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MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

JUNE 18, 2008

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 51 ISSUE 25



5 Marines learn to fight in every "climb" and place



6 K-9 program is popular but challenging



7 Reservists conduct annual training



9 Youth and Development Center celebrates Father's Day

This Day in Marine Corps History -June 15, 1944-

After Naval gunfire and carrier air strikes, the V Amphibious Corps assaulted Saipan, Marianas Islands. By nightfall, Marine Divisions had established a beachhead.

Commander parts with Tanks, new C.O. rolls in

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Maj. Lee M. Rush relinquished command of 1st Tank Battalion to Lt. Col. Thomas J. Gordon in a change-of command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

Rush, who served as 1st Tanks' executive officer before becoming the battalion in December, will be the new commanding officer for Recruiting Station Springfield, Mass.

Rush joined the Corps after graduating from the State University College of New York and attended boot camp at Marines Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, S.C., January 1995.

His first duty assigned was as tank platoon commander of 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, from 1996 to 1999.

Following his duty as commanding officer of the Armor Officer Basic Course and commanding officer of the Marine Training Company, Marine Corps Detachment in Fort Knox, Ky., from 1999 to 2002, he was assigned to 8th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, as Inspector-



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Maj. Lee M. Rush exchanges the colors with Lt. Col. Thomas J. Gordon during a change-of-command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

Instructor of Bravo Company, Syracuse, N.Y., from 2004 to 2006.

Sgt. Maj. Conrad E. Potts, battalion sergeant major, said he was honored to work with a leader like

Rush who has an intimate background in recent historical battles and who leads from the front.

"Maj. Rush is a phenomenal leader," he said. "He is going to be

one of the premier leaders in the Marine Corps with his wisdom and knowledge of the MAGTFTC

See COMMAND, A14

2/7 families move miles for deployed heroes



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Erica McNicoll, wife of 1st Lt. Michael McNicoll, platoon commander with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, participates in the "I Ran to Afghanistan" program with her twin daughters, Ashley and Kaitlyn, to show support to her husband and other 2/7 Marines and sailors during their deployment scheduled to end this fall.

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Key Volunteer Network recently organized a new program specifically for families, loved ones and supporters of 2/7 Marines and sailors, who have been deployed to Afghanistan since April.

The program, called "I Ran to Afghanistan", is built on the concept of bringing support and healthy lifestyles to 2/7 family members through a simple mathematical equation.

If 100 people run 11 miles every week for seven months, the added distance among all participants would be equivalent to the distance from the Combat Center to Afghanistan.

Any spouse, parent, child, sibling, or loved one of a 2/7 Marine or corpsman may participate in the program.

The program, which started May 1 and runs through Nov. 16, was created by Carolyn Schroder, the wife of 1st Lt. Brandon J.

See 2/7, A12

MWTC Marines 'hoof it' with beasts of burden

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. – In a mountainous environment, using trucks to move supplies may become challenging, or even impossible.

The Mountain Warfare Training Center is providing the Marine Corps with rare and valuable instruction on how to use alternatives to vehicles for transporting

equipment in rigorous terrain: pack animals.

"Our mission here is to give Marines an alternative source to carry gear and supplies to support their units in a mountainous environment," said Sgt. Robert Frost, MWTC pack master and stables maintainer. "Mountains experience a lot of moisture, especially in the winter months. Mules and horses can make it across muddy terrain with little difficulty, whereas a vehicle would sink up to its

See MULES, A15



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Sgt. Graham W. Golden, Mountain Warfare Training Center mountain warfare instructor, leads a string of pack animals down a mountain behind the MWTC May 30. The pack masters take the animals out regularly for exercise and conditioning in order to keep them healthy. This exercise was in preparation for the Animal Packers Course scheduled for 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

Keeping Your Head Above Water

APRIL PHILLIPS

NAVAL SAFETY CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Whether you're planning to surf the ocean waves, jump in a lake, float down a lazy stream, or just cool off in a kiddie pool, chances are good your off-duty activities will lead you to a body of water sometime this summer. Swimming is good exercise and a great way to cool off on a hot afternoon. However, each year, sailors and Marines are injured or killed in the water.

Last year, a second class petty officer was body surfing in Hawaii, having a great time being propelled along the breakers. However, he wasn't paying attention to obvious danger signs as the swells increased. It only took one big wave to sweep him into shallow water and crash him into the sand. He landed on his head and received a compound fracture to his neck. The rest of his summer was spent in the hospital and on limited duty. The neck brace didn't do anything to set off his tan.

He was better off than the two sailors and one Marine who drowned during the 2007 Critical Days of Summer.

"Swimming is the leading recreational killer of military personnel," said John Williams, a recreation and off-duty safety manager at the Naval Safety Center. "In total off-duty mishaps, it's only surpassed by traffic accidents."

Swimmers who aren't aware of the water depth or underwater hazards are at added risk. While all the hazards of swimming can't be eliminated, there are smart decisions sailors, Marines, and family members can make to minimize the danger. One of the most important, Williams said, is to always swim with a buddy.

"Don't ever go to the beach by yourself and always be familiarized with the area you're going to," he said.

He recommended taking advantage of the information Morale, Welfare and Recreation has to offer.

"MWR has specifics on the beaches within a base complex and within the local area. They'll also know any beaches that are off-limits due to excessive dangers."

If, in spite of planning and precaution, you find yourself in a dangerous rip current, keeping a cool head can save the day.

"Stop struggling!" Williams said. "Swim parallel to the shore until the tug dissipates. If you try to swim against the rip tide, you are swimming against nature. You will get tired and drown."

Another important rule is never to swim under the influence of alcohol. "Most of the time, alcohol is a contributing factor in drowning mishaps," Williams said.

A trip to the ocean, lake or community pool is meant to be a good time and there are many resources available to help swimmers stay safe in the water.

The American Red Cross has an excellent Web site covering a wide variety of water-safety tips. View their Web site at: <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/healthtips/safetywater.html>

The Naval Safety Center website has additional safety information on a variety of water activities at: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/toolbox/swimming/default.htm>.



COURTESY PHOTO

Taking safety precautions while swimming or taking part in any water activity can help reduce the number of mishaps during the "101 Critical Days of Summer."

Employee Spotlight



Employee: Kelly J. Cook

Employer: Training and Education Command

Job title: Sergeants Course Director of Academics

Hometown: Sioux City, Iowa

Hobbies: Camping, fishing, reading, and going to the beach

What do you like most about your job: The people that work here at the Sergeants Course

Significant achievements: none

Military service: none, wife of retired Chief Warrant Officer Jess Cook

Time on base: 6 months

SILENT MOVIES

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18						19				
20				21						22				
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				59			60	61						
62	63	64					65					66		
67							68					69		
70							71					72		

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ACROSS

- 1. Undercover org.
- 4. Spills the beans
- 9. High-IQ crowd
- 14. Herbert of Pink Panther movies
- 15. Chowder server
- 16. Accepted truth
- 17. Suffix with cannon
- 18. Biblical witch's home
- 19. Manhattan's Little _____
- 20. "The Quiet American" actor
- 23. Topple in a joust
- 24. Like some blocks
- 28. One of equal rank
- 29. Steward's work place
- 32. Rock's ZZ Top, for one
- 33. Figs.
- 36. Each, slangily

DOWN

- 38. Verb with thou
- 39. "In the Still of the Night" actress
- 42. Taking after
- 44. Fit of pique
- 45. Stuff in a pit
- 46. Source of nectar
- 48. _____ off (irate)
- 50. Fateful time for Caesar
- 54. Catch in a net
- 56. Bubble gum cost, once
- 59. "Hush" actress
- 62. "Olympia" painter
- 65. Up to
- 66. Cookie container
- 67. Put in a seat
- 68. Started a hole
- 69. Sinus-specializing MD
- 70. "Same here!"
- 71. Raid alert
- 72. Paris's Pont _____Arts

DOWN

- 1. Button one's lip
- 2. Cut application
- 3. "Cocoon" Oscar winner Don
- 4. Make indistinct
- 5. Kegling sites
- 6. Discombobulates
- 7. Allied group
- 8. Blood fluids
- 9. The only one-syllable state
- 10. Full range
- 11. Actress Vardalos
- 12. Costa del _____
- 13. Singer Winehouse
- 21. Mezzo-soprano Marilyn
- 22. Japanese car, e.g.
- 25. Drainpipe part
- 26. Go public with
- 27. Stickball field, maybe
- 30. Headlong action
- 31. _____ for (choose)
- 34. Surgery ctrs.

- 35. Moogs et al.
- 37. Shade of green
- 39. "Just the facts,____"
- 40. Crock
- 41. Susan Lucci role
- 42. Pal of Tarzan
- 43. Grid greatDawson
- 47. Throw out
- 49. Tamper with
- 51. In need of body work
- 52. Wankel, for one
- 53. Artery wideners
- 55. Brief tussle
- 57. Born yesterday, so to speak
- 58. Barkin or Burstyn
- 60. Brewski
- 61. Calvary letters
- 62. Pre-____ (coll. major)
- 63. Boxer portrayed by Will Smith
- 64. Bring home

[Solutions on A15]

Centerspeak

If you could meet anyone famous, who would it be and why?

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



LANCE CPL. ROBERTO REID
2ND BATTALION, 25TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Russell Simmons because he is from the same city as me and I feel he is an independent person who makes a lot of money but is constantly giving back to the community."



SGT. TERENCE BOWENS
1ST BATTALION, 3RD MARINE REGIMENT

"Michael Jordan because I am a big fan of basketball and he is one of the greatest basketball players of all time."



ROBERTA MAIXNER-AUCION
WIFE OF SGT. NATHAN AUCION WITH 3RD LIGHT ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION

"Lynn Hill because she is the first female to climb El Capitan."

OBSERVATION POST

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WED. 6/18, 6/20, 6/21 & 6/22 Palm Springs Baseball Power vs Academy Free for active military Opens: 6 p.m. \$1 beers till first pitch at 7:05 p.m. Where: Palm Springs Stadium, 1901 E. Baristo Rd. Palm Springs For more info call Baylor Nicole Love at 864-6278 or visit http://www.PSPBB.com	WED. 6/18 Drama Queens Film Series "NOW, VOYAGER" Time: 7 p.m. Where: Palm Canyon Theatre 538 N. Palm Canyon Dr. at Allejo Palm Springs Free to the public, For more info visit http://www.psfilmfest.org Or call 322-2930.	THURS. 6/19 Summer Movies in Luckie Park "TRANSFORMERS" Time: As soon as it's dark Location: Luckie Park, Grass field at north side of Racquet ball courts, Utah Trail, 29 Palms For more info call 29 Palms Recreation Dept. 367-7562	THURS. 6/19 East Coast Swing Dance Class Time: 7 p.m. Where: Starstruck Dance Studio, 55816 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley For more info call Chris 365-0475	FRI. 6/20 Ritmo Loco Jazz Time: 7:30 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's, 53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown For more info call 365-5956 or visit http://www.pappyandharriets.com
SAT. 6/21 Discover India Time: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Hi-Desert Nature Museum 57090 29 Palms Hwy Yucca Valley For more info call 369-7212 Or visit http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org	SAT. 6/21 Morongo Basin Cultural Arts Council Art Village Marketplace Time: 4-8 p.m. Behind A Roadside Attraction Gallery, Indian Cove area 69197 Hwy. 62, 29 Palms For more info call Christine Delmonico 668-3337	SAT. 6/21 Yucca Valley Summer Music Festival "FOLK COLLECTION" Folk music Time: 7 p.m. Where: Yucca Valley Community Center Complex 57090 29 Palms Hwy Yucca Valley CA 92284 For more info call 369-7211	SAT. 6/21 Alejandra Guzman at Morongo Casino Time: 8 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For tickets or info call 800-252-4499 or visit http://www.morongo.com .	SUN. 6/22 "The Trickeries of Scapin" A French Farce by Moliere Time: 2:30 p.m. Where: Theatre 29, 73637 Sullivan Rd., 29 Palms For more info call 361-4151 Or visit http://www.theatre29.com

Water Aerobics offers cool alternative to running laps

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Don't let the summer heat slow down your physical training. Water aerobic classes are open to all base personnel every Monday and Wednesday at 5 p.m. at the training tank located between 4th and 5th streets, next to Sunset Cinema.

One may wonder, what does water PT offer that standard cardio workouts do not? Yvonne Warfield, water aerobics coordinator who has been leading these classes for seven years, said the greatest difference between the two is the amount of impact each has on a person's body.

Water exercises regulate body temperatures better and offer a significantly lower-impact alternative for weight loss, muscle toning and cardiovascular expansion, according to a health article on the benefits of swimming on Web MD, or <http://www.webmd.com>.

When submerged in waist-



CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Participants of the Combat Center's water aerobic class follow the instructions of Yvonne Warfield, class coordinator, at the Combat Center training tank. Classes have been held at the Combat Center every summer since 2000.

deep water, a person reduces their weight by 50 percent, according to the Web site. Participants in the Combat Center's aerobics classes use the water and an assortment of weights and equipment to regulate resistance.

"There is no swimming involved in the class," said Warfield. "If you are not a swimmer or you are afraid of the water, you can still enjoy the class." Water aerobics is especially helpful to those in physical therapy, said Warfield, a North Ridge, Calif., native.

The Robert E. Bush Naval

Hospital plans to have its own water aerobics program aimed specifically at those recovering from injuries or surgeries, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Zackary Boles, physical therapy technician at the Naval hospital.

"We have not started the class yet, but we hope to start it next week," said Boles, a Decatur, Ill. native. "They really benefit from aquatics because of the resistance training."

Staff Sgt. Bradley J. Stull, aquatics staff noncommissioned officer at the training tank, said he has personally seen the benefits of swimming.

After swimming for a few weeks, Stull said he noticed considerable improvement in his shoulder and back muscles.

"It's another way to increase

your stamina," he said. "It works all your smaller muscle groups."

Workouts in water are also ideal for expecting mothers, said Warfield.

"Last summer I had eight pregnant ladies in my class at once," she said.

She added pregnant women find the class to be very favorable in summer time because it keeps their core temperatures cooler than if they were exercising in the gym or outside, said Warfield.

There are also opportunities for children to burn energy in water classes.

A program called "Learn to Swim" is available for children as young as 12 months and is held at the family pool in building 697, said Stull.

If you are frustrated with the heat but want that summer physique back, slap on some sun block and hit the pool.

To learn more about water aerobic classes, call Warfield at 830-3381. For pool hours of operation, call 830-6212.



CPL. REGINA N. ORTIZ

Yvonne Warfield, water aerobics coordinator, gives instructions to participants during a class at the Combat Center training tank.

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Protective Services Career Fair helps Marines find jobs after Corps

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Career Resource Office and Marine Corps Community Services invites those who have access to the Combat Center to visit the base's Community Center for the a Law Enforcement Protective Services Career Fair today from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The career fair will offer information to Marines, sailors, family members and base employees who are looking for a job in law enforcement or security services.

More than 25 agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Nuclear Security Administration Department of Energy along with police and sheriffs departments throughout California, Nevada and Arizona will all be available to provide information or answer questions at the fair.

The Human Resource Office will also be attending the career fair to inform participants about the wide range of civil service jobs available aboard the Combat Center.

"We have people coming in from all over," said Virginia Sulick, the career resource manager. "It is a great opportunity. No job search is ever wasted even if they aren't looking for a job at this moment. It gives them that experience of learn-

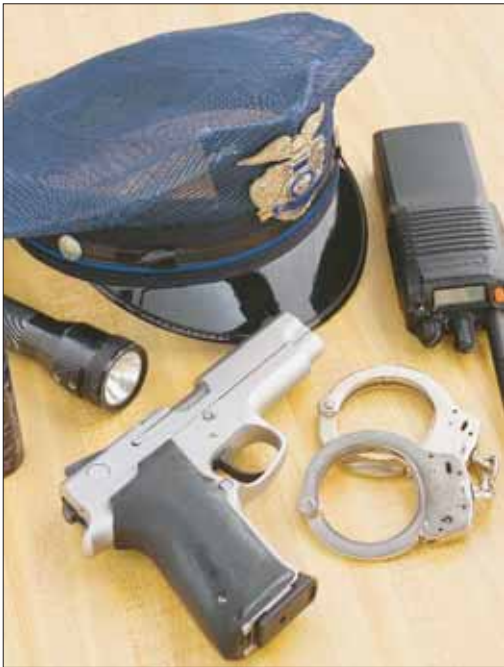
ing how to talk to an employer and how an interview is conducted."

Skills Marines and sailors gain from their constant training and the leadership traits that were instilled into them in boot camp make them one of the best candidates for the protective services and law enforcement agencies, said Dennis Warren, the Transitioning Assistance Program coordinator. Warren continued to say there is a strong demand for military personnel to join protective services agencies, "Agencies as far away as Albuquerque, New Mexico, have seen the high quality of the Marine Corps and the Marines that are transitioning out," he said. "That's why they are willing to travel so far to come to this fair."

Every service member transitions out of the military sooner or later and it is a good idea to have a plan for when they get out, continued Warren, a Wichita, Kan., native.

The Career Resource Office encourages everybody attending the career fair to bring copies of their resumé to give to agencies they come across during the fair. They recommend to "dress for success" or wear the uniform of the day.

The Law Enforcement Protective Services Career Fair will give service members an opportunity to seek employment where they can excel at their job by using skills they honed while in the mili-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Career Resource Office and Marine Corps Community Services will host a Law Enforcement Protective Services Career Fair today from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

tary, said Sulick.

For more information about the fair or a complete list of expected agencies, call 830-7225.



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HOT TOPICS

RUN FOR THE FALLEN 2008

Run for the Fallen is a cross-country memorial run commemorating the American service member. Beginning Sunday, a dedicated team of eight runners will run one mile for every service member killed in Iraq since the war began. Throughout this cross-country run, an American flag and a personalized sign card will be placed at the end of every mile in remembrance of each service member. Run for the Fallen is committed to the men and women that benefit from our run. The run is scheduled to start near Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif., and will be coming through the Twentynine Palms area roughly June 21. If you're interested in running with the group or showing your support more information can be found at www.runforthe-fallen.org or contact Jon Bellona at (315) 404-2239 or jon@runforthe-fallen.org.

SKY'S THE LIMIT NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Sky's the Limit is beginning ground breaking soon for the establishment of an observatory in the city of Twentynine Palms. They need the assistance of eight Marines to assist the handicapped on the nature trail walk on June 21 and 22. The time period each day that they need assistance will be from 7 to 11 a.m. The point of contact is Ms. Jerri Hagman at 367-0030.

U.S. CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR ALL JUNE 26

The Legal Assistance Office, building 1514, assists all active duty service members with their naturalization process. For family members, a military outreach is scheduled for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to assist family members with naturalization, permanent resident status, VISAs, etc. on June 26. The immigration officers will assist with general information on all types of immigration issues, petitions and applications, completing immigration forms, checking status of cases, and answering questions. Please call the LAO at 830-6111 to schedule an appointment with an immigration officer or for more information.

SUMMER HOSPICE VOLUNTEER TRAINING

In small ways and in just a few hours a month, you can make a difference! You can offer practical help and emotional support to terminally ill people and their families. Summer classes to become a volunteer for the Hospice of Morongo Basin will be held Wednesday and Friday mornings, June 18 through July 2, and Tuesday July 8. Call 366-1308 for information or to register. There is no charge for training.

What you need to know to ease the PCS strain

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Family Housing

- A minimum of 30 days advanced notice is required to vacate quarters.
- When filing your intent to vacate, provide a forwarding address and telephone number.
- If this information is not available, list your home of record address and next of kin telephone number.
- When you file your intent to vacate you will need to set an appointment for a pre-vacate inspection. This appointment will provide the necessary information to prepare you to stand your final inspection. The inspector will come to your property and detail all the cleaning requirements for your final inspection.
- This appointment usually takes approximately 30 minutes.
- You may set your final inspection with a copy of your orders when you file your intent to vacate or you may return at a later date to set your final inspection.
- Ensure that you allow ample time when scheduling your final inspection to facilitate other responsibilities such as moving house hold goods and proper cleaning.

- Final inspection dates cannot be changed except in emergency situations.
 - Regardless of who you have clean your quarters the service member is ultimately responsible and will be required to stand the final inspection. Should circumstance preclude the service member from standing the final inspection a properly executed power of attorney given to an adult will be accepted with the understanding that the service member is ultimately responsible.
 - For information regarding housing at the next duty station, the service member should refer to the installations Web site.
- Installation Personnel Administration Center**
- Prior to starting their Permanent Change of Station process at IPAC's PCS orders section, Marines must have the following:
 - PCS Data Sheet
 - PCS Data Sheet completely filled out by their chain of command
 - Officers only require their battalion's commanding officer's signature on the PCS Data Sheet
 - Web Orders
 - Checkout Sheet from their S-1
 - Once the Marine receives the check out sheet, S-1 should put Marines on the Electronic Check

- Out Sheet.
- S-1 should provide a point of contact and a copy of the ECOS page, so Marines can contact all the places the need to be visited.
 - Once the data sheet is completed, Marines should then immediately report to IPAC's PCS orders section in Building 1450.
 - For further information, contact Cpl. Laomise Lapaix or Cpl. Jason H. Czuj IPAC NCO Orders Section at 830-1818 ext. 119.
- Traffic Management Office**
- Joint Federal Travel Regulations/Joint travel Regulations allow for travel reimbursement when receipts are provided for lodging expenses regardless of amount and for all individual expenditures of \$75 or more.
 - This includes but is not limited to any lodging, rental cars, and transportation expenses reserved through the Defense Travel System, even when paid using the traveler's Government Travel Charge Card. For travel using DTS, these receipts are faxed or scanned, and attached to the traveler's electronic voucher. For travel paid outside DTS, these receipts are attached to the paper travel voucher and submitted to the office responsible for the travel payment.
 - A valid receipt is a written acknowledgment that the vendor



COURTESY PHOTO

Regulations allow for travel reimbursement when receipts are provided including any lodging, rental cars and transportation expenses.

- has been paid for providing goods and services.
- It must show:
 - The name of the company providing the goods and services
 - When the specific services were rendered or articles purchased
 - The unit price
 - The final amount due and that it was paid
 - Examples of invalid receipts
 - Hotel bills
 - Rental car contracts
 - Itineraries/invoices
 - If no receipt is available
 - If you forget to get a receipt or lose a receipt, you should first contact the service provider to get

- a replacement. Joint Federal Travel Regulations do allow travelers to provide a statement when receipts are lost or impractical to obtain. This statement must include an explanation of the circumstances, and contain all of the information that would be included in a valid receipt, such as:
- Service providers name and address
 - Date(s) or service
 - Itemized costs and
 - Total amount paid
 - For lodging costs, the statement must also include whether or not another person shared the room (and the sharer's status as an official traveler or not).

2/1 learns to fight in every 'climb' and place

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. – The Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., completed the final portion of their Marine Air

Ground Task Force Operations training at the Mountain Warfare Training Center June 14. During the week-long course, 2/1 was trained on how to traverse the rugged terrain of the mountains effectively as a unit for larger-scale operations. "This course teaches the Marines to move based on their maps," said Sgt. Bradley Kramer, an MWTC School of Mountain

Warfare instructor. "Learning to move through this type of environment is really the bread and butter of this course." The instructors refreshed the Marines in land navigation techniques, but also taught them how to use the terrain as their guide. The 25-year-old, Kramer, explained it as understanding everything you see on a map. "All of the lines mean something," he said. "If you see a bunch of contour lines close together, it doesn't just mean there is a steep slope. It could very well mean the route is impassable and you have to find another way." Select Marines from the battalion also attended satellite courses, which would also help them travel more easily in a mountainous landscape. Several of the Marines attended the Tactical Rope Suspension Technician Course, which focused mostly on rappelling techniques.

Approximately 28 of the Marines learned logistical skills indigenous to mountainous environments in the Animal Packers Course. The instructors there taught them how to properly use pack animals to carry loads of supplies, equipment and personnel in the absence of vehicles. The battalion practiced moving through a mountainous environment June 14. This last training day before the MAGTF Operations Course final exercise focused on unit movement over rugged terrain. Each company in the battalion departed MWTC Lower Base Camp early that morning, carrying their weapons and full packs. The last company, Echo Company, left at approximately 8:30 a.m., falling into a single file line. At first, everything progressed as planned. The pace was slow and the small hills in and around

Lower Base Camp failed to slow the Marines down. Their objective, a point known as Sardine Rock, was approximately eight kilometers away. The trail twisted deeper into the mountains, gaining elevation as it continued winding up the slopes. It crossed several seasonal streams of melted snow, and weaved around trees and rocks. Echo Company stopped to rest after several hours, just before reaching their first obstacle. The slope of the trail rose sharply and was covered by gravel, which would make conquering their first challenge a daunting task. The path up the slope was nearly vertical, and the Marines and sailors struggled to scale such an incline under the weight of their packs and gear. The gravel slipped and shifted beneath their feet, but they eventually made

See MOUNTAIN, A14



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Staff Sgt. Erick P. Bruno, an Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment platoon sergeant, climbs a small, rocky slope during the Marine Air Ground Task Force Operations Course at the Mountain Warfare Training Center Saturday.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Marines from Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, battle their way uphill during the Marine Air Ground Task Force Operations Course at the Mountain Warfare Training Center Saturday.

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K-9: Only hard dawg MPs need apply

LANCE CPL. MONICA
C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A military working dog handler is considered one of the most rewarding military occupational specialties in the Marine Corps, by those assigned to the Combat Center's K-9 unit.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Cpl. Samuel Corns, narcotics noncommissioned officer, provokes Little Rex to attack him during a training session at the K-9 kennels Thursday.

Dog handlers and their canines have the responsibility of protecting a wide range of people, including the President of the United States, fellow Marines and military installations and community members that surround the base. Along with their responsibility of

protecting these people, they have the opportunity to travel around the world with their dog while doing their job.

However, Marines can't just pick the K-9 military occupational specialty, go to school and come back with a new job. In fact, it still takes a lot of dedication and passion to become a dog handler for the Marine Corps, said Staff Sgt. James Baker, K-9 unit kennel master.

There are two different ways to become a working dog handler for the Marine Corps. All Marines who are chosen already are, or are training to become military policemen. Even with that, a common saying for the Marines in the Combat Center's K-9 kennel is, "You can't choose K-9, K-9 chooses you."

The first way is as a student during Military Police School. Instructors choose the top five students who have the highest academic and physical fitness test scores and best off-duty conduct to be given the opportunity to become a dog handler.

The second way for a Marine to become a working dog handler is to be an

outstanding military policeman at your duty station while showing interest in becoming a dog handler. Every MP at the Combat Center that has proven themselves as a dedicated worker who wants to be a dog handler is put on a board, which is a review of information and personal selection process, and interviewed by the kennel master and the Provost Marshal's Office operations chief. After the interested Marine has been interviewed, he is then chosen to attend military working dog school at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

While at the K-9 school and even afterward Marines must learn everything there is to know about training and taking care of a dog before they are assigned one of their own. New dog handlers must attend every utilization call, which is any type of request or emergency that asks the K-9 unit for assistance. The new dog handlers must watch and learn from his fellow Marines during these calls before he is certified to respond to calls himself.

The K-9 unit here at the Combat Center is made up of 12 dogs and 11 Marines.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Timothy Culhane, a Provost Marshal's Office K-9 handler, leads his trustworthy canine, Little Rex, through the obstacle course for some exercise at the K-9 kennels Thursday.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Timothy Culhane, Provost Marshal's Office K-9 handler, cuddles with his dog, Little Rex.

The dogs are a mixed group of German shepherds and Belgian Malinois' that are trained to sniff out narcotics and explosives, and tackle and detain an eluding individual within seconds.

The unit is broken down into five sections

where every Marine and his dog must excel. The sections are Installation Security, Department of State, Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, Education and

See K-9, A9



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ESD gets an extra hand as reservists conduct annual training

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marine reservists with 4th Maintenance Battalion, based out of Charlotte, N.C., and 4th Supply Battalion, based out of Newport News, Va., traveled to the Combat Center from around the United States to conduct their annual two-week training at

Exercise Support Division June 1 through Saturday. The 25 Marines took part in the training evolution dubbed Enhanced Equipment Allowance Pool, Personnel Temporary Augmentation Program III, where they worked with civilians and Marines from ESD, learning and refreshing skills in their respective military occupational specialty. “It is a great opportunity to re-

affiliate myself with other Marines in my MOS,” said Sgt. Daniel Williams, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the reservists. The maintenance and supply Marines worked with different elements of ESD alongside active duty Marines with the same MOS to ensure they received proper training. The training gave Marines a chance to perform their assigned job while learning new skills and mechanical techniques from fellow Marines, said Williams, a Sacramento, Calif., native. “This is the best training they will get all year round,” said Staff Sgt. Byron Lee, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the reservists. “It’s a good opportunity for Marines who dedicated their time doing what they would do if they were deployed or active duty.” 4th Maintenance Marines’ job was to assist ESD’s primary mission by conducting initial inspections and making repairs on new equipment and vehicles before they are used by Marines taking part in training or Mojave Viper, a month-long

pre-deployment training exercise. It is difficult to ensure the mechanics maintain their training when there is rarely any vehicles that need to be repaired during their regular once-a-month training throughout the year, said Lee, a San Jose, Calif., native. “The type of skills they learn here are the type of skills they would be using while deployed,” he continued. “These are skills they are expected to know.” Marines from 4th Supply will be in charge of sorting and issuing gear to Marines who are training, while keeping a record of all transactions and how much equipment is in the warehouse. “Once these Marines have a chance to deploy they will have the skills they need,” said Lee about how the training prepares the Marines to deploy. The two-week training requirement for every reservist is to ensure they are maintaining the set level of knowledge for their MOS to guarantee readiness for deployment. The reservists who worked with ESD were able to meet that

training requirement at the Combat Center because of the wide range of equipment and vehicles they trained with and the Marines and civilians from ESD they worked alongside, said Lee.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpls. Ryan Cubbage and Randall King, small arms repair technicians with 4th Maintenance Battalion, conduct an initial inspection on an M240G machine gun at Exercise Support Division June 12.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Dylan Roblins, an automotive mechanic with 4th Maintenance, puts a new side on a humvee during his two-week annual training requirement at Exercise Support Division June 12.

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Iraqis receive a second lease on life

CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 5

HADITHA, Iraq – Former Iraqi detainees are getting another shot to positively contribute to their communities.

The Haditha Iraqi Police District received 23 former detainees May 27 to be released back to their homes as soon as possible as part of the Supervised Release Program.

“It’s a great program for these men,” said IP Maj. Rajab Rowaily, an IP investigator for the National Information and Investigation Agency. “They made their mistakes and have paid their debt to society.”

The program began in January

2008, and groups of detainees have been released twice a month since. The program has acted like a parolee system for the IP.

“Most of the men released won’t do anything wrong again, but we’ll still keep an eye on everyone that is released,” said IP Maj. Munir Hamid Mahdi, the lead investigator for the Haditha IP District. “We’re giving them another chance to prove themselves because we believe they won’t make the same mistakes.”

Detainees who were selected to be released were sent back to the district where they were detained. Their families waited to greet them about a block away.

“The detainees come from Camp Bucca, and we release

them,” said Staff Sgt. Moises E. Vilca, 30, the SRP coordinator and intelligence chief for 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, from Miami. “They’re selected by how long they have been in jail.”

The release of the detainees was controlled by the IP. Marines were on hand to assist the policemen, but adopted more of an overwatch position on the activities.

“This was our first time in charge of the event,” Rajab said. “We learned how to do the job from Coalition forces, and we’ll look at the mistakes we made and make the corrections.”

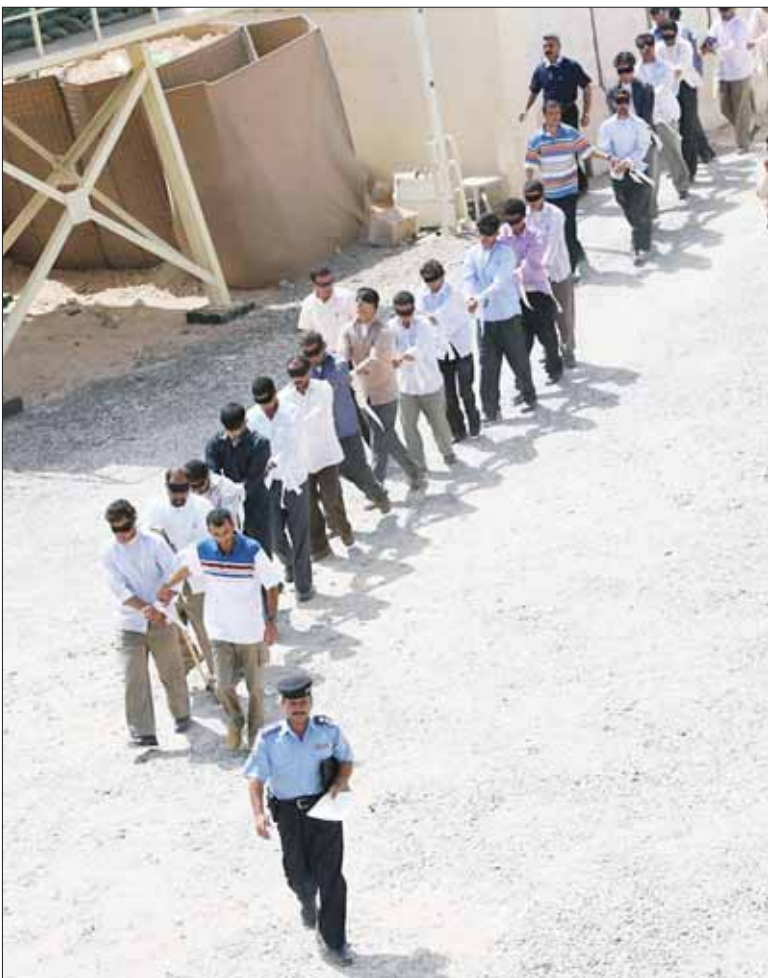
The IP closed off roads leading into the District Headquarters and made sure security was established. Detainees were off-loaded outside the building and escorted by officers into the structure to begin the next phase of the procedure.

Inside the building, the detainees being released were updated in the Biometrics Automated Toolset, which is an electronic database to help Coalition forces track detainees after they are released.

“The detainees were given an iris scan, and their new information was put into the BAT,” Vilca said. “If they didn’t have a photo in the system, then we took their photo.”

The detainees’ moods at the function were joyful. They seemed relieved that they were on the verge of heading home.

“The men being released had



CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

Iraqi Police Lt. Khamis Yaseen leads 23 detainees selected to be released from jail into the Haditha Police District building in Haditha, Iraq, May 27. Iraqi policemen were in charge of the event in Haditha for the first time. Marines from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, supervised the release.



CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

Staff Sgt. Moises E. Vilca, intelligence chief for 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, reviews information about the detainees being released with Iraqi Police Maj. Munir Hamid Mahdi (left) and IP Lt. Khamis Yaseen in Haditha, Iraq, May 27.

positive attitudes,” Rajab said. “They were happy to leave jail and go back to their normal lives.”

Although some of the people in the community were skeptical about the release program, the policemen chose to remain focused

on the way they performed their duties during the occasion.

“I think we made some small mistakes, but all the (policemen) did their job,” Munir said. “I was proud of my officers and how everything turned out.”



Golf Wine & Dine

Saturday, June 28th
5 - 8 p.m.

Desert Winds Golf Course is hosting a Golf, Wine & Dine event on Saturday, June 28th from 5 - 8 p.m., show time is at 4p.m. This event will feature a 9 hole individual handicap golfing event & will include a putting and closest to the pin competition followed by heavy hors d'oeuvres & wine tasting.

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The DWGC PGA Professional will be on hand to run a golf clinic for those interested. Cost for Golf & Food, \$30 per person Cost without Golf, \$20 per person Please sign up by Monday, June 23rd. For reservations, please call 830-6132.

Youth and development centers celebrate Father's Day

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center child development center celebrated Father's Day by hosting a breakfast for Combat Center families Friday. The breakfast, which started at 7 a.m., was held in each classroom in the Center to accommodate all families.

The breakfast, as well as the Father's Day barbecue at the Youth Center, is an annual Combat Center tradition, said Dawn Fowler, Youth Center program assistant. Staff Sgt. Steven K. Scott, motor transportation chief,

Tactical Training Exercise Control Group, said he found out about the breakfast from his wife, Sabrina. "This is a day I get to celebrate being with my daughter," said Scott, a Cove, Ark., native, about his 4-year-old daughter, Josie. "You need to cherish every one you're with because you won't always be there." After breakfast, several fathers remained at the center for a while to play and interact with their children. The Father's Day barbecue, which took place at 11:30 a.m., attracted children, Youth Center workers and parents to a smor-

gasbord of hot dogs, potato salad, fruit and chili. The barbecue was followed by an ice cream social at 2:30 p.m. Mindy Hunsinger, wife of Staff Sgt. Tyler Hunsinger, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, said she had to celebrate Father's Day a little differently this year due to her husband's deployment. "In order for my husband to get all his Father's Day stuff on time, we had to send out boxes three weeks ago," said Hunsinger, a Silverdale, Wash., native. "We had to plan way in advance. It was different for us." Cheyenne and Tyler, Hunsinger's children added homemade pictures and cards to the box before it was shipped out. Hunsinger added that family time for holidays like these should be treasured. "Take in every moment, even the small ones," she said. Regardless of where fathers are on this special day, they should remember their roles as heroes are being celebrated by loved ones near and far.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
Staff Sgt. Steven K. Scott of Tactical Training Exercise Contron Group watches his daughter, Josie, cook an "egg" for him after a Father's Day breakfast at the Child Development Center Friday.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
Children and parents at the Combat Center Youth Center enjoy a Father's Day barbecue after a Father's Day breakfast at the Child Development Center Friday.

K-9, from A6

civilian agency support. The Installation Security mission specifically deals with narcotics searches, helping battalions with searching barracks rooms during health and comfort inspections and patrolling base housing. "We're a big deterrence to crime," said Baker, "What's going to have more of an effect, an MP or an MP with a dog?" The second section is Department of State. A dog handler and his canine can be called anywhere in the world to protect the president or vice president of the United States or anyone else that holds a high federal position. "We can get called to protect anybody that the [United States] Secret Service protects," said Baker, who just had a Marine and his dog return from the Republic of Croatia after the President of the United States made a brief visit to that country. The K-9 unit also has Marines and their dogs deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom constantly. Their jobs while deployed consist of finding bombs, narcotics and inspecting during patrols. Education is one of the biggest sections for the K-9 unit. Dog handlers and their dogs are continuously performing demonstrations for Marines, children, base employees and community events. These demonstrations show how the highly trained canine can sniff out narcotics and how quickly they can take down a non-compliant individual. "It is one thing to tell them to not do drugs," said Baker about

the people who get to watch the demonstrations. "It is another thing when we show them they will get caught and this is how." The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department relies on the support of the Combat Center's K-9 unit because they do not have a K-9 unit of their own. The Marines and their canines can be called out to search for narcotics bomb threats, or other events in the local area where the sheriff's department and PMO have reasonable belief that a person has committed a crime or people are in danger of injury or death. At the end of the day, a Marine dog handler may be done with their regular duties, but their job doesn't end there. Every Marine is in charge of the dog that is assigned to them. They must ensure it is fed, cleaned and exercised daily. Their kennels must be mucked out twice a day, and in some cases more. The dogs must continue their training to guarantee they retain everything they need to know, and the Marine in charge of them is responsible for their depth of training and health. "You are responsible for an expensive dog," said Cpl. Danial Swafford, assistant kennel master and chief trainer. "This job really builds leadership, and you get to work and play with dogs all day. What can be more fun than that?" But more than the fun and pride that goes along with this unique military specialty, there is one more aspect of the job that qualifies it as rewarding by anyone's definition. "It can be considered the best work when you work with your best friend," said Swafford, "You can always depend on your dog."

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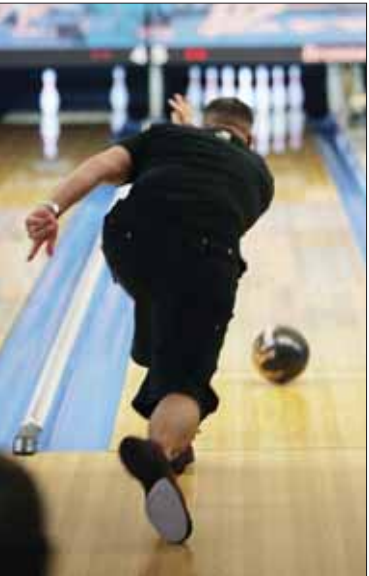
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Intramural bowling season on a roll

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Every Wednesday at the Combat Center's Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League kicks off at 3 p.m.

The league, which started March 12, consists of 20 weeks of competitive play and will end July 16, with a trophy being presented to the top two teams, said



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
Roy J. Perrin, career planner with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, watches his ball speed down the center of the lane during the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League at Sandy Hill Lanes June 11.

Randy S. Husted, sport specialist, Marine Corps Community Services.

Husted said, each team can have a maximum of six bowlers, but most have a minimum of four bowlers to compete in the handicapped league.

Handicapping is an equalizing tool which allows a team or individual to compete against others of greater or lesser skill on an equal level playing field.

Todd Makovsky, manager, Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center, said the league is competitive but not as competitive as the commanding general's basketball or softball leagues.

"Some are bowling just for the fun, some are competitive," said Makovsky.

He said unlike the softball and basketball leagues offered here at the Combat Center there is not a lot of yelling and no referees or umpires to argue with. The bowling league is more laidback, said Makovsky, and is made even more relaxing with the Sandy Hill Lanes Snack Bar being so close.

Husted said there are 18 teams competing in the league which has been held for an estimated 20 years, with teams from the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Range Control, and the Exercise and Support Division competing for the

top spot.

Team "Sport This", who average a score of 799 per game, currently leads the league with 39 wins and 13 loses.

The MCCES, Alpha Company, Organizational Maintenance Training Section, team holds the season high team score with 945 points, and the MCCES Butters team holds the season high team series with a score of 2691.

Individual high scores are currently held by Chris Wright of the MCCES A CO OMTS team, and Thomas Romkow, of team Old Greg.

Wright holds the season high game with a score of 316, while Romkow holds the season high for the handicap series with 724 points.

For children interested in bowling, the bowling center will be hosting a youth summer bowling program July 8 through 29 from 9-11:30 a.m.

The program will provide young bowlers with the opportunity to bowl on their own as well as provide them with clinical instruction taught by Makovsky who is a member of the Professional Bowlers Association.

For more information about the youth program contact MCCS Youth Sports at 830-3910.

For more information about the intramural bowling league contact Husted at 830-4092.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
Hector Deltoro, a Seattle, Wash. native, and administrative clerk with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, concentrates before bowling a frame during the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League at Sandy Hill Lanes June 11.

Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League Standings

As of June 11

Place	Team	Won	Lost
1	Sport This	39	13
2	3 Balls & A Chick	33.5	18.5
3	MCCES A CO OMTS	32.5	19.5
4	Old Greg	32	20
5	FTP	32	20
6	BEARMAT	30	22
7	MCCES Butter	29	23
8	Ten Pin	29	23
9	ESD Mech Necks	28	24
10	Hossiers	27.5	24.5
11	Patriots	27	25
12	Naval Personnel	26.5	25.5
13	ESD Go Getters	22	30
14	Average Joes	21	31
15	Bandits	21	31
16	Lower Rollers	17.5	34.5
17	Packers	12	40
18	BYE	0	0

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Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino
is announcing a new time and day
for free legal services.

Beginning June 1st, 2008 Legal Aid will be held at 11:00 am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday at Joshua Tree Community Center, 6171 Sunburst Ave., Joshua Tree, CA.

Legal Aid provides consultations and preparation of legal documents on Family Law, including custody, visitation, child support, spousal support, divorce, parentage, unlawful detainer (eviction), conservatorship, guardianship, and advance medical directives. Bring all documents if there is existing case. Please do not bring children.

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MWTC Marines take mobility to new levels

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. – Despite being faced with overwhelming odds, the Marine Corps has always found ways to emerge victorious in any situation.

When Marines needed a way to cross mud, snow, and water other vehicles cannot cross, they turned to the Swedish-made Hägglunds Bandvagn-206.

The Bv-206, a tracked personnel carrier, has been used by the Marine Corps since the 1990s and has the ability to cross through rugged terrain with little difficulty.

“It’s definitely an all-terrain vehicle,” said Doug Boyd, an MWTC Southwest Region Fleet Transportation driver and retired Marine Corps master sergeant. “There is an individual drive system on each track, so if one spins, the others can pick up the pace.”

“All this vehicle needs to do is be a logistical transport to support Marine Corps training,” added the 48-year-old Gardnerville, Nev., native. “It’s just like using a 7-ton truck to take Marines to the field.”

However, the Bv-206 is an old, outdated vehicle. The Marine Corps is currently testing the more improved BvS10, dubbed “Viking” by British troops.

“I really hope the Viking replaces the BV,” said Gordon.

“We could definitely use it in Afghanistan. The Viking is faster, more comfortable and more durable than the BV.”

The Viking, which can travel at approximately 45 miles per hour, can carry a heavier load and is more heavily armored than the BV, said Staff Sgt. Jerry Bray, MWTC motor transport maintenance chief.

According to an article published by BAE Systems, a global aerospace and defense systems company, the new Viking also features amphibious landing capabilities, add-on armor and weapons mounts for increased tactical performance.

“I think we would benefit very nicely using the Viking in Afghanistan,” added Bray, a 29-year-old Russell Springs, Ky., native. “This vehicle is deal for places like Afghanistan, Korea, Russia or other snowy, mountainous environments.”

The Bv-206 and its many variants, including the Viking, are currently fielded by more than 37 countries worldwide. According to a January 2007 news article published by the United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, the Viking has been a major asset to British troops serving in Afghanistan.

For now, the Viking remains at MWTC for testing. It is scheduled to be sent to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., for desert testing in July.



LANCE CPL. URIEL DE LUNA-FELIX

The new BvS10 “Viking” and the older Bv-206 sit side-by-side at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center’s motor transport facility. The Viking is expected to replace the Bv-206 as an all-terrain transport in mountainous environments.



LANCE CPL. URIEL DE LUNA-FELIX

Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, stands in front of a BvS10 “Viking” at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center during a field test conducted earlier this year. This new tracked vehicle is expected to replace the older Bv-206 as an all-terrain transport in mountainous environments.



LANCE CPL. URIEL DE LUNA-FELIX

A row of Bv-206s parked at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center’s motor transport facility. The new BvS10 “Viking” is expected to replace the older Bv-206 as an all-terrain transport in mountainous environments.



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2/7, from A1

Schroder, executive officer of Echo Company, 2/7. She said the idea of the program came about while she was having a girls' night out with a few friends.

One of her friends, Sally Salmons, had organized a program with two other wives in May 2005 called "2/7 Families: To Iraq and Back."

After discussing how different an Iraq deployment was from an Afghanistan deployment, the women decided something needed to be done to bring the family members and loved ones of 2/7 Marines and sailors together for support.

"I figured it was a really good way to keep the wives busy, to

keep cohesion, and especially to bring in the parents," said Schroder.

Basing her idea off Salmons', Schroder began coordinating with 2/7 key volunteer representative Sue Cruz about making the idea a reality.

Cruz synchronized with other key volunteers by putting the word out via newsletter, posting information on the unit Web site and speaking with the commanding officer's wife, Amy Hall.

Schroder, a Sunnyvale, Calif., native, then created a personal blog for the "I Ran to Afghanistan" program in order to make communication, registration and exchanging information easier and faster.

The blog, which can be found

at <http://www.rantoafghanistan.blogspot.com>, features an official registration form and overview of the program's mission.

"This initiative is a fun and easy way to show support for our Marines and sailors while reaping all the benefits of physical activity," said Salmon, a Boston native.

"The program is unique in that just about anyone connected to the 2/7 family can participate."

Schroder said surprisingly enough, it is not wives who have had the greatest number of participants, which numbers more than 150.

"We have more parents than wives participating so far," she said.

Salmon agreed.

"We were particularly encouraged by the positive feedback from parents and extended family of our Marines and sailors," she

said, referring to the "To Iraq and Back" program. "Moms and dads experience many of the same stressors and concerns that we do as spouses, and the program provided a way for them to feel connected too."

Schroder said there are several participants who do not know a single service member in 2/7, but insist on taking part and contributing to the total number of miles.

"We are at 6,000 miles right now," said Schroder.

The total at the end of the first month is only 1,900 miles short of the 7,900 mile total needed by November.

For those who have more running experience, time or energy, a second option is available called "I Ran to Afghanistan and Back" and requires 22 miles a week.

Schroder said aside from get-

ting in shape, this program offers a solid foundation to form friendships and get involved with the base community, especially for new military wives.

"A lot of these women are young wives, and it doesn't make sense to them why they don't hear from their husbands often," she said. "They should definitely get out there, explore Twentynine Palms and make some friends. A deployment goes a heck of a lot faster if you have good friends or a job."

She added that participating in community events and activities not only benefits the family members, but also puts the service members' minds at ease.

"If I am happy, my husband is happy," she said. "He doesn't need to be worrying about me while I'm over here. He needs to worry about himself and his men."

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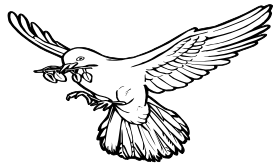








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Food services boosting morale with chow

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

On the second and fourth Sunday of every month from 8 to 11 a.m. Food Service Operations sponsors Military Family Appreciation Meals at the Combat Center's Phelps Hall, building 1460.

The meals are open to service members and their families, retirees, and guests, and are part of FSO's attempt to boost morale at the Combat Center, said Gunnery Sgt. David C. Young, sustenance chief and

assistant to the contracting officer representative, FSO.

Manuel V. Rocha, FSO's contract surveillance representative and a retired master sergeant, said FSO started offering appreciation meals in the late 80's.

He said the meals' implementation came after the Combat Center's command recognized the need to provide students at the Marine Communication-Electronics School here with the opportunity to have family and friends visit during their lengthy military occupational specialty training.

The original appreciation

meals were hosted every weekend and were open to any service member with a meal card, but due to logistical problems the program was forced to shut down.

Two years ago, Rocha, a native of San Jose, Calif., and FSO revived the meal program along with FSO's Military Retiree's Breakfast which is hosted the third Wednesday of every month at Phelps Hall and Littleton Hall, in building 1660, for retirees of all branches of service and their families.

Young, a Lordsburg, N.M. native, said the meals serve as an opportunity for family and friends of service members to get a first hand account of what being in the military is like. Parents, who may have no prior knowledge about the military, are able to see that their young Marine or sailor is receiving three quality meals a day.

In addition to the meals acting as a public affairs event, he said they also help instill camaraderie amongst the Marines and sailors of the Combat Center, as well as amongst their families.

Instead of leaving base and paying a hefty bill at a civilian restaurant, Marines and sailors have the option of offering their loved ones a low cost meal and at the same time introduce those loved ones to their friends here at the Combat Center.

Young said family members can then share memories, experiences, guidance and network with other military families. This networking can create cohesiveness amongst families, and make the military experience for all go more smoothly.

Prices for the meals are currently \$3.80 for the dependents of E-4 and below and \$4.40 for all others unless they have a meal card.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Marines and sailors stand in line at Phelps Hall, building 1460, for afternoon chow Friday.

For additional information about the meals, or to voice comments, questions, or concerns about food service at the Combat Center contact Food Service Operations at 830-4211.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Hasse Gertrudes and Kiyoe Thompson serve up afternoon chow at Phelps Hall, building 1460, Friday. Food Service Operations holds Military Family Appreciation Meals at Phelps Hall every second and fourth Sunday of the month for service members, their families, friends and retired service members.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

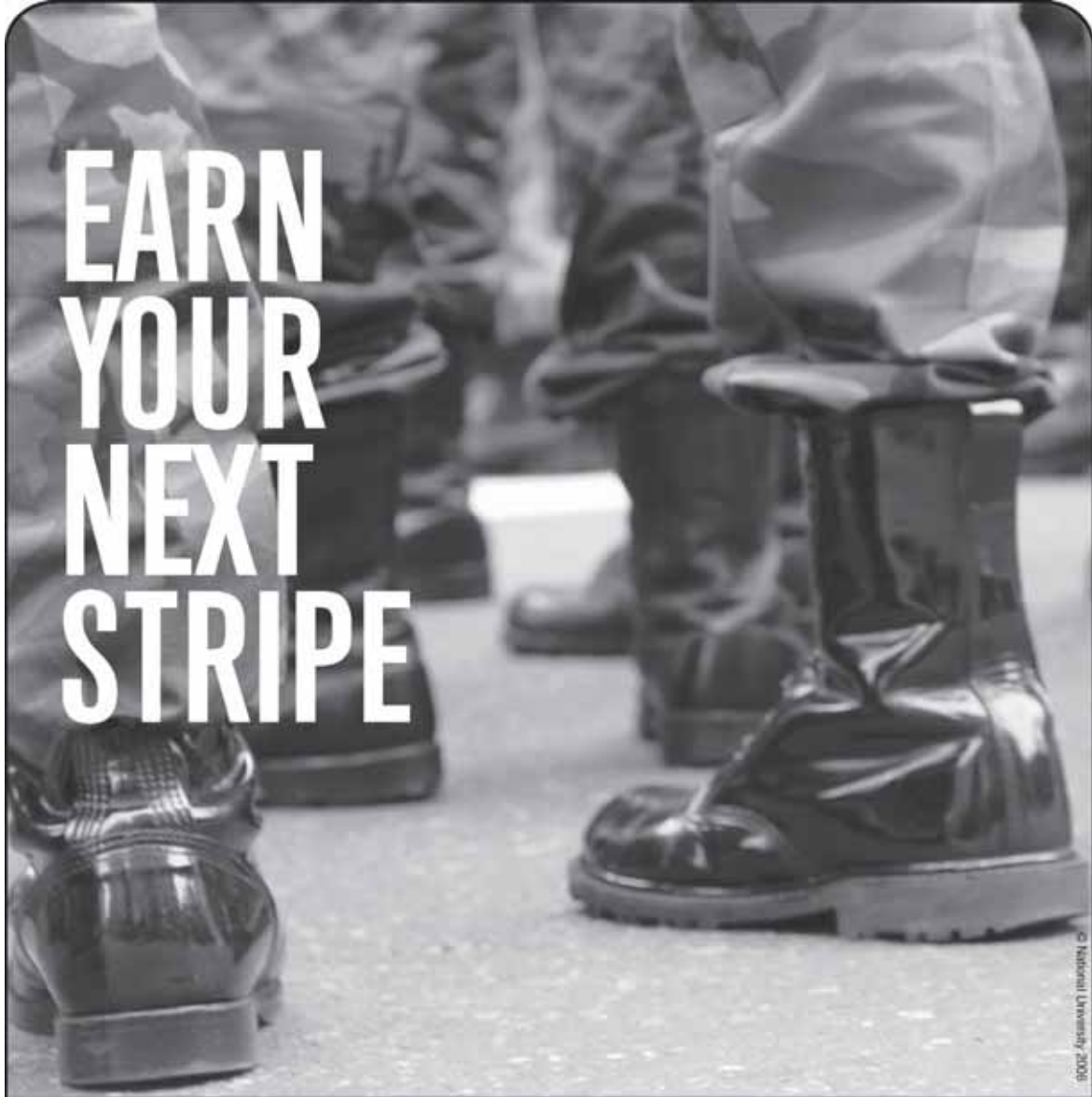
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Sun 9 a.m. Faith Formation/CCD (Bldg 1551)
Sun 9:15 a.m. Confessions+
Sun 10 a.m. Rosary
Sun 10:30 a.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 10:30 a.m. Children's Liturgy of the Word
Sun 4 p.m. Choir Practice
Sun 4 p.m. Life Teen/Youth Grp.
Sun 4:30 p.m. Rosary
Sun 5 p.m. Catholic Mass
Sun 6 p.m. Cyrus Young Adult Group age 18-35, married or single
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12:30 p.m. Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
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Sun 9 a.m. Worship*
Wed 7 p.m. Praise & Worship*

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Sun 11 a.m. Worship

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Sun 12:30 p.m. Worship
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Wednesday
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6 p.m. Praise & Worship Rehearsal
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MOUNTAIN, from A5

their way to the top.

Echo Company, the last in line, battled their way uphill - the road to the top seeming endless. The hills became even more treacherous after that first steep portion of the trail.

Sweat poured from the faces of the beleaguered Marines and sailors as they continued to climb. Another steep trail, similar to the first, but with better footing, marked a new challenge for the battalion's men.

Approximately nine hours and nearly five miles later, Echo Company had reached the objective and had gained almost 3,000 feet in elevation. Fox Company, who had departed Lower Base Camp an hour before them, had arrived earlier and was waiting for them. The two companies set up a bivouac for the night and were brought back down the mountain by trucks the following day.

Despite the pain and exhaustion the Marines and sailors experienced on the trail, they still

felt it was worth something.

"This course demonstrates to the Marines the tactics, techniques and procedures on how to mitigate mountainous terrain," said 1st Lt. Ronald Blaze, Weapons Platoon commander, Fox Company, 2/1. "The entire curriculum is important when it comes to operating in this type of environment."

The 26-year-old Mercer, Penn., native added he feels the training is beneficial to his Marines. He has deployed with the battalion to Okinawa, Japan, and deployed to Iraq with Landing Support Equipment Company, 4th Landing Support Battalion, from Vienna, Ohio.

Sgt. William Spangler, a Fox Company, 2/1, squad leader, also said he feels the lessons learned from this course will help his Marines generate success during their next deployment.

"This is very much the kind of training that leaves the doors open for a deployment to Afghanistan," said the 21-year-old veteran from Bryan, Texas. "All the survival classes they

taught in the beginning will teach these Marines how to stay alive, even in the worst case scenario."

Kramer said the goal is to provide the battalion the knowledge they need and help them expand on it.

"Most of what we teach here is field craft," he said. "To learn how to be tactical in this environment is on them. We teach the simple little tricks, and it's those tricks that matter."

"This is something that isn't quickly or easily learned," added the Van Buren, Mich., native. "For the most part, what works out best is when they learn they can rely on each other. When it all hits the fan, they help each other get through it."

The Marines and sailors of 2/1 will continue to train to fight in every clime and place, preparing for their upcoming deployment early next year. Although the battalion's destination is unknown, the training they receive at MWTC and other installations will help them adapt to any challenges they may face.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Shannen Gordon, daughter of Lt. Col. Thomas J. Gordon, smiles as she receives a bouquet of flowers during her father's change-of-command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

COMMAND, from A1

[Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command] concept."

Rush said he was also very honored to work with the battalion.

"I am very proud of the battalion," he said. "What amazes me the most about it is what they are able to accomplish with the number of people we have. It's a testament to the Marine Corps. Do more with less."

Rush, a Shortsville, N.Y., native, added he has learned a great deal about endurance and perseverance from his staff and junior Marines.

In his speech during the ceremony, Rush said no prouder commander could be found in the division.

"You continue to carry the traditions and pride of this unit," he said to the Marines and sailors of the battalion who stood in formation for the ceremony. "I am extremely honored to have walked beside you."

In addition to walking beside his unit, Rush has also had the honor of working with Gordon in the past. The two were assigned to 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, in 1998 when Rush worked as one of Gordon's platoon commanders when they were with 2nd Tanks.

"He was by far my best platoon commander," said Gordon. "I am honored to take the colors from him, and I am sure one day he will be getting them back."

Gordon graduated from the Citadel and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1991.

His first assignment was as a tank platoon commander in 1st Tank Battalion in 1992.

After departing the unit as a company executive officer in 1995, he served as a series officer, company executive officer and commanding officer of Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Battalion at MCRD Parris Island.


After completing the Armor Officers Advanced Course in 1998, he was transferred to 2nd Tank Battalion as the commanding officer of Bravo and Alpha companies and the battalion assistant operations officer.

Gordon deployed to Iraq with 8th Tank Battalion as Inspector Instructor for Bravo Company in 2003. He also deployed to Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar in the following three years.

Gordon, a Boston native, then worked his way from Deputy Current Operations to Operations Officer for III Marine Expeditionary Force based out of Okinawa, Japan, in 2006 prior to his arrival at the Combat Center.

Gordon said the unit will continue to focus on supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, MEF and Marine Expeditionary Units.

"The commandant wants the Corps to be a two-fisted fighter," said Gordon. "We will be the knock out punch. We'll continue to focus on the horizon for what comes next."




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Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

2004 HONDA ACCORD LX COUPE 55,000K, fully loaded, silver \$14,500 Call Patricia (619) 851-7832 6/18/08

MOTORHOME FOR SALE 1991 PACE ARROW. 35' class A. 460 Ford/Oshkosh many extras. 61,000 miles \$16,500. OBO. Call Jon at 361-5777. 6/11/08

2005 PT CRUISER Touring Edition. 26 MPG. Great condition. Like new. \$7,000 OBO. Call 830-7634. 6/11/08

883 C SPORTSTER 2006. Only 26 miles, plus riding gear, vest, helmet, ramps for flatbed included. \$6,500 OBO. 6/11/08

1995 LEXUS SC300. Excellent condition. Dealer maintained. New tires. Blue exterior, sand interior. \$6,500 OBO. Call Mike 218-0450. 6/11/08

'06 TOYOTA TACOMA 2WD PRERUNNER, V6, Auto, PW/PL, Tow Pkg. \$21,000 Call Anytime 208-3098 ro 277-3447 6/4/08

2005 33' GRAND JUNCTION HIGH 5TH WHEEL LOADED! 3 slideouts, 2 AC units and much more. 954-5103 or 219-2184. 6/4/08

2005 37BHSS 37' Forest River Salem Travel Trailer. Only used once. 2 Bedrooms! Must See! (\$18,500) 217-1314. 5/21/08

2004 JEEP WRANGLER X SPRT 6 Cyl, 4 ltr, 5 spd, 4WD, hardtop (soft available) new tires, no accidents, 53K, Great shape. All maintenance records. Kelly blue book, \$14,600-15,500. Asking 14K. (559) 904-7326 5/14/08

2002 FLSTC HARLEY-DAVIDSON® Heritage Softail Classic, luxury blue with stripe, under 4,400 miles. Accessories included, excellent condition. \$14k Call 221-8831 5/14/08

MISC.

X-LARGE KENMORE ELECTRIC DRYER 220V \$150, AB Lounge \$50, 3 month old gas lawn mower \$100. Please call Tammy 819-1007 6/18/08

BIG WHITE LOVE SEAT Stain and odor free. \$50 firm. Call Brian (520) 204-0144 6/11/08.

MEDIUM PATIO DOGGIE DOOR 10" x 9" opening \$60. Please call 367-5019 and leave a message 6/11/08.

BOWFLEX XTL310 - 310 pounds of resistance in the bars. Very little use. \$550 call 219-2184 6/4/08

TAKAMINE G SERIES ACOUSTIC/ELECTRIC GUITAR model #EGC334SBC. \$400/obo call call 219-2184 6/4/08

COLLECTIBLE MEMORABILIA CARDS Baseball, football & Star Trek cards at very low prices. Many set and individual players available. Call Stephen at 567-0400. 5/28/08

FEMALE ROOMMATE WANTED to share new 3 bedroom home with w/d close to Joshua Tree Nat'l Park. Available June 1. \$575/month. Security deposit \$750. (406) 370-9736. 5/21/08

NINTENDO WII numb chucks, 2 controllers, sports game. \$210 OBO. A savings of over \$75. Call Kris 880-6224 5/14/08

SCHWINN STATIONARY EXERCISE BIKE, like new, hardly used. \$150 OBO. Call 361-1209. 5/7/08

SCHWINN ORANGE COUNTY CHOPPERS STING-RAY BIKES (2) 20 inch (1 red, 1 blue) (1) 16 inc red \$75 each or OBO Call Chris at 362-5293. 5/7/08

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.

MULES, from A1

axles and get stuck."

People who are indigenous to mountainous regions of the world use pack animals as the primary mode of transportation for supplies. Marine Corps units deploying to these areas can use the skill of efficiently packing animals to help them carry equipment and supplies through steep terrain found in these areas.

The MWTC stables house six horses and 24 mules, all of which can carry supplies long distances through areas vehicles may not be able to travel. These animals are used for stateside training and do not deploy. The Animal Packers Course here instructs students how to acquire the materials, animals included, in other countries.

"With the amount of animals I have here, I can move anything in support of an infantry battalion in the field continuously," said Tony Parkhurst, MWTC pack master and training specialist.

Parkhurst added the pack animals can carry approximately one-third of their body weight. Most weigh between 300 and 400 pounds, which means each animal can carry between 100 and 150 pounds of gear and supplies each. The beasts can carry anything from weapons and supplies to wounded Marines.

The Animal Packers Course teaches Marines and sailors how to properly load pack animals, as well as how to work with them and keep them healthy.

The nine-day curriculum begins with the history of animal packing, then transitions to employing beasts of burden in a tactical environment.

During the course, students are taught the basics of animal packing, such as first aid, weight distribution, and grooming and sad-

dling. Marines also learn how to set up bivouacs with the animals.

The stables also provide an "improvised" packing class to help students expand their comprehension of the unique skill.

"We hope to give them a broader knowledge of animal packing," said Frost, a native of St. Maries, Idaho. "You won't always find conditions organic to our stables in a foreign country, so you might have to improvise."

"One of the most important things we teach here is how to provide security while moving with the animals," he added. "The basics are the same -rear, flank and forward security with route reconnaissance ahead of you -- but you also have to take the animals into account."

Students apply the knowledge they gain in the course during day and night movements in the mountains surrounding the MWTC. Four Marines from 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., recently completed an animal packing refresher course to sharpen skills they learned several years ago.

"I think this is one of the best-kept secrets of the Marine Corps," said Gunnery Sgt. Rene Urena, 2/1 armory and S-4 chief. "This is one of those tools every Marine definitely needs in his or her professional toolbox."

"With the way the world is going, I can see this becoming a predominant course in the Marine Corps," added the Miami native. "It's certainly one of the most exhilarating courses I've ever been through. It really takes you out of

your comfort zone, but teaches you a lot of useful skills."

Cpl. Brad Shelton, a Weapons Company, 2/1, mortarman and Frost, Texas, native, also attended the refresher course alongside Urena.

"Where we're going, this stuff is really going to be useful," he said. "I enjoyed this course the first time around, and I'm super excited to be back."

Urena, Shelton, and the other two Marines from 2/1 will assist the pack masters when 24 more Marines from the battalion arrive at MWTC to learn animal packing Monday.

The Animal Packers Course is conducted four to seven times annually, depending on the number of infantry battalions training at MWTC, said Parkhurst. Satellite packages can be run for military personnel training here upon request.

Parkhurst added the course has been known to travel to other installations in the past to fit the needs of units who desire to learn the skill.

"We're willing to travel to any unit at any base, as long as it supports the training mission," he said.

The instructors have also taught courses to special operations forces deploying to rural or mountainous areas.

As Marines prepare to deploy to Afghanistan and other mountainous regions throughout the world, animal packing is a skill that will carry them a long way. It will provide them with a way to transport equipment and supplies in areas where vehicles cannot safely travel.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Cpl. Brad Shelton, a mortarman with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, leads Cpl. Kyle W. Hunter, a 2/1 field radio operator, on a mule to demonstrate a casualty evacuation saddle at the MWTC stables June 4.

SOLUTIONS

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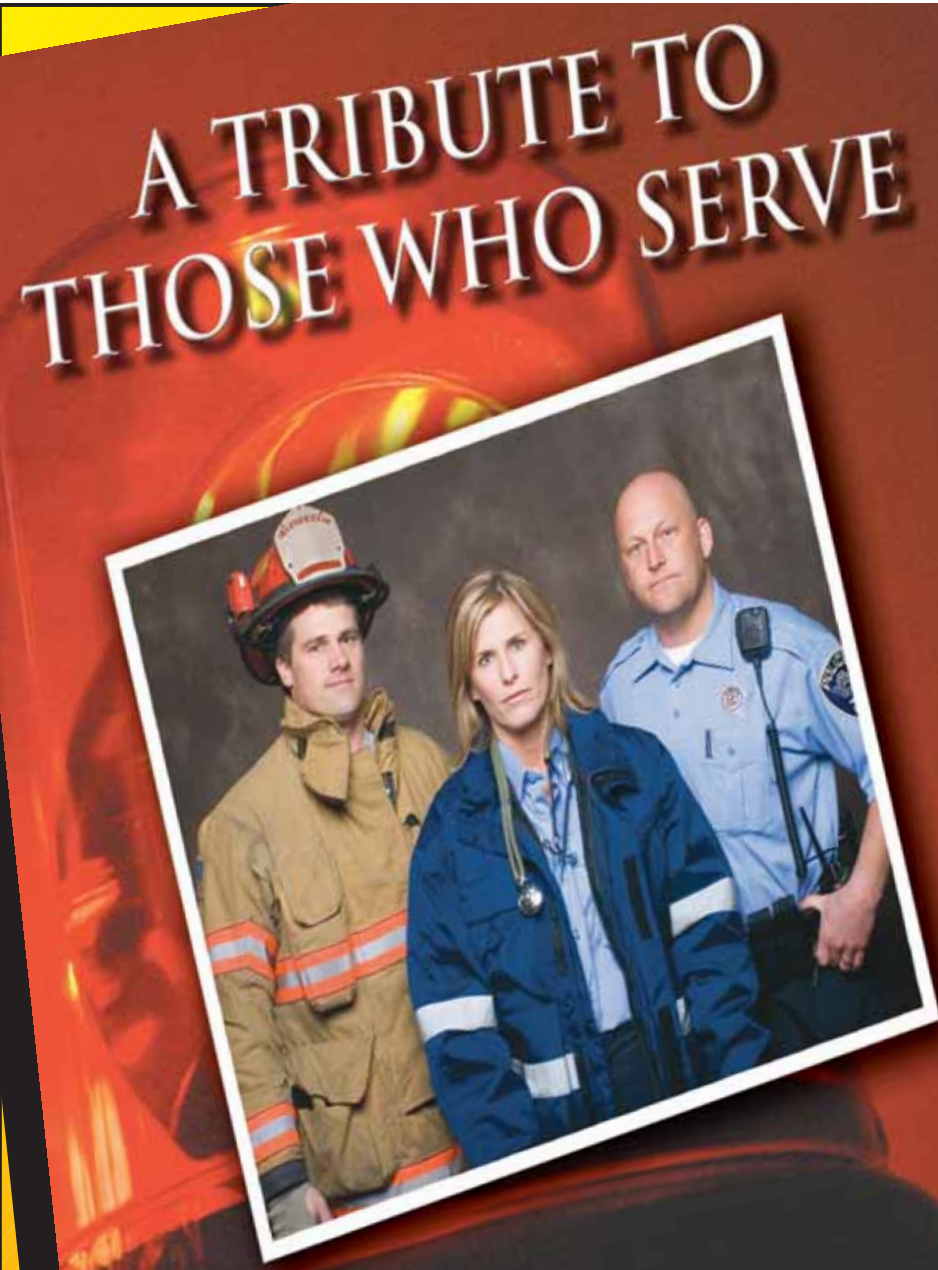


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Special standard size tabloid will be inserted in the Hi-Desert Star, The Desert Trail and The Observation Post July 9, & 10, & 11, 2008 Reservation deadline June 20



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