

The DAV began shortly after World War I, when more than 200,000 wounded veterans returned home from the trench fighting on the war-torn Western Front. Following the war, many veterans experienced difficulty finding jobs, ultimately ending up unemployed and homeless.

In 1920, the Disabled American Veterans of the World War was established by Capt. Robert S. Marx, a wounded World War I veteran and Cincinnati lawyer. The following year, Marx organized a caucus

of wounded veterans nationwide. The caucus led to the creation of state and local DAV chapters.

The DAV officially came to the Combat Center Nov. 19. Pagdilao is the TSO representing the DAV for the installation.

"My presence here as a DAV representative allows for services on base Monday through Friday every week," said Pagdilao. "We operate on a walk-in basis, which, to me, allows us to see as many



customers as possible efficiently."

One service the DAV has offered since April 20, is a service member's ability to file a Benefits Delivery of Discharge within 180 days of their separation from active service. Before, the claim could not be filed until the service member had been completely separated from the military.

Since the DAV came to the Combat Center, they have assisted approximately 85 disabled veterans in transition from active-

duty obtain the benefits they require. The DAV has served an additional 50 to 65 separating service members through the weekly TAPs classes.

"I feel very good about the DAV," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Veliz, hospital corpsman, Adult Medical Care Clinic. "They have been very helpful to me. Anything I need from them, I can just walk right in. Within a few days, I've got everything I need. I'm totally satisfied with their service."

Pagdilao said he feels honored to be able to assist disabled veterans. He also understands the troubles they may face when filing claims with the VA.

Pagdilao, a Pinili, Locos Norte, Philippines, native, was medically retired from the Navy as a chief petty officer after 23 years of active duty service.

"I know what these men and women are going through," said Pagdilao. "I'm here to assist them because they've done so much for the country."

"Whenever a client leaves my office with a smile on their face, it is very rewarding to me," he added.

The DAV will continue to help disabled veterans file claims to the VA. Since the DAV is a private, non-profit organization, services come at no cost to clients. Membership to the DAV is not required to receive help in filing your veteran's benefits claims.

For more information about the Disabled American Veterans, contact Pagdilao at 830-7225 or log on to www.dva.org.

DARKSIDE, from A1

govern the country efficiently.

"This may be the fifth time this battalion has deployed, but a lot of these Marines that have deployed before are facing something completely different," said Capt. Chris McGuire, Kilo Company commander, 3/4.

McGuire continued to say the environment in Iraq is a lot safer than their last deployment.

A somber mood from family and friends mixed with excitement was felt as Marines and sailors from 3/4 said goodbye to their loved ones.

"I am going to miss him so much," said Pfc. Jennifer Vaughn of Headquarters Battalion and a Cincinnati, Ohio, native. She is the wife of Lance Cpl. Eddy

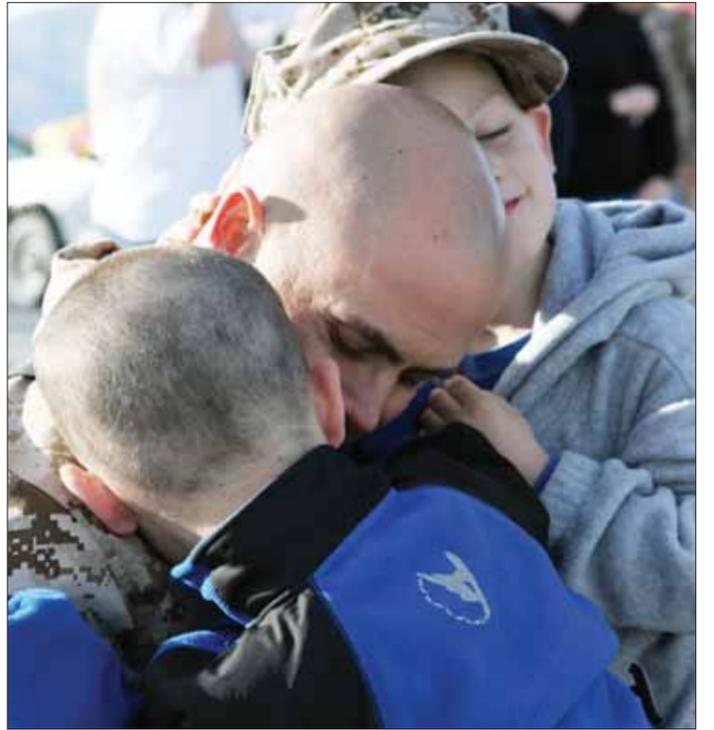
Ampie, a food service specialist for Headquarters and Services Company, 3/4. "I wish I could go with him, but I know he has to do this."

Ampie, a New York native, agreed with his wife, saying he was nervous, but the training he went through has made him ready to deploy.

Lt. Col. William Visted, 3/4's battalion commander, also expressed his excitement to deploy.

"We are 100 percent ready to go," said the Springfield, Va., native. "I am confident in my Marines."

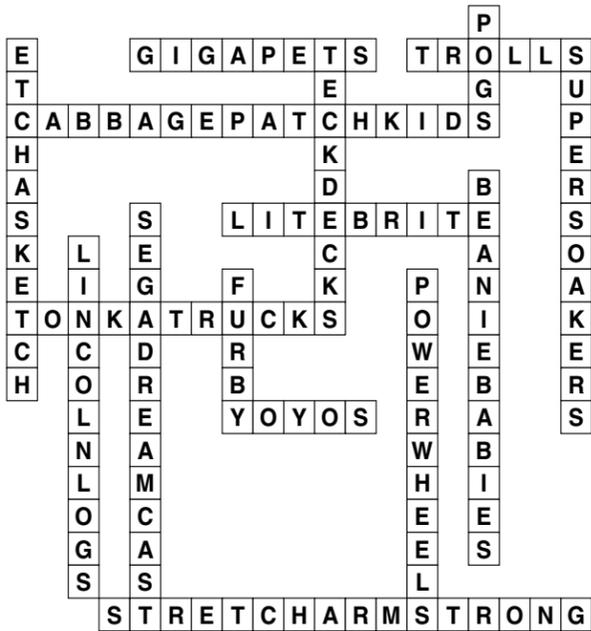
Family members and friends waved goodbye to the Marines and sailors of 3/4 as they loaded on to the buses and began their journey to western Al Anbar Province.



CPL. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

1st Sgt. Michael Miller, a Denver native with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, hugs his sons, Austin and Gabriel, goodbye before deploying to Iraq Feb. 25.

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Families drawn to Meet the Masters art class

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Zaul Lizalde, 13-year-old Albuquerque, N.M., native, practices with oil pastels during the first class of Meet the Masters at the Protestant Chapel Feb. 26.

Oil pastels and black parchment littered every table while copies of famous paintings hung in front of the classroom during the first class of Meet the Masters at the Combat Center's Protestant Chapel Feb. 26.

Meet the Masters is an art program sponsored by the Armed Services YMCA and offered to children and adults who wish to expand their creativity, learn about famous artists and gain a better understanding of art.

This is the second year the program has been offered aboard the Combat Center, and two professional artists from Palm Springs, Calif., are teaching the class.

"I am thankful the ASYMCA has provided this opportunity to enrich our art appreciation and expand our God-given creativity," said Victoria Flint, a participant of the course. "The fact that my children and I can do it together is an added bonus as is the blessing of Twentynine Palms to share their

these two artists graciously making the trip to time and talents with us."

Meet the Masters will hold one class each month that will revolve around a popular artist and one of his or her paintings.

"We are going to take them further into different aspects of art and the artist," said Diane McClary, professional artist and Meet the Masters instructor. "It is our desire to show them a good time and give them a chance to develop their own creativity."

The artists to be introduced to the class are Vincent Van Gogh, Mary Cassatt, Piet Mondrian, Claude Monet, Winslow Homer and Pablo Picasso.

"We picked these artists because they all had unique aspects to their paintings," said Maria Hunt, professional artist and Meet the Masters instructor. "Each of these artists may give someone in my class a different view on artistic techniques that they may not have realized before."

At the beginning of class, the students learn the history of the artist, said Hunt. They will be assigned to draw

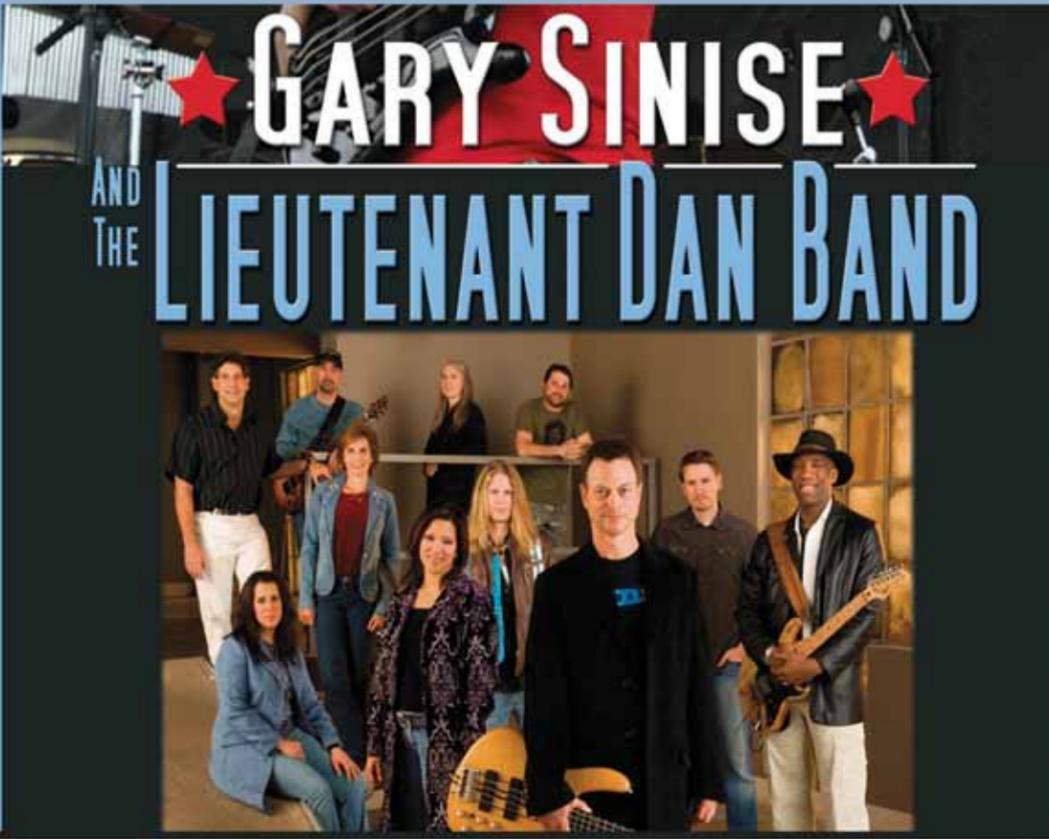


LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Grace Flint, 11, draws her own copy of Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Night" during the Meet the Masters art program at the Protestant Chapel Feb. 26.

See ART, A8

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MCAGCC hoops wins tourney

PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center men's basketball team capped off the Western Pacific Regional Tournament with a 90-81 win over Camp Pendleton Feb. 25 here at the east gym.

Camp Pendleton started off strong, lighting up the scoreboard with NBA-caliber three-pointers from point guard Willie Nathan. The Combat Center's team rallied late in the first half and jumped to a 12-point lead at the break. The Combat Center's small forward Brandon Dobbs had nine points

at the break and center Owen Oliver had 10 points. Nathan threw down 15 points by the end of the first half for Camp Pendleton.

The second half started out just as fast paced as the first half ended.

The Combat Center's team dominated the ball on both sides of the court, extending their lead to 18 points with 15:30 left in the game.

Dobbs was seemingly unstoppable, scoring 14 points in the second half.

Camp Pendleton closed the gap late with a huge three-pointer from Nathan cutting the score to 84-81. However, the Combat

Center held their ground on their home court, making crucial free throws and ultimately sealing the win 90-81.

Dobbs finished the game with 25 points.

Nathan led Camp Pendleton with a whopping 30 points.

Dobbs was named tournament Most Valuable Player in an awards ceremony after the game.

"It feels great to win," said Dobbs, a Norfolk, Va., native. "They [Camp Pendleton] had our number for the longest time.

"This is my third year playing in the tournament," said head coach and player Spencer Rutledge, a native of Camden, S.C. "My first year we got second place. Last year we got third place, and I guess the third time's a charm."

The players devoted a lot of time to the team on top of their normal Marine Corps duties, said assistant coach Layton Matthews, a Pittsburgh native.

"We have a lot of challenges to overcome," said Matthews. "I can attest to the players' commitment to this team. Some of them have families, so to see them come out here and win this tournament is awesome."

"We have no excuses," said Phil Bryant, Camp Pendleton's head coach. "They're a good squad. They played hard and got after it. We have to play our best game to beat them and we didn't today."

Bryant said a good rivalry is forming between the two teams.

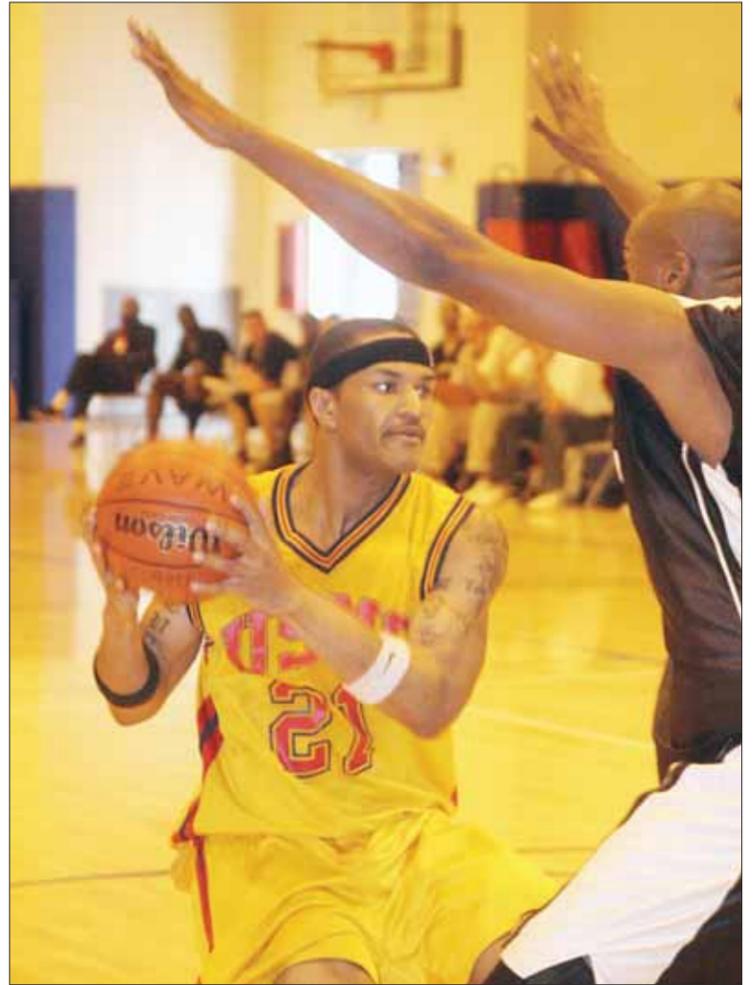
"The first time they got us (in Las Vegas), we were upset about it," said Bryant. "Now it's making for a good rivalry. We now know the competition is going to be good, and we have to get back to work and change a few things and come out a little harder against them."

"The next time we'll see them would probably be the (Western Pacific Basketball League) championships, if we both make it that far," added Bryant. "That's in April. We definitely want to beat them bad. We'd like to play them again right now if we could."



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center's Owen Oliver, center, goes for a lay up in the men's basketball Western Pacific Regional Tournament Feb. 25. The Combat Center's team took the tournament with a 90-81 win over Camp Pendleton.



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center's small forward Brandon Dobbs looks for an open teammate in the men's basketball Western Pacific Regional Tournament Feb. 25. The Combat Center's team took the tournament with a 90-81 win over Camp Pendleton.



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center's small forward Brandon Dobbs drives past Camp Pendleton defender Willie Nathan in the men's basketball Western Pacific Regional Tournament Feb. 25. The Combat Center's team took the tournament with a 90-81 win over Camp Pendleton.

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ART, from A6

or sketch on a piece of paper in the same style of the famous artist. Participants are also encouraged to create artwork related to the topic of the day to broaden their imagination.

"Most of all we want them to

have fun," said Hunt, a Memphis, Tenn., native. "They don't have to draw exactly what we show them. We want them to be unique and creative."

The participants will have the opportunity to use oil pastels, crayons, acrylic paint and design by cut-and-paste.

"I really like art," said Grace Flint, 11-year-old daughter of Victoria Flint. "Using the pastels was an interesting experience. I am excited to learn about another artist next class."

The class will also cover the art wheel, finger drawing, composition, values of light and dark, and warm and cool colors, various styles of abstract and impressionistic art and about the color chart.

Meet the Masters was designed for adults and children wishing to participate in a local art class that presents extensive knowledge of famous artists and their techniques.

For more information contact Jodi Bennett, ASYMCA program coordinator, at 830-7481.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Corey Yarbrough, a 13-year-old Winston Salem, N.C., native, is praised by Diane McClary, professional artist, for his use of light and dark colors during the Meet the Masters art program at the Protestant Chapel Feb. 26.

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MAGTFTC Battle Simulation Center puts combat in virtual perspective

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command Battle Simulation Center is providing deploying Marines and sailors with a variety of cutting-edge virtual training tools to help them prepare for today's combat environment.

The BSC was stood up at the Combat Center in 1996 and originally offered only a couple of training simulations, the MAGTF Tactical Warfare Simulation and the Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation, said Gary R. Stump, BSC site manager and simulation analyst.

MTWS focused primarily on larger-scale training, meaning the company, battalion and regimental levels, while JCATS was designed to train Marines at the fire team through platoon levels.

"We've always been here to train Marines, but since 1996, we've expanded," said Stump. "We have a lot more capabilities now than we did back then."

The Battle Simulation Center works closely with the MAGTF Integrated Systems Training Center, which focuses on command and control systems training. To date, the BSC offers 10 different training simulators and the MISTC hosts seven training programs.

Virtual Battle Space 1 and 2: VBS 1 and 2 are PC-based first-person viewpoints of a fully func-

tional battlefield that focuses on smaller-unit operations. VBS2 is currently more advanced and more prevalent than its older counterpart. Depending on the demands of the individual units, VBS can take the form of many different combat scenarios and environments. Anywhere between one and 100 Marines can be immersed into a virtual world where small-unit leaders can test their standard operating procedures, as well as conduct rehearsals on the same terrain they will be likely walking to in the near future.

MAGTF Tactical Warfare Simulation: MTWS is a "birds-eye-view" of a battlefield that allows unit commanders to practice command and control functions, and standard operating procedures. The simulation offers real-time engagement and movement, and mission recording for after-action review. Commanders using MTWS can receive orders from their combat operations center for their units and carry out those orders through the simulation.

Forward Observer PC Simulation: FOPCSim is another PC-based first-person viewpoint, similar to VBS, only focusing on a forward observer calling for artillery fire support. The purpose of the simulator is to hone the individual Marines' call-for-fire skills on stationary and mobile targets. The program can be used by itself as

See VIRTUAL, A10



COURTESY PHOTO

The Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer simulates convoy operations by allowing operators to drive through virtual cities. There are four separate vehicles, which are linked to each other, to simulate a convoy.

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Firefighter displays selfless dedication to public service



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Aaron Sitton, Combat Center Fire Department firefighter and emergency medical technician, wipes down Truck 451 during a shift at Fire Station 1 Feb. 20.

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The willingness to help others during a time of need is deemed as an honorable trait and is held in high regard by many.

Aaron Sitton, Combat Center Fire Department firefighter and emergency medical technician, has carried that principle with him from his upbringing to the firehouse.

Sitton was born June 14, 1982, in Fullerton, Calif., and was raised in neighboring Mission Viejo, Calif. Growing up, he enjoyed being outdoors, camping, snowboarding, scuba diving and going to the beach. While growing up, he said his father, who was a construction worker, instilled an earnest work ethic and sense of selflessness in him, teaching him to work hard and put others before himself.

When he was 12 years old, Sitton said he was driving on the highway with his father one day and came across a car accident.

There was a van turned on its side and it was beginning to catch fire. The passengers were trapped in the van and emergency services had not yet arrived at the scene.

Despite the volume of traffic passing by the accident, Sitton's father pulled off to the side of the road to help them. His father opened the trunk, where he kept a sledgehammer. Wielding the tool, he was able to smash the windshield of the van and help the passengers escape to safety.

"I honestly didn't know what to say at the time," said Sitton. "It felt really good to help those people that day. It also made me realize I wanted to do something with my life where I could help others the way my father did."

Sitton's desire to become a firefighter solidified when he enrolled in the Fire Explorer program at age 16 with Orange County Fire Authority in Mission Viejo.

After graduating from high school in 2000, Sitton remained as a fire explorer while working at

a grocery store. In 2002, he began attending Riverside Community College in Riverside, Calif., where he chose a major in fire science.

While going to college during the winter, Sitton also worked as a U.S. Forest Service wildland firefighter for Cleveland National Forest in Southern California.

"That was basically the beginning of my firefighter career and I didn't really know what I was getting into," said Sitton. "Working for the Forest Service was a real eye-opener. It helped me realize how much work it really is being a firefighter."

Sitton said he loved working for the Forest Service, despite how hard the job was at times. In 2005, he left the job and worked briefly on an ambulance and for the California Department of Forestry.

He began working for the Combat Center Fire Department Aug. 7, 2006, after learning about the job from a fellow wildland

See DEDICATION, A11

VIRTUAL, from A9

well as integrated with other simulators, which make up the Combined Arms Network.

Tactical Language and Cultural Trainer: TLCT is designed to teach Marines the basic principles of language they will certainly use in their upcoming deployments. TLCT instructs Marines in the essential elements of Iraqi Arabic and critical aspects of Iraqi culture. The trainer helps Marines become proficient with the language and the culture. In addition to Iraqi Arabic, TLCT offers simulation training for Afghani Dari and Pashto, and Creole French.

Recognition of Combatants: The ROC is a three-part series featuring training in the identification of improvised explosive devices, suicide bombers and vehicles. The programs familiarize Marines with various hazards they may encounter on the battlefield.

Combined Arms Planning Tool: The CAPT program is designed to test the elements of a commander's fire support plan. It is able to test a fire support plan and identify potential problems based

on warfighting doctrine, which is incorporated into the program.

Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer: This training simulator consists of four mock humvees with a 360-degree view. VCCT is designed to simulate convoy operations in a combat environment. It can be used alongside other simulations to familiarize Marines with how to use convoys in conjunction with other operations.

Operator Driver Simulator: ODS is a training program used to teach Marines how to operate humvees, Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacements, known as seven-ton trucks, and, coming soon, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The system can simulate a number of driving conditions in most foreign areas of operation.

Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer: The purpose of HEAT is to simulate humvees in rollover conditions. It teaches Marines the proper ways to exit a vehicle that is upside down and assist fellow Marines who were injured in the rollover. Marines are also required to transport injured Marines to safety and secure the simulated

rollover site.

MISTC: MISTC is designed to train MAGTF commanders and battle staffs in the art and science of command and control so they can better organize, deploy, fight and defeat the enemy.

Maj. C. Neil Fitzpatrick, BSC modeling and simulations officer, said in addition to the numerous simulators the BSC has to offer, it is also working on integrating simulations with live training exercises.

"One of the things we're looking at is the integration of live forces in the field with virtual and constructive simulation," said Fitzpatrick. "If a company is training in the field alone, we can simulate other units on the battlefield that don't really exist, but are needed for staff planning purposes."

Constructive simulation is currently being used by the BSC and is fully operational, but Fitzpatrick said they are ready to move to the next phase.

"Imagine a unit in the field alone conducting an attack at Range 410A," he said. "If the Marines in the field are instrumented, we can simulate a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) flying in the area that provides the unit

commander the ability to see everything that's going on from the UAV's perspective."

Fitzpatrick added the simulation center could provide exercise commanders this capability at his unit operation center. Both Stump and Fitzpatrick project this to be fully functional within the next three to five years.

The Battle Simulation Center trains approximately 15,000 Marines annually from units throughout the Marine Corps. They will continue to provide Marines the training they need in preparation for their field exercises and ultimately their deployments in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

Employee Spotlight



Employee: Elizabeth Asash

Organization: Substance Abuse Counseling Center

Job title: Drug demand reduction coordinator

Duties: Provide prevention and awareness of illicit drugs, oversee base urinalysis, and promote a healthy lifestyle within the Marine Corps.

Hometown: Atlanta

Hobbies: Learning to ride a motorcycle, decorating and painting

What I like about my job: I'm proud to work with Marines. Reminding Marines how to have fun without using drugs and alcohol.

One of the most significant achievements since you've been here: Building partnerships on base with the different organizations and programs.

Have you ever served in the military: No

Time employed at MCAGCC: I've been here for a year and four months.

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Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

2003 HARLEY DAVIDSON Softail Deuce Anniversary Edition; Black. 1450cc with 19,950 miles. Excellent condition with lots of upgrades. \$15,000 firm. More info and pictures can be seen at: <http://www.prospectorsdepot.com> (760) 366-3333 3/5/08

FOR SALE: 2005 KEYSTONE SPRINGDALE, Travel Trailer. Sleeps 6, 1 Slide, many extras, (601) 329-9896 Located at MCAGCC Twilight Dunes RV Park, # 29. \$18,400. 3/5/08

'98 HARLEY DAVIDSON ULTRA CLASSIC Detachable Trunk, true dual exhaust, Real Red, 54K, all maintenance records \$10,500 830-5863 on base (760) 365-1545 2/27/08

MOTOR HOME FOR SALE 1991 PACE ARROW. 35ft. Class A. 460 Ford/Oshkosh many extras 61,000 miles. \$25,900 OBO. Call Jon (760) 361-5777. 2/27/08

2005 SUZUKI BOULEVARD (800cc). \$4,000. Windshield, saddle bags and sissy bar. Call (760) 910-3964 for more information. 2/20/08

1975 CAMPER TRAILER, 22 ft. and fully contained. \$800, our best offer. Located on base trailer park, space #26. Call (760) 910-3964. 2/20/08

2002 FLSTC HARLEY-DAVIDSON® Heritage Softail Classic, luxury blue with stripe, under 4400 miles, Accessories included, excellent condition. \$14k Call 760-221-8831 2/6/08

04 HARLEY DAVIDSON NIGHTRAIN black on black. 103-inch balanced motor. many extras. \$13,000 OBO. Call (808) 225-2473 1/30/08

2005 CHEVY IMPALA: 65,400 miles. GREAT condition interior/exterior. Runs great! \$8,800. Call (760) 992-4570. 1/30/08

90CC QUADS: Pink and Green Cammo, \$400each. 495 KTM Dirt Bike \$750. '04 Blaster 200cc \$2200 OBO. Helmets included. Call (760) 368-7098. 1/30/08

MISC.

HOUSE FOR RENT: 2 bedroom, 2 bath house for rent. Central cooling washer & dryer. 15 minutes from base. \$800. per month. (619)851-7832 or (760) 447-3644 3/5/08

PRECOR EFX 546 ELLIPTICAL, same as in west gym. Bought for \$7,000. Sacrifice for \$3,000. Call (760) 819-9660. 2/27/08

JOGGER STROLLER excellent condition. \$50. Call (760) 819-9660. 2/27/08

AKCYELLOW LABRADOR named Charlie. 2 years old. Mommy and daddy are divorcing and I need a new home. \$300. (760) 819-9660. 2/27/08

32-INCH HDTV flat screen. \$300 OBO (760) 819-9660. 2/27/08

TURTLE FOR SALE. \$45. Tank and food included. Call (760) 368-9375. NEEDS a good home. 2/27/08

ROOMMATE WANTED: Looking for a clean responsible roommate. Located in Twentynine Palms. For more information and details, call Lorenzo at (760) 702-0075. 2-13-08

ROOM FOR RENT: Two mature Marines seek roommate for a place close to base. All utilities included and garage. \$450/month. Must be clean and responsible. Call (713) 857-7227 for more info. 2-13-08

The deadline for submitting Trader ads is noon Wednesday, the week prior to publication.

Trader Ad Forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417.

Ads may also be submitted through e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil address. If you are active duty, retired military or a family member and do not have an @usmc.mil address you can go to the PAO page of the base

Web site at: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/dirs/pao/> and complete a request to publish an ad.

The limitations for ads are: there is a 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only

for noncommercial classified ads containing items of personal property offered by and for individuals authorized to use this service. Such ads must represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

Ads for housing rentals will not be considered for the Combat Center Trader.

To have a "House For Sale" ad run in the Observation Post, applicants must provide Permanent Change of Station orders and have the ad

approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors. Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-3762.



Birth announcements

COLEY PAMELA ALLYSEN ROGERS

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Andrew J. Rogers and wife, Emily. Born Feb. 19, weighing 10 lbs, 1.3 oz and measuring 20 inches.

SADIE ELENA FIGUEROA

Daughter of Sgt. Edgar Figueroa and wife, Ashley. Born Feb. 20, weighing 9 lbs, 7 oz and measuring 19 inches.

RAIGHEN MAKENZYE PORTER

Daughter of Pvt. Jeremy K. Porter and wife, Laci. Born Feb. 20, weighing 6 lbs, 1.6 oz and measuring 18.7 inches.

JASLENE ANAHI ADRIANO

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Carlos Adriano and wife, Brenda. Born Feb. 22, weighing 6 lbs, 12.7 oz and measuring 18.3 inches.

XZAVIER ZACHERY LORENTE

Son of Sgt. Norman Lorente and wife, Esmeralda. Born on Feb. 22, weighing 8 lbs, 1 oz and measuring 20.3 inches.



DEDICATION, from A10

firefighter who had been recently hired by the base.

"When I first heard about the job, I thought it would be a great opportunity to not only help others, but see what it's like working with the Marines," said Sitton. "Around the firehouse, we always talk about how much we respect Marines for what they do. It's really cool to be able to do something for them since they do so much for us."

Sitton's unselfish and positive attitude has not gone unnoticed by his peers and senior officers at Center Fire. Captain Robert E. Moore, Center Fire, said he feels he is blessed to have Sitton as a member of his crew.

"Aaron is always volunteering for anything that becomes available, even if it's last-minute or inconvenient for him," said Moore. "He's really motivated, energetic and hard working. He did an exceptional job getting his DoD [Department of Defense] firefighting certification when he first got here."

"He really is enjoyable to work with and be around," he added.

Sitton's strong work ethic and selfless nature are paving the way for his future. Everyone at Center Fire speaks highly of him, and respects his attitude and love for the job. He is also currently working toward his associate's degree in fire science.

Sitton said he plans to remain with Center Fire. He also expresses a desire to travel and assume a temporary duty as a DoD firefighter overseas.

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Going once...going twice...SOLD! Mardi Gras auction raises college funds for students



Lara White and Larissa Traquair, with Marine Corps Community Services Coffee Group, show off their Mardi Gras masks during the annual Mardi Gras auction at the Officer's Club Feb. 23.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Brian Catlin, G-3 operations chief, auctions off a treadmill with pilates' tapes during the annual Mardi Gras auction at the Officer's Club Feb. 23. Proceeds from the auction will be contributed to scholarships organized by the Officer's Spouses Club.

Road closures and construction

PHASE II

Work Description - Install new box culvert for the drainage ditch between the gas station and Carl's Jr.

Scheduled Dates - Monday through March 21.

Detour Description - The detour for this area will be down Agate Road, past the auto hobby shop, behind the commissary and home store onto Calcite Road, then exiting onto Del Valle near Cottontail Road. An access road will allow entrance to the commissary from the back side between the gas station and commissary. Del Valle will be open to the work area on both sides but closed to through traffic.



Admin Corner

TRAINING: Marines should contact their S-1/S-3 prior to visiting IPAC for Training related items to be reported. New enhancements in Marine On-Line allow S-1/S-3's to report items such as rifle and physical fitness test scores for their Marines.

PAY: W-2s are available on MyPay. Per MARADMIN 355/05, "All Marines are required to establish a My Pay Personal Identification Number no later than 30 September 2005." In order to create or reset your MyPay PIN click on the "New PIN" button on the MyPay web site at: <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

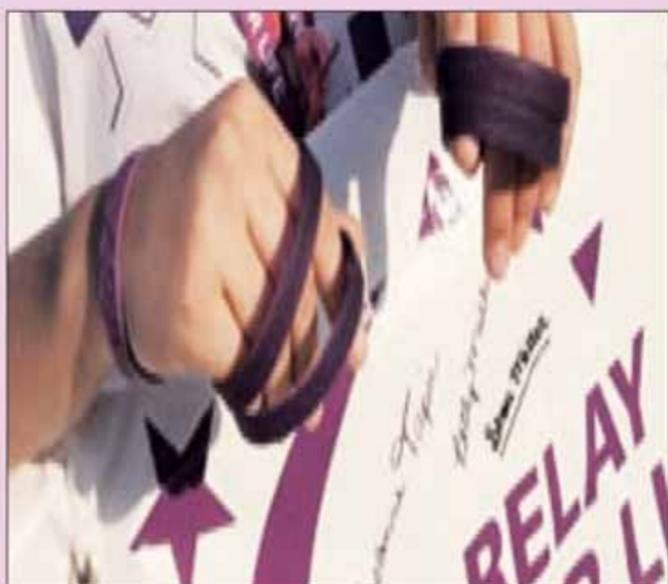
PROMOTIONS: The April Promotion Quarter cutoff for submitting composite score related information is Feb. 20. Information submitted after Feb. 20 will not count toward your composite score until the following promotion quarter.

IPAC (Buildings 1450 and 1459 on 4th Street) - Phone Number 830-1818

Office	Ext.	Office	Ext.	Office	Ext.
HMB	108	Separations	113	Orders	116
Customer Svc	115	New Joins	174	Travel Claim	170
Legal	128	Promotions	164	Pay	161
Deployment	127				

If you...	You must report to the...	No later than...
- Return from a location outside the U.S	Deployment Office	within 5 days upon return
- Return from outside the U.S. on emergency leave	Deployment Office	within 5 days upon return
- Visit a Medical Treatment Facility (Hospital)	Deployment Office	within 5 days upon return
- If you are going on Terminal Leave	Separations Office	10 days prior to leave
- Receive notification of orders (PCS or PCA)	Orders Office	immediately upon notification
- Add or lose a dependent (spouse, child, etc.)	Customer Svc Office	within 5 days of change
- Transfer units on base (PCA, TAD, or FAP)	New Joins Office	within 5 days of reporting
- Transfer units from off base (PCS)	New Joins Office	within 5 days of reporting
- Are a MCCES student with an admin issue	HMB	within 5 days

... in order to complete and update your information and receive your entitlements.



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Event Date
April 26, 2008

Event Location
Yucca Valley High School

Find out more or sign up at
www.relayforlife.org - California Division, Morongo Basin



1-800-ACS-2345 / www.cancer.org