

OBSERVATION Post

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MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

APRIL 9, 2008

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 51 ISSUE 15



6 Marines participate in local little league



7 Neal McCoy is coming to the Combat Center



8-9 Combat Center hosts corporals course



13 More treatment options for injured Marines

2/7 leaves for Afghanistan mission

PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Friends and family gathered over the weekend to bid farewell to the Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

2/7 will be deployed to Afghanistan for seven months and will conduct security operations as well as train and mentor Afghan police.

It is the first deployment to Afghanistan for

See DEPLOY, A5



PHOTO BY PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LESLIE SHAW

Lance Cpl. Christopher P. Coon, a mortarman with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, hugs his wife Adrianna before his deployment to Afghanistan Monday morning.

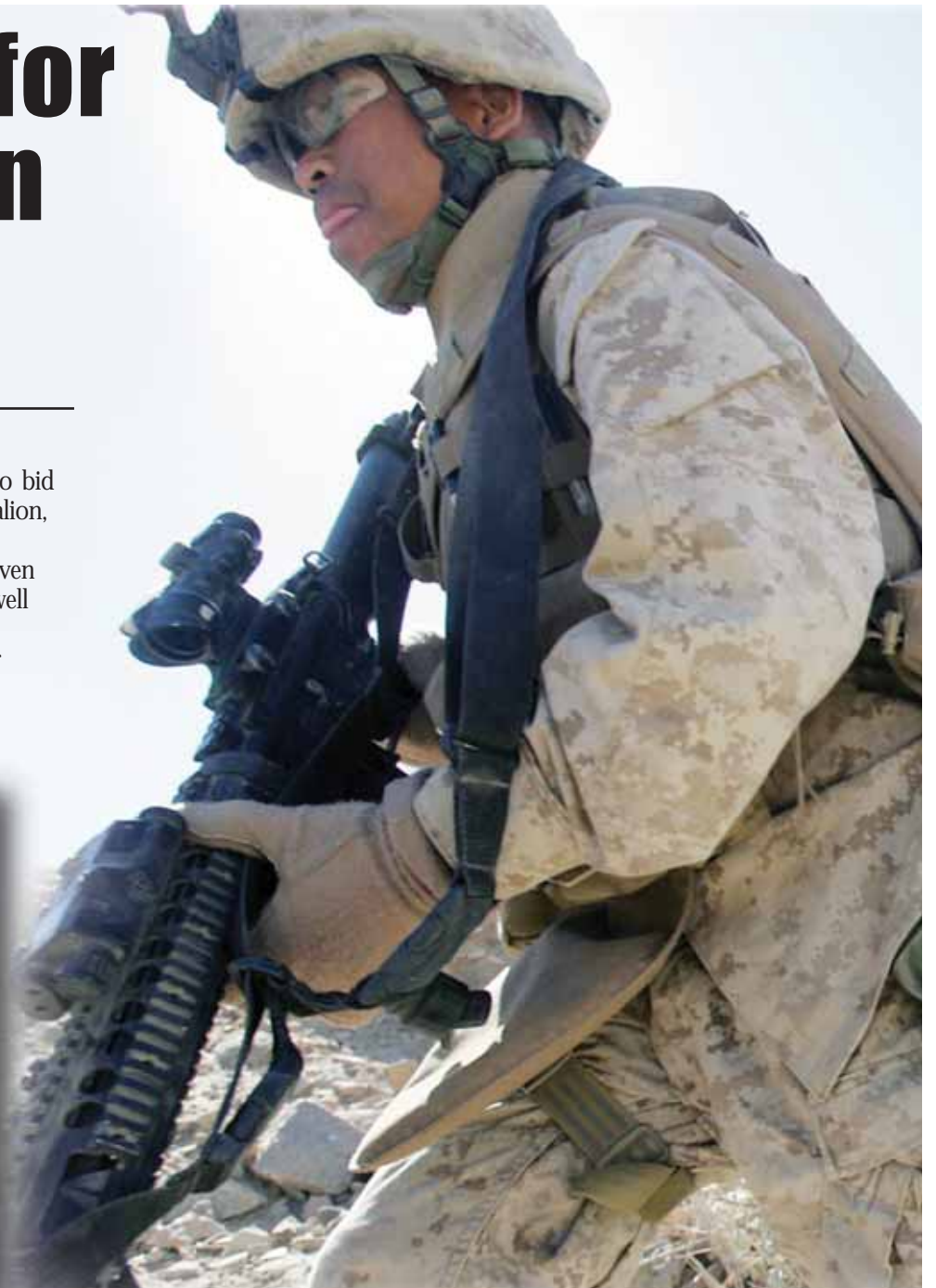


PHOTO BY CPL. RAY LEWIS
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LESLIE SHAW

Seaman Ryan F. Magsayo, 21, a corpsman with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment from Chicago, charges through a rocky trench March 6 during Mojave Viper. Magsayo and Marines with 2/7 conducted a platoon hasty attack to prepare for challenges they might face on their deployment to Afghanistan.

Procrastinators: Tax Deadlines Looming

COMPILED BY THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Waiting till the last minute to file taxes again this year?

The filing deadline falls on

April 15 this year, although many will file for extensions.

For military members, their families, and retirees, the Military Tax Center, located at the Village Center, has prepared

\$5 million in returns so far this tax season, according to Master Sgt. Mark Braun, Tax Center site coordinator. The Tax Center has saved Combat Center staff over \$400,000 in tax preparation service fees for state and federal tax filings.

The staff there can also amend errors by taxpayers and help members from all states.

"We are the experts in supporting all states and can e-file support 41 states and the District of Columbia. Since many states have military and combat exclusions we are the resident expert to assist our patrons," said Braun.

For those who are missing their W-2s, copies may be printed from the myPay Web site <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. Corrected W-2s (W-2C) may not be available at myPay, but can be obtained by

going to the Installation Personnel Administration Center or contacting DFAS directly. Those wanting to file extensions need to file by April 15 and can find extension filing paperwork at www.irs.gov, form 4868.

Additional Tax Perks for 2008

The government has created a tax relief provisions for members of the Armed Services with the combat zone tax benefits exempting certain types of income from taxation while serving in a combat zone. This includes exemption from filing deadlines for the service member and the spouses filing jointly. IRS Publication 3, Armed Forces' Tax Guide, can provide additional details.

Economic Stimulus Rebates

The recent economic downturns

See TAX TIME, A6



COURTESY PHOTO

The Tax Center has saved Combat Center service members and others \$400,000 in tax preparation service fees for state and federal tax filings.

This Day in Marine Corps History

-April 9, 1865-

Gen. Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse.



C.O.P. Corner

Community Oriented Policing



The proactive voice of crime prevention
Presented by the Provost Marshal's Office, Crime Prevention Section

PT Safely

Personnel safety is of utmost concern to the USMC and to the Combat Center. PT presents occasions for mishap, so the following is presented as a reminder to all engaging in PT aboard the Combat Center.

Per Combat Center Order 1630.8C, this is especially the case during periods of reduced visibility and before morning colors and after evening colors, Pedestrians and other military formations, shall walk, run, jog on the left side of the roadway facing oncoming traffic.

Personnel participating in individual physical training must wear reflective vest or reflective belts. Formation runs will not be conducted on Del Valle Road at anytime due to heavy traffic.

Drivers of motor vehicles are asked be cautious of pedestrians on the road ways.

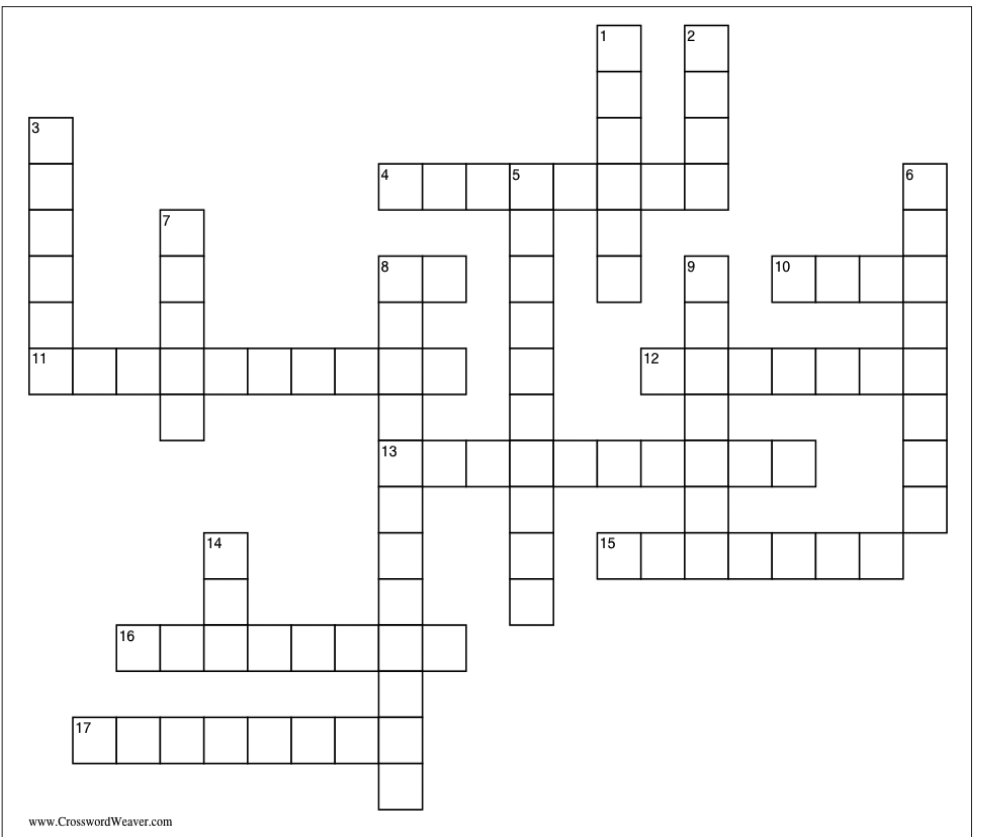
For information on Motor Vehicle Regulations or any Traffic regulation go the MCAGCC home page to CCO 1630.8C.

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 830-4561/6094.

POPULAR DRINKS FROM THE LAST 2 DECADES



ACROSS

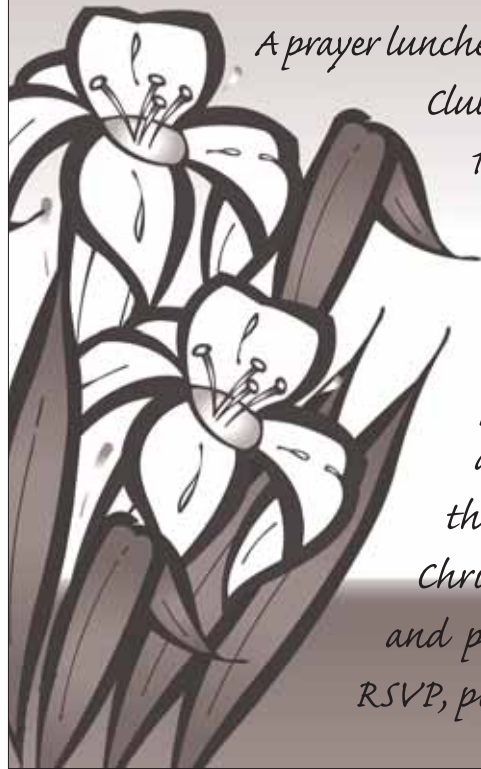
- 4. It's not really made from bugs
- 8. Famous for tomato juice
- 10. They invented GPS because you were _____
- 11. Kids beverages with faces and characters on the bottles
- 12. The current leader in energy drinks
- 13. You can make it, or buy it, in a minute
- 15. It gives you wings
- 17. Very, real power

DOWN

- 1. Had many floating pieces of something in it
- 2. Had a "Thriller" of a Superbowl commerical
- 3. Total rip off of squeeze-its
- 5. 100% Juice!
- 6. Is it in you?
- 7. Made from real fruits and vegetables
- 8. 50 Cent was partially responsible for starting this trendy drink
- 9. It's mascot is a big talking jug of juice that jumps through walls
- 14. Not 100% juice, but 100% Vitamin C

[Solutions on A15]

Prayer Luncheon



A prayer luncheon will be held at the Officer's Club, Mesa Room Thursday from 11:30- 12:50 p.m.

Commanding General Maj. Gen.(Sel) M.G. Spiese will be speaking. Come and pray for our nation, military and families. Bring \$10 for the buffet and join other Christians for encouragement and prayer! For more info or to RSVP, please call 830-6464.

Centerspeak

Who is your favorite super hero and why?

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



PFC. DUSTIN GREEN
MCCCESS, ALPHA COMPANY

"The Incredible Hulk because of his strength and the green."



LANCE CPL. TONY G. SANCHEZ
MWCS-28 MACG-28 2D MAW

"My mom because she will help anyone without expecting anything in return."



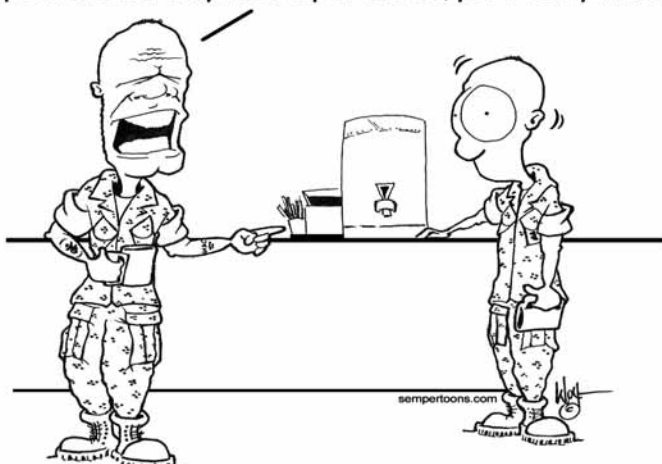
MARCUS D. PACHECO
SON OF SERGEANT MAJOR ALEX PACHECO

"My dad because he is always strong and because when he was young he was really jacked and his muscles would rip his shirts."

Sempertoons

By Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

"I'll tell ya what I had for breakfast, Mr. 20 questions... I had 2 Pfc's with a side of LCpl and washed it all down with a Sergeant!! NOW! If you ask me another question before my first cup of coffee, you'll be my lunch!"



WHY MARINES AVOID E9'S BEFORE 0900

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General

Brig. Gen. M.G. Spiese

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	<p>TONIGHT, 4/9</p> <p>4th Annual Taste of Palm Springs Time: 5-9 p.m. Where: Palm Springs Convention Center 277 N. Avenida Caballeros Palm Springs For more info call 322-3554</p>	<p>FRI., 4/11</p> <p>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn April 11-May 10 Time: 7 p.m. Where: Theatre 29 73673 Sullivan Rd. Twentynine Palms For more info call 361-4151</p>	<p>FRI.-SUN. 4/11-4/13</p> <p>Party for the Planet Time: All day event Where: The Living Desert 47-900 Portola Ave Palm Desert For more info call 346-5694</p>	<p>FRI.-SUN. 4/11-4/13</p> <p>Art Under the Umbrellas Time: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Where: Old Town La Quinta Calle Tampico and Desert Club Dr. La Quinta For more info call 564-1244</p>
<p>SAT. 4/12</p> <p>Block Party! Time: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Where: On base at Ocotillo Heights and Fairway Heights For more info call 368-4500</p>	<p>SAT. 4/12</p> <p>Sergio Mendes Time: 7:30 p.m. Where: Mission Hills Resort and Spa 71333 Dinah Shore Dr. Rancho Mirage For more info call 324-4511</p>	<p>SUN. 4/13</p> <p>Sunday Jazz Café with the Mojave Hotshots Time: 12-2 p.m. Where: Water Canyon Coffee Co. 55844 29Palms Hwy Yucca Valley For more info call 365-7771</p>	<p>SUN. 4/13</p> <p>Rancho Mirage Family Circus Time: 3 p.m. Where: McCallum Theatre 73000 Fred Waring Dr. Palm Springs For more info call 340-2787</p>	<p>MON. 4/14</p> <p>Hike Cedar Spring Trail Time: 8:30 a.m. Where: Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mtns. National Monument Visitor Center 51500 Hwy. 74, Palm Desert For more info call 862-9984</p>

Theatre offers relief from boredom

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It starts out slow: First comes the eye twitch, then the castle made out of Twinkies. Before you know it, you own every movie and game ever sold at the Main Exchange.

These are some inevitable signs of boredom, whether you live in the barracks or in a house; many military members and their fami-

lies have difficulty finding things to do while stationed aboard the Combat Center.

Theatre 29 presents opportunities to the military and family members who normally sit in their house and twiddle their thumbs to get out of their living quarters and experience the quality entertainment Twentynine Palms, Calif., has to offer.

"We normally produce seven productions a year and a Halloween Haunt event," said Charles Harvey, director for Theatre 29. "We perform a variety of works from big Broadway extravaganza musicals to small cast comedies and dramas."

Theatre 29, founded in 2000,

gives the people of Twentynine Palms a family-oriented theater while offering opportunities to children, civilians, and service members to participate in the live arts.

"Many service members have performed on our stage," said Harvey, a Desert Hot Springs, Calif., native. "We always have a need for fresh talent and the support of our community."

Audition times are posted on the Theatre 29 Web site, and open call auditions are held throughout the season.

"Members of the armed forces originate from all over the country and a good number have

See THEATRE, A10



COURTESY PHOTO

Marines and spouses perform in "She Loves Me," at Theatre 29 in December. The theater gives service members and their families a chance to become active in the Twentynine Palms, Calif., community.

Cinema 6

MOVIE TIMES

365-9633

www.cinema6theatre.com

ALL SHOWS BEFORE 6:00 PM \$6.00	• ADULTS \$8.00 • SENIORS \$6.00 • CHILDREN \$6.00
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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.

Fares from 29 Palms

One-way Regular Fare	\$20.00
Round Trip Regular Fare	\$25.00

For more information call MBTA Customer Service at 760-366-2395.

The Reliable, Easy and Economical Way to Go!

Movies for the upcoming week at the Sunset Cinema

WEDNESDAY
 The Eye
 7 p.m. - PG-13

THURSDAY
 Fools Gold
 6 p.m. - PG-13

FRIDAY
 Jumper
 6 p.m. - PG-13
 Definitely, Maybe
 9 p.m. - PG-13
 Step-Up 2
 Midnight - PG-13

SATURDAY
FREE Matinee Cars
 11 a.m. - G

Spiderwick Chronicles
 2 p.m. - PG

Fools Gold
 6 p.m. - PG-13

Vantage Point
 9 p.m. - PG-13

Witness Protection
 Midnight - PG-13

SUNDAY - MONDAY
 TBA

Hero lost but not forgotten

Fallen Marine lieutenant awarded Bronze Star posthumously

LUKE S. LARSON

SPECIAL TO THE OBSERVATION POST

Almost one year ago on April 17, 2007, I was in Kuwait preparing to go into Ar Ramadi in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq for my second tour during Operation Iraqi Freedom. On the way to the chow hall I stopped to call my wife. I'll never forget her crying when she answered the phone and told me one of my fellow Marine lieutenants and a very close personal friend had been killed in an area outside of Fallujah.

I first met Shaun Blue in Quantico, Va., at Officer Candidate School when he ran the initial three-mile portion of the physical fitness test in 16 minutes. He finished first on the run, two minutes faster than his closest competitor.

When we arrived back in Quantico to attend the Marine Corps six-month officer course called The Basic School, Blue and I were assigned to the same squad, where I soon realized he could not only ace the Marine Corps PFT, but every challenge the instructors at The Basic School tried to throw at him.

I've been told that three qualities that make a good Marine Corps Officer are intellect, force of will and character, with character being the most important. Blue showed me on several occasions he had all three of the attributes. When I struggled to get through the very challenging Infantry Officer Course, Blue seemed to glide through the difficulties effortlessly.

When other officers, that probably looked better on paper than Blue, crumbled under the pressures of the human factors of a difficult situation, that's when Blue excelled. When it was cold, wet, and we were tired, Blue was the first person to push the rest of us through the dark nights constantly helping his peers. In the very competitive environment of a military school, Blue always rose to the top 10 percent of the class with his intellect and force of will.

Blue's character is what consistently kept him from being the number one graduate. Blue could have easily strived to beat out the

other top performers, but he did not care about merits of achievement or meaningless accolades. He cared about doing the best he could and helping others do the best they could. Instead of spending the extra hour on his own work to be the number one guy he would regularly spend that hour helping out the sub-par performers get up to a level that they could pass the course. More importantly he helped teach them to be good infantry officers that would lead men into combat. Blue had character.

Standing in Kuwait that day in April 2007, after smoking several packs of cigarettes, I said a silent prayer for my friend. After taking a deep breath I decided I would mourn his death only after my own unit made it through our deployment.

It had been almost a year since Blue's death in Iraq and I received a letter that he had been posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V, the combat valor distinguishing device, and that the award would be given to his parents on April 5.

On the way to Blue's parents' house on April 4, driving into Munster, Ind., I noticed a billboard the town had hung up that said: IN MEMORY OF 1ST LT SHAUN BLUE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS.

At Jim and Debbie Blue's house I had the honor of listening to several other lieutenants who served with Blue tell his parents fond memories of their son.

There was the time when Blue's truck broke down 30 miles outside of Twentynine Palms, Calif., the day he was supposed to report to



COURTESY PHOTO

Fellow military officers, 1st Lt. Mike Bell, 1st Lt. Shaun Meyer, 1st Lt. Jeff Buck, Lt. j.g. Jesse Hyles and 1st Lt. Jacob Hyles observe their friend 1st Lt. Shaun Blue's brick at the Munster Memorial Park.

his first fleet unit. With limited options, Blue ran 30 miles into town and checked into his unit.

There was the time that a sergeant in his platoon challenged him to a boxing match in front of his 30 Marines. Normally, it would be best for a green lieutenant with little to no boxing experience to avoid stepping into the ring against a golden glove boxer who had beaten everyone in the entire platoon. After continued nagging from the sergeant he accepted the challenge. Blue with a cigarette hanging off his lip knocked out the veteran boxer with his first punch.

On April 5, several Marine lieutenants who had flown in from around the country for the event headed to the ceremony at Munster Memorial Park. All of us had been to Washington, D.C., and I think we each commented in surprise how the Munster Memorial Park rivaled any monument we've seen in the nation's capital.

At the ceremony the local

reserve unit did an outstanding job performing the color guard as Blue's parents were awarded his well deserved Bronze Star, one of the military's highest awards. After the presentation the crowd walked through the Memorial Park on a red brick path stopping at each of the monuments honoring WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War. Near the middle of the path close to the WWII monument there is a brick dedicated to Blue. Closely located is another brick dedicated to his grandfather Cecil T. Blue who served in the Marines during WWII. Blue often told his friends of his veteran grandfather and I'm certain that his bedrock character was in a large part influenced by his elderly mentor.

After walking through the Memorial Park we walked over to a beautiful brick pavilion. In the pavilion there are several of the old WWII recruiting posters and paintings that rallied the support of the nation for the war. In the middle of the exhibit is a permanent display of black polished granite that portrays reflections almost as clearly as a mirror.

Etched into the polished stone is a picture of Blue in his dress blues. Underneath the portrait is an excellent biography that summarized the life of the fallen lieutenant. As I looked into the granite reflection I locked eyes with the etched picture of Blue and had to pull away because I was hit by a wave of emotions I had never felt. As I tried to gather my composure, Blue's mother Debbie came over and gave me a hug I felt selfish. I should have been comforting her. She lost her son and here she was comforting me. I saw again where Blue had



Debbie Blue, Shaun's mother touches her son's memorial brick at this Bronze Star ceremony.



COURTESY PHOTO

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HOT TOPICS

FILL OUT C.E.L. SURVEY FOR CHANCE TO WIN DISNEYLAND TRIP

A Satisfaction Survey will be delivered by mail during the week of April 15 from CEL & Associates, Inc. to residents in Family Housing aboard the Combat Center. The survey will afford residents an opportunity to provide feedback regarding quality of life as it pertains to Lincoln Military Housing and an opportunity to express opinions on which activities, events and services residents enjoyed this past year and indicate any other programs residents would like to see added or improved. If you have particular comments about maintenance technicians, please use the comment card provided in the mail. By returning your sealed survey to your District Office, you will be entered in a drawing to win an all expense paid trip to Disneyland. For more details about the survey or drawing, contact your district office.

NAVAL HOSPITAL RIDGE RUN

The annual Ridge Run sponsored by Naval Hospital MWR will be held April 18. The race course will be the same as last year at Range 100. The start and finish line will be behind the Naval Hospital. Race 1 will consist of a 5K run through the trails above the hospital. This race should be relatively flat. Race 2 will be a strenuous 8K run, through sand, up and down hills. Get ready for a challenge. The race will begin at 7 a.m. Race day registration will begin at 6 a.m. The cost is \$10 for individuals signing up for the run before April 11, \$13 for individuals signing up after April 11, and \$5 for squad runners (5 or more per squad). All runners will receive a commemorative engraved Dog Tag. For more information please contact Dan Barber at 830-2362.

KIDS PFT: PLAY AND FUN TIME

Are you a Marine or sailor that can kick a soccer ball, play chase (tag), or throw a football with children of those forward deployed? If so, we need you on April 20 at 2 p.m. at the East Gym Basketball Court. For more information please e-mail kidspftpalms@live.com.

See HERO, A10

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3/7 opens eyes with film

LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN
KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Throughout the entire war in Iraq, there have been perceptions that America's military efforts are futile.

Marines from 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, hoped to tell of the Marine Corps' progress in the war-torn country with a film they made while deployed to Ramadi from April to November 2007.

The purpose of the film was to let Marines, sailors, their families and the public know just how much progress the Marine Corps has made since the war began.

"In 2005, Ramadi was the absolute most violent place I had ever experienced," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Carpenter, battalion gunner, 3/7. "When we got there in 2007, it was completely different."

When the Marines landed in Ramadi, what they saw was not a war-riddled city, but a city that had been changed.

The Iraqi locals had created a police force, preventing insurgents from moving throughout the city.

The Marines from 3/7 quickly learned that their mission would not be to combat enemy insurgents. Their job was to rebuild a city damaged during their previous deployment and forge relationships with the people they once considered enemies.

"The film shows how genuine the Iraqi people are," added Lance Cpl. Andrew Marshall, team leader, Lima Company, 3/7. "You can see just how glad they

are that we're there."

During the deployment, 3/7 worked with the people of Ramadi to repair the city's essential services and infrastructure. More than 400 reconstruction projects were approved valued at \$14.5 million.

Sewer and water lines were repaired after being damaged by improvised explosive devices. The streets were cleared of open sewage caused by broken sewer pumps.

The city also went from no electrical coverage to 50 to 75 percent coverage.

More than 20 schools were restored and 40 buses returned to their routes.

The two local hospitals were renovated and the water treatment plant was restored, bringing fresh water to more than 400,000 people.

Throughout the seven-month deployment, Marines from 3/7 received no combat-related injuries while continuously patrolling the streets of Ramadi.

"I was proud of our young Marines and their ability to shift gears and adapt to a new fight," added Carpenter, a Loysville, Pa., native. "The Marine Corps can do whatever it is tasked to do, and we do it well."

It is difficult to get the story out on what the Marines actually experience while being deployed, and this film will help get the word out, said Maj. Rory Quinn, battalion executive officer, 3/7.

"The film shows anyone who hasn't deployed to Ramadi what it's really like," explained Marshall, a Chicago native. "Marines are slowly making progress over there."

DEPLOY, from A1

2/7, but the Marines of Golf Co. understand the differences from Iraq.

"It's a totally different area and a totally different language," said Lance Cpl. Christopher P. Coon, a mortarman with Golf Co.

"Unlike the Iraqis who will shoot and run, the Afghans will stay and fight, so it is important to work with them and convince them to fight with us," said Coon.

Even though the 2/7 is facing a new mission morale is high and Gold Co. feels that it is ready to meet the challenge.

"They are motivated and put a lot of work into preparing for this," said Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brookshire.

"I am very impressed with the performance they have put forward in preparing for this mission," said Brookshire.

In preparation for the mission Mojave Viper training exercises were slightly modified in order to help Marines prepare for situations they may face out in the field.

However, most of the training that 2/7 underwent in preparation for this deployment was business as usual.

"We concentrated on the basics and worked on perfecting the small but important stuff," said Lance Cpl. Christopher P. Coon, a mortarman, Golf Co., 2/7.

This is not the first for the

majority of the Marines and sailors of 2/7 and family members found it a little bit easier to say goodbye this time around.

"There is some anxiety but it's a little easier because I am more aware of what to expect," said Greg Bardos, father of Cpl. Brandon Bardos, a mortarman with Golf Co.

Adel Sweet, mother of Lance Cpl. Christopher Darr, a Golf Co. assaultman, fought back tears and waved to her son one last time before the buses headed out.

"I'm a little better than I was the first time and I am still proud of him and behind him 100 percent," she said.



PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Cpl. Brandon Bardos, a mortarman with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment holds his son Kayden as he stands with his wife Alena and waits to board a bus.

Dedication to country, Corps



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Lt. Col. J.J. Dill, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, gives a speech during a reenlistment ceremony at the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field March 31. More than 70 Marines from 1/7 volunteered for another four years of service during the ceremony.

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Marines serving their country through little league

PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Saturday at Luckie Park was opening day for 29 Palms Little League and the day couldn't have been better. The sun was bright, a cool breeze moved through the air, and the smell of freshly cut grass was strong. The playing fields were in immaculate condition and the many uniforms present were crisp and clean without any grass stains or signs of wear. Players sported fresh paint under their eyes to help fight any unwanted glare, and family and friends set up their folding chairs, blankets, and coolers.

The festivities began with the introduction and formation of all the teams participating in this year's league. After a prayer led by Navy chaplain, Captain Chris Heston, and the singing of the national anthem, the words that everyone had been waiting for echoed through the park's speaker system. "Play ball!"

With those words another season of little league baseball commenced and the many Marines who dedicate their time to the league went to work.

"About 80 percent of our volunteers are Marines and sailors and, or their spouses," said Staff Sgt. Tim L. Cook a Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School instructor with Alpha Co. and a 29 Palms Little League board member.

Whether it is coaching, officiating, field maintenance or working at the snack bar, Marines are willing to lend a helping hand to

the league.

"Coaching is more enjoyable because there is more interaction and you get to watch these young kids improve," said Pfc. Nate Barr, an administrative clerk with Installation Personnel Administration Center, who is also a little league coach and umpire.

The majority of Marines who donate their time to the league serve as coaches and love working with the younger children.

"I love teaching the young ones because you get them when they are raw and are able to teach them the fundamentals," said Staff Sgt. Tracy S. Matteson, a MCCES instructor.

Matteson, like many Marines who volunteer, helps the league in many different ways. He is currently a coach, an umpire, the information officer, as well as the league's web master.

"These Marines take time out of their schedules between deployments and that says a lot about their character," said Gunnery Sgt. Timothy M. Hope, Headquarters and Services Company, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. "Without them we wouldn't have a league."

Besides teaching young ballplayers the fundamentals of baseball, Marine volunteers also teach important life skills. Accountability of and taking care of the team's gear is stressed. Team communication is taught as are preparation skills and concentration techniques. Players are coached on how to keep their bearing after striking out or missing a ground ball and are taught to

be proud of the uniform they are wearing. One of the biggest skills taught through the little league program is leadership.

"Little league is a leadership program that uses baseball as its means of instruction," said Cook

As young players progress through the little league ranks, leadership roles pass from coaches and parents to players. Players are taught to take charge of the teams gear, players and formations. Designated captains must lead stretching routines, and players begin to make their own on field decisions.

"Little league teaches leadership traits and shows them how to work as a team," said Cpl. Charlie D. Reffiani, Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment.

The young ballplayers are not the only ones learning leadership skills. Young Marines who help coach are also learning leadership traits and this is why many older Marines feel it is important to increase the number of young Marines who volunteer.

"I encourage [young Marines] to come out," said Alvin S. Thomas a retired Marine and little league volunteer. "They have the energy to keep up with these young kids and at the same time learn how to teach them."

Gunnery Sgt. Sylvester Harris of Tactical Training Exercise Control Group agrees. "We need to get young service members off base and involved because the things they do out here can have a major impact," he explained, "These kids look up to us as



PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Staff Sgt. Tracey S. Matteson, an MCCES instructor, leads his team in a cheer during Saturday's little league action at Luckie Park.

Marines. No matter what your rank is, you are a role model."

The Marines who dedicate their valuable free time to little league are everyday examples of what the United States Marine Corps stands for. Selflessness, duty, commitment, leadership and the numerous other attributes are what make Marines unique. By simply encouraging a young

ballplayer to use two hands when he is fielding a ground ball, or by giving her a high five after she scores a run, Marines are showing that they serve and defend our country, but they also serve our community.

For more information on how to volunteer, visit the 29 Palms Little League website at <http://www.29palmsll.org>.

TAX TIME, from A1

have resulted in an additional tax benefit for many. Single filers may receive \$300-600, and married filers may receive between \$600-1200. Each dependent may increase the rebate by \$300. Contact the Tax Center for more information.

To download forms, W-2 information computers are available at: The Learning Resource Center (Bldg. 1527), the Library (Bldg. 1528) or Information & Referral (Bldg. 1551)

The tax center will be open 0800-1700 Monday through Friday through April 18. Late filers will find some limited support available through April 30. The Tax Center has also been helping many Marines, Sailors and families correct returns call 830-4TAX (4829) for appointments.

Other useful Web addresses:

Armed Forces' Tax Guide <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p3/index.html>

Economic Stimulus Payments: Especially for Military Combat Personnel <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=180339,00.html>

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LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Neal McCoy in the Spirit of America Tour come to Combat Center Tuesday to play a free concert at the Sunset Cinema beginning at 7 p.m. McCoy has sold over five million records and this will be his third performance with the tour.

Neal McCoy is country music's real McCoy

LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Country music star Neal McCoy and the Spirit of America Tour is returning to the Combat Center Tuesday to play a free concert at the Sunset Cinema.

McCoy kicks off his Spirit of America Tour concert at 7 p.m. The event is open to Marines, sailors, their families and authorized patrons.

The doors of the Sunset Cinema will open at 6:30 p.m.

The Spirit of America Tour was formed in 2002 to bring headline entertainers to America's stateside military bases and boost the morale of service members. Performers like Billy Bob Thornton, Travis Tritt and Saliva have volunteered for the tour.

The tour is a project of the Robert and Nina Rosenthal Foundation Incorporated, a California non-profit organization, and accepts donations and corporate sponsorships.

Robert Rosenthal, founder and

president of the Spirit of America Tour, retired as a lawyer in 2000 and expected to spend the rest of his life going to movies, staying active in the community and relaxing.

Then came 9/11.

Rosenthal and his wife felt they should do something to help America. They looked around on the internet and noticed that there were no major entertainers performing for stateside military installations. The United Services Organization was providing entertainment overseas so Rosenthal created the Spirit of America tour to fill the need.

The Tour has arranged 93 shows since 9/11.

Since the tour started, it has become the premiere sponsor of entertainment for America's stateside military bases.

"It's vitally important for Marines and sailors to know that celebrities care greatly about the military," added Rosenthal. "Celebrities can play a very impor-

tant role in the views and opinions the public has on the military."

The event is not entirely on a volunteer basis. Though all the artists that perform for the tour donate their time and talents, the Spirit of America Tour pays their reasonable expenses.

This will be Neal McCoy's third time performing for the tour.

McCoy has sold over five million country records during his 20-year career. He also has three platinum-selling albums and one gold-selling album.

McCoy not only reaches people through his music.

The warm-hearted singer founded the East Texas Angel Network with his wife, Melinda, to provide financial assistance to families with children suffering from serious illnesses. Since its inception, the ETAN has raised more than five million dollars.

For more information about the Spirit of America Tour you can visit <http://www.spiritofamericatour.org>.



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Marines learn to be mentors, le



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines practice drill April 1 during the Combat Center's corporal's course. More than 80 Marines from various units aboard the Combat Center are participating in the two-and-a-half-week course. The next corporal's course is slated to begin in August.

LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN
KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Noncommissioned officers play a vital role in instilling some of the Corps' valued qualities and characteristics in their junior Marines.

More than 80 Marines from various units aboard the Combat Center are participating in a corporal's course from March 27 to April 10.

During the course, Marines learn how to be better mentors and leaders, said Sgt. Mark Moyer, the chief instructor of corporal's course.

This is the first corporal's course the Combat Center has held in more than two-and-a-half years.

"Having this course on base

really benefits the Marines here," said Sgt. Maj. Mark Geletko, Headquarters Battalion sergeant major. "By staying local, units are able to send several Marines to the course rather than two or three at a time. In the past, they had to go down to Camp Pendleton, so units couldn't afford to send as many."

Marines are instructed in physical fitness, combat leadership, administrative leadership and other areas of leadership

through instructional classes.

They are also shown several different ways to connect and have fun with their junior Marines.

"We try to show the Marines different ways to run [physical training] with their units besides running three miles and doing pull-ups and crunches," added Moyer, an Erie, Pa., native.

The Marines are graded throughout the course and have to take three written tests,



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines stand at attention as platoon advisors inspect their service C uniforms April 3. The Combat Center plans to host corporal's course three times a year.



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Sgt. Mark Moyer, chief instructor of the Combat Center's corporal's course, inspects a Marine's service C uniform April 3. During the course, Marines learned new ways to be better mentors and leaders. This is the first corporal's course the Combat Center has held in more than two years.



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Leaders during corporals course



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines participating in the Combat Center's corporal's course exercise in the "circle of death" Monday. The Marines graduate the course Thursday after two-and-a-half-weeks of training that involved drill and sword manual, uniform inspections and leadership classes.



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Students exercise during corporal's course Monday at the Combat Center's Victory Field. Marines learn new ways to conduct physical training with their units during the two-and-a-half-week course.



LANCE CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Cpl. Steven Andrews, student, Marines practice sword manual during the Combat Center's corporal's course April 1. During the two-and-a-half-week course, Marines sharpen their leadership and mentoring skills. The Combat Center plans to host corporal's course three times a year.

pass uniform inspections, drill and sword manual to pass. They also have to pass the final physical fitness test.

Students are held to high standards and must maintain an 80 percent average throughout the course to graduate, said Moyer.

The Marine with the highest average at the end of the course

is named the honor graduate and awarded a plaque, certificate of commendation and a book from the Commandant's Reading List.

Other awards will also be presented to Marines that stand out during the course.

The students are broken up into five platoons and the platoon with the highest overall

average will be named the honor platoon. They will also receive a plaque that will be posted at Headquarters Battalion.

"We are going to have this course three times a year," added Geletko, a Pittsburg native.

The next corporal's course will begin training Marines to lead and be mentors in August.

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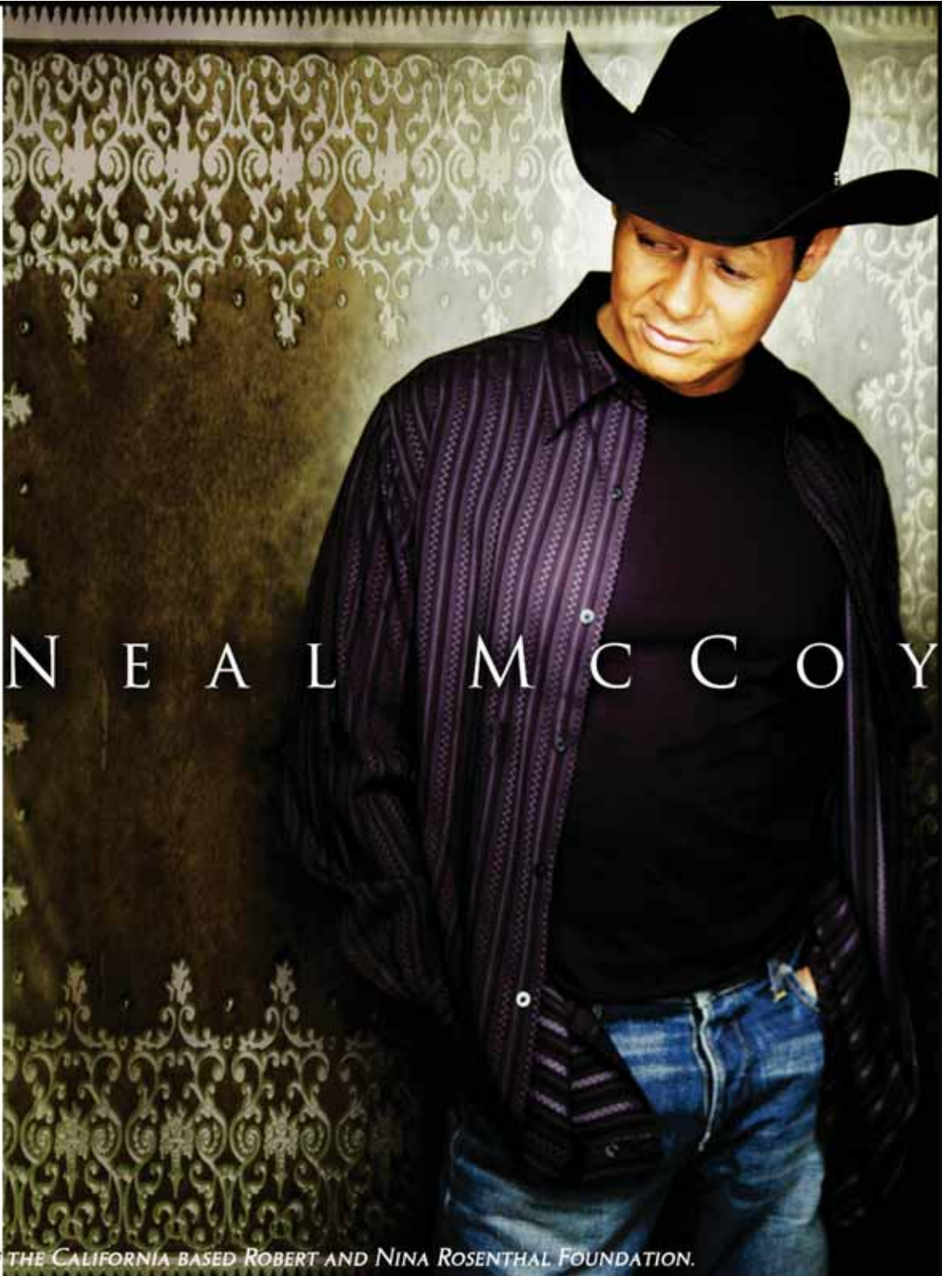
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HERO, from A4

gotten his most important leadership trait. The entire Blue family has character.

On the way back to Blues parent's house, another lieutenant and I discussed what a shame it was that Blue had been killed. Our conversation then shifted to how only a small proportion of

the United States society truly carries the burden of this war. In no time the atmosphere in the car was very bitter.

To lighten the mood the other lieutenant suggested that we stop at a bar, his reasoning was that if Blue was at one of our memorials that is what he would have done. I agreed with his logic and we pulled into Kilroy's Pub in Lansing, Ill.,

just outside of Munster.

Inside the bar 30 local patrons all stopped talking simultaneously and stared at the other lieutenant and I who were both wearing our Marine Corps Dress Blues. When we tried to buy two beers several locals fought over who would get to buy us the drinks. We sat down next to a local who introduced himself to us by his self appointed nickname, "Sticks." He asked us why we were in town and when we told him for Blue's memorial he stood up and asked for the bar's attention. Sticks then announced the reason for our visit and the entire bar stood and gave us a lengthy standing ovation. They had heard of Blue. After several rounds were brought to our table courtesy of the Munster and Lansing locals,

we had to practically fight to get out of the bar and back on our way to Blue's parent's house.

On the drive the other lieutenant and I decided that although the rest of the country might not care the people in the small towns do care and definitely appreciate the military's sacrifice. That day in Munster, I was proud to be a Marine and proud to be an American.

I like to think that if the gates of heaven are guarded by Marines as the Marines hymn suggests, that 1st Lt. Shaun Blue is now forever walking the lines of the perimeter checking on the Marines defending their eternal post.

The writer served two tours to Iraq as a Marine Corps Infantry Officer.

THEATRE, from A3

experienced the arts, either in school or civilian life prior to their service," said Harvey. "Curiosity for certain productions also draws military members into our theatre."

Entertainment provided by Theatre 29 offers an assortment of scheduled productions that will appeal to a variety of diverse tastes throughout the audience.

"It definitely is a productive activity to do in my off hours," said Sgt. Arthur D. Schocken, a Marine who participated in the production, "She Loves Me." "It has a lot of extra responsibilities and stress that go with it, but that comes with doing any performance. All-in-all, it is about having fun. When the actual performance of the show started, it made all those hours worth it."

According to Harvey, Theatre 29 is dependent on the involvement of Marines and sailors from the Combat Center.

"They are vital to the continued success of the theater as well as the social good of the town," said Harvey. "Whether as a spectator or a participant, I look forward to allowing our servicemen and women an artistic outlet close to home."

The upcoming production, "Big River," the story of Huckleberry Finn, opens April 11 and will run weekends through May 10.

The theater is also holding auditions for the classic Moliere French Comedy, "The Trickeries of Scapin," April 14.

For more information about Theatre 29, you can visit their Web site at www.Theatre29.com or call 361-4151.

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3/4 Marines win hearts of Iraqi children

CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

MULTI NATIONAL FORCE - WEST

HIT, Iraq Lance Cpl. Edwin S. Contreras, an assaultman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, knows the best way to let the Iraqi people know

that Marines are here to help is through the children.

Marines with Company I conducted a security patrol March 29 through the city of Hit, Iraq, to ensure all is running smoothly in the city.

"The purpose of the patrol was to provide security for the

people and to build rapport with them," said Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Barnes, 21, a team leader with Company I from Fairbanks, Alaska. "We're still looking for suspicious things or anything we can do to hinder insurgent activity."

As Marines walked through the city they handed out treats to kids who approached the patrols. Although some of the kids seemed timid at first, once they saw the candy their fears disappeared. Marines felt that making the extra effort for the kids would demonstrate the good Marines are doing.

"Giving out candy is good for our rapport with the people," said Contreras, 19, from Pico Rivera, Calif. "We win over the hearts of the kids, the parents see that and we win the people over."

Barnes understands the importance of making the kids happy, but to keep kids from disrupting his patrol he had to tell them through an interpreter to keep their distance.

"We don't always bring candy out because when we do they

like to swarm our patrols," Barnes said. "We only do it now and then so they know we're trying to help."

When Marines stopped at houses to speak with residents of the neighborhood, the kids followed and watched Marines post security.

"We got to sit down with some people and talk about some interesting stuff," Barnes said. "We try to put a face to the Marines so they know we're human too."

Marines asked questions

through an interpreter and spent the majority of the time listening to what the people had to say. They received insight on how the community feels about the Iraq Provisional Security Force, Iraqi Police and Marines.

Marines left the last house on their patrol feeling good about how their patrol went.

"The patrol went smooth," Contreras said. "We got to talk to a lot of people. Most of our patrols are about building rapport with the people. We accomplished our mission out there."



CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

Lance Cpl. Austin L. Barnhill, 23, a rifleman from Riverside, Calif., assigned to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, handed an Iraqi girl candy March 29 in Hit, Iraq. Marine with I Company handed out candy to Iraqi children while conducting a security patrol through the city and spoke with Iraqi locals about their thoughts on the Iraqi Provisional Security Force, Iraqi Police and Marines.

Wild, wild world of sports

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Spring is in the air and Marine Corps Community Services Sports is featuring a variety of athletic activities everyone can enjoy.

For the first time at the Combat Center, an all-hands strongman arm wrestling tournament April 19 at the East Gym from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"We're excited about the tournament because it's never been done on this base before," said Skip Best, MCCS Sports athletic director. "[Marine Corps Base] Camp Pendleton [Calif.] has held a tournament for the past two years and had great success each time.

'Camp Pendleton has challenged us to put this tournament together and I think we'll have great success," he added. "I think it might eventually evolve into a Best of the West tournament similar to what we do with football."

In addition to the tournament, five-time world champion arm wrestler Bill Collins will be conducting an arm wrestling clinic the day of the tournament at 9 a.m. The crash course will cover arm wrestling techniques revolving around safety.

"Mr. Collins has a lot of experience with arm wrestling and he's coming to provide the Marines with techniques for a high level of competition," said Randy Husted, MCCS Sports specialist. "We hope to see Marines come down to see this and learn the basics."

Husted and Best both expect the tournament to go well. It is open to all Combat Center personnel and dependents above the age of 18. Spectators are also

welcome to come and watch the event.

The tournament will be divided into five different weight classes and awards will be presented to the first through third place winners in each division.

"One thing we want to do is find the top few people on the base so we can send them to the military competition at the Arizona State Fair in Phoenix," said Husted.

MCCS Sports predicts the turnout rate and success of the competition will be high this year. They hope to continue hosting an arm wrestling tournament annually.

Also coming up in the world of MCCS Sports is:

- April 7-10: The Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League playoffs. The championship game will be held tomorrow.
- April 12: The Combat Center will be hosting the Marine Corps Varsity Softball League.
- April 16: The Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League begins.

• April 22: The Commanding General's Intramural Softball League begins. The preseason tournament will run from April 14-17.

• May: Co-ed Softball League begins.

• May 12-15: The Commanding General's Intramural Golf Tournament will be held. The Commanding General's tournament will be held May 16.

Also a reminder from MCCS Sports is the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League is currently in play. League games are held at the Sandy Hills bowling alley every Wednesday at 3 p.m.

MCCS Sports offers a multitude of intramural sporting activities year-round. They will continue to schedule regular league seasons in a variety of sports. MCCS Sports will also continue to expand their programs to accommodate the interests of a wide range of people aboard the Combat Center.

For more information about any upcoming sporting event, you can call Husted at 830-6857.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Roman Catholic Services Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

Sun 7:30 a.m. Rosary
Sun 8 a.m. Catholic Mass*
Sun 9 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women (Bldg 1551)
Sun 9 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
Most Blessed Sacrament (1st Friday Each Month)

Holy Days of Obligation Masses

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

Non-denominational Christian Service Christ Chapel

Sun 8 a.m. Sunday School*
Sun 9 a.m. Worship*
Wed 7 p.m. Praise & Worship*

Wed. Bible Study: 7 p.m.

Protestant Liturgical Service Christ Chapel

Sun 11 a.m. Worship

Lay-Led Independent Baptist Service Christ Chapel

Sun 11 a.m. Worship

Lay-Led Gospel Service Christ Chapel

Sun 12:30 p.m. Worship

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

7 p.m. Praise & Worship Service.

1st Thursday each month

7 p.m. Knights of Columbus

Legend

*Indicates Child Care Provided
+Appointments can be made for Confessions, call 830-6456 or 830-6646



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Marines jump back into action with help of chiropractor



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Derrick Riedel, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, stretches his lower back during his visit to Dr. George Sargetis, Combat Center's only chiropractor, March 25, after being injured during his last deployment to Iraq.

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Warm hands massage your back, finding the aches and pains built up over the years. The hands tense, and you feel your back begin to crack and a new feeling washes over you. For the first time in a long time, your back doesn't hurt.

In Greek, the word chiropractor means "hands-on," gives people an option to try a proven medical healing method without medication or surgery.

In 2001, the Department of Defense developed and implemented a plan to offer chiropractic services to all active duty military personnel.

In 2006, Dr. George Sargetis offered his services as a chiropractor to the Marine Corps and was directed to assist injured Marines and sailors at the Combat Center.

Sargetis uses injury-specific manual body adjustments or stretches to the abnormal joints and muscles.

"Chiropractic is a health care discipline which emphasizes the inherent recuperative power of the body to heal itself without the use of drug or surgery," said Sargetis. "The practice of chiropractic focuses on the relationship between structure and function and how that relationship affects the preservation and restoration of health."

Chiropractic services emphasize good alignment, flexibility and strength of the joints and muscles of the body. When a person is injured, their body changes the way it functions, which reduces maximum performance.

"I have realized the most common problem is lower back pain," said Sargetis, a Sacramento, Calif., native. "Most of this pain comes from Marines training with heavy gear and packs."

Minor cases of lower back pain

causes muscle spasms, stiffness of the back and limbs, and vertebrae may lock in twisted positions.

Severe cases of lower back pain causes muscle spasms in the back and legs, bothered disks, and ruptured vertebrae.

"A lot of cases that were referred to me were because pain medication and physical therapy was not working," said Sargetis.

Staff Sgt. Earnest Hughes, with Marine Corps Staff Noncommissioned Officers Academy, was referred to Sargetis after injuring his back while celebrating the 2007 Marine Corps Ball in Las Vegas.

Hughes, a 37-year-old Los Angeles native, was prescribed multiple types of medication and was finally referred to physical therapy for two months. When his back pain became worse, he was finally referred to Sargetis.

"When I first got here my pain was an eight [on a 1-10 pain scale]," said Hughes. "It was really uncomfortable and I could not put forth my max effort into my military duties because the pain was constantly on my mind."

After visiting Sargetis once a week for a month, Hughes noticed a complete turn-around.

"My pain level dropped to a two or three," said Hughes. "I was able to spread out my appointments to once a month instead of every week."

Multiple comment cards submitted to Sargetis shows how he helped people through injuries when other doctors have failed and had gave up.

One comment card written by Erik Barden, a retired corpsman formerly assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, said he was told by neurologists he would never have a headache-free day due to the multiple improvised explosive device detonation he encountered while deployed.

"Nobody could help me," said Barden. "On a whim the doctor asked to work on me. Two weeks later I had my first headache-free day in over a year."

Sargetis devotes most of his time to helping Marines and sailors recuperate from injuries when, on many cases, his patients have been told they were unable to be healed.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Staff Sgt. Earnest Hughes, with Marine Corps Staff Noncommissioned Officers Academy, lies still as Dr. George Sargetis, chiropractor, uses a hand-held massager to loosen his back during his appointment March 25. Hughes, a 37-year-old Los Angeles native, was prescribed multiple types of medication and was finally referred to physical therapy for two months. When his back pain became worse, he was finally referred to Sargetis.

Regular season intramural basketball ends with TTECG win

PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The regular season of the Commanding General's Intramural Basketball League concluded with the Tactical Training and Exercise Control Group defeating the Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, 84-66, at the Combat Center's East Gym April 2.

TTECG, who went into the game with a 7-4 record, were looking to rebound from a loss during last year's season to MWSS-374, who entered the game with a record of 5-5.

Both teams, having already booked their places in the playoffs, were looking to improve their chances of obtaining favorable seeding positions.

TTECG left the starting line strong, and quickly jumped out to a convincing 42-22 first-half lead.

TTECG's height advantage and solid teamwork helped compensate for the team's short bench and enabled TTECG to hold their lead throughout the game.

During half-time heads were hanging on the MWSS-374 bench and it looked as though TTECG

was on its way to a blowout.

But MWSS-374 came into the second half a rejuvenated team and quickly began to put points on the board.

A strong passing game by MWSS-374 helped the team chip away at TTECG's comfortable lead and invigorated MWSS-374's quiet bench.

In the end, MWSS-374's rally was not enough to overcome TTECG and the game ended with both teams feeling optimistic about the playoffs.

"If we [MWSS-374] can apply what we did in the second half to the first half we can win," said Ryan Fromherz, a MWSS-374 guard.

Sixth seeded MWSS-374 will begin their playoff campaign Monday night when they face off against the second seeded Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School staff non-commissioned officer team at 8:45 p.m. The MWSS-374 team will enter Monday's game trying to avenge their regular season 78-28 loss to the MCCES SNCOs.

Up next, for fifth seeded TTECG, is a first round play-off game against number three seed Combat Logistics Battalion 7 Monday night at 6:15 p.m. The regular season meeting between the two sides ended with CLB-7 holding on for a 49-48 win.

"If we [TTECG] go into the playoffs playing like we



PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Anthony Davis and Dandre Brown battle it out for a rebound during Wednesday night hoop action at the Combat Center's East Gym.



PFC. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Anthony Davis, Tactical Training and Exercise Control Group forward, leaps above his competition at the Combat Center's East Gym April 2.

did tonight, we stand a chance of claiming this year's title," said Adrian M. Kilgore, a TTECG forward.

"The season started of rocky,

but now everything is starting to click," he added.

For more information about Combat Center sports, contact Skip Best at 830-4092.



Grubstake Days Community Fair

VENDORS NEEDED

Sat. May 24, 2008

at the Yucca Valley Community Center

Vendor applications are available at the Basin Wide Foundation, Z1077, Town of Yucca Valley recreation dept. and Hi-Desert Star. Non-profit and commercial vendors welcome! (deadline May 16, 2008)

Be prepared...
Fun is coming!
May 24 -
Grubstake Days
Community Fair!



- Looking for:
- * Games
- * Food & Fun
- * Charities
- * Tournaments



Call Cindy at 365-3315; Kelly at 365-7019 or Maureen at 369-7211 for vendor information. Join us and make this a special day to celebrate our community!

Once a Marine, always a Marine



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

The Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office held a mess night Friday to celebrate camaraderie and esprit de corps. However, it was a special night for PMO, as they were graced with two notable guests of honor.

Former Cpl. Allen Striffler, a radio operator and World War II veteran, once assigned to 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, and former Cpl. Joe Lisi, a radio operator and retired New York City Police Department captain from Manhattan's 17th Precinct, were invited to dine with PMO by Maj. Pietro P. Scarselli, PMO commanding officer.

Striffler, a veteran of campaigns in the Marianas Islands, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima, and Lisi, a Marine and police officer turned actor, both addressed the mess, citing how they were proud to be Marines and honored to be sitting with the PMO Marines that evening.

"Not only is it an absolute honor to be in their presence, but to see the passion and love for the Corps burning so strong in them brings a whole new meaning to 'once a Marine, always a Marine,'" said Scarselli.

Striffler and Lisi both currently serve on an advisory board for Marine Corps Recruiting Station New York and the Marine Corps Public Affairs Office in New York City.

Look for the full story in next Wednesday's edition of the Observation Post.

Fund drive helps NMCRS give back to service members

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society kicked off their annual fund drive March 31 to run until May 2.

During the month-long drive, NMCRS will be working alongside active duty Marines and sailors to encourage Combat Center personnel to donate money to the program.

"The society is allowed one authorized fund drive per year," said Raymond Caldwell, director of NMCRS. "Our purpose of the drive is to get 100 percent contact aboard the base. We want to reach every military member and ensure they are knowledgeable of the help they can receive."

Last year, the Combat Center raised more than \$93,000 for the NMCRS fund drive. In turn, the relief society gave out \$600,000 in grants and interest-free loans to Marines, sailors and their families.

"The money the relief society gets in donations go directly back to people who need it," said Christee Mainz, NMCRS assistant and Combat Casualty Coordinator. "The more money we get, the more people we can help."

According to the All Navy Message 017/08, Marines and sailors have relied on the NMCRS whenever they have suffered an unexpected financial emergency. The society was founded to provide prompt

and effective solutions to temporary financial problems through of grants and interest-free loans.

The ALNAV highlights two newly implemented programs created to assist families of service members.

To implement the program set in the ALNAV, the NMCRS hired eight extra full-time visiting nurses to assist families dealing with combat casualty issues. These qualified nurses provide long-term case management for special case clients.

The nurses visit face-to-face with wounded Marines, sailors and their family members who are being treated in military medical facilities, and then remain in close personal contact with the service member after their discharge.

After a trial period at eight different military installations, NMCRS expanded the Quick Assist Loan program throughout all their offices around the world.

The QAL is intended for first-time clients who normally do not have financial problems but suffer a one-time shortfall of \$300 or less.

The local NMCRS will issue grants or interest-free loans to Marines and sailors with verified needs.

Caldwell said NMCRS will help service members who have difficulty paying for housing, food, clothing or utilities; medical or dental expenses; vehicle or transportation expenses; or family emergencies.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

A volunteer is interviewed before being able to help the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society kicked off their annual fund drive March 31 to run until May 2. During the month-long drive, NMCRS will be working alongside active duty Marines and sailors to encourage Combat Center personnel to donate money to the program.

If a service member requires money for a problem outside the normal category, he may request a loan from NMCRS, which will take the request to the NMCRS Headquarters. Officials there will ensure it is a verified need before approving the loan.

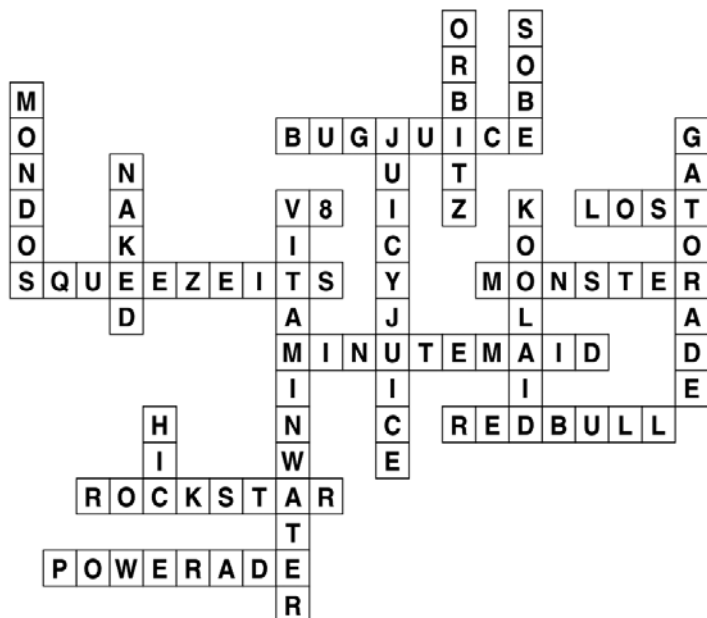
NMCRS also helps bring family members to the bedside of their injured service

member by assisting with travel and lodging payments.

"Our goal is to help Marines and sailors going through financial hardships," said Caldwell. "We hope to help them become self-sustained so they can live within their means and be financially stable."

For more information, visit the NMCRS Web site at www.NMCRS.org.

SOLUTIONS



Employee Spotlight



Employee: Manuel Rocha

Organization: Food Service Section

Job title: Assistant Contracting Officer Representative

Job Duties: Assistant Contracting Officer Representative for food service sections in Twentynine Palms to ensure mess hall civilian contractors follow their duties.

Hometown: San Jose, Calif.

Hobbies: Cooking and running

What I like most about my job: Ensure all the military that eat at both mess halls get a nutritious meal at all times.

Significant achievements since aboard MCAGCC: Receiving a new job title.

Any military services: 26 years in the Marine Corps.

Time employed at MCAGCC: June 2004 to present.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

MOTOR HOME FOR SALE 1991 PACE ARROW. 35 ft. class A. 460 Ford/Oshkosh many extras. 61,000 miles. \$19,500. OBO. Call Jon at 361-5777. 3/31/08

FIVE 275/70R18 TIRES from 2007 F350 4x4. 12,400 miles, great shape, plug in the tread of one. Set of 5 for \$250 OBO. Call (760)799-3045. 3/12/08

2004 FORD F-250 4X4. Many extras, lift, 38" tires, 20" rims. Call (760) 220-0749. 3/12/08

STEPS FROM '07 F350 SUPER CAB 4X4: Factory chrome steps that drop down 6". Removed when new. Fit F250/350 from 1999-2008 and include brackets and bolts. \$250 for everything. (760)799-3045 3/12/08

NEW BRAKE ROTORS, FRONT. Brembo part# 25358. Lexus ES300 92-01. Toyota: Avalon 95-04; Camry V6 92-01; Camry 4-cyl 00-06; Sienna 98-03; Solara 99-03. \$35ea/\$60 both. Call (760) 362-8033 or E-mail jch99@gmail.com 3/12/08

2006 MUSTANG V-8 304 GT. Black convertible. Power everything. 6 disc CD. 12,000 miles. Excellent condition. Ryan (760) 774-0166. 3/12/08

2001 BUICK LA SABRE. One owner, well maintained. Under 40K miles. \$8,000. fully loaded. Leather. Call (760) 366-8606. 3/12/08

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

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

MISC.

FIVE KITTENS READY FOR A NICE FRIENDLY HOME 7 weeks old, 1 light orange, 1 dark orange, 1 light brown, 1 mostly grey with a little white, 1 mostly white with a little grey. Any-one interested please call 805-8674. 4/9/08

FREE TO GOOD HOME 2 YEAR OLD NEUTERED AKC YELLOW LAB. Male references requested. Affectionate and housebroken. 880-1773 during evenings. 4-2-08

18 X 33 ABOVE GROUND SWIMMING POOL w/ liner/ladder. Free for the taking. Call (760) 285-1603 3/26/08

PATIO FURNITURE. 6 chairs w/table and 2 chairs w/side table. \$100 takes All. (760) 285-1603 3-26-08

2 GOLDEN RETRIEVERS. Free to good home: 3 yrs old each. Registered, neutered. Never been apart, love kids! Call (760) 285-1603 3/26/08

FREE 50 GALLON FISH TANK WITH TWO FISH. My office space is shrinking, and the wife won't have it in the house. Call (760) 401-3752. 3/26/08

PUMP FOR ABOVE GROUND SWIMMING POOL. \$100. Call (760) 285-1603 3/26/08

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.

Marriage - Before or After Deployment

FROM
LIFELINES.USMC.MIL

Deciding to get married is one of the most important decisions a couple will make together. If one or both of you are facing deployment, you may feel pressure to get married right away, before you are separated. It is never a good idea to rush into a marriage. If your relationship is strong, it will survive a deployment. If your relationship isn't healthy and happy to begin with, getting married won't make it better; it will only make matters more complicated.

Before making the decision to get married, take an honest look at yourselves alone and as a couple and talk together about how you see your future. You may want to meet with a chaplain or respected adviser to discuss your thoughts and your plans.

Reasons you may consider before getting married

There are many reasons a couple may want to get married. The trick is to recognize which ones are the right reasons, and which ones are not reason

enough to make a lifelong commitment. Marriage may be right for you if

- You can imagine yourself together far into the future.
- You share the same basic values.
- You both feel the same way about having children and agree on how to raise them.
- You feel your partner brings out the best in you, and your partner feels you bring out the best in him or her.
- You respect and appreciate your partner.
- You communicate well with one another.

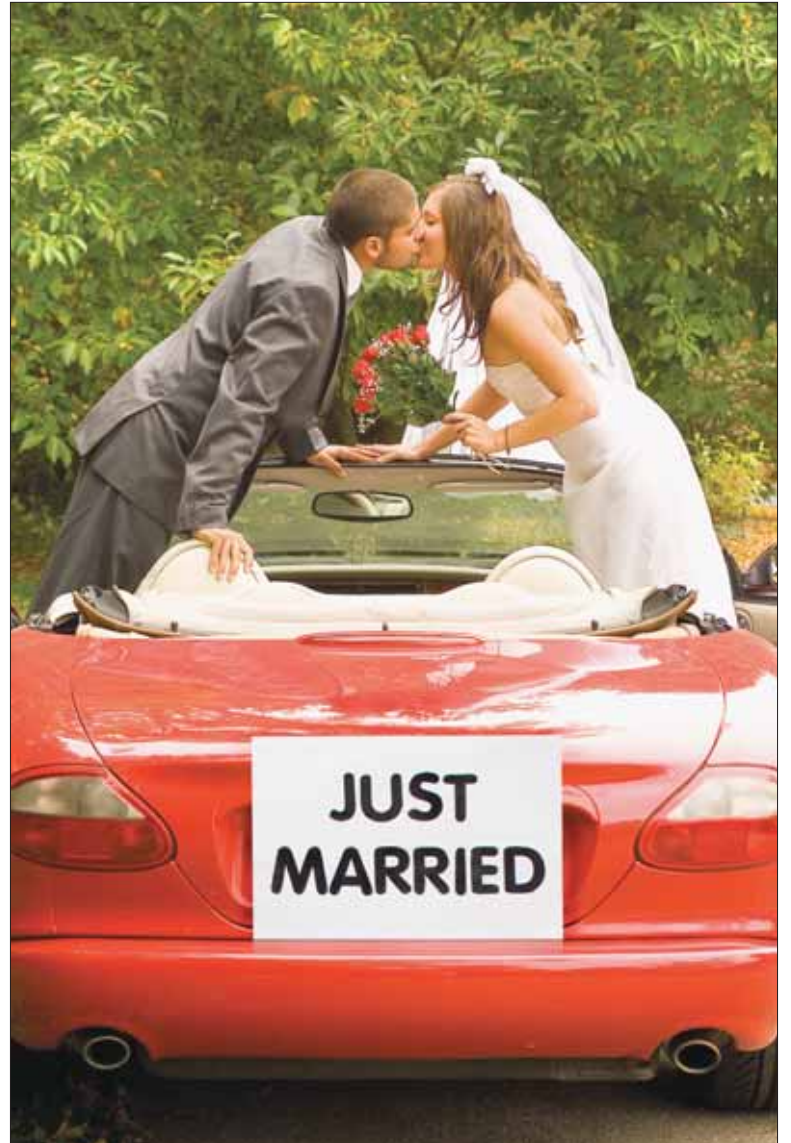
You should think twice about committing yourself to another person if:

- You are afraid your relationship won't endure deployment. If it won't endure separation, it probably won't last a lifetime.
- You want your significant other to be eligible for military benefits; health care, housing, commissary and exchange - by itself it is not reason enough to enter into a legally binding contract of marriage.
- You think marriage will

“change” the other person. Marriage won't change anything. It may make matters worse by raising expectations for each of you.

Marriage is a commitment that should not be rushed into. It's always best to hold off until you or your partner returns from a deployment. Then, take an honest look at yourself, your relationship, and what each of you expects from a marriage before deciding whether to get married. Talk with your chaplain or other trusted adviser. If available, attend premarital classes through your community services center. If you go into marriage prepared for the future, you are likely to enjoy a strong and healthy relationship that will last a lifetime.

This article was written with the help of Mary Craig, Marine Corps Family Team Building Program Section Head; Air Force Chaplain Robert Roffman, Lackland AFB, Permanent Party Branch; and Navy Chaplain Winston Shearin, Head, Plans, Logistics and Facilities Branch.



COURTESY PHOTO

Marriage before or after deployment, can create big challenges. Some may want to think twice before committing.

• SPRING •

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