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MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

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SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

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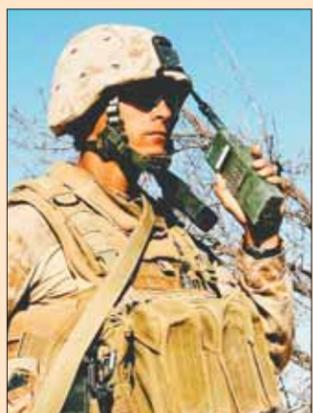
Marines assault Taliban stronghold



5 3/4 and CLB-7 advance parties are back



7 Preparing for the real horrors of war



11 2/7 comm helps get the job done



13 Party Band Ensemble gets down in the Rockies

CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Marines along with coalition forces carried out an assault on a Taliban-held compound in Now Zad, Afghanistan, Aug. 28.

The accomplishments of the assault, was the seizure of enemy ordnance and weapons, materials used to make IEDs (improvised explosive devices), and the destruction of several enemy vehicles, buildings and fighting positions.

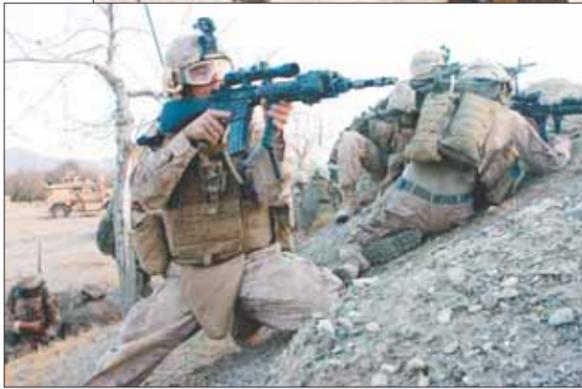
The Marines and sailors of Company F, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and Coalition forces are exploiting the enemy any way they can.

“Our overall mission here is to degrade the enemies’ ability to operate in Now Zad,” said Capt. Ross Schellhaas, Company F commander and Meridian, Idaho native. “During this assault, we pushed far beyond our objective. We found and took several of the enemies’

See ASSAULT, A16



LANCE CPL. GENE ALLEN AINSWORTH III



CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

Lance Cpl. Bryan E. McDonald III, a designated marksman assigned to 3rd Platoon, Company F, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and a Denton, Texas, native, searches for enemy fighters during the initial assault of a Taliban-held compound Aug. 28.

Lance Cpl. Ray Alvarado, a vehicle commander assigned to Weapons Company, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and a Fillmore, Calif., native, fires a Javelin missile at enemy targets during an assault on a Taliban-held compound Aug. 28.

3/7 Marines welcomed to Iraq

CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

HIT, Iraq — Marines with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, conducted a patrol to introduce Marines from Company L, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, to key leaders in the area of operations that the battalion will inherit.

“The purpose of the patrol was to introduce the incoming Marines to Sheik Khalif Awwad Farhan, who is the primary sheik for the towns of Abutiban and Asiriyah,” said Capt. Scott J. Anderson, 31, company commander, Company L, 3/4, from Reno, Nev. “He also has a lot of ties to the government in Baghdad.”



CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

Cpl. Jack D. Jacoby, a rifleman with Company L, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, enjoys an Iraqi dinner with Sheik Khalif Awwad Farhan in Hit, Iraq, Sept. 2.

When the Marines arrived at the sheik’s home, they were greeted warmly and invited into the home. Marines with 3rd Bn., 7th Marines have had similar welcomes from other sheiks and community leaders since arriving in Iraq.

“The sheiks have been disappointed

See 3/7, A15

Combat Center Band offers more than music in Colorado



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

The Combat Center Band leaves the field after performing at the Stanley Park Fairgrounds Saturday in Estes Park, Colo., during the town’s annual Long’s Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival Parade.

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The cool mountain air and local community of Estes Park, Colo., played host to the Combat Center Band Sept. 4 through Sunday for the town’s annual Long’s Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival.

Fans braved chilly nights, with the help of hot chocolate and hot dogs, to see the bands’ quick and crisp marches and hear their defined sound, which makes them a fan

favorite where-ever they go.

While some may think the band is merely an act for the ears and eyes, fans in attendance admitted the band also served as a unique means of boosting their morale and patriotism.

The festival, which celebrates Celtic traditions, featured Celtic music concerts, jousting competitions, Scottish athletic events, dancing competitions, vendors, and a dog exhibition competition, among other things.

Other musical acts included

See BAND, A6

This Day in Marine Corps History

-September 13, 1847-

Marines help seize fortress of Chapultepec.

Stress management important throughout military careers

LIFELINES.USMC.MIL

The Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control is teaching sailors and Marines how to deal with everyday and combat-related stress starting at the beginning of their military careers, a senior Navy official said.

The center recently was established at Naval Medical Center San Diego to address the issues of psychological health by improving care for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, but also how to effectively teach sailors and Marines to recognize the signs of stress.

"The idea of the center is ... not only to help sailors and Marines in distress, but to promote good stress management and promote psychological health so it starts when ... people come into boot camp and [lasts] all of the way until they graduate from war college," Navy Capt. (Dr.) Paul Hammer, the center's director, said Aug. 7 in an interview on Dot-Mil-Docs radio show hosted on BlogTalkRadio.com.

"The idea is that we get past the concept of just dealing with things when they are in crisis and hopefully promote a system of addressing stress and addressing our ability to cope with it so we rarely get into a crisis mode," Hammer said.

He added that the routine stressors that sailors and Marines undergo on a routine basis, not looking at when they are in a combat zone, are extremely dangerous at times and require that leaders manage their stress well.

One of the center's missions is to determine where officials might have the most impact to help educate sailors and Marines, for example in the curriculum they are taught in military training, Hammer said.

"One of the things that I like to look at, when people are training and they go through drills is, 'How can we incorporate stress training into that so that they are more aware of when they are dealing with stress?'" Hammer said.

The center is the first of its kind in the Navy to incorporate stress training during both pre- and post-deployment periods. With more than 14,000 sailors and Marines currently serving as individual augmentees around the world in combat areas, learning how to recognize operational stress is important for everyone's well-being.

"When we talk about operational stress, we're talking about that unique set of circumstances that people have when they are deployed or when they are in the jobs that they do," Hammer said. "For example, somebody who works on the deck of an aircraft carrier has a much different level of stress than someone who is a civilian and works in an office building downtown."

According to the Navy Bureau of Medicine's Combat/Operational Stress Cell, the signs of operational stress can be sudden or build up over time. Combat stress can happen suddenly when a sailor or Marine encounters immediate danger or it can build up from things such as lack of adequate sleep, loud or constant noise, extreme heat or cold -- things that make life in combat stressful. Stress can have harmful effects on a sailors' or Marines' bodies, minds and actions, he said. It also can directly affect how sailors or Marines deal with others—friends or enemies.

"Combat stress, of course, is the stress that occurs when you are in combat - the extreme set of circumstances when your life is in danger and when you have to [make] life and death ... decisions quickly ... and when you are under extreme pressure," Hammer said.

Some common signs of combat stress can include extreme restlessness, staring into the distance, shallow breathing, trembling or sweaty hands, and feeling detached from others or even feeling sick or nauseated.

Dealing with both routine and operational stress is handled by the center's four major divisions to address how to recognize stress and look at methods to improve treatment. "The center has four major divisions: knowledge management, programs, research facilitation, and strategic communications," Hammer said.

Knowledge management looks at what is currently known about PTSD and TBI; programs looks at ways to improve the level of care provided to service-members; research facilitation is designed to examine causes of stress; and strategic communications focuses on ways to communicate and educate service-members about these issues, he explained.

Condor Gate new hours

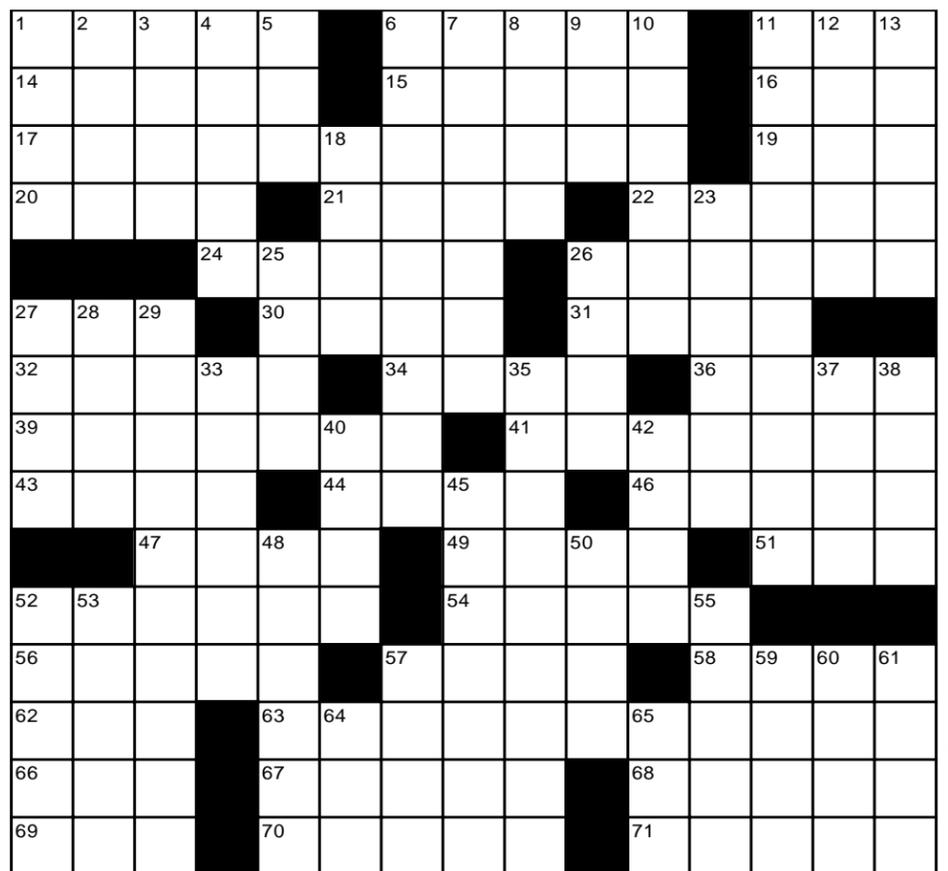
Condor Gate will now be open from 5:30 a.m.–11 p.m., Monday through Friday, regardless of holidays and school closures.

Employee Spotlight

Name: Estelita Harkley
Job Title: Catholic Director Religious Education
Organization: The Combat Center Catholic Church
Job Duties: Educating military dependents and civilians about the Catholic faith.
Hometown: The Philippines
Hobbies: Traveling to the old religious missions throughout California.
What Do You Like Most About Your Job: Being able to educate children and adults and help them learn about their Catholic faith and the history of the faith.
Significant Achievements: Completed a 3-year theology class.
Military Service: none, two sons in the Air Force.
Time At The Combat Center: 18 years.



PINBALL WIZARD



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 39. TV detective with a ruffled raincoat | DOWN | 33. Go at it |
| 1. Main ideas | 41. Prepare for new job | 1. Big bash | 35. Pro and con considerations |
| 6. Patton portrayer George C. | 43. Colonial critters | 2. Closely monitored hosp. areas | 37. Wedding cake section |
| 11. Impolite alternative to "sir" | 44. Work place conditions org. | 3. "___ is life!" | 38. Added stipulations |
| 14. MDX and RDX automaker | 46. Dog-___ (shabby) | 4. Took a stab at | 40. Mannerless sort |
| 15. Small role for a big star | 47. Regarding, in memos | 5. Erie Canal mule | 42. Spill the beans |
| 16. Filmdom's Merkelor O'Connor | 49. Extra: Abbr. | 6. Plot outlines | 45. Poor one |
| 17. Desilu co-head | 51. Yearbook sect. | 7. Place for liquor | 48. Old Toyota model |
| 19. GPs, e.g. | 52. ___ monkey (simian with a loud call) | 8. Arabian Peninsula land | 50. Boone, informally |
| 20. Big Apple tennis stadium | 54. Calves raised for their meat | 9. ___ Aviv | 52. Woman of Troy |
| 21. Has ___ (is connected) | 56. Old anesthetic | 10. Rang out | 53. "SNL" alum Cheri |
| 22. One Jesus healed | 57. Former ring champ Spinks | 11. Amusement park colliders | 55. ___ Tuesday (big primary day) |
| 24. Parlor piece | 58. Letters on a B-29 bomber | 12. Reporting to | 57. Jar tops |
| 26. Biological divisions | 62. Floral necklace | 13. Seaport of Iraq | 59. Agile for one's age |
| 27. Dyer's tank | 63. Referee, pre-kickoff | 18. Pounce is formed from it | 60. Prefix with dynamic |
| 30. Paddock parent | 66. Blow it | 23. "Bewitched" witch | 61. Pal of Kukla and Ollie |
| 31. Envelope info: Abbr. | 67. "...is this the Rico?" | 25. Mosque official | 64. ___ roll (winning) |
| 32. R&B singer Baker | 68. ___ firma | 26. Motown's Marvin | 65. Addams Family cousin |
| 34. ___-bitty | 69. Zilch | 27. Explorer Cabezade ___ | |
| 36. Tetra- doubled | 70. Hangs in there | 28. Soon, in poems | |
| | 71. Check for fit | 29. Popular carnival ride | |

[Solutions on A8]

Centerspeak

What movie are you ashamed to say you like?

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



PFC. JEREMY SPINDLER
STUDENT, MCCES

"I think 'The Girl Next Door' because that movie was a big flop."



PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS LUIS VILLANUEVA
HOSPITAL CORPSMAN, CO. A, 1/4

"I think it would be 'Breaking All the Rules' because it's a romantic comedy, but it's not that bad."



STAFF SGT. AARON HANEY
WIRE CHIEF, H&S Co., 3/4

"I'd say 'The Notebook,' because it's a chick-flick."

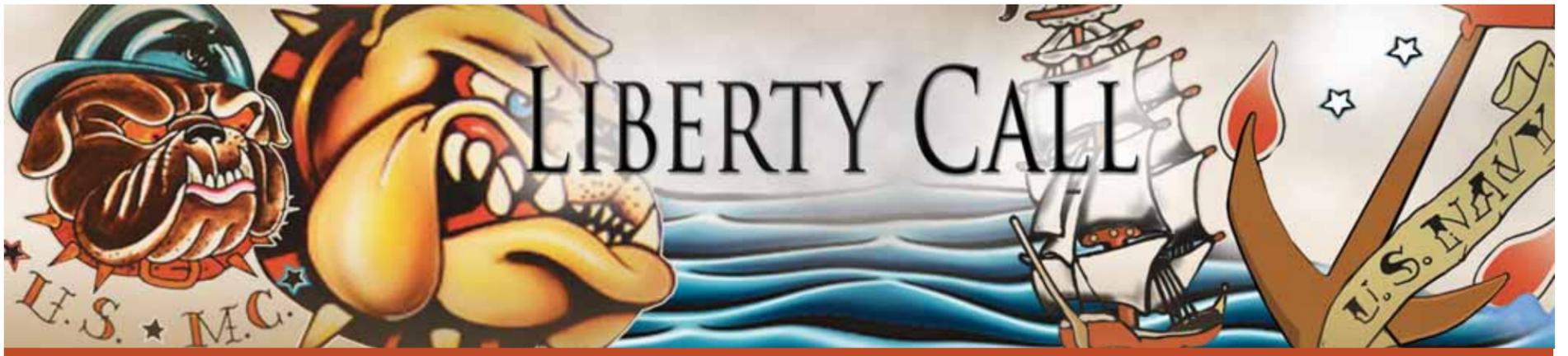
OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus

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| | | Layout, Design | Leslie Shaw |

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FRI. 9/12 Art Opening: Polaroid Pictorial Time: Reception 6-10 p.m. Where: 29 Palms Creative Cntr. & Gallery, 6847 Adobe Rd. For more info call Gretchen Grunt at 361-1805 or visit http://www.29palmscreativecenter.com	FRI. 9/12 Los Tigres Del Norte & Pablo Montero Time: 9 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort, 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For more info call (951) 755-5391 or visit http://www.morongocasinoresort.com	FRI. 9/12 Concert: DEEP 6 Time: 8 p.m. Where: B & J's Sports Bar 4960 Adobe Rd., Twentynine Palms For more info call 367-6757	FRI. 9/12 & SAT. 9/13 Cracker/Camper Van Beethoven Campout Music Festival Time: 6 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's, 53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown For more info call 365-5956 or visit http://www.pappyandharriets.com	SAT. 9/13 & SUN. 9/14 Big Bear Oktoberfest Time: 12 p.m. - 12 a.m. Where: Big Bear Convention Cntr. For more info call (909) 585-3000 or log onto http://www.bigbearevents.com Free admission, Military, law enforcement & firefighters 9/13 & 9/14 only
SAT. 9/13 Concert: Jason Mraz Time: 8 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort, 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For more info visit http://www.morongocasinoresort.com or call (951) 755-5391	SAT. 9/13 Concert: Ana Gabriel Time: 8 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort, 84245 Indio Springs Pkwy., Indio For tickets/info call (800) 827-2946 or visit http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com	SAT. 9/13 Dance: Flamenco Bravo! Time: 7 p.m. Where: Joslyn Center's Arthur Newman Theatre 73750 Catalina Way, Palm Desert For more info visit http://www.flamencobravo.com or call 340-3220, Ext. 109	MON. 9/15 THRU FRI. 9/19 Condor Elementary Book Fair & Family Fun Night When: Fair is Mon. 9/15 thru 9/19, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. daily, Family Fun Night is Sept. 15 from 5:30 - 8 p.m. Where: Condor Elementary, 2551 Condor Rd. Hosted by Condor Elem. PTO	TUES. 9/16 Mexican Independence Day Party Time: 6 p.m. Where: Spotlight 29 Casino, 46-200 Harrison St., Coachella For more info call (800) 585-3737 or visit http://www.Spotlight29.com

Roughley Manor gives back to members of the armed services

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Roughley Manor Bed and Breakfast Inn, a hotel in Twentynine Palms, Calif., built in 1925 as a house by Bill and Elizabeth Campbell, gives special deals to service members and their families.

The inn has 12 rooms located throughout the grounds. Two of the rooms are located in the main house. These rooms, the Campbell Room and Magnolia Suite, have fireplaces.

The other 10 rooms are outer cottages all around the main house. All the rooms include a sitting room and a kitchenette, a flat-screen television with Direct TV, and wireless internet. Two of the cottages are available for rent for people traveling with pets.

"We like to make this a home away from home," said Jan Peters, co-owner and chef of the manor, and a Twentynine Palms native. "We try to accommodate our visitors in the best way possible, especially if someone is here for an extended period of time, we pick up on certain things they may like. Like if they like to keep their shutters closed, or don't like the flower vase on the table, we keep the blinds closed, and we make sure the flowers aren't on the table."

The manor's yard is decorated with giant palm trees, a garden, fountains, sitting areas and a gazebo. A pool and a year-around heated spa are also available to guests of the inn.

"The way everything is set up brings a certain class to the inn," said Amanda Halpin, assistant innkeeper and Palm Dale, Calif., native. "This place is so welcoming to the community and the Marines here, but it is secluded enough that it

holds a low, easy atmosphere." Jennifer Driscoll, who visited the manor last year with friends, agreed with Halpin, saying the manor is beautifully built and rich with history of Twentynine Palms.

"The grounds are so breathtaking," said Driscoll. "The rooms are generously decorated, and the people there are so friendly." Every morning at 7:30 a.m.,

coffee and tea is served in the dining area of the Great Room or on the patio outside the Great Room. Breakfast begins at 8 a.m. and starts with a serving of fruit. Peters has a variety of

entrees she has created herself. A few of the breakfasts include a potato quiche served with oat nut toast, French toast stuffed

SeeMANOR, A8



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Roughley Manor's patio is decorated with a three-piece fountain and is used by guests during breakfast hours.

Cinema 6

MOVIE TIMES 365-9633 Showtimes Effective 9/12/08 - 9/18/08

Righteous Kill (R) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thurs: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	House Bunny (PG-13) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thurs: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	
Burn After Reading (R) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thurs: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	Bangkok Dangerous (R) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thurs: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	ALL SHOWS BEFORE 6:00 PM \$6.00 • ADULTS \$8.00 • SENIORS \$6.00 • CHILDREN \$6.00 www.cinema6theatre.com

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

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

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Troops to Teachers representative visits Combat Center



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Marines, sailors, spouses and civilian employees of the Combat Center listen to Robert Bartron, military transition recruitment specialist for the California Troops to Teachers program, Tuesday at the Combat Center's Education Center.

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Military Transition Recruitment Specialist for the California Troops to Teachers program, Robert Bartron, hosted a presentation on the benefits of the program Tuesday at the Combat Center's Education Center.

According to the Troops to Teachers Web site, the program is federally funded by the Department of Education and administered by the Department of Defense through the Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support.

The mission of the Troops to Teachers program is to improve the quality of American education by placing mature, motivated, experienced and dedicated personnel in the nation's classrooms.

The program does this by providing current and prior armed service members who desire to pursue a career in education with the counseling, financial and placement assistance needed to become educators.

Tuesday's presentation was free and open to active, reserve or retired, spouses and civilian employees. Information was provided with details on earning teaching credentials, financial assistance and employment opportunities, how to begin a teaching career with little or no college experience, and how the Troops to Teachers and Spouses to Teachers programs can help them become educators.

"This is a brief about what it takes to be a teacher in the United States," said Bartron. "Teaching isn't a job, but a profession, much like the military."

At the presentation, Bartron said the Marine Corps provides service members many skills, such as time management and leadership that traditional colleges or universities cannot.

Bartron also said the self discipline and planning abilities learned in the Marine Corps are necessary for success in any classroom, and the common Marine mentality of 'If my Marines fail, I have failed as

a leader,' holds the potential to create an outstanding educator.

Bartron said teachers, much like members of the armed services, are alike because they don't choose to become one or the other for the money.

"Teachers make the same as a Marine," explained Bartron. "They make a difference."

Heather Marshall, wife of Sgt. Arric T. Marshall, platoon sergeant with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, admitted she held the belief that becoming a teacher simply involved obtaining a bachelor's degree and then applying for a teaching position.

Marshall, whose goal is to become a kindergarten teacher, said the class was very helpful and informed her about such important topics as institutional accreditation.

"I think it's important because it tells you what you need to do to be a teacher," she said.

Marshall also said another positive aspect of the presentation was the networking and the introduction to individuals, like Robert Bartron, who could assist her with her goal.

"You make connections with people who are really resourceful," said Marshall.

Jeff Fourier, education service officer at the Lifelong Learning and Education Center, said the resources and information the Troops to Teachers program offer are great for pointing service members, who may not know how to obtain a teaching position, in the right direction.

"It's a great program because it offers our service members a wonderful opportunity to start a new career and continue to contribute to our community," said Fourier.

Bartron said he is scheduled to return to the Combat Center in mid-October and for more information about the Troops to Teachers program contact Robert Bartron (916) 325-0150, call the Troops to Teachers California toll free number (877) 908-3600, or visited <http://www.caltroops.org>.

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HOT TOPICS

CG'S INTRAMURAL RIFLE MATCHES

The Combat Center Marksmanship Training Unit would like to invite teams to compete in the Commanding General's Intramural Rifle and Pistol Matches. Teams will consist of four shooters to include at least one staff noncommissioned officer or officer. Classes will begin on Sept. 29 at 7 a.m. at the MTU. All participants are required to attend. The opening ceremony first shot will be at 7 a.m. Oct. 2 and the closing ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. Oct. 17 followed by a barbecue for all shooters. All participants are required to use the M16A2/A4/M4 Service Rifle and the M9 Service Pistol and required to attend all marksmanship classes. Military retirees are also invited to compete. For more information please contact MTU at 830-6700.

EXPEDITIONARY WARFARE SCHOOL, COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE SEMINAR PROGRAMS START

The Marine Corps College of Continuing Education is the center for advancing Expeditionary Warfare School and Command and Staff College Distance Education Programs. The College of Continuing Education seminar program academic year runs Sept. 29 through June 1, 2009. Command and Staff may only be taken by seminar, either onsite or online. This is designed to be a two year program and there is no longer an independent guided study option for officers to complete at their own pace. Expeditionary Warfare School seminars are available onsite only. Enrollments are being accepted now. Students should enroll as soon as possible to ensure there is room available. For more information about enrollment or seminar schedules, contact the Camp Pendleton Regional Coordinator, Jeffrey Willis at 725-8400 (DSN 365), or by e-mail at jwillis@cot.s.com.

MEN'S BASKETBALL TRYOUTS

Men's basketball tryouts will be held Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m., at the West Gym. Only active duty personnel are eligible to participate. Call 830-4092/6857 for further information.

NMCRS VOLUNTEER REFRESHMENT EVENT

The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society is hosting a Volunteer Refreshment event to provide information to those interested in volunteering for NMCRS at the Community Center Sept. 19 from 10:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. There will be food, games and prizes with a free demonstration by Kindermusik.

3/4, CLB-7 return first hundred service members



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL NERL

Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 7 and 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment greet their friends and loved ones for the first time Sept. 5 since departing in February on a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Approximately one hundred Marines and sailors from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, and Combat Logistics Battalion 7 reunited with friends and family at the Combat Center's Victory Field Sept. 5 after a seven-month deployment to Iraq.

3/4's return marks the drawing to a close of their fifth combat deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. CLB-7

detachments deployed for the third time in February in support of OIF.

The Marines of CLB-7 were based at Camp Fallujah and Ramadi, Iraq, said Lt. Col. Sekou Karega, the battalion commander of CLB-7 and a native of Benton Harbor, Mich.

"Our mission in Iraq was to help supply and support the infantry battalions to accomplish their mission in any way we could," said Karega. "We had company-level attachments that

worked with CLB-1 to assist them in their accomplishing their overall support requirements. Our operations included logistics convoys and handling security for some EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) missions, as well as providing security for recovery missions."

Service members with 3/4 undertook a different mission while overseas, ranging from combat operations to supervising the Iraqi peacekeeping effort.

"We performed numerous

active patrols and point operations," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Frank Pater, who recently returned with his unit as the Headquarters and Service Company executive officer and a native of Ellsworth, Ohio. "We also had a job as over watch of the Iraqis [Iraqi Security Forces]. They're a newly organized military, and we gave them supervision in performing their task of peacekeeping. The primary goal

See RETURN, A12

MCAGCC gears up for the Combat Center Challenge

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center is preparing for its annual Combat Center Challenge scheduled for Oct. 17 where all base units will compete to be the best at various competitive events.

Many events are offered so units can enter teams, said Charles R. Dougwillo, the fitness and wellness branch chief with Marine Corps Community Services Semper Fit, who hails from Lynn, Mass.

1st Tank Battalion claimed the top spot in the challenge the past three out of four times. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, posed the closest threat to the champs last year, but their most recent win was two years ago, said Dougwillo.

"There are 13 events advertised for the Combat Center Challenge," said Dougwillo. "We have a variety of different events for all different types of people here. We've got events ranging from the sand volleyball competition, the Hummer pull, 'Tug-O-War,' jousting and 'King of the Hill,' and a basketball tournament, which can also be held as a tie-breaker at the end."

Most units have competed before, but with deployments between all the units, all are still attempting to make time to be in

the Combat Center Challenge, said Dougwillo.

"We like to see all the units competing, including the Navy," he continued. "They're part of Twentynine Palms as well, and we like to see everyone enjoying life out here."

23rd Dental Company, 1st Dental Battalion, plans to enter the competition for the first time this year, said Seaman Jennifer Ybarra, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation treasurer of 23rd Dental and a native of Pflugerville, Texas.

"We're new to this but we're feeling very confident," said Ybarra. "Our command is very big on competition, and they want everybody to know that we're here at Twentynine Palms."

Ybarra said they feel most confident about their chances of winning in the volleyball and basketball parts of the competition. She added that since they have courts for volleyball and basketball outside the Navy barracks aboard the base, they get lots of practice time in those sports.

Units that have competed before are familiar with the issues and logistics associated with setting themselves up for competing in the Combat Center Challenge, said Dougwillo.

"We did somewhat good last year," said Master Sgt. Rogelio



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Pfc. Charles London and Pfc. William Parks, both with 1st Tank Battalion, battle against each other in the inflatable gladiator ring at last year's Combat Center Challenge Sept. 7. The Combat Center is starting preparations now for this year's challenge, scheduled for Oct. 17.

Zamora, the operations chief for Combat Logistics Battalion 7, and a native of El Paso, Texas. "We have a lot of new people in the battalion. We feel that CLB-7 is always ready for a challenge from anybody, however, we do have issues with our schedule and pre-deployment training."

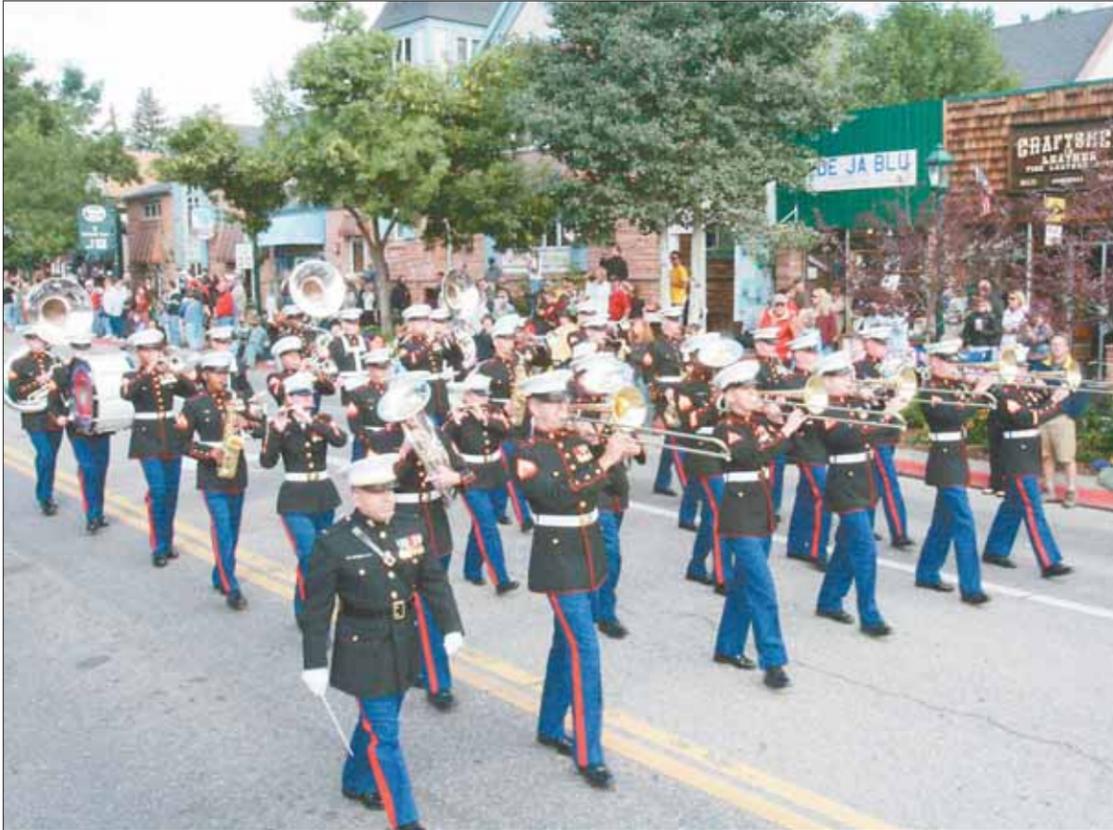
CLB-7 has pre-deployment training scheduled around when the challenge is to take place, said Zamora. The battalion knows they can compete with the best of other units, the only problems lie with scheduling issues and put-

ting together a team.

"We have to focus on the important things -- the Marine Corps comes first," said Zamora. "If we can make time for our Marines to do so, then we will compete in the events, but our pre-deployment training comes first."

We want to encourage all units to enter teams, said Dougwillo.

"It is a competition, but we really want the Marines and sailors to come out here and enjoy themselves. That's what we're really looking for," he said.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

The Combat Center Band marches in formation down Elkhorn Ave., Estes Park, Colo., Saturday during the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival Parade.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Trombone players with the Combat Center Band perform on Saturday night in Estes Park, Colo., during the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival.

BAND from, A1

the Niagara Regional Police Pipe Band, the Royal Canadian Legion Highland Mist Band, and the United States Military Academy Field Music Group also known as the "The Hellcats."

While these acts were rookies to the 32-year-old festival, the Combat Center Band was attending the event for the eighth year in a row.

When asked why the Combat Center Band was asked to return to an event which seeks out fresh musical talent each year, fans said the band's popularity stems from more than fancy uniforms and sensational music.

"For me it's being able to see guys with the same love of country," said Leslie Herman, a former Marine who served as a field artillery operator from 1969 to 1971. "The band to me shows integrity, discipline, camaraderie, and esprit de corps."

Michael May, who served as a Marine aircraft electrician and electronic technician from 1960 to 1964, added some people do come for the Dress Blue uniform, but others come for the sense of patriotism the band represents.

"They symbolize patriotism, protection, and good, young people doing their duty for their country," said Dianne Wallace, a native of Bevier, Miss. "It's a lot of pride when I see and hear the band."

Shane Uhrick, who came to see the band perform during the festival's parade on Saturday morning of Sept. 6, agreed with May and Wallace.

"They give me a real feeling of pride and patriotism," said Uhrick, a native of Fort Morgan, Colo. "When it comes down to it, the Marines are the first ones in the fight, so they are the symbol of America."

Karen Reid, a Plymouth, Mass., native, who was also attending the parade, said the band's annual return has a lot to do with its member's interaction with the local community while on liberty, and how the interaction helps local families support their children's desire to enlist in the armed forces.

"They make me proud, especially at this time so close to 9/11, and give me a sense of patriotism" said Reid. "People want to see our military, and they want to see the Marines."

Sgt. Victor Diaz, a piano player who has attended the festival with the Combat Center Band for three years, said the band provides veterans with the opportunity to come out and reconnect with their military past, and shared an opinion similar to Reid's.

"We represent their sons and daughters," said Diaz, a native of New York City. "We represent the America they want to see, not the America they see on the news."

After returning from Estes Park, Combat Center Band officer, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen B. Giove, expressed his happiness with the performance of his Marines.

"The Marines performed nostalgically, and they represented the Combat Center with the utmost professionalism," said Giove. "With all their hard work they have something to be proud of."

While the band once again proved their musical expertise at Estes Park, with such musical pieces as "Swing, Swing, Swing," "The Armed Services Melody," "Amazing Grace," and "God Bless America," they also proved their reach and appeal goes beyond the musical spectrum.

The musicians of the band, who are basically trained riflemen and who can serve as perimeter security or a provisional machine gun platoon during times of war, embedded a sense of pride and patriotism into thousands of Americans and painted the Marine Corps in the most positive of lights.

"This festival would not be the same without the Combat Center Band," said Wallace. "I love all the other stuff, but the band needs to be here every year."

After a couple days of rest, the Combat Center Band will begin preparing for an upcoming trip to Wisconsin, where they will help with recruiting in the Milwaukee and Greenbay area.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Saxophonists with the Combat Center Band perform Sept. 4 in Estes Park, Colo., during the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival.

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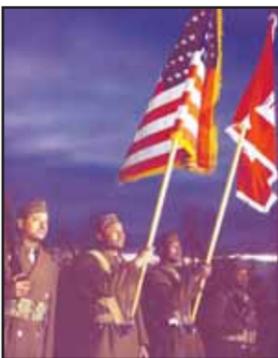
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Photographs courtesy of the Library of Congress

2/25 Marines learn to stomach the reality of war

CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG

2ND BATTALION, 25TH MARINE REGIMENT

Marines from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, got a taste of the dark side of combat Aug. 21 in a casualty response training exercise during the Urban Warfare Training portion of Mojave Viper.

The training staff, assisted by a civilian company which provided role players to act as combat casualties, provided the Marines the opportunity to utilize advanced first aid skills in addressing a gamut of external and internal injuries.

When the Marines entered the "blood house," they were met by a gory scene with fake blood splattered over the walls and concrete floors. The notional wounded screamed in agony or gasped for breath. The Marines were required to determine the extent of injuries, prioritize them, administer emergency first aid and call in 9-line casualty evacuation requests.

"It was very realistic," said Lance Cpl. Derek Daly, a Company E team leader from Narvon, Penn. "I've been through the Marine Corps Combat Lifesaver course and civilian first aid classes, so I was able to react to it. My background and training really kicked in."

Daly, who is a wildlife conservation officer in his civilian career, explained that the more repetition his Marines have had with first aid training in different scenarios over the course of the past several months, the more proficient they've become.

The primary casualties the Marines treated included abdomi-

nal wounds, arterial bleeding and collapsed airways. Under the mentorship of experienced U.S. Navy corpsmen, the Marines worked feverishly in the 110-degree heat, applying bandages and restoring breathing passages, all the time trying to calm the patients to keep them from going into shock.

"It adds some stress to the environment," said Lance Cpl. Steven Galson, an Echo Company rifleman from New Portville, Penn., who works as a longshoreman in his civilian career. "The patient was screaming out like someone with an abdominal wound actually would. It was definitely life-like."

One of the role players was an actual amputee, having lost his left leg from the knee down in a motorcycle accident. He wore the rank of a Marine gunnery sergeant, and it took all the strength of one Marine to hold him down while another applied a tourniquet to the fake blood which oozed from his leg.

"This kind of training is a lot more realistic than working with mannequins," said Petty Officer 1st Class Gerald Jackson, an active-duty sailor who has joined 2/25 for the deployment and assisted in conducting the training.

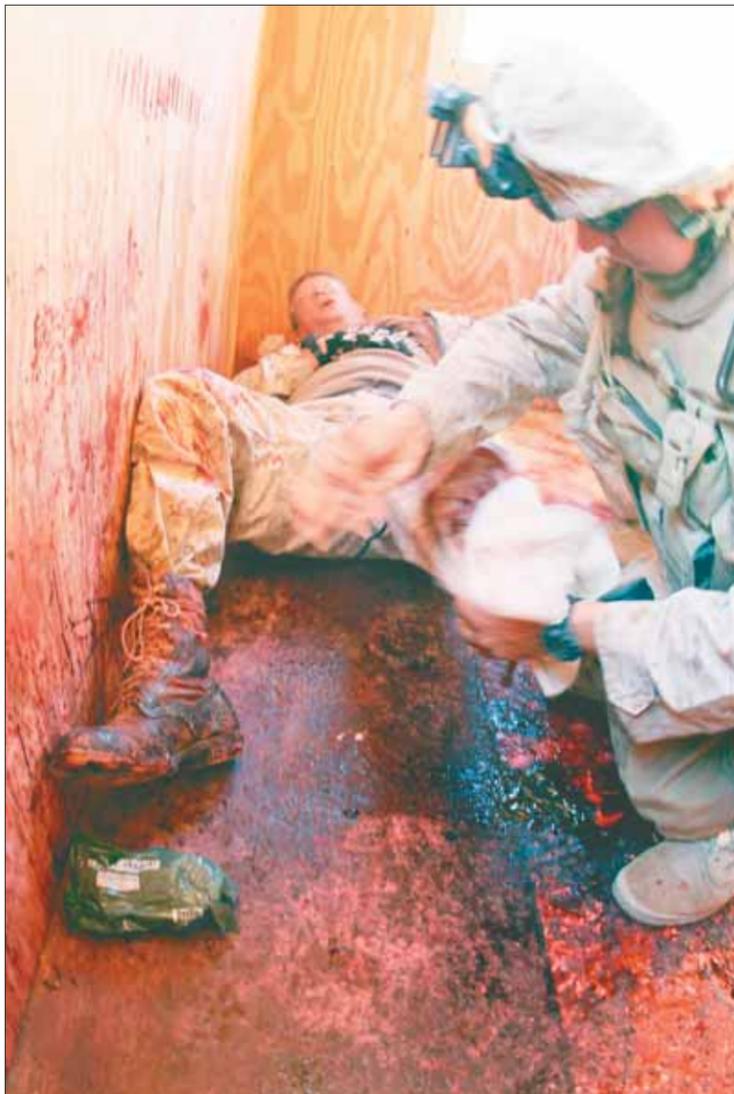
"Overall, they're doing pretty good. Some freeze at first, as they are overwhelmed by seeing the patients covered in blood. But they're learning to work under stress. I think they're ready to go."

Company E, along with the rest of the battalion, departed for Iraq for a seven-month tour with Regimental Combat Team 5 in the country's Al Anbar Province.



CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG

Under the supervision of Petty Officer 2nd Class David Macias, a Marine from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, works to stop the arterial bleeding of a civilian role player Aug. 21 during a casualty response training exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center.



CAPT. PAUL L. GREENBERG

A Marine from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, applies a notional tourniquet to a role player dressed as a Marine gunnery sergeant during a casualty response training exercise aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Aug. 21.

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with cream cheese and home-made raspberry compote, or a twice baked potato topped with scrambled eggs, bacon and melted cheddar cheese.

At 5 p.m. tea is placed in the great room along with a wide assortment of desserts includ-

ing banana cream pie, pineapple-upside-down cake or freshly baked cookies.

"We are famous for our banana cream pie," said Jan. "People read about this place and always ask for a taste of our banana cream pie."

Jan and her husband Gary, a retired Marine, offer special dis-

counts to service members who are going on or returning from a deployment or have received a temporary assigned duty to the Combat Center and to family members traveling to visit their service member.

"We give huge discounts to Marines and sailors going to or coming from Iraq and Afghanistan," said Jan, whose husband was a Marine for 31 years. "We understand the need for couples and families to spend time together, especially before a deployment."

The bed and breakfast will rent a room to a service member in concurrence with the military's per diem rate.

For more information regarding the inn, contact Jan at 367-3238.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Roughley Manor's Campbell Room is located inside the main house and has its own sitting area and fireplace. The Manor has one other room inside the main house called the Magnolia Suite. The 10 other rooms are located in cottages throughout the inns' 25 acres.

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ESD: Improving combat readiness through Lean Six Sigma

LANCE CPL. MICHAEL NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Exercise Support Division is currently conducting a Rapid Improvement Event by implementing the Lean Six Sigma program to improve their productivity and reduce expenses, starting with their amphibious assault vehicle repair section.

Lean Six Sigma is an educational program offered to help identify wasteful processes, organizational issues and increase productivity through efficiency, said Capt. Michael A. Nolan, the ordnance and communications maintenance officer and a native of Kennewick, Wash.

"Everything is a process and every process has variation and waste and we have to come to learn that variation and waste are our enemies," added Nolan. "We have to be wise in how we spend the tax payers' dollars."

ESD's primary focus is to improve war fighting readiness by improving our support processes by eliminating overhead costs, paperwork, transactions times, and lengthy decision making efforts, said Nolan.

ESD is making use of Lean Six Sigma to help streamline their processes in hopes that it will result in a smoother flow and help them be better organized and uniformed, said Nolan.

"We're using Lean Six Sigma to enhance all aspects of support provided to Marine Corps warfighting capability by identifying and removing all the non-value added elements within our daily processes," said Nolan. "We're striving for better organization by reducing excess process steps, delays, excess

inventory and to reduce variation by reducing defects by eliminating mistakes as exemplified in how we set up our HAZMAT (hazardous material) lockers."

Nolan said they are going to have a standard setup for the lockers for every mechanic team. Also, the main storage locker will be better organized along with all the other storage areas in the AAV section.

Nolan added the AAV section is being done first as a trial section, and if improvements are made as planned then the system will be applied to other operational areas in ESD.

ESD is taking use of the new system slowly through one small section of the division at a time, said Nolan.

"We really want the input from the guys on the ground – the smaller end," said Nolan. "Our input and ideas we get from our mechanics are what is going to help us make this new system a permanent staple in the way ESD operates."

ESD is starting from the bottom and working its way to the top, said Harry Paahana, an AAV mechanic and native of Honolulu.

"The higher-ups said that they really want the input from the little guys," explained Paahana. "It made sense to all of us because they're the ones in charge, but we're the ones down there turning the wrenches and making things happen on the vehicles."

The mechanics are each given cards to fill out on a weekly basis that rate how they view the changes made and offer any other suggestions, said Erik Baalrud, an AAV mechanic and a native of New Auburn, Wis.

He added in order for them to



The team of engineers and Marines with the Amphibious Assault Vehicle Support Division stand together in front of their work section Tuesday.

help in making decisions, they must be educated and qualified in the Lean Six Sigma system before they can do so.

The mechanics and the higher-ups in ESD earn their "belts" in the Lean Six Sigma system, said Baalrud. Its not like a martial arts belt someone would wear, but its a certification in levels of classes that individuals obtain through the training completed as well as the level of complexity, cost and time spent working on command prioritized projects.

Each belt is different. There are additional classes you have to take, along with exams at the end of each class. There is also a comprehensive examination for the black and master black belt certification, added Baalrud. There are five belts in the Lean Six Sigma System. Colors of the belts are white, yellow, green, black and master black belt.

The division hopes to improve its capabilities and speed at work as a whole, said Nolan.

"If our results show enough promise to make a good impact on other areas, then the rest of our operations will be altered using this method," said Nolan. "Hopefully the rest of the Marine Corps will see how well our system works and the idea will expand not only through ESD, but also to the rest of the Marine Corps."



Gary Link, an amphibious assault vehicle mechanic, and a native of New York examines the floor of an AAV before making repairs to it Tuesday. The vehicle was recently returned from a training exercise and needed maintenance.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Sunday

Roman Catholic Services Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel

Faith Formation/CCD-8 a.m.
Confessions+ - 8:45 a.m.
Rosary - 9 a.m.
Catholic Mass* - 9:30 a.m.
Children's Liturgy of the Word 9:30 a.m.
Confessions+ - 4:15 p.m.
Choir Practice - 4 p.m.
Rosary - 4:30 p.m.
Catholic Mass - 5 p.m.

Protestant Services Christ Chapel

Lay-Led Independent Baptist
Breakfast, West Wing - 8:30 a.m.
Non-Denominational Service
Worship - 9 a.m.
Children's Church - 9 a.m.
Sunday School - 10:15 a.m.
Youth Group 6 p.m.

Pastor-Led Lutheran Worship Worship-NHTP Chapel-11:15 a.m.

Lay-Led Gospel Service
Worship - 11:30 a.m.

Legend

* Indicates Child Care Provided
+Appointments can be made for
Confessions by calling 830-6456/6482

Weekday Events

Immaculate Heart of Mary
Catholic Mass Mon-Fri - 11:45
a.m. (except holidays)

Monday

Christ Chapel
Praise & Worship Rehearsal-4 p.m.

Immaculate Heart of Mary
Catholic Mass, Mon-Fri -
11:45 a.m. (except holidays)

Tuesday

Christ Chapel

Christian Women's Fellowship* -
9 a.m., (September - May)

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Children's RCIA - 4-5:30 p.m.
Catechist Meeting - 5-8 p.m.
(Second Tuesday each month)
Baptism Class - 6-7:30 p.m.
(First Tuesday each month)

C&E Barracks Building 1666

Bible Study - 6:30 p.m. Chaplain
Hester 830-6187

Wednesday

Christ Chapel

Praise Band Rehearsal - 6 p.m.
Food/Fellowship - 6:30 p.m.
Non-Denomination Bible Study-
7 p.m.
Lay-Led Gospel Bible Study-7 p.m.

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Military Council of Catholic
Women* - 9:30 a.m. Sept. - May
Youth Teen - 6 p.m.
Knights of Columbus - 7 p.m.
(1st Wednesday each month)

Thursday

Immaculate Heart of Mary

RCIA-6-7:30 p.m. Resumes Sept. 11

C&E Barracks Building 1666

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

Friday

Christ Chapel

Gospel Rehearsal - 5 p.m.

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Exposition/Adoration of the
Blessed Sacrament 12:15-4:30 p.m.
(First Friday each month)



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OSC hosts welcome aboard, celebrates more than 50 years of service

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Officers' Spouses' Club hosted Rockin' 'N the Desert, a welcome aboard party for officers' wives Sept. 4 at Quarters 1, the commanding general's house.

The 50's themed party celebrated over 50 years of activity while spouses met up with old friends, made new friends, learned about the base — and for those who weren't already — became a part of OSC.

"[The club] helps me find good people to get together and go out with," said Marlena

McGuire, wife of Capt. Christopher McGuire, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. "Especially when our husbands deploy, we all have a safe outlet and a group of friends to help us within the club."

The club was created to promote friendship, camaraderie and support for the military and surrounding community by holding fundraisers and events every month to raise money for grants and scholarships for people and organizations throughout the Morongo Basin. It is open to spouses of active duty, reserve and retired officers who served in the armed forces.

"I have always enjoyed being with the wives," said Fran Matthews, a retired officer's widow. "Our functions do many good things for the people on the base and community."

As spouses arrived for the party they participated in different ice-breakers to get to know each other and step out of their comfort zone, said Kaprece James, OSC's vice president. The ice-breakers included human-bingo and a raffle drawing with donated prizes such as an Airbonne Fragrance basket, a Pampered Chef gift certificate, Premier Design jewelry and scented candles.

During the event, tables were set up for community and base organizations to display informa-

tion to inform spouses about what was available to them.

The organizations included Marine Corps Community Services, the Combat Center's American Red Cross, the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, the Armed Services YMCA, the Christian Women's Fellowship and the Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley Chambers of Commerce.

Shiloh Hand, OSC treasurer and wife of Maj. Mark Hand, Advisor Training Group, and her two sisters, Brittany Duggan and Marijke Mose, held a live performance and sang "Lollipop" by The Chordettes and "Rockin' Robin" by Bobby Day.

Brig. Gen. Charles Gurganus and his wife, Janet, also spoke to all the spouses during the gathering and thanked them for all they did for the Marines and sailors aboard the base and for the community.

"This is probably the greatest opportunity to establish a network of friends and contacts," said Janet. "A huge part of what we do is to draw the community tighter and make an effort to welcome everyone here."

The next OSC event will be Roll Out the Barrel beer and wine tasting Sept. 27 at the Officers' Club. For more information regarding the Officers' Spouses' Club contact Kaprece James at (760) 910-9576.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Jennifer Driscoll, Officers' Spouses' Club president, introduces the councilwomen of the club during the Rockin' 'N the Desert, an Officers' Spouses' Club welcome aboard party Sept. 4 at Quarters 1, the commanding general's house.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Shiloh Hand, Officers' Spouses' Club treasurer, and her two sisters, Brittany Duggan and Marijke Mose, sing "Lollipop" during the welcome aboard event.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Marine Corps Community Services employees stand by their tables ready to explain what MCCS does for the Combat Center during the welcome aboard party.

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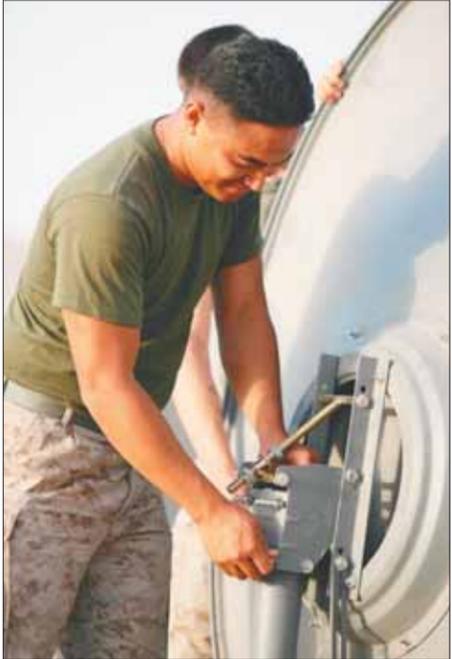
Communication enables Marines to conduct successful Afghanistan operations

CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

HELMAND PROVINCE, CAMP BARBER, Afghanistan — "Eighty ones, we are receiving small arms fire. Request air support!" the radioman shouts.

This life-saving call for fire support wouldn't happen without the



CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

Cpl. Mikael S. Satini, a switchboard operator attached to Communications Platoon, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and Bueno Park, Calif., native, installs a satellite dish to expand communications at a forward operating base.

Communications Platoon of Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

"We were providing security for a fire support team and they started to get hit with small arms and R.P.G. (rocket propelled grenade) fire," said Sgt. Dan R. Coon, a TF 2/7 ground sensor operator and Thousand Oaks, Calif., native. "Without comm, we wouldn't have been able to coordinate an air strike to destroy the Taliban building where the rounds were coming from."

The Communications Platoon keeps the front lines connected through various means, but the primary source of communicating around the headquarters camp and within areas surrounding the FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) is through the use of handheld radios similar to walkie-talkies.

"By issuing radios to the commanders on down to the squad leaders, the Marines are able to maintain constant contact with higher headquarters and other adjacent teams," said Staff Sgt. Matthew R. Henry, radio chief and Toledo, Ohio, native. "Radios are the main source of communication for the battalion."

Due to the high operational capacity and different networks used for communication, TF 2/7 communicators have one of the largest and most complex data networks run by a battalion in the Marine Corps. Maintaining communications on such a grand scale is essential to linking the commanders with their Marines, as TF 2/7 continues its mission of conducting counterinsurgency operations with an emphasis

on police training and mentoring.

"We maintain five data networks for the Marines and other services to maintain communication throughout this area of responsibility, as opposed to other bases that only have two," explained Master Sgt. Adam D. Bethard, communications chief and Assumption, Ill., native. "The 'comm' we're dealing with out here is as complex as the communications of an entire division."

The challenges of producing and monitoring the enormous system has been a daily test for the Marines.

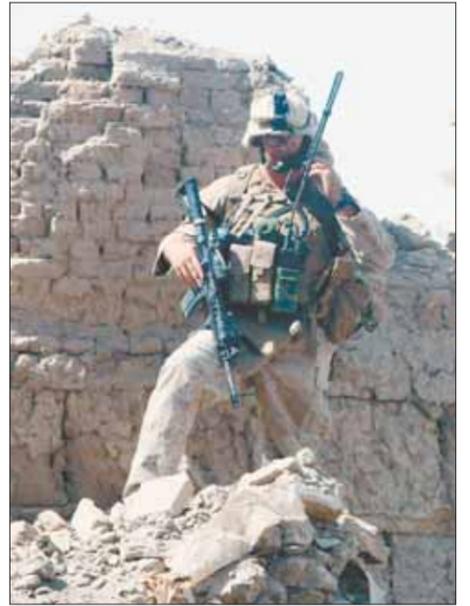
"When we arrived here, we had to build the entire data infrastructure from the ground up," said Lt. Darrell G. Mounger II, communications officer and McKinney, Texas native. "It's not like we fell in on an existing system. So it was an incredible challenge to get it up and running. It took 10 Marines about three weeks to get fully operational."

Afghanistan's rugged terrain is a major factor when delivering communication to the FOBs austere locations. Luckily, the Marines here have help from above.

"We have the ability to use various forms of communication methods to overcome that obstacle and get 'comm' out to even the most remote FOBs," Mounger said.

The Marines also use a high-tech computer system to help track and troubleshoot friction points when problems occur.

"Bad weather, such as sandstorms, can affect communications. Trucks can also run over land lines, severing them. Luckily, we have a state-of-the-art monitoring system and very proficient Marines to go out to the FOBs and fix any problems that may



CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

Capt. Ross Schellhaas, commander, Company F, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and native of Meridian, Idaho, uses a radio to communicate with his platoon commanders following the raid his Marines conducted on a Taliban headquarters building.

arise," said Sgt. Donald O. Critchlow, assistant data chief and Falls Church, Va., native.

Keeping the commanders connected with the Marines at the tip of the fighting spear is simply another day on the job for the communicators who work in shifts, 24 hours a day.

"If communications breaks down you could have problems with medical evacuations, stranded patrols, an inability to coordinate with other units and other problems making the mission next to impossible," Bethard said. "We know how important it is to keep constant communication. This is why we take our job so seriously."

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RETURN, from A5

there was to let them do it with minimum interference from us so when they assume control, when it is their time, it runs as smooth as possible."

At the Combat Center's Victory Field friends and family gathered in the morning and waited throughout the day for the service members to return.

"This was our son's first deployment, and yes, we were worried," said Randy Flood, father of Lance Cpl. Rylan Flood, who is an electrical equipment repair specialist with CLB-7, and a native of Flora, Ill. "There is a big war going on overseas and our son was part of the conflict. I can't wait to see him though. I was in the Army during the Gulf War. We both had many things we could identify with before this. It's what he came in for, and it's what I was in for as well. I'll be glad to see my son when he finally comes home safe and sound."

The family of Cpl. Matt

Dombrowski, a welder with CLB-7 and a native of Hammond, Ind., was waiting for their son as well.

"We were really worried about Matthew while he was overseas," said Martin Dombrowski, father of Cpl. Dombrowski. "We worried and thought about him a lot. It sometimes took up a good portion of our day."

Dombrowski's mother, Lydia, said she devoted a lot of time thinking of her son while he was overseas.

"Along with the rest of the family I prayed quite a bit hoping for my son to make it home safely," she said. "It was hard having him gone. We were used to him being gone because he's stationed out here, but this was different. I'm just glad that he's back in the country safe and sound."

The Marines of CLB-7 will be taking time off, and preparing for another deployment in the upcoming months, whereas 3/4 will be returning to training soon, after enjoying some post-deployment leave.



LANCE CPL. MICHAEL NERL

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 7 and 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, meet their families at the Combat Center's Victory Field after returning from a deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom Sept. 5.

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Party like the Band

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

For those in search of Marines who like to let loose and have a good time, look no further than the Combat Center Band, which offers a more casual form of musical entertainment in its Party Band Ensemble.

Warrant Officer 2 Stephen B. Giove, Combat Center band officer, said party bands, which resemble the famous brass bands of New Orleans, have always been incorporated into bands throughout the Marine Corps, and are meant to show fans that Marines are human while also providing those same fans with a good time.

"People love it when they see Marines out of the normal persona with their discipline and seriousness," said Giove.

Sgt. Douglas Hardee, Party Band leader and snare drummer, said the Party Band, who entertain fans with such songs as "Hey Baby," "Bourbon Street Parade," "Margaritaville," and "The Hamster Dance," is meant to make people have fun.

"The Party Band is the fun ensemble," said Hardee, a native of Charleston, S.C. "We make any situation into a party-like atmosphere, and if they're not having a good time, we aren't doing our job."

Hardee said the current Party Band, which was formed in August, pulled together after its conception and selected both older, more recognizable songs like "Tequila" as well as more recent hits by artists such as Blur, in order to appeal to all age groups.

The goal is to get attendees to sing along and dance, making the show about the fans, more than the band, through crowd interaction.

Due to member's commitments to the complete Combat Center Band, members of the Party Band were forced to learn 12 songs in only four rehearsals during liberty hours and continued to practice outside of work, sometimes at their private residences.

"To say these guys put in work is an understatement," said Hardee. "I ask for commitment, they give me 100 percent."

Lance Cpl. Daniel I. Phillips, Party Band trumpeter, said being a member of the Party Band is time consuming, but his love for music and desire to improve as a musician made him jump at the oppor-

tunity to play for the ensemble.

"It's a lot of dedication, but I love music, and I like to play as much as I can," said Phillips, a native of Knoxville, Tenn. "I look at it as an opportunity to broaden my talent."

Phillips admitted that being in the spotlight with the Party Band can be intimidating because all eyes are focused on the Party Band's nine members instead of the approximately 40 members of the complete Combat Center Band, but also said the pressure forces the band's members to be at the top of their game.

"With that large crowd and with all those people we all have to be ready," said Phillips.

Sgt. Victor L. Norris, Party Band tenor saxophonist, also admitted the band can be time consuming, but said the Party Band fits better with his personality of enjoying the spotlight while entertaining fans.

"I enjoy looking into people's eyes and seeing their reaction," said Norris, a native of Birmingham, Ala. "Playing music is what I love."

Norris, who has hosted rehearsals at his home with his wife and three children, also feels, like Phillips, that the Party Band allows him to better himself as a musician.

"It forces me to be better because I'm out there in the spotlight, and if I screw up there is nowhere to hide," said Norris. "It makes me perform better."

While Norris admitted the



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Sgt. Victor L. Norris, tenor saxophonist, performs a solo while playing with the Combat Center's Party Band Ensemble Sunday in Estes Park, Colo., at the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Members of the Combat Center's Party Band Ensemble entertain fans Sunday night at the Holiday Inn in Estes Park, Colo., at the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival Banquet.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Members of the Combat Center's Party Band Ensemble wave and address their fans Saturday after a performance in Estes Park, Colo., at the town's annual Long's Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival.

Party Band is not a perfect concert ensemble, he said the band's many personalities, which range from resolved yet confident soloists to comedic relief, combine with each member's dedica-

tion to create a more intimate and entertaining show.

"If you don't want to get up and have a good time, don't call us because that is what we are going to do," said Hardee.

Next up for the Party Band Ensemble is a trip with the entire Combat Center Band to Wisconsin where they will help with recruiting efforts in the Milwaukee and Green Bay area.

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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: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for

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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.

3/7, from A1

that their friends of six months are leaving," said Capt. Seth W. MacCutcheon, 33, company commander, Company L, 3/7, from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "They understand our cycle of (deployments), and they've given us a warm welcome."

After the introductions were made, the Marines and Iraqi

leaders discussed the progress made in the city. They also talked about the security in the area and how the Iraqi Police are doing.

"Both the operations officer and the company commander were there, so they were brought up to speed on the happenings in the area," Anderson said. "They can start where we left off. We

built relationships with the sheiks, so they have an opportunity to do better in the area than we did because they have those relationships established."

Sheik Khalif and the Marines took a break in the middle of their conversation to dine on some Iraqi cuisine, which consisted of rice, lamb, watermelon and vegetables.

Sharing a meal with the sheik and other leaders is a sign of good relations.

"The sheiks have a very important role," MacCutcheon said. "They are a part of the culture so they have a large influence in the community."

The Marines with 3/4 believe their battalion has given them a strong foundation to work on and are looking for-

ward to making even more progress here.

"We want to make the government function more effectively while we're here," MacCutcheon said, "and we want to help the commerce get going. There are also still a few bad guys around, so we want to help the IP identify them and get rid of them completely."



Birth announcements

CONOR MALACHI LUNSFORD

Son of Lance Cpl. Michael Lunsford and wife, Monica.

Born July 29, weighing 7 pounds, 9.8 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

ERIC RICARDO ARGUETA

Son of Lance Cpl. Eric Argueta and Hensel Mcheguen-Sanchez.

Born July 30, weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

CHLOE J. PERKINS

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Perkins.

Born Aug. 2, weighing 7 pounds, 8 ounces and measuring 20.2 inches.

GABRIEL CLIFTON JAIME

Son of Capt. Nathaniel Jaime and wife, Alana.

Born Aug. 3, weighing 8 pounds, 3 ounces and measuring 19.8 inches.

DANIEL SCOTT HENDRICKSON JR.

Son of Cpl. Daniel Hendrickson and wife, Ashley.

Born Aug. 6, weighing 8 pounds, 14.6 ounces and measuring 20.7 inches.

MAKALA ROSE TAORMINA

Daughter of Pfc. James J. Taormina Jr., and wife, Kira.

Born Aug. 8, weighing 6 pounds, 14.7 ounces and measuring 18.9 inches.

CHASE ALEXANDER LYONS

Son of Cpl. James A. Lyons and wife, Melanie.

Born Aug. 10, weighing 7 pounds, 6 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

JACOB GABRIEL CASTRO

Son of Sgt. Abel Castro and wife, Randi.

Born Aug. 12, weighing 6 pounds, 4.3 ounces and measuring 18.2 inches.

BRAILYN NICOLE ALBRITTON

Daughter of Sgt. Aaron Albritton and wife, Brandi.

Born Aug. 12, weighing 7 pounds, 9.6 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

NOAH LEE BOUCHARD

Son of 2nd Lt. David Bouchard and wife, Christine.

Born Aug. 12, weighing 6 pounds, 10 ounces and measuring 20.4 inches.

ANTHONY CHRISTOPHER MARIN

Son of Lance Cpl. Kevin Marin and wife, Barbara.

Born Aug. 13, weighing 7 pounds, 9.8 ounces and measuring 20.4 inches.

BRADEN WILLIAM MCDANIEL

Son of Cpl. Andrew T. McDaniel and wife, Amy.

Born Aug. 15, weighing 7 pounds, 6.8 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

EMMALEE MARIE MATHEWS

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Toby Mathews and wife, Aleasa.

Born Aug. 16, weighing 6 pounds, 9 ounces and measuring 18 inches.

MICAH BRAYDON ANDERSON

Son of Seaman Kyle C. Anderson and wife, Mahanna.

Born Aug. 20, weighing 8 pounds, 4.8 ounces and measuring 20.7 inches.

JULIA LESLIE CAPERON

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Enrique Caperon and wife, Andrea.

Born Aug. 20, weighing 7 pounds, 5.5 ounces and measuring 21 inches.

JAYDEN KEITH PHIBBS

Son of Cpl. Christopher M. Phibbs and wife, Korie.

Born Aug. 23, weighing 7 pounds, 2.5 ounces and measuring 19.2 inches.

EMERSYN DREW TRITT

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Andrew Tritt and wife, Candyce.

Born Aug. 25, weighing 8 pounds, 3.5 ounces and measuring 20.3 inches.



CPL. ERIK VILLAGRAN

Capt. Seth W. MacCutcheon, company commander, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, greets Sheik Khalif Awwad Farhan in Hit, Iraq, Sept. 2.

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CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

Sgt. David J. Lang, a combat engineer assigned to Company F, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and a Port Orchard, Wash., native, kicks a door in to clear a room during an assault on a Taliban-held compound Aug. 28.

ASSAULT from, A1

weapons, which takes away their ability to use them against us.”

“Whenever we get to an assault position, we’re already receiving fire and the Marines go right to the sound of the guns – no hesitation,” Capt. Schellhaas explained.

During the assault, Company F Marines had the additional support of the task force’s Combined Anti-Armor Team, which supported the operation with additional heavy firepower.

“Our main goal was to help Company F clear their objective by killing as many enemy fighters as possible,” said Maj. Urbano Cruz, Weapons Company commander and Palm Beach, Fla., native. “The thing that CAAT brings to the fight is a sizable force. We’re the big guns of the battalion, and the Taliban see that and think twice before attacking.”

To combat the IED threat, TF 2/7’s Combat Engineer Platoon are called forward and breach the enemy’s walls with explosives so the Fox Company Marines can move forward to their objective.

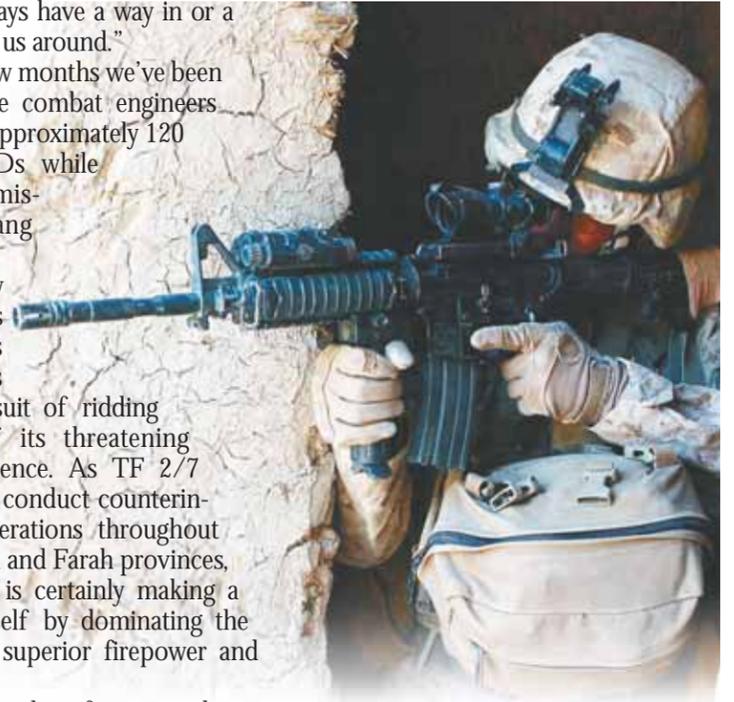
“We can always get the Marines through the door, or through the wall,” said Sgt. David J. Lang, a combat engineer squad leader and Port Orchard, Wash., native. “The infantry

guys will always have a way in or a way out with us around.”

“In the few months we’ve been out here, the combat engineers have found approximately 120 possible IEDs while out on missions,” Lang said.

Company F Marines and sailors are relentless in their pursuit of ridding the area of its threatening Taliban presence. As TF 2/7 continues to conduct counterinsurgency operations throughout the Helmand and Farah provinces, Company F is certainly making a name for itself by dominating the enemy with superior firepower and maneuver.

“After months of sustained combat, it’s a testament to the Marines’ strength, endurance and character that they keep doing the little things right,” said 1st Lt. Arthur E. Karel, 3rd Platoon commander and Arlington, Va., native.



CPL. JAMES M. MERCURE

A Marine assigned to Company F, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, posts security for his platoon deep within a Taliban-held compound Aug. 28.

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