

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

FEBRUARY 6, 2009 SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957 VOL. 52 ISSUE 5

Easing families' minds:

Marine Corps prohibits sex offenders from occupying, accessing government housing

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Whether children are splashing in the community pool during the summer months, walking the family dog or playing in their own back yard, parents want to feel secure knowing their children are safe in a military community.

Headquarters Marine Corps under direction from the Secretary of the Navy recently published a policy letter stating that all registered sex offenders are now prohibited from occupying or accessing Marine Corps government-owned, leased or privatized family housing. The SECNAV policy was issued Dec. 31.

"We want service members to know that while they are fighting for their country, their family members are taken care of back home," said Ken Tinquist, the Combat Center's housing officer.

According to the policy letter, all service members applying for government housing and every member of their family who will be residing with them will now be screened using available sex offender registries prior to placement.

Although service members are screened prior to enlistment, they will be screened again because circumstances could change during military service and for a variety of

See FAMILIES, A5

Wolfpack tops off NTC training with FINEX



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Iraqi role players tend to a mock casualty who was shot by an Iraqi Army soldier role player in Al Wahde, a training town at the Army's National Training Center Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 28. Members of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion spent two weeks training at Fort Irwin in preparation of their upcoming deployment to Iraq. The Marines primarily played support roles, helping Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police role players establish order in the mock towns throughout Fort Irwin's training sites.

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER FORT IRWIN, Calif. - The Marines and sailors of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion completed their two-week pre-deployment training evolution here Jan. 30, at the end of a final exercise designed to test their newly acquired skills.

The Wolfpack spent a week preparing for the four-day FINEX by conducting urban patrols, zone and route reconnaissance missions, and casualty evacuation exercises throughout Fort Irwin's training areas.

"The National Training Center here at Fort Irwin affords us a great opportunity to conduct many types of missions," said Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, commanding officer. "Our principle focus of effort here is to conduct counterinsurgency operations

See FINEX, A7

'Thundering Third' Marines give helping hand to needy

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

More than 45 Marines and sailors from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, teamed up with community members from Indian Wells and La Quinta, Calif., Saturday, at the Southwest Community Church in Indian Wells, as part of a community outreach program.

The Marines and sailors ventured to the city of Duroville, Calif., where the residents of the city were ordered to remove additions to their trailer homes that

once served as spare bedrooms, car ports and porches due to fire hazards the construction caused.

"I was really excited when I heard the Marines were coming," said Kevin Johnson, a pastor at the Southwest Community Church. "I know that they are all really hard workers with a good attitude, so I knew Duroville would get a good group."

The additions had been removed, but the residents had no place or money to remove all the trash from the neighborhood. With no other alternative, the community created a large dump

site and filled it with the wood, wall insulation, cement, pipes, trash and old furniture.

"All of it is wood and it's all a big fire danger," said Tom Flynn, the court-appointed property manager of the city. "There have been two fires at Duroville."

The Marines, who worked alongside a handful of civilians, had to clear away the debris by throwing it into one of seven large dumpsters provided at the site Saturday. The Marines filled the bins within two hours, but needed dozens

See HELP, A4

'War Dogs' celebrate Marine Corps birthday, honor fallen brothers



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Marines bring forth the birthday cake during their celebration of the Marine Corps birthday in Laughlin, Nev., Jan. 29. A crowd of more than 50 people from Bullhead City, Ariz., were present outside the ballroom to thank them for their patriotism and heroism during their recent deployment to Afghanistan.

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, celebrated a belated Marine Corps birthday Jan. 29, in Laughlin, Nev., while also recognizing all their brothers-in-arms who paid the ultimate sacrifice during their recent deployment to Afghanistan.

In support of the Marines and sailors of 2/7, Debbie Nuchols, the mother of Dustin Burnett, a corpsman who was killed during their deployment, arranged a crowd of more

than 50 people from Bullhead City, Ariz., to thank them for their patriotism. The supporters waved American flags, carried signs that thanked 2/7 for all their hard work and welcomed them home with hugs, handshakes and thank yous.

"I was overwhelmingly surprised," said Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brookshire, the battalion sergeant major. "When I heard it was Doc Burnett's family doing this for us, it held even more meaning for me. It was very touching for them to take time out of their schedule to thank the Marines for what

they did in Afghanistan."

Although Nuchols was there to thank and welcome home all the Marines and sailors of 2/7, she searched for service members who served with her son in Company G. She had prepared bags filled with snacks, and a letter she wrote for each service members of her son's company.

"I want to make sure they know we are grateful for all they did," said Nuchols, who buried her son July 4. "These guys served with my son. I want to get to know them and hear happy stories

See BIRTHDAY, A3



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Byron Hunter, a rifleman with Company K, picks up trash during a community outreach program Jan. 31, in Duroville, Calif.

Civilian journalist saves Marine's life
See Page A5



Elevating communication skills
See Page A6

Intramural Basketball highlights
See Page B3



Marines bring aid to village
See Page A7

Speak up about your medical care issues at a medical care forum Feb. 10 at building 1707 from 6-7:30 p.m. Free childcare will be available at New Horizons Child Care Center. See A2 for more details.

Scholarships for Military Children

Are you digging under the sofa cushions for misplaced change and rolling coins from your money jar to help pay for college tuition? Given the soaring costs of higher education, you certainly aren't alone. Perhaps a \$1,500 scholarship could help?

Applications for the 2009 Scholarships for Military Children Program must be turned in to the commissary by close of business Feb. 20. They are available in commissaries worldwide or online at <http://www.commissaries.com/> and <http://www.militaryscholar.org>, where they can be filled out on the computer and printed, or printed and filled out by hand. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The scholarship program is open to

unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of active-duty, reserve, National Guard and retired military personnel. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database.

Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the DEERS database and that they have a current ID card. All applicants must be U.S. citizens. The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2009.

Students at community or junior colleges must be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

To report emergencies, call 9-1-1, but that's not all

COMBAT CENTER FIRE DEPARTMENT

A recent caller was shocked when it took more than 15 minutes for our emergency units to arrive after calling 9-1-1 to report an emergency from a cell phone. She commented "What might have happened if the person had been critically injured?" Fifteen minutes is a long wait when someone is "down for the count," but our units arrived within only a few minutes of receiving the call. So, what happened in between?

Cellular and Voice-over-Internet Protocol 9-1-1 calls are not directly received by the MCAGCC Emergency 9-1-1 Center. Cellular calls are routed off the installation to outside agencies such as the California Highway Patrol in Barstow, Victorville or Indio, Calif., then typically transferred to San Bernardino Dispatch who, in turn, sends the call to the Provost Marshal's Office. PMO then forwards the call to the Fire Department. All these processes can cause a lengthy delay in getting local resources coming to you.

VOIP calls work a little differently.

They are routed to an operator that needs to associate your address with your local emergency services dispatch center, which is not typically a smooth transition. VOIP phones need your information registered with the provider. You should register your address when you sign up and again any time you move.

Once your VOIP service is established, test your phone to ensure your call is being routed to the correct Emergency 9-1-1 Center. If you are located on base, you can report emergencies by setting up a quick dial for one of the dedicated local emergency lines. Make sure you have your address or location available for the Emergency 9-1-1 Center.

In short, calling 9-1-1 from any land line phone aboard the base is the best way to report a local MCAGCC emergency. However, if you do not have a land line with a cell or VOIP phone, the fastest way to contact the MCAGCC Emergency Dispatch Center is by calling one of our dedicated phone lines at 830-3473, 830-3333 or 830-3334.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Assistant Fire Chief Darlene Hull at 830-5400.

HELP!

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American Profile Hometown Content 01/18/2009

ACROSS

1. To-do list item
5. "Animal House" house
9. "Once bitten, ____"
14. Height: Prefix
15. A Simpson kid
16. "Ready ____"
17. Horse coloring
18. MBA subj.
19. Puts together
20. Ruthian nickname
23. Thumb twiddlers
24. Law school class
28. ____ culpa
30. Mideast org.
31. Tour book feature
32. Knock for a loop
36. "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" writer
38. Made the scene
39. Shortened firearm
42. ____-Contra affair
43. Lo-cal
44. French seaport
45. NE or SW

DOWN

1. Ankle bones
2. One way to think
3. Play for time
4. Kunta ____ ("Roots" role)
5. Defat, whaler-style
6. "Little Caesar" role
7. Beginning on
8. Summer shades
9. Heckler's missile
10. Burning rage
11. Tattooist's supply
12. Cedar Rapids college
13. UFO occupants
21. Ready for battle
22. Cardiff-born
25. Spin doctor's concern
26. "The Stranger" author
27. Tuckered out
29. Jude Law or Michael Caine title role
30. Tough problem

32. Out of the way
33. Cheech of Cheech & Chong
34. Obie or Emmy
35. Meditative sect
37. Frequently, to a bard
38. NBA or NFL pos.
40. Of days gone by
41. Articles in black borders
46. Strongly opposed
48. "Hogwash!"
50. Hayes or Newton
52. In the thick of
53. Calyx part
54. Piece of Latin percussion
55. "Candid Camera" creator Funt
57. Metro map feature
58. Trevi fountain throw-in
59. Algerian port
60. Source of syrup
61. Soccer stadium cheer
62. Diarist Anais

[puzzle Solutions on A6]

Combat Center Spotlight

Rank/Name: 1st Lt. Adam McLaurin
Hometown: Gainesville, Fla.
Organization: Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment
Job title: Adjutant
Duties: Legal issues, personnel administration, awards, public affairs issues and TAD travel.
Favorite aspect of your job?: "I like helping out Marines and sailors."
Hobbies: Florida Gator football, Florida Gator basketball, watching the Gators win the National Championship, long walks on the beach and pork rinds.
Significant achievements: Becoming an adjutant
Military service: Nearly three-and-a-half years
Time at the Combat Center: Almost one year



Hot Topics

JAN. 12 – MARCH 9: WATER OUTAGES

Between now and March 8, at different times, buildings aboard the installation will experience a water loss of a short duration, no more than five or 10 minutes. The water loss is a result of a required inspection and certification of all water backflow preventers. If any repairs to the backflows are required, a longer duration of water loss may be experienced. If a repair is required, notification to the building occupants will be made at a later date.

FEB. 10: MEDICAL CARE FORUM

Lt. Gen. Ronald S. Coleman, the deputy commander for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, M.D. U.S. Army, the deputy director of TRICARE Management Activity, will be at the Combat Center Tuesday at a forum to address your medical care issues. Information tables will also be set up to highlight services offered. The forum will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in building 1707. For more information, call 830-6807.

FEB. 19: RECRUITER SCREENING TEAM TO VISIT COMBAT CENTER

The Headquarters Marine Corps Recruiter Screening Team will visit the Combat Center Feb. 19 to screen pre-designated enlisted Marines for potential future assignment on recruiting duty.

This Day in Marine Corps History

Feb. 2, 1968

Operation Hue City; Tet Offensive began in Vietnam.

SUDOKU

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Centerspeak

If you could be a character in any movie or TV show, who would you be and why?

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



SHANE HINPT
SECURITY GUARD, MARINE CORPS EXCHANGE

"I would be Jim Carrey because he is hilarious. He's a really funny guy."



LANCE CPL. GABRIEL BRANHAM
LAV CREWMAN, CO. D, 3RD LAR BN.

"I would be Batman from 'The Dark Knight'. He's got everything in the world."



SGT. ALFREDO SOTO
ASSAULTMAN, WEAPONS CO., 3/4

"I would be Seth Rogan because he's funny. I like to make people laugh."

OBSERVATION POST

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Translating friendship: *Wolfpack captain and Iraqi interpreter reunite at Fort Irwin*

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Throughout U.S. operations in the Middle East, the Marine Corps and other branches of the military have made great strides toward establishing friendships with the Iraqi people. Although some of these relationships may only last

during a deployment, some do continue to grow as years go by. Spc. Sherhan, translator, 51st Translator Interpreter Company, who asked his full name not be released to protect his family in Iraq, and Capt. Andrew Kressin, company commander, Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, reunited at the Army's National Training Center,

Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 18 - Feb. 2, after working together in Iraq in 2003. Sherhan, a Baghdad native, began working as a translator for Coalition forces in 2003. "I saw an ad in the newspaper that said the U.S. government was looking for interpreters to assist the military," said Sherhan. "I went to the Coalition Provisional Authority Headquarters in Baghdad and submitted my paperwork. After passing my English test, an Army major called me and said I had been accepted for the job."

Sherhan and five other translators were assigned as interpreter supervisors in charge of 40 to 45 other interpreters who assisted coalition forces in their daily operations. During this time, he was transferred to Taji, Iraq, where he met Kressin. At the time, Kressin was assigned to a Military Transition Team, formerly known as Advisor Support Teams, where he assisted in the initial training of 1st Brigade, 1st Division, Iraqi Army, after the fall of the Iraqi government. "Sherhan helped us bridge the language gap," said Kressin, a Beloit, Va., native. "We held several training classes in Taji, and he would interpret what we said." Kressin and Sherhan quickly became friends at the training center in Iraq. Sherhan taught Kressin how to speak Arabic during their downtime, but he did not need much help with his English, since he had graduated from the University of Baghdad with an English



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE Spc. Sherhan, translator, 51st Translator Interpreter Company, and Capt. Andrew Kressin, company commander, Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, reunited at the Army's National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 18 to Monday, after working together in Iraq in 2003. Kressin and the rest of the Wolfpack spent two weeks at Fort Irwin training for their upcoming deployment.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE Spc. Sherhan, translator, 51st Translator Interpreter Company, translates for Capt. Andrew Kressin, company commander, Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, during a meeting with Iraqi Army role players at the Army's National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 28. Kressin and Sherhan worked with each other in Taji, Iraq, in 2003.

BIRTHDAY, from A1

about my son." As Nuchols approached Marines from Company G, the reaction was the same every time; the Marine would instantly hug her, tell her how sorry he is about her loss and tell her how he remembered Dustin. As the ceremony began, a slideshow was presented in honor of all the service members and the Afghan interpreter who lost their lives during their deployment. The slideshow presented their names, pictures and the day they were killed. As each name and picture came across

the screen, the attendees of the ball applauded and vocalized their respect for their fallen comrades with a resonating "Ooh-rah!" "My guys did a great job in honoring our fallen, wounded and their families," said Lt. Col. Richard Hall, the battalion's commanding officer. "They showed their heart on how we embrace those in our family." The cake-cutting ceremony introduced 2/7's guest of honor for the night, Oliver North, a decorated colonel who retired from the Marine Corps. He is currently a Fox News correspondent who spent time with the battalion

in Afghanistan last year. "I have lived 47 years out of my whole life in or around the Marine Corps," said North. "And from my experience, 2/7 is amazing because you have lived and fought in some of the most difficult and hardest places on earth against the most dangerous enemies, and you have never lost a gun fight." As the ceremony came to an end, the Marines and sailors of 2/7 continued to celebrate the Marine Corps ball, not so much for themselves, but for their fallen brothers who were with them in spirit.

Medical Care Forum

February 10th 6 - 7:30 P.M. Bldg. 1707



Come out and let your voice be heard by a panel of experts here to address your medical care issues:
Lieutenant General Ronald S. Coleman; Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and Major General Elder Granger, M.D. US Army; Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity

Information tables will also be available to highlight services offered.

For more information, please call 830-6807

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April 18, 2009

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Navy honors civilian journalist for saving Marine’s life

ARMY STAFF SGT. JOY PARIANTE

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

WASHINGTON — A civilian journalist received a top Navy honor in Iraq on Jan. 24 for his heroism in saving a Marine’s life while in Afghanistan.

Then-Fox News cameraman Chris Jackson, embedded with a Marine Corps platoon, was traveling by Humvee down a dangerous road in Afghanistan on Aug. 3 when it hit 50 pounds of homemade explosives. All of the vehicle’s passengers escaped the flaming vehicle, with the exception of vehicle commander Sgt. Courtney Rauch.

The blast severely injured Rauch and knocked him unconscious. Jackson, despite having received shrapnel wounds himself, rushed back to the vehicle, pulled Rauch out and carried him to safety.

“Without Chris’ quick thinking and heroic act, I would have lost my life that day,” Rauch said. “Chris forgot about being a reporter that day and became one of our brothers and acted as one of us. Chris went above and beyond his duty.”

Jackson, who now works for CNN/ Turner Broadcasting, was presented with the Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award, the second-highest award given to civilians by the Navy, for his actions. Jackson received the award at Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, outside of Baghdad, during a stop

in Iraq en route to India. An audience of appreciative Marines was on hand during the ceremony.

Maj. Gen. Paul Lefebvre, deputy commanding general for Multinational Corps Iraq, has a son in the same company with which Jackson was traveling. Lefebvre, who pre-

sented the award on behalf of the Navy, asked his son if all the wonderful things being said about Jackson were true.

“I asked him, ‘Is this the real thing?’ and he said, ‘Yeah dad, this guy’s a hero,’” Lefebvre said. “This was not an everyday action. It came

from somewhere deep inside and shows such a level of courage and commitment.”

When told in front of the crowd why he was invited to Al Faw Palace, Jackson blushed. “It goes to show

that Marines have a good sense of humor,” he said. “I was told I was coming here for a briefing.”

Jackson said he didn’t think twice about risking his own life to save someone else’s.

“I wasn’t thinking. I saw there was trouble, and I didn’t even think about grabbing a camera and filming it,” Jackson said. “I just did what anyone else would do if someone was in trouble.”



ARMY STAFF SGT. JOY PARIANTE

Maj. Gen. Paul Lefebvre, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps - Iraq, awards Fox News cameraman Chris Jackson with the Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award Jan. 24 at Al Faw Palace for pulling Sgt. Courtney Rauch from a burning humvee in Afghanistan Aug. 3.

FAMILIES, from A1

other reasons, Tinquist said.

All members living in housing aged 14 and older will be screened, Tinquist said. To comply with the new policy, Family Housing has already started to screen everyone currently in government housing and Lincoln Military Housing.

“This is not a witch hunt,” Tinquist said. “We are not trying to pry into people’s lives. This is for the protection of children and their families.”

Guests are also subject to being screened if they reside in the house for over 30 days, Tinquist said. They are required to submit a letter stating why they will be living in

that residence for the time period and provide information for the screening process. Guests residing in Lincoln Military Housing over 30 days must also provide \$50 for the background check.

“This not only heightens awareness for our families, but also brings a sense of security in knowing that the Marine Corps is focusing on the safety of our children,” said Denise Cullum, the 7th Marine Regiment family readiness officer.

According to the policy letter, if an applicant or family member is identified on a sex offender registry, their application will be immediately referred to the respective chain of command, including the Staff Judge Advocate and the

installation commander. The package will be reviewed at each level and weighed against mitigating circumstances.

After consideration of all the facts provided, the installation commander can then decide if a waiver request is warranted to the deputy commandant of the Marine Corps of Installation and Logistics.

“Although the Marine Corps policy letter brings a measure of security, it doesn’t prevent sex offenders, unknown to our families, from coming on base to visit for activities,” Cullum said. She advised to always be aware of where your children are at all times.

For more information about the new policy, contact Family Housing at 830-6611.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Sunday

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel
Roman Catholic Services
8 a.m. Faith Formation /CCD
Sept. - May building 1551
8:45 a.m. Confessions+
9 a.m. Rosary
9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass*
9:30 a.m. Children’s Liturgy of the Word
4:15 p.m. Confessions+
4 p.m. Choir Practice
4:30 p.m. Rosary
5 p.m. Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
Lay-Led Independent Baptist Breakfast, 8 a.m. West Wing
Non-Denominational Christian Service
9 a.m. Worship*
9 a.m. Children’s Church
10:15 a.m. Sunday School*
6 p.m. Youth Group
Lay-led Gospel Service
11:30 a.m. Worship
Protestant Chapel
Assemblies of God Fellowship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Morning Service building 1707, room G
Legend
* Indicates Child Care Provided
+ Appointments can be for Confessions by calling 830-6456/6482

Weekday Events

Immaculate Heart of Mary
Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m. Catholic Mass (except holidays)
Monday
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m. Catholic Mass (except holidays)
Tuesday
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. Christian Women’s Fellowship* Sept. to May
Evening service at 7 p.m. - Protestant Chapel west wing
Immaculate Heart of Mary
4-5:30 p.m. Children’s RCIA
5-8 p.m. Catechist Meeting (Second Tuesday each month)
6-7:30 p.m. Baptism Class (First Tuesday each month)
Wednesday
Christ Chapel
6 p.m. Praise Band Rehearsal
6:30 p.m. Food/Fellowship
7 p.m. Non-Denomination Bible Study
7 p.m. Lay-led Gospel Bible Study
Immaculate Heart of Mary
9:30 a.m. Military Council of Catholic Women* Sept. to May
6 p.m. Youth Teen
7 p.m. Knights of Columbus (1st Wednesday each month)
Thursday
Immaculate Heart of Mary
6-7:30 p.m. RCIA Resumes Sept 11
C&E Barracks building 1666
11:30 a.m. Bible Study Chaplain Moran 830-6187
Friday
Christ Chapel
5 p.m. Gospel Rehearsal
Immaculate Heart of Mary
12:15 p.m. 4:30 p.m. Exposition/Adoration Most Blessed Sacrament (First Friday each month)

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Communication Marines tackle mountainous challenge

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGE-



Cpl. Blake W. Garces, a field radio operator with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, conducts a radio check during an abbreviated version of the Mountain Command and Control Communication Course Jan. 29.

PORT, Calif. – Marines from Regimental Combat Team 7 and 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, underwent an abbreviated version of the Mountain Command and

Control Communication Course here Jan. 26 to 30. Gunnery Sgt. Brad Faulkner, the chief instructor of the communication course, said the standard 10-to-15-day course is offered eight times a year to Marines holding communications-based military occupational specialties and may open to Marines serving as provision- al communicators.

The course is designed to teach Marines how to communicate in complex terrain and focus field expedient antenna employment with high frequency radio systems, very high frequency systems, ultra high frequency systems and satellite communication in mountainous environments like Afghanistan, said Faulkner, a Glasgow, Ken., native.

The 10 students of the abbreviated course, all from Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., learned how to employ HF field antennae in cold weather and mountainous terrain, something that is not be feasible in the flat, desert landscape from which they come.

“In the kind of complex,



Cpl. Colby F. Staples, Cpl. Jefferson A. Saures and Lance Cpl. Antonio E. Reyes, field radio operators, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, use a “dagger” or GPS location devise, to determine their angle of azimuth before setting up a communication station at the Brownie Creek parking lot during an abbreviated version of the Mountain Command and Control Communication Course offered at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 29.

compartmentalized terrain found here, Marines typically rely on over-the-horizon [communications] since line-of-sight communication is limited as far as distance is concerned,” said Faulkner. “These Marines are doing crawl, walk, run stages in this course before they return with their units in February.”

Faulkner explained in desert and flat-ground land-

scapes where visibility is excellent over long distances, communication details do not need to be as closely monitored as they do in terrain with extreme short-distance elevation changes.

Environmental obstacles such as trees and mountains pose relatively difficult hurdles to line-of-sight communications and limits what are called “bigger box equipment” or “mobilized terrestrial equipment” systems normally borne on vehicles and used by higher echelon command elements like regiments and battalions.

“Bigger box equipment systems are restricted to traveling only where roads go,” said Faulkner. “Operations plans [in mountainous environments] have to be looked at differently because the comm services are not as robust in man-packed operations. But man-packed operations do allow Marines to reach out and touch someone further.”

Sgt. Timothy D. Galluzzi, a

mountain communication course instructor at MWTC, explained why communication is vital to the mission of the Marine Corps.

“Comm is the backbone of a battalion and the lower level operations,” said the Sacramento, Calif., native. “It’s one of the six warfighting functions. You must have comm in order to fight, and this is the only place where mountainous environmental training for comm takes place in the Marine Corps.”

Sgt. James F. Hanson, a field radio operator with Headquarters and Service Company, 3/4, was a first-time student of a mountain communication course.

“I really didn’t know what to expect before I got here because I’ve never been in an environment like this,” said the North Little Rock, Ark., native. “I’ve done comm courses before in Twentynine Palms, but you really didn’t have to be very specific with it. All these different features like the trees and mountains come into play here.”

Hanson added all the Marines who went through this course will be noncommissioned officers taking charge of their units for the unit training package at MWTC in February with the experience and knowledge they gained here, they will have more success passing knowledge to their Marines when the course kicks off this month.

“Since we will need to be speaking over mountainous distances in Afghanistan, this training will prepare us immensely,” he said.

Faulkner said in light of the conflict moving into Afghanistan, training at MWTC could play a major role in unit preparedness.

“It’s very important for any Marines who deploy to Afghanistan to not only go through comm courses, but to also do our unit package for those basic skills,” said Faulkner. “You have to be brilliant in the fundamentals.”

The Marines and sailors of 3/4 will train at MWTC later this month in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan this summer.



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Sgt. James F. Handson, a field radio operator with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, connects communication wire to a snow shoe stuck in the snow during the abbreviated communications course Jan. 29.

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Afghan National Army, Marines provide humanitarian assistance

LANCE CPL. BRIAN D. JONES
SPECIAL PURPOSE MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE AFGHANISTAN

QAMBARAN, Afghanistan — Afghan National Army soldiers provided humanitarian assistance to locals of the southern Afghan village of Qambaran, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Jan. 26, 2009, with the assistance of alliance forces.

The ANA took the lead during the operation, while being escorted by U.S. Marines of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment [Reinforced], the ground combat element of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Afghanistan, and a team of Italian soldiers of the 186th Parachutist

Regiment, 207th Corps. The mission was to build relationships with the villagers while driving a wedge between the locals and insurgents in a known hostile environment.

“We were out there to let them know that they do have a government, and ANA and Afghan National Police are standing up in their area,” said Sgt. Jesus O. Luna, a Marine with 3rd Civil Affairs Group, SPMAGTF-A.

The Afghan and Italian soldiers and U.S. Marines traveled many hours over desolate and difficult terrain to arrive at the village. In such a remote location, the locals there had never witnessed the presence of the ANA before.

“They’re so far removed from other areas that only a few patrols have been up

there since the 1980s when the Russians were here,” said 1st Lt. Adam J. Felde, the Weapons Platoon commander of Company K. “We were probably the second, maybe the third American force to have ever been up to Qambaran. The first time we went up there about a month ago, they wouldn’t even look at us. They were more receptive this time.”

“It was the first time the locals and even the older men there have ever reported seeing ANA up there,” said Felde. “A lot of times, the locals don’t even know the ANA are even Muslim. They just think of them as foreigners. They didn’t pay much attention to [U.S. Marines] at all. They were very

See AFGHAN, A8



LANCE CPL. BRIAN D. JONES
An interpreter working with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Afghanistan, explains how to administer medication to a local of the southern Afghan village of Qambaran, during a humanitarian assistance mission Jan. 26.

FINEX, from A1

while working with Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army soldiers and civil leadership officials to better the situation in their respective simulated towns.

“Due to the versatility, maneuverability and the organic firepower of an LAR battalion, we can conduct a variety of missions across the spectrum of counter-insurgency,” added the Coupland, Texas, native.

The battalion’s scenario during the FINEX was to help Iraqi Security Forces defeat enemy insurgents in order to facilitate self-governance and economic development in the simulated towns throughout the training area, dubbed the Al Khadaa Province.

Each company faced similar problems in their assigned towns dealing with sanitation, water, food, crime and eco-

nomie development issues. All of these problems have been common in Iraq since the fall of the Iraqi government in 2003.

Company D was appointed as the main effort in Al Wahde, the provincial capital. Throughout the four-day exercise, Company D, also known by their call sign ‘Dragoons,’ identified the problems civilian Iraqi role players faced and made efforts to better the town.

The Dragoons helped train Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police officials, identified and investigated potential terrorists, and provided medical care and food to civilian role players.

“This was really good training for a non-kinetic environment,” said Lance Cpl. Aaron Ramos, rifleman, Company D, 3rd LAR. “We’ve been practicing language skills and building rapport with the local

populous in order to gain valuable information.”

Training now is much different than it was during the initial invasion of Iraq, added the Oceanside, Calif., native. Instead of being the tip of the spear, Marines are now mainly playing a support role.

“This training really gets us in the mindset that we aren’t going to go to Iraq and be in a fully kinetic environment all the time,” said Cpl. Sergio Gomez, squad leader, Company D, 3rd LAR.

However, the random riots and simulated improvised explosive device attacks

helped us avoid complacency, added the Downey, Calif., native.

The Iraqi role players also proved to be key factors during the training exercise. They only spoke Arabic, making the Marines work a little harder when gathering intelligence and conducting daily operations. However, translators were assigned to each company to help break the language barrier.

Thanks to our training here at Fort Irwin and Exercise Steel Knight, which took place at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat

Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., in December, the Wolfpack will be ready for anything we may face in Iraq, said Kassner.

The Wolfpack is slated for its fifth deployment to Iraq this spring and may be one of the last LAR battalions to deploy to the country.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
Marine leaders of 3rd LAR stand in front of their unit’s rock at National Training Center Fort Irwin, Calif., Jan. 31. Each unit training at Fort Irwin is presented with a rock with their unit’s insignia painted on it located outside the base’s main gate.

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AFGHAN, from A7

focused on the ANA.”

The ANA soldiers greeted the villagers and handed out blankets and sweaters provided to them through the donations of the nonprofit organization Spirit of America.

Luna commented on how helpful the donations from Spirit of America were during his previous tour in Iraq and believes they will be just as effective in Afghanistan to help International Security Assistance Forces conduct counterinsurgency operations.

“Anything we get from Spirit of America we give to the ANA to pass out,” said Luna. “It helps the Afghan people build trust and confidence in their government. Everything helps immensely.”

“The [ANA] love it,” said Luna. “They say they just want to keep going out with us because they get to pass out stuff, and they get to put little smiles on faces. They like it just as much as we do.”

U.S. Navy physicians and a doctor from the Italian armed forces also joined in, providing medical attention to those who stepped forward.

One local man, approximately 70 years old, commented by saying, “You must be here to help us because you’re not hurting us. You are helping us,” as translated by an interpreter.

The medical personnel arrived with a variety of over-

the-counter medications, prescription meds and other much-needed items, such as bandages, dressings and antibiotic ointments.

The physicians assisted approximately 25-50 Afghans from ages 3 to 80 years old with a variety of symptoms from lower back pain, arthritis and headaches to cold symptoms and children with regular viral colds and what one physician referred to as “a few interesting cases.”

“I expected to be taken aback a little bit by the situation,” said Lt. j.g. Kevin A. Goodell, a physician assistant with the Shock Trauma Plt. of Combat Logistics Battalion 3, the logistics combat element of SPMAGTF-A. “When you see people living in those standards with very little, you can’t help but to compare it with your own life. [It] might not be fair to do, but seeing [the conditions], you can’t help but to be touched by it.”

The physicians treated one child with a chronic infection on his foot, which they were able to treat with antibiotics. Another child was treated for a parasitic infection.

Goodell described the treatment he helped provide as an overall rewarding experience.

“They seemed to be very grateful and satisfied with our assistance,” said Goodell. “I don’t want to be naïve to say they’re cured because they have medicine now, but it was a rewarding experience seeing

them getting blankets, sweaters and things that they didn’t have. I would say they expressed in a language that we can all understand, which were just gestures, that they were definitely grateful.”

The mission ended as the ANA handed out the remainder of the humanitarian assistance supplies and everyone who had desired to be seen by the doctors had explained their ailments in return for a diagnosis and medication.

“Our whole mission was accomplished by introducing the ANA, providing security for them, and delivering needed items to the area,” said Felde.



LANCE CPL. BRIAN D. JONES
A 16-year-old boy from the southern Afghan village of Qambaran, holds his 2-year-old brother as he waits to receive medication from Navy physicians during a humanitarian assistance mission Jan. 26.

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LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Auto Skills Center, which is the third largest facility of its type throughout the Marine Corps, offers a full range of services with a staff of mechanics to assist patrons while they work on their automobile or motorcycle.

The center offers services with welding, short-term and long-term storage, and inspections and free pre-smog emission readings, among others, said Kevin Kessler, the Auto Skills Center's manager and a Pittsburgh native.

"Certain services have to be reserved ahead of time, such as the paint booth, [air conditioning] Freon recharging, and exhaust pipe benders," Kessler explained, giving examples of some services that require prior coordination.

He added there are also online manuals available on computers at the skills center; all the manuals are accessible through an online system that displays their catalog. The paperless system makes it simple for patrons to peruse through the selection electronically.

"We use Mitchell Online as our online catalog so customers can look at parts online on our computers here," he said. "We serve almost 20,000 people a year



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Pfc. David E. Garrett, an antitank missileman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, removes the drive belt from his vehicle to replace it as part of an ongoing series of repairs. Like many other Marines aboard the Combat Center, Garrett uses the Auto Skills Center to work on his vehicle for a lower cost.

and it makes it pretty easy for them to utilize the online program," Kessler mentioned the center is going to be

updated. They are planning an expansion of the center to add more vehicle bays. "We have an upcoming

eight bay expansion, with lifts so more people can work underneath more cars," he said. "Also, there are planned

expansions to the retail area, so we can better accommodate our wholesale suppliers so the ASC can market to our

patrons better." Kessler added the center also has a

See AUTO, B4

Shelter takes animals off the streets, finds caring homes

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Soft dark puppy eyes peer out between metal bars as a person, a potential owner, is heading his way. The dog begins to jump for joy, excited he might be picked or at least have the opportunity to play again before the end of the day.

As each dog sees the person, the barking begins, as if every dog is saying "Pick me. Pick me." trying to get the attention of, hopefully, their future owner.

The Combat Center and the surrounding area of Twentynine Palms, Calif., has seen a continuous trend of irresponsible pet ownership, causing many animals to be put up for adoption or worse – possibly being euthanized.

From mistreatment or lack of vaccinations to letting your animal run loose around the

desert, there are many responsibilities that pet owners have not been educated on, said Rick Boyd, the supervisor for Palms N Paws Animal Shelter.

Palms N Paws Animal Shelter in Twentynine Palms, offers a variety of loving dogs and cats to good homes, and is also the animal control office for the city.

Animal control collects roughly 200 to 250 animals or reptiles a month, Boyd said. Some are picked up by their owners and others go to rescues, pet stores, or zoos, depending on the kind and size of the animal.

Dogs and cats that are not claimed within six days, if they do not have identification, or 10 days, if they do, are screened to be put up for adoption, Boyd said. Approximately 20 dogs and cats are adopted every week from the shelter.

Although many of the ani-

mals collected are given good homes or transferred to rescues, there are still many that are put down for a variety of reasons.

"Some animals are bite cases, while others have terminal illnesses, viruses or were injured," Boyd said. "When an animal is injured, even as simple as a dog with a broken leg, if they don't have identification they will get put down. We don't have the resources to take care of them."

That is why Boyd emphasized why identification tags or microchip implants are so important. A microchip implant is an identifying integrated circuit placed under the skin of an animal, about the size of a large grain of rice, so even if a pet is lost without their tags, a small scanner can read the implant

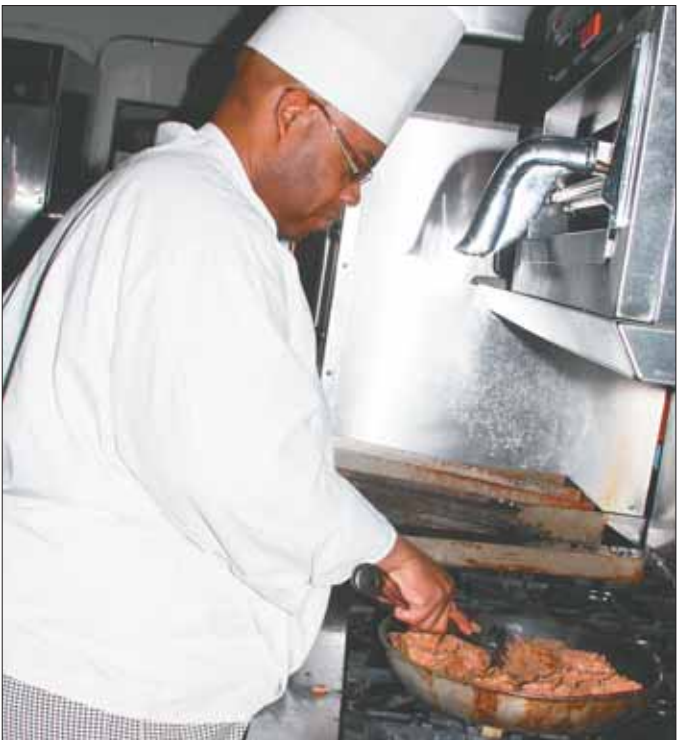
See SHELTER, B4



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

Jessie, a calico tabby mix, is one of the cats that are up for adoption at the Palms N Paws Animal Shelter in Twentynine Palms Tuesday. Approximately 20 dogs and cats are adopted every week from the shelter.

Officers' Club makes additions to accommodate the working Marine



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Charles Harris, a cook at the Officers' Club, cooks sausage in preparation of Pasta Night before the club starts seating diners. The Officers' Club is having a makeover starting in February that will include a dinner and martini menu, extended lunch and dinner hours, and the grand opening of Sunday Breakfast.

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Officers' Club is getting a makeover throughout the month of February that will include menu changes, extended hours of operation, and completely new breakfast, lunch and dinner meals.

"It is going to be a fantastic month for the club," said Tracy Hatch, the Officers' Club general manager. "It all started with the new Asian Bar we are now offering for lunch every Friday."

On Monday, the Officers' Club staff will be hosting their last Sunday Champagne Brunch, and on Feb. 15, they will be introducing the new Sunday Breakfast. The breakfast will begin at 8 a.m., and end at 2 p.m., giving patrons an extra two hours to enjoy

their meal.

"All the food is going to be served a la carte," said Hatch, who was born and raised in England. "We have great cooks who work here, so I know everything will taste amazing."

The club will also be extending its hours for lunch every day, which will give busy service members and Combat Center employees more time to enjoy a sit-down lunch in their day, said Jennifer Tossetti, an Officers' Club duty operations assistant. Beginning Feb. 17, lunch will begin at 11 a.m., and end at 3 p.m.

"The way we are changing everything will really help open our services to all the Marines who have a hectic schedule," said Tossetti, a Temple City, Calif., native. "We are here for the Marines. This just makes it easier for them."

During the dinner hours from Monday through Thursday, which have also been extended, the club has introduced a completely new menu for patrons.

"For all of our die-hard fans, we are going to keep doing our specific dinners," said Hatch. "We are just going to be adding a menu to the mix to give them more of a variety to choose from. The meals that we do now will still be provided, but will be our special for that night."

To help keep everything in order, the club will also be switching their specific dinners around to correspond with the lunch menu, explained William Schroeder-Cox, an Officers' Club duty operations assistant.

"Our Italian dinner will be served on Tuesdays now to correspond with our Pasta Bar at lunch and our

Fajita Dinner is being moved to Wednesdays," said the Twentynine Palms, Calif., native. "On Thursdays, our special will be chef's choice, which will provide even more variety."

The bar inside the club has also made a few changes to their drink menu, including a specialty drink specifically for the patrons of the bar.

"Our bar has a nickname called the Man Cave," said Hatch. "So we made a drink for them called the Dirty Man Cave."

The drink menu has also added a few other drinks, which include the Chocolate Martini, Chambord Savory Brown and the Tropical Splash.

For more information regarding the new Officers' Club changes, contact Tossetti or Schroeder-Cox at 830-6610.



FRI. 2/6 Apocalypse Cage Fights Time: All day event Where: Spotlight 29 Casino 46-200 Harrison St. Coachella For more info, call (800) 585-3737 or log on to http://www.spotlight29.com	FRI. 2/6 Blues After Hours Time: 5-9 p.m. Where: Cafe Potpourri at the Carriage Inn 901 N. China Lake Blvd. Ridgecrest For more info, call 446-7910 or log on to http://www.carriageinn.biz	SAT. 2/7 Explore 29 Palms Tour Time: 11 a.m. Where: Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce 73660 Civic Center Dr Twentynine Palms For more info, call 367-3445 or log on to http://www.29chamber.com	SUN. 2/8 Heart Time: 7 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Dr. Cabazon For more info, call (951) 849-3080 or log on to http://www.morongoresort.com	THURS. 2/12 Reptiles Alive! Time: 12 p.m. Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum 57090 29 Palms Hwy. Yucca Valley For more info, call 369-7212 or visit http://www.yucca-valley.org
FRI. 2/13 Sweetheart Luncheon Time: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Where: Little Church of the Desert 6079 Adobe Rd. Twentynine Palms For more info, call 367-4322 or 367-1673	FRI. 2/13 Verizon Tour de Palm Springs Bike Event Time: All day event Where: Palm Springs Convention Center 277 N. Avenida Caballeros Palm Springs For more info, call 568-2800	FRI. 2/13 Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival Time: All day event Where: Riverside County Fairgrounds 82-503 Hwy 111, Indio For more info, call 1 (800) 811-FAIR or log on to http://www.datefest.org	FRI. 2/20 Brooks & Dunn Time: 8 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84245 Indio Springs Pkwy. Indio For more info, call 342-5000 or log on to http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com	FRI. 2/20 Chicago Time: 9 p.m. Where: Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa 32-250 Bob Hope Dr. Rancho Mirage For more info, call (866) 923-7244 or visit http://www.hotwatercasino.com/TheShow/

‘The Reader’ dives into a thorny romantic tangle

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

The Reader, Rated R
Starring Kate Winslet and
Ralph Fiennes

An “older woman” and a schoolboy begin a forbidden love affair that sends shock waves far beyond their summer fling in “The Reader,” a sweeping story of passion, secrets, guilt and shame that reverberates across six decades. The story begins in Germany in the 1950s when a stern-looking stranger (Kate Winslet) helps 15-year-old student Michael Berg (David Kross) get home after she finds him, rain-drenched and

vomiting, in the doorway of her tenement building. After he recovers, he’s soon skipping school to meet her for torrid afternoon lovemaking sessions. He knows little about her beyond her name, Hannah Schmitz. And what he doesn’t know about Hannah doesn’t matter—yet. Sure, Hannah seduces him. But Michael is a more than willing participant, even when Hannah adds an unusual request—she wants him to read to her before they make love. When Hannah abruptly disappears, Michael is crushed, but life moves on. He grows up and goes to law school. One week, his class takes a war-

crimes trial of former Nazi concentration-camp guards. To Michael’s shock, Hannah is one of the defendants. But that’s just the first bombshell that rocks his world. Another revelation, which explains much about Hannah, drives the young college student into a moral quandary and puts him in an emotional tailspin. The film’s third act plays out over the following three decades and features Ralph Fiennes as the adult Michael. The entire cast of “The Reader” is strong, but Winslet is especially powerful, moving and even sympathetic in a role that, on the surface, invites little sympathy. Fiennes convincingly conveys the deep emotional scars of a man tormented by a lifelong secret and vexed by conflicting emotions. “The Reader” isn’t your typical love story. It’s more a Holocaust movie with a deep, twisting dive into a dense tangle of thorny moral, ethical, situational and emotional issues. It forces you to think about its characters, what they’ve done,




COURTESY PHOTO
Starring Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes, “The Reader” is a story about an “older woman” and a schoolboy beginning a forbidden love affair.

what they should have done and what they’ll do next. The movie poses several tough questions, but none more provocative and haunting than the one Hannah hurls at her inquisitor during the trial. “What would YOU have done?!” she tearfully pleads. It’s a query that will echo in your head long after its ring leaves “The Reader’s” charged courtroom.



COURTESY PHOTO
Winslet is especially powerful, moving and sympathetic.



**TOUGH MINDED
OPTIMISM**
by Lou Gerhardt

I am a tough minded optimist who is also a realist. I mean, dear readers, that I have an understanding with my soul as to what realism means to me.

For one thing, realism is degraded when it slips down into the idea that only ugly things are real. Some people are so afraid of being sentimental and idealistic that they manage their thinking and their living as some people write their novels, as though sewers were the only real things and mountain streams were not real too.

Sewers are real but so are our seemingly timeless San Gorgonio mountains and so is the majestic snow capped San Jacinto peak.

Slums, of course, are real but so are the thousands of humble and love-filled homes that populate our High Desert.

The late Sydney Harris wrote: “Reality is sitting on a moonlit pierat midnight and dangling your feet in the water. Reality is toasting marshmallows over an open fire and singing the old, almost forgotten songs of camp days.”

Finally, my friends, remember that while the mighty Goliath was real, so was young David with his sling shot. And while Adolph Hitler was real so was Winston Churchill. And while teenagers who use illegal drugs and form street gangs are real, so are the many hundreds of bright and wholesome young people who attend our schools in the Morongo Basin.

If people are going to be realists, they should go all the way.

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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		


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LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Jacob Vasquez, a player with the Unpredictables, retaliates against opposing players with Marksmanship Training Unit. The Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League meets every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the Combat Center's East Gym.

Intramural dodgeball league standings as of Wednesday

Team	Wins	Losses
Jive Turkeys	4	0
Fainting Goats	4	0
MCCES A Co.	3	1
Sapper	2	2
A-Team	2	2
MTU	2	3
Hospital	1	3
Dental	1	3
Tanks #4	1	3
Justice League	0	4



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Steven Santana, a player with Tanks #4, sends a ball down range at his opponents Tuesday during the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League. The league meets every Tuesday at 6 p.m. for play at the Combat Center's East Gym.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Rudy Davila and Jack McNellie, players with Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School Alpha Co., attempt to knock out the opposition.



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES
Brandon Dobbs, a Yeoman 3rd Class at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, brings one to the hoop for his team Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms before colliding with a player with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374's B team Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym. MWSS-374 came back within four points with minutes left in the game, but NHTP sealed the deal, 61-50.



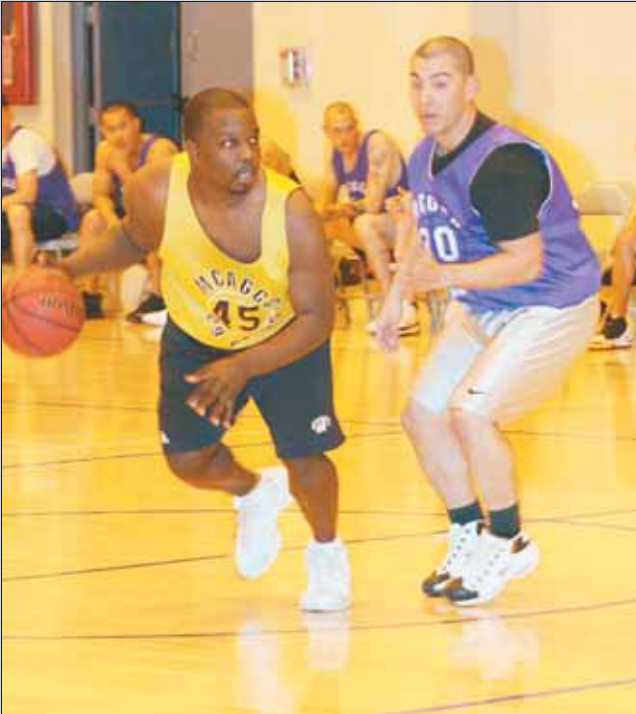
CPL. MARGARET HUGHES



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES
James Nicholson, a store keeper at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, throws a pass through heavy defense Wednesday night at the Combat Center's Gym.

Current 2009 Intramural Basketball Standings

Ranked Team	Wins	Losses
1 NHTP	4	0
1 Ole School Plus	3	0
1 MCCES All-Stars	2	0
4 1/7	3	1
5 IPAC	2	2
5 MCCES A	1	1
7 MWSS-374 (A)	1	2
7 MWSS-374 (B)	1	2
7 1st Tanks	1	2
10 3d CEB	0	2
10 CLB-7	0	3
10 MCCES Party	0	3



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES
Jerome Hawkins, a civilian with the Public Works Division, looks for an open teammate with Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms while being defended by a player with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 team Bravo Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym.



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

Joshua Levene, a culinary specialist at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, brings the ball to the basket for Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms while a defender from Marine Wing Support Squadron 374's B team looks for a block Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym.

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March 18.....	Joe Nutter & His Sophisticated Swing
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program known as SAFE, or Spousal Assistance for Emergencies.

"SAFE is a program we have available here to spouses so they know what to do when their husband is deployed and they need to take care of the car," he said. "It is really a win-win service here. They have availability to access tools and expert advice from our technicians here."

Marines aboard the Combat Center frequent the facility to perform anything from normal maintenance

on their vehicle to upgrading it for higher performance.

"I know enough on my car to do basic stuff like changing my own oil, it saves a lot of money to come here," said Lance Cpl. Benjamin Rusak, a tank mechanic with Company C, 1st Tank Battalion and a native of Tallahassee, Fla. "Its on base so I don't have to go far, and all the equipment here makes it much easier to actually do."

Other Marines were at the center to make their vehicle more powerful, and shared the opinions of others who performed regular mainte-

nance with ease.

"They have machines here that can balance tires, and with my new wheels that's pretty convenient so it goes much smoother than going out in town and paying a lot of money," said Cpl. Tom Lusak, a 7-ton truck mechanic with Exercise Support Division and a native of Seattle. "It's important to me to work on my car to make it more powerful and a little faster, so I think this is a great place to have on base."

For more information on the Auto Skills Center, contact them at 830-4179.

for identification purposes.

"If the injured dog had identification, they would have been taken to the animal hospital because someone is financially responsible," Boyd said.

Another major issue Boyd stressed is getting animals vaccinated. Half of the animals that are put down are because they are not vaccinated. The reason behind this is to prevent an outbreak of the Parvovirus in the domesticated animal population. The virus affects the gastrointestinal tract and lymphatic system, leading to vomiting, diarrhea and immunosuppression, a condition that reduces the efficiency of the immune system.

Wild desert animals, like coyotes, can carry and spread the virus, Boyd said. If an owner lets their unvaccinated dog run around the desert or it gets loose, they can easily catch this very contagious virus.

The Parvovirus can be curable if it is treated at an early stage, Boyd said. The starting point would be around \$500 to get the animal back to good health. That could be easily prevented by spending a much smaller sum of money for a vaccination before they come in contact with virus.

If an owner plans on getting their pets vaccinated, they should also consider spaying and neutering their pet during the same doctor's visit. Every day 6.5 million dogs are born,

Boyd said. Even if someone finds homes for all the puppies in a litter, those were homes that were taken away from animals that need adopting.

Kelly Cox, a local who adopted a dog from the shelter, agrees that she feels better knowing she took an animal off the streets and gave it a good home.

When considering whether to get a pet, by adopting or other means, Boyd recommends the soon-to-be pet owners to ask themselves if they are ready for a 10-to-15-year commitment and if they are financially capable of taking care of a pet.

"You have to be ready for a lifetime commitment with that animal," said Dawn Wallace, a shelter attendant.

For service members who will be deploying, moving or are no longer able to take care of their pet, Boyd advises them to ask themselves if they are doing the right thing and trying to exhaust all their options before bringing them to the shelter, or worse, setting them free in the desert. He also suggests considering future moves and foreseeing if this might be a problem before they get a pet.

The shelter provides services for pet adoption, microchip implants and licensing. The adoption fee is \$117 for a dog and \$80 for a cat. The fee covers the adoption, a city license, the first round of shots, a health check

up at the High Desert Animal Hospital in Twentynine Palms, a discount voucher toward the price of spaying or neutering, a microchip implant, the first year's registration and a 30-day insurance exchange program. The exchange program allows the new pet owner to exchange the dog or cat if they do not mix well in their new family or if the animal is found to be terminally ill during its initial health check up.

For additional information and questions about taking care of your pet, or for looking into adopting, contact the Palms N Paws Animal Shelter at 367-0157.



Cpl. Marc Garcia, a motor transportation operator with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, removes the old tires on his 1996 Chevrolet Silverado at the Auto Skills Center Sunday. Garcia was changing to larger tires on his vehicle to give it better clearance when riding off road. The Auto Skills Center is open from Wednesdays to Sundays for Marines and dependants aboard the Combat Center.



Terry, a shepherd, chow chow mix, sits in his temporary home at the Palms N Paws Animal Shelter in Twentynine Palms Tuesday.

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