

OBSERVATION POST

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 6, 2009

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 52 ISSUE 9

Local area students shadow Combat Center careers

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center was buzzing with activity Feb. 26 when nearly 50 high school juniors and seniors from schools throughout the High Desert participated in the Job Shadow Day aboard the base from 9 to 11 a.m.

Approximately 30 different locations and units on base also took place in the event, showing the students a wide variety of career fields they can move on to after high school.

"This is the fifth or sixth year we've done this on the base," said Lori Cosgriff, the Twentynine Palms High School job coach developer. "The students are part of the Traditional Partnership Program, which is a year-long program where students do career exploration.

"The goal is to help them choose a career and get on the right path to working in that career," Cosgriff said.

Throughout the course of the year, the students in the program learn about many career fields they can move into, many of which require them to leave the area once they graduate, she said.

"A base in an area like this is great for us because many jobs that can be done in the civilian world aren't typically found around here," Cosgriff said. "Students in this area



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
Staff Sgt. Joseph Evans, the Provost Marshal's Office's kennel master and Special Reaction Team sniper, demonstrates the "combat glide" to local area high school students during Job Shadow Day Feb. 26.

see a very limited number of job opportunities since there is no major industry here."

Surprisingly to some of the students, the base offers a number of jobs not per-

formed by military personnel that can also be obtained in the civilian sector, she said.

Some of the jobs include medical and dental care, graphic design, air traffic

control, law enforcement and computer technician.

Areas the students visited included the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, the Provost Marshal's Office, the

Exercise Support Division welding station, the Public Works Division and Marine Corps Community Services.

However, the Job Shadow Day participants were also

able to see some of the military jobs available to them.

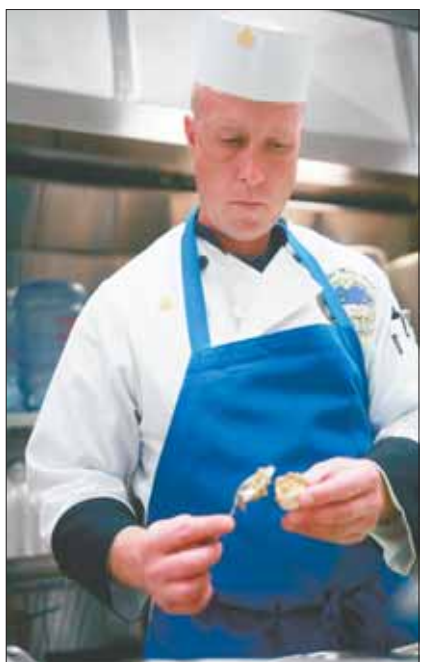
"Some of the kids just wanted to know about the

See CAREERS, A5

Combat Center chefs take 2nd in West Coast competition

PFC. JERRICK J. GRIFFIN
1ST MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. - Four teams entered, but only one survived in the Culinary Team of the Quarter competition for Marine Corps



PFC. JERRICK J. GRIFFIN
Sgt. Brian D. Carrier, 34, Asheville NC, a quality assurance evaluator from Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, stuffs a mushroom for his Andorille stuffed mushrooms in the Culinary Team of the Quarter Competition here Feb. 25.

Installations West.

Combat Center Marines Sgt. Brian D. Carrier, a quality assurance evaluator, and Cpl. Austin J. Nelson, a food service specialist, participated in the competition and took home the second place trophy.

The culinary team from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., came in first place for the competition at the Las Pulgas Mess Hall here Feb. 25.

Cpl. Jacob R. Ballard and Pfc. Ja'Lisa C. White, food service specialists from MCAS Yuma, won first place with their winning meal of "Finger Shrimp Po' Boy's," "Jammin' Jambalaya," Cajun fried okra tempura with scallion sauce and chocolate crepes with fresh strawberries.

"I could already tell the competition would be very hard," said Ballard about the 11 Marine and civilian teams from the Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., MCAS Yuma and Camp Pendleton.

"This is an incredible partnership that we have between the Marine Corps and Sodexo," said Donovan Brown, the regional executive chef for Sodexo. "This competition brings us all together because our motto is one team, one fight. The bottom line is taking care of Marines."

The competition started with a

See CHEFS, A3

Sergeants Course educates future of corporate America



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
Students from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business stand on line as Gunnery Sgt. Peter J. O'Brien, an instructor with the Combat Center's Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Sergeants Course, informs them that speed, intensity and teamwork will be key to their success during a rack-making session similar to recruit training as part of the USC MBA Leadership Challenge hosted by Sergeants Course Feb. 27.

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy opened its doors to the University of Southern California's Marshall School of

Business Feb. 27 and 28 when instructors of the academy's Sergeants Course hosted students from USC's master's of business administration program.

The event, which is called the USC MBA Leadership Challenge, is sponsored by business school's military veterans

association in collaboration with the Combat Center and is focused on providing graduate students with a unique leadership experience that no classroom can provide, said Joseph Hernandez, USC's MBA pro-

See COURSE, A6



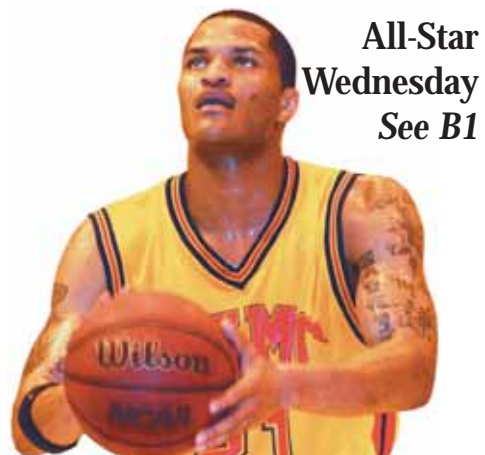
Snow place like home ~ See A3



Corpsman up! - See A7



Battle Colors ceremony drills Combat Center ~ See A4



All-Star Wednesday See B1

Tobacco, taxes and tobacco cessation made easy!

MARTHA HUNT, MA

HEALTH PROMOTION COORDINATOR NAVAL HOSPITAL TWENTYNINE PALMS

Starting March 31, federal taxes on tobacco products will rise considerably. Federal taxes on a pack of cigarettes will rise from 39 cents to \$1 per pack and taxes on a can of smokeless tobacco will rise from 4.4 cents to 11.3 cents per can.

Federal taxes are also increasing on cigars, roll-your-own tobacco and all tobacco related products such as rolling papers.

Remember, the real cost to your personal budget for tobacco is \$42 per pack or can as the real costs of tobacco are seen in your health insurance, life insurance, the value of your house and car, and on and on.

How do you access tobacco cessation services if your thoughts are to quit? As of July 31, 2008 the new Secretary of the Navy's tobacco instruction stated that the tobacco class was no longer mandatory in order to access the tobacco cessation medications. You simply go to your provider and they place any prescriptions for tobacco cessation medications that you and your

provider agree upon. You then contact Health Promotion & Wellness for the education materials that can further help you to become tobacco free. Anyone who is TRICARE eligible is able to access the meds and counseling services.

Tobacco use is the greatest deterrent to combat readiness and health. The most likely causes of early medical discharge from all branches of the military are tobacco-use related illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, and lung disease, injuries that don't heal and a wealth of health problems made worse by tobacco use.

Not only is tobacco use costly in terms of health outcomes, but according to a 1997 Department of Defense Inspector General report, the DoD loses money 8-to-1 on tobacco sales. For every dollar of profits in the exchange system, the health care side of the DoD loses \$8 in extra health care costs for Active Duty.

Don't let your addiction to tobacco affect your combat readiness. Contact your health provider for the medications that can help you give up tobacco and contact Health Promotion & Wellness at 830-2814 to get more information on successfully giving up tobacco.

FILLING THE BILL

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American Profile Hometown Content

03/01/2009

ACROSS

- "Don't play," to a musician
- Jeff Davis's boys
- Pro ___ (free, in legalese)
- Like Abie's Rose
- Director Kazan
- Apple music player
- Hard-to-accept situation
- Game similar to lotto
- Suffix with Japan
- Members' payments
- Tillie the ___ of old comics
- Energy drink brand
- Think ahead
- '50s campaign moniker
- Viciously attack
- Swiftly, to a bard
- Lost buoyancy
- Scored 100 on
- With eyes and ears open
- Left Bank river

DOWN

- Rome's river
- Spring up
- Gave a summons to
- Body shop fig.
- Snider or Wayne
- Ward off
- Some Ivy Leaguers
- Puppeteer Baird
- The Dead Sea, for one
- Nuclear test site of the '40s and '50s
- Kadett auto maker
- ___ the worse for wear
- Dumpster emanation
- Exercise authority
- Galley mover
- Handle bars attachment
- Tubular pasta
- Render impure
- "March Madness" org.
- Archer of legend
- Works of Sappho

ACROSS

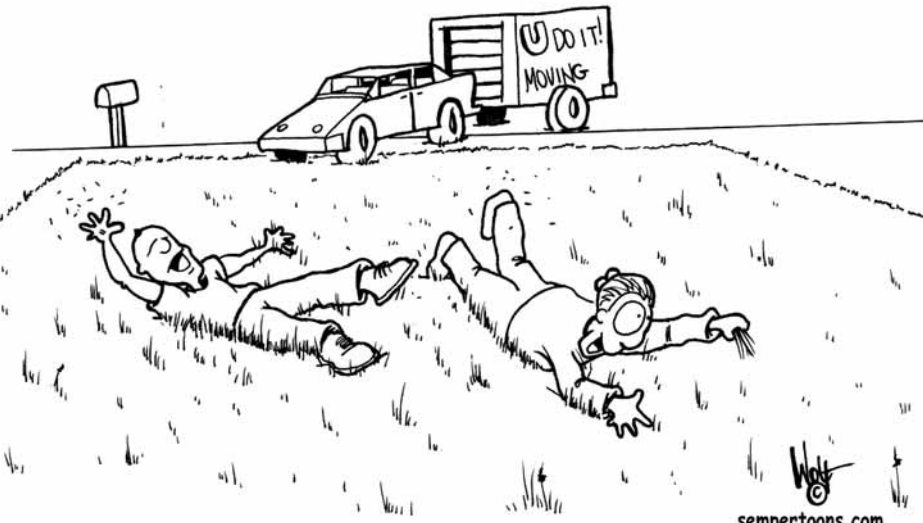
- Bit of folklore
- Idle of Monty Python fame
- Dunce cap shape
- Frosty the Snowman's eyes
- Die, as an engine
- Blanc who voiced Bugs Bunny
- ___ of Sandwich
- Antique desk feature
- Tarzan portrayer
- Buster
- Soccer immortal
- Brazilian hot spot
- Sewing machine inventor Elias
- June 16, 1775 battle locale
- Heathen's figurine
- Cyclotron bits
- Home made of hides
- ___-mell
- Nowhere to be found
- Wash stand vessels

DOWN

- Knocks for a loop
- Go splitsville
- Diva's delivery
- 1988 Olympics site
- Hit the jackpot
- Holm of "All About Eve"
- Home to maze-solving rats
- Feature of Brie rind
- Witherspoon of the '40s and '50s
- Utter nonsense
- Crude conveyor
- Magnet ends
- Short shot
- Took the el, say
- Delinquent GI
- Ivy in Philly
- Kanga's kid
- Shape with an axe

[puzzle Solutions on A4]

"I love you grass!!!, WHA-WHOO!!!
SMELL IT, FEEL IT, TOUCH IT!!!!
I AM NEVER MOVING FROM THIS SPOT!!
and It's not even our YARD..., YEAAAH!!!!"



Strange things Marines and their families do when PCSing from 29 Palms

SEMPERTOONS: CREATED BY GUNNERY SGT. CHARLES WOLF, USMC/RET.

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Cpl. Chadwick Novak
Hometown: Schenectady, N.Y.
Job Title: Ammo Tech
Organization: Tactical Training Exercise Control Group
Job Duties: Allocate ammo and explosives for Mojave Viper and assess unit safety during these exercises.
Like most: Going out on the ranges.
Significant Achievements: Successfully prepared Marines for combat deployments.
Hobbies: Hanging out with the dogs and hiking in National Parks
Military service: Two years in the Marine Corps.
Time at Combat Center: One and a half years.



Hot Topics

NEW GYM HOURS

The East and West Gym/Fitness Centers' new hours of operation will be 4:30 a.m. – 10 p.m., seven days a week.

VARSITY SOFTBALL TRYOUTS

The Varsity Men's Softball team is currently holding tryouts Felix Softball Fields on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 p.m. Please contact Debra or Skip at the Sports Dept at 830-6857 for more information.

MARSOC SCREENING APRIL 1

The Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command will be aboard the Combat Center Wednesday, April 1 to screen pre-designated personnel and volunteers for potential assignment as Critical Skills Operators. See your unit Career Retention Specialist for time, location, details, and eligibility requirements. Point of contact for the visit is Gunnery Sgt. Mintz, Base CRS at 830-6171.

This Day in Marine Corps History

March 8, 1965

The 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade landed at DaNang, Republic of Vietnam as the first U.S. ground combat troops to be committed to that conflict. The 3,500 men arrived both across the beach with Battalion Landing Team 3/9, and at DaNang Airfield with Battalion Landing Team 1/3.

SUDOKU

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Centerspeak

What do you think about Michael Vick getting out of jail and what NFL team do you think he'll go to?

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



LANCE CPL. MIKE NEISEN
MACHINE GUNNER, A Co., 3RD BATTALION, 3RD MARINE REGIMENT

"I think he shouldn't have gone to jail, it was too harsh of a punishment." "The Dallas Cowboys."



HM3 CHRIS BERGER
CORPSMAN, 2ND BATTALION, 23 MARINE REGIMENT

"He's got enough money to hide anything anyway, there's bigger issues out there." "The Detroit Lions."



SGT. JEREMY HIGHT
FACILITY CHIEF, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"He should be in jail, he committed a crime." "The Raiders."

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus

Public Affairs Officer Jennie E. Haskamp

Public Affairs Chief Gunnery Sgt. Sergio Jimenez

Press Chief/Editor Lance Cpl. Corey A. Blodgett

Layout, Design Leslie Shaw

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3/4 and RCT-7 change scenery, prep for war

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. — Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, and Regimental Combat Team 7 out of the Combat Center began the practical application portion during their first week of the Mountain Warrior Exercise training package at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Monday.

Before strapping on their packs and stepping off to Aspen Bowl, the unit's first practical application training area, Marines and sailors of Companies I, K, L and Weapons



Seaman Michael J. Arroyo, a corpsman with Regimental Combat Team 7, flicks a shovel full of snow off to the side of his bivouac, during the Mountain Warrior Exercise training package at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Monday.

CHEFS, from A1

knowledge portion, consisting of the teams answering 60 culinary questions. Everything was put on the board, including food temperature, portion control, safety, menus, rules and sanitation standards.

"These are tasks you use on a day-to-day basis," Brown stated to the competitors of the event. "There's no study guide, your study guide is showing up to work."

After the knowledge bowl, the four teams with the most points advanced to the cook-off portion of the event. Marines from MCAS Yuma, the Combat Center, and two

teams of Sodexo workers from the 53 and 22 Area mess halls advanced to the next round.

In past quarters, there have been Thanksgiving and Super Bowl party themes, so the teams had to be prepared for anything. This quarter's theme was Cajun Creole, a Mardi Gras celebration motif.

The contestants were given a list of ingredients and had to prepare a menu for a full course meal while staying within the Mardi Gras theme.

After receiving the theme on short notice and having limited time to prepare a menu, they had the added

challenge of working in an unfamiliar environment.

"It's a challenge to walk into a kitchen you've never been in before," Brown said. "Not only did the participants have to get adjusted to new settings, they also worked right next to the current staff in charge of feeding the Marines their regular meals."

"It was very difficult trying to get things done with all the other people in the kitchen," said Brenda Delgado, a Sodexo worker from the 53 Area mess hall. "Even with the crowded kitchen, we managed to push through and prepare our meal on time."

Toward the end of the

cook-off, the participants displayed their dishes and the judges sampled each team's entree.

"I like [the competition]. It's good for the Marines and civilians to grow and it gives them something to look forward to," said Debbie Powell, the production manager for 22 Area and a judge during the competition.

Ballard and White received a plaque to display in their unit's mess hall, embroidered chef's coats, gold medals and a two-week trip to the Culinary Institute of America in New York City.

"It feels good to win the competition," Ballard said. "I



Cpl. Isidro Cobos, a warehouse clerk with Regimental Combat Team 7, helps a fellow Marine and sailor clear an area for their bivouac, or camp area, while participating in the Mountain Warrior Exercise in training area Aspen Bowl at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Monday.

"Being here puts in you in a different mindset," said Gregory, an Albuquerque, N.M., native. "In this kind of setting, you are constantly uncomfortable from being cold or wet. That can decrease morale and efficiency, so we do our best to cheer each other up. But the Marine Corps is supposed to be able to adapt anywhere, and this is what Afghanistan will be like."

Sgt. Steven Ross, a field radio operator with RCT-7, was fortunate enough to have trained at MWTC for the Mountain Command and Control Communication Course in January. He said he believes no amount of simulated mountain training could prepare warfighters like the training at MWTC.

"Simulation just isn't enough," said Ross, a Baton Rouge, La., native. "The snow and high altitude here changes everything. They don't have those things anywhere but here and overseas."

Petty Officer 3rd Class Trey Gregory, the assistant lead petty officer corpsman with RCT-7, agreed about the environmental conditions.

above and beyond sustainment training in the instance we do deploy to Afghanistan," said Kufchak, a Youngstown, Ohio, native.

Although this is the sixth winter package Kufchak has undergone in his Marine Corps career, he said he has learned something different from all of them. The environmental conditions were different and so where the individual experiences with the Marines and sailors, he said.

Both units expect to continue training at MWTC into the middle of March, and then are scheduled to return to the Combat Center to continue preparing for future deployments.

"This training is about going

Choice was a popular vote of whose meal appealed to the audience's taste.

"I still feel happy with the way I performed," Nelson said. "I would like to get first place, but second place isn't bad."

Coming in third place was 22 Area mess hall and fourth place was 53 Area mess hall.

To most of the competitors cooking is not just a job. "Cooking has always been a love of mine," Carrier said. "It's something I really enjoy."

The first place winners of the competition will also have their menu featured at their unit's mess hall to serve to the Marines in the near future.



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'Oldest Post of the Corps' leaves Combat Center in awe

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The United States Marine Corps Battle Color Detachment left the Combat

Center in awe after their performance at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Feb. 27. The Battle Color Detachment is comprised of the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, United States

Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and Official Color Guard of the Marine Corps. The ceremony opened with "The Commandant's Own" Drum and Bugle Corps marching onto the

field in presentation of their 2009 edition of Music in Motion. The first song they played was a selection from Cole Porter's award-winning musical "Kiss Me Kate."

"The band was very good," said Cpl. Ryan Wongwai, a supply administrator for the Exercise Support Division. "It was a lot better than I thought it would be. It was very organized and the music was great."

The Drum and Bugle Corps closed their performance with John Phillip Sousa's signature work "The Stars and Stripes Forever," then stepped aside as the Silent Drill Platoon slowly marched onto the field.

The 24 Marines of the Silent Drill Platoon, which is also known as the "Marching 24," performed synchronized drill movements without commands or cadences while



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Master Gunnery Sgt. Mark Miller, the drum major for the Drum and Bugle Corps, leads his Marines forward during their performance at the Combat Center Feb. 27 on Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Marines from the Silent Drill Platoon flip their M-1 Garand rifles over their heads as part of a ceremonial rifle inspection during the Battle Color Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Feb. 27.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
A Marine from the Drum and Bugle Corps plays a xylophone for the spectators aboard the Combat Center during the Battle Color Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Feb. 27

See DRILLING, A8



TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

When a tough Oklahoma cowboy is thrown off his horse he gets right back on the horse that threw him.

Similarly, when a tough speed car driver suffers an awful crash that almost kills him he leaves the hospital and immediately gets behind the wheel of another vehicle designed to break speed records.

Such a driver is my friend Burke Le Sage of Joshua Tree. After his horrific crash at the Dry Lakes, Burke began racing on Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats where he set many speed records. In 1963 he was inducted into the prestigious 200 mph Club. Burke is now considered a legend in the racing fraternity and is a member of the racing industry's Hall of Fame.

There is much more to Burke, however, than simply having the ability to drive with exceptional skill and daring. Burke is a lover of books! That's right, all kinds of books. I don't think Burke ever saw a book he didn't like. He owns hundreds and hundreds of books that he has collected, categorized, and placed on shelves specifically constructed to protect them. And most important of all: Burke reads his books. He gains knowledge, wisdom and perspective each day as he explores his books.

My friend Burke believes that life is good and that all things will ultimately work together to accomplish the purposes of the Creator.

Every morning Burke reads a book and drinks his coffee from a cup with his philosophy stamped on it. "All things are in Divine order."

Let there be no doubt about it. Burke Le Sage is a tough minded optimist.

This message sponsored by:

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Arnold Taylor
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627
800-995-1620
res19mxc@verizon.net

NMCRS goes above, beyond for Combat Center community

LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

In November Sgt. Brittany Bucklew and her husband Pvt. Charles Bucklew, a rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, found themselves in an unexpected and unfortunate financial situation.

Faced with financial adversity, Bucklew, a systems administrator instructor at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, turned to the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, an organization she promotes to her students during briefs she hold to advise them about the resources available to them at the Combat Center.

At the society she was introduced to Sarah Hamann, the NMCRS chair of case-work, and together they tackled the family's financial woes.

In the first step to get the family back on their feet, Bucklew and Hamann made

a list of current bills to get an idea of how much debt the family had, devised a budget, thought of ways to cut down expenses, and developed a plan to help the family catch up financially, said Bucklew, a native of Pearland, Texas.

In addition to financial advice, Hamann and NMCRS found the resources to pay for the Bucklews' child care, diaper, and grocery expenses. "They were wonderful," said Bucklew. "They were very helpful in all aspects of the situation."

However NMCRS was not done giving, and after Hamann submitted the necessary paperwork Bucklew was approved for and received a \$1,200 grant from the society.

"I was in tears of relief," Bucklew said.

Bucklew said the grant allowed her to get over the hump of hard times, and prevented her from having

to take out a loan and fall further into debt.

"I'm very, very grateful," Bucklew said.

Hamann, a native of Windsor, Calif., said after reviewing Bucklew's case obtaining the grant for her was in Bucklew's best interest and the right thing to do.

She also said she just wanted to find a way to help Bucklew and her family, so when the grant was approved she was very excited.

"It's a really, really rewarding experience," said Hamann, the wife of Sgt. Stephen Hamann, an assault section leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

Bucklew thanked Hamann for providing the financial support and emotional support which helped her get through the hard times.

"She's very dedicated," said Ray Caldwell, the director of the Twentynine Palms NMCRS office, about Hamann. "She has a heart to serve."

While quick to praise Hamann, Caldwell also said the willingness to go above and beyond for a client is typical of the society's volunteers, who each hold a personal desire to provide the Combat Center community with the best care possible.

"Our clients are very important to us," said Caldwell.

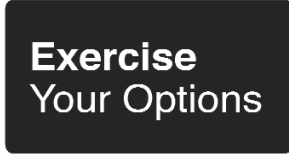
Bucklew said she continues to promote NMCRS and often uses her story as a testimony of the society's success.

Bucklew, who makes her own monthly donations to the society, said she is happy to support them and individuals who are encountering a similar situation should not be embarrassed to admit it.

"There's no need to be embarrassed," said Bucklew. "Be glad you have somewhere to come to."

For more information about NMCRS call 830-6323 or visit <http://www.nmcrs.org/>.

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SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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Cramped VMU-3 welcomes much needed new home

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marines and sailors of Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3 participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony next to their old headquarters building Monday celebrating the unit's four new buildings and three new hangars.

The construction, which was not slated to begin till April 2009, began more than three months ago and took more than 4,500 hours of labor to complete.

The new buildings are temporary and only scheduled to house the unit for five to six years until the unit is

given a permanent residence, said 2nd Lt. Philip E. Dufresne, the adjutant of VMU-3.

Nearly 300 Marines of VMU-3, since their inception Sept. 12, have been cramped in a single 3,000-square-foot building, said Lt. Col. James Frey, the commanding officer of VMU-3. The space was simply inadequate for the needs of the unit.

Unit personnel worked hand-in-hand with the project developers to create the new buildings that will fulfill all of the units many needs, he said.

The new space has plenty of room for storage and will offer VMU-3 ample space to

perform much of the unit's training, Frey said.

"We plan on hitting full operational status in about six months," Frey said. Construction for VMU-3 is part of a \$50 million project to help renovate the Combat Center, said Matt Amdur, the superintendent of Straub Construction Inc., the contracted company that is working on the project. There are 14 other sites being built throughout the Combat Center which are scheduled to be completed Aug. of 2009.

VMU-3 is expected to deploy sometime this fall and will be able to use their new home to prepare for the upcoming deployment.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
PMO's Special Response Team demonstrates a single file formation used for room clearing to local high school students during Job Shadow Day Feb. 26.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
Col. Wes Weston, the assistant chief of staff for Installation and Logistics, speaks to the Marines of VMU-3 prior to Monday's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

CAREERS, from A1

in the simulator," said Phillips. "I think it was fun. We turned it into a little competition to see who the best shooter was."

Other areas of the Combat Center had their own presentations put together. PMO took their students to the kennels near the Adobe Flats housing area and gave them numerous demonstrations.

At one point, the students shadowing PMO also had the rare chance to see the Special Response Team firsthand. Staff Sergeant Joseph Evans, PMO's chief trainer, narrated the steps SRT takes as it enters and clears a building during a hostage situation.

The SRT keeps a tight formation and moves fast to throw off the enemy when clearing a room or building, Evans said. Each man has a specific role to play, and the team trains constantly to ensure every member knows their role by

muscle memory. The lights shut off and the SRT swiftly entered the room, ordering all the occupants to the floor immediately. The students shadowing PMO were amazed at the speed and efficiency of the four-man team.

At the end of Job Shadow Day, excited students departed the base more educated about many career fields.

"Job Shadow Day was very effective this year," Cosgriff said. "Our career fair was held this week and we have more out-of-town visitors than we've had in the past."

"All the students were so eager to talk about the different things they got to see on the base," she added. "I think job shadowing is great. It encourages these kids to explore different career fields they're interested in, get out there and do what they want to do in life."

Combat Center Boy Scout saves mom, receives medal of merit

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

In the event of a medical emergency, standard procedure is to call emergency services, but what if the situation requires immediate attention?

When Joseph Kappas, a Boy Scout with Troop 78 on base, found his diabetic mother unresponsive Jan. 5, 2008, he knew he had to act.

"When I first saw her in the chair, I knew she wasn't supposed to be like that," said the 15-year-old Scout. "I was a

little scared at first." Instead of panicking, Kappas said he recalled his Boy Scout first aid training and immediately checked for breathing and consciousness. Once he established his mother was conscious, he checked her blood glucose level and found it to be well below the normal rate.

Kappas then talked to his mother to get a response and called his father for help. His father advised him against

giving his mother an insulin shot, since diabetics can become violent and paranoid during a low glucose episode. Instead, Kappas' father told him to keep his mother calm, give her food and drink, and continue to monitor her blood glucose level.

Kappas fixed his mother a sandwich and a glass of milk to help raise her blood glucose level. After taking a bite of the sandwich and a sip of milk, his mother became paranoid

and locked herself in her bedroom. Kappas was able to unlock the door, but his mother had barricaded herself in, so he couldn't reach her.

Again, Kappas didn't panic. Instead, he calmly spoke to his mother until he convinced her to let him in the room. From there, he was able to feed her some more of the sandwich and milk. When he checked her blood glucose level again, he noticed it had improved. Kappas stayed

with his mother and cared for her until his father arrived.

Kappas' decisive thinking and swift actions to save his mother's life earned him the Medal of Merit, the third-highest award presented to Boy Scouts. He was recommended for the medal by the Boy Scouts of America National Court of Honor. The request was approved Sept. 11.

According to the Boy
See SCOUT, A8



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Joseph Kappas stands tall and proud in front of Boy Scout Troop 78 Feb. 27 during a ceremony in the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School Technical Controllers Course classroom after receiving the Medal of Merit, which he earned by saving his mother's life Jan. 5, 2008.

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COURSE, from A1

gram coordinator. Gunnery Sgt. M.L. Coe, the deputy director of the Combat Center's Sergeants Course, said the exercise teaches the students leadership traits like quick thinking, working with speed and intensity, clear and efficient communication, team building, and small unit leadership. These are skills the student can use on a daily basis in corporate America, he said.

In addition to promoting leadership, the program will help educate future civilian employers about the Marine Corps.

"It allows us here to showcase Marine Corps leadership, and that's fun to do," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Donald T. Downey, the director of Sergeants Course.

Upon arrival at the Combat Center, the attendees received a command brief from the base's community relations department detailing what they should expect and what was going to be expected of them.

Once introductions had concluded, instructors wasted no time educating their new students. The students received a demonstration on how to properly make a rack and then moved into their living quarters where they got their first lesson in teamwork - making their racks in an fast paced and detail oriented environment similar to recruit training.

The following day started early with reveille at 5 a.m.

Once again the instructors made the most of their time with the students.

Students received a weapons safety and han-

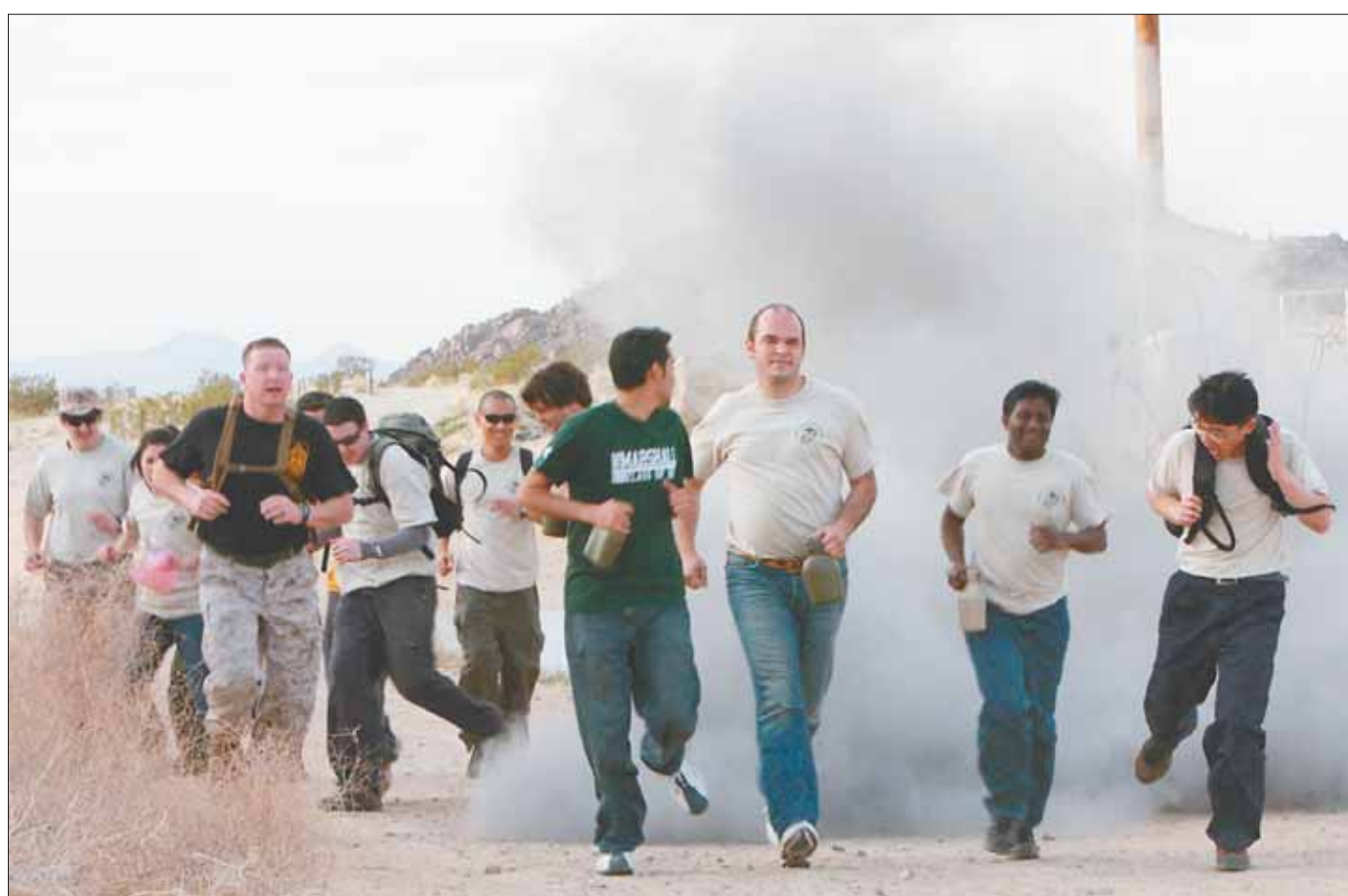
dling brief at the Combat Center's rifle range before cycling through the individual and crew served weapons at the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer. Next, students viewed a static display of an M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank, an Amphibious Assault Vehicle, a 7-ton truck, and a Light Armored Vehicle.

Next the students and their instructors moved to the Combat Center's Camp Wilson where they honed their decision-making and communications skills by participating in scenarios at the Virtual Convoy Course Trainer. Students also learned how to exit an overturned humvee at the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Trainer.

After returning to the main side of the base, the class traveled to and negotiated the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School's obstacle course. While moving on foot to the Combat Center's main obstacle course, students encountered a simulated improvised explosive device that forced them to assess casualties and transport them to a designated evacuation point using the gear provided.

As a final challenge and test of what they had learned the students had to negotiate the main obstacle course as a team carrying ammo cans, five-gallon water jugs, rubber rifles and any casualties suffered while en route.

Mike Droessler, a business student participating in the program, said the event was an amazing experience and was like nothing he had ever done.



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Students from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business react to a simulated improvised explosive device while in transition from the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School's obstacle course during the final challenge of USC MBA Leadership Challenge hosted by the Combat Center's Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Sergeants Course Feb. 27 and 28.

Droessler, a native of Lafayette, Calif., said the professional and serious nature of the instructors taught the students many leadership skills and abilities no classroom or text book can, and showcased the importance of strong and efficient leadership.

He said he found the program's constant focus on teamwork very valuable. The students' discussions on unit cohesion in the classroom and the numerous practical applications, such as the rack-making exercises, really showed how necessary teamwork is to be successful.

After the day's activities concluded Saturday, all involved gathered at Hashmarks, the staff non-commissioned officer's club, to relax.

The program has come a long way since its creation four years ago and has a solid reputation amongst the students. Therefore the school

has discussed expanding the program to an entire weekend event, Hernandez said.

Droessler, a first-year

graduate student, concentrating in finance agreed with Hernandez and said that was why he attended.

"It has a reputation of being a good program," said Droessler. "I knew I'd get a lot out of it."



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Students from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business negotiate the MCCES obstacle course during the final challenge of USC MBA Leadership Challenge hosted by the Combat Center's SNCO Academy's Sergeants Course Feb. 27 and 28.

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 spirit_truthworshipcenter@yahoo.com

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 AWANA (during school year) 6:15-8:00 PM
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 Jr High Wednesday 6:30-8:00 PM
 High School Sunday 6:30-8:30 PM
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Corpsman saves British commander in Afghanistan

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When Petty Officer 1st Class Wil Morales, the line corpsman for Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, would hear someone yelling "Corpsman Up" during their recent deployment to Afghanistan, he never hesitated.

It was his courageous and decisive life-saving action while in Afghanistan that recently earned him a Bronze Star Medal with a "Combat V."

He said he was just doing his job. 'Just doing his job' on one occasion meant saving the life of Lt. Col. David Richmond, the Battle Group Northwest commander with 5th Battalion, Royal Scots, which is part of the British Army.

On June 18, Morales was with the Marines of Co. F as they prepared to set up a locking position to flush out Taliban insurgents in the town of Kats-Sharbat, Afghanistan.

Working with U.K. troops, Afghan National Army and local police, the company flanked the town. As Morales and his team entered the city, they began taking small-arms, machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire.

Staff Sgt. Eric Hillis, a platoon sergeant for Weapons Company who was attached to Co. F, said the battle lasted four hours as each group moved forward slowly, clearing the town building by building.

"All the fire was on us," said Hillis, a Carrollton, Ill., native. "The British and the Afghans barely received any as they moved into the town."

As the battle reached the four-hour mark, the fighting lulled, and Richmond moved toward the Marines' position.

"He was toward the front of the group," said Morales, a Brooklyn, N.Y., native. "While I was watching, I saw him drop to the ground and heard someone calling 'Doc.'"

Morales stopped engaging the enemy and exposed himself to their fire by low-crawling 30 meters toward the fallen commander.

"I just remember telling myself to stay low," the 32-year-old said. "I didn't feel any fear because of the adrenaline rush. I was running on pure instinct."

Cpl. Serjio Rolon, an assaultman with the company, reached the commander first and began dragging him toward Morales, meeting him halfway in the exposed area. The two men then dragged Richmond to safety. Morales assessed Richmond's injuries; the commander had been shot and the round had splintered the bone.

"When I checked, I saw there was a big bullet hole in his leg," Morales said. "His leg began to swell like a balloon and I knew blood was pooling in the cavity."

To stop the bleeding, Morales applied a tourniquet on the commander's upper thigh. When that only slowed the bleeding, he applied a second one as a pressure dressing.

"I realized he had no support in his leg after I stopped the bleeding," Morales said. "When you moved his leg, it was like rubber. That's when I realized the bullet had shattered his femur bone."

Morales low-crawled back to where he helped rescue the wounded commander while still taking fire. He collected fallen tree branches to use as a splint for the commander's broken leg.

Although it only took 10 minutes for Morales to save the commander's life, he said it felt like an eternity.

"After I got him stabilized,

lized we moved him even further back and called in for a medevac [medical evacuation]," he said.

After saving the commander's life, Morales returned to Co. F and continued to provide medical support throughout the rest of the firefight.

"When I went back, I had to treat two more Marines," Morales said. "One Marine had taken shrapnel to the arm, and the second had become a heat casualty."

Hillis said Morales' dedication to duty displayed during the firefight was just one example of why he was a necessity to their company's welfare throughout the deployment.

"HM1 Morales was instrumental to many of the guys who were injured," he said.

"He is the reason why many of the wounded

Marines were able to go home with all their body parts instead as amputees. He knew how to react and when to react when a situation came up."

Rolon also said Morales had immense dedication to his job and to his Marines.

"He was our 'doc,' and we were never worried about being shot because he was there," he said. "He also made sure his corpsmen were properly trained in case he wasn't there."

When Morales was treating a patient at the forward operating base, he would ensure every available corpsman he worked with was there so he could teach them how to treat different types of wounds and illnesses.

"He gave the Marines faith in the other corpsman, even if they were on their first deployment," Hillis said.

"The Britons always wanted him to go to their side of the camp and treat their wounded and ill."

"You didn't hear the guys worrying about getting wounded," he said.



Petty Officer 1st Class Wil Morales, a line corpsman with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Company F, shakes hands with Lt. Col. Richard D. Hall, the former battalion commander, who pinned on his Bronze Star Medal with a "Combat V" for heroic actions during their deployment to Afghanistan. Morales saved the life of Lt. Col. David Richmond, the Battle Group Northwest commander with 5th Battalion, Royal Scots, which is part of the British Army.

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"Normally halfway through a deployment the guys begin to get more worried about being shot. With Morales here they were able to focus on our mission."

For five months of their eight-month deployment, the Marines and sailors of Co. F did not have electricity and had to shower with plastic bags full of water. Hillis said they were dirty all the time, but somehow Morales ensured every Marine was practicing good hygiene and drinking clean water. Morales also had passed out hand sanitizers to all the Marines to help keep them germ free.

"We shared our camp with the British," Hillis said. "They were losing manpower

from all the illnesses they got from drinking the water. We barely had a fraction of that because Morales was keeping us healthy."

Rolon agreed with Hillis, saying their company never had a Marine miss a patrol due to sickness.

Morales had also extended his expertise and warm heart to the locals, including a young Afghanistan boy who had been severely injured by an unexploded mortar round.

"This young boy found this cracked round and decided to put a lit match in it," Hillis said. "The round exploded and gave him third

See HERO, A8

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

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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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The deadline for submitting Trader ads is noon Wednesday, for the upcoming Friday's paper.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-3762.

DRILLING, from A4

carrying M-1 Garand rifles with bayonets attached.

Murmurs and gasps raced through the crowd as the rifles spun through the air, bayonets flying within mere inches from the Marines.

"They are truly the best" one woman whispered as she sat in the silence of the crowd who were listening solely to the clicks and thumps made by the Silent Drill Platoon.

The routine concluded with a unique rifle inspection that included elaborate rifle spins and tosses.

"I like being able to represent the Marine Corps in a positive way," said Lance Cpl. Zachary Sturges, a member of the Silent Drill Platoon. "It is good for people to see the overall discipline Marines have."

Sturges received the nick-

name "Old Dog" for scoring the highest grade for the second-year Marines during Challenge Day, which is when the Marines of the Silent Drill Platoon compete for key positions in the "Marching 24."

"Marines were screened during School of Infantry," said Sturges, while explaining what it takes to become a member of the platoon. "If the Marines passed the screening they attended a four-month long school."

During school Marines were not only trained in drill, but had to prove they had the right attitude to become a member of the "Marching 24" by taking an active role in the platoon and having an overall positive mind-set.

Silence fell over the crowd as Marines and civilians stood to honor and salute the official battle colors of the Marine

Corps as they were marched onto the field.

There are 54 streamers and silver bands that represent military campaigns the Marine Corps has been involved in dating back to the Revolutionary War.

At the end of the ceremony, Marines from the Silent Drill Platoon met with members of the audience and let Combat Center Marines and children from Condor, Twentynine Palms and Landers elementary schools look at their rifles and explained what it took to become part of the Silent Drill Platoon.

Every year, the Battle Color Detachment visits the Combat Center as part of their West Coast tour. They will be performing today at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and tomorrow at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Marines from the Drum and Bugle Corps perform well-known music pieces for the spectators aboard the Combat Center during the Battle Color Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Feb. 27.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Marines from the Silent Drill Platoon twirl their M-1 Garand rifles inches from their fellow Marines heads during the Battle Color Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Feb. 27.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Brig. Gen. Mark Gurganus, the Combat Center's commanding general, stands in position of attention during the pass and review of the Battle Color Detachment.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

The Official Color Guard of the Marine Corps marches out onto Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field at the end of the Battle Color Ceremony Feb. 27.



COURTESY OF PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS WIL MORALES

Petty Officer 1st Class Wil Morales, a line corpsman for 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Company F, administers a shot to the Afghanistan boy he helped rehabilitate during 2/7's recent deployment.

HERO, from A7

degree burns on his face, chest and arm."

The boy was told he would never have use of his hand again. Morales spoke to the family through a translator, and instructed the boy's father to bring his son in every

day for treatment.

Rolon said every day Morales would change his dressing and treat the burns for the little boy.

"By the time we were preparing to go back home, the boy's face was healing and he was getting pigment back and he was able to use his hand," he said.

Morales went above and beyond to not only treat his Marines, but also his British comrades and the local Afghan community; making the war zone a better place not only for those who came across his medical table, but simply, anyone who came across him.

SCOUT, from A5

Scouts of America Web site, <http://www.scouting.org>, the Medal of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or an adult leader who has performed some outstanding act of service of a rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.

Kappas received the Medal of Merit Feb. 27 at 6:30 p.m. during a ceremony in the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School Technical Controllers Course classroom, building 1738. John Calbreath, the

Sunrise District executive for the California Inland Empire Council, presented the medal to Kappas' father, Master Sgt. Joseph Kappas, who pinned it on his son's uniform.

"We're proud - I think proud would be a good word," said Kappas, who is the heavy section motor transport maintenance chief for Exercise Support Division. "He's known what to do for a long time. We're just glad he stayed calm, paid attention and took the right actions."

Calbreath also spoke highly of the young Boy Scout, saying the steps he took to save his mother's life epitomize what a Boy Scout is

meant to be.

"On behalf of the California Inland Empire Council, I appreciate the fact that he is a role model for his fellow Scouts," he said. "His character and his values are what scouting is all about."

Despite being honored as a hero, Kappas is humbled by the award.

"I just feel better knowing that everything is back to normal," he said.

Kappas and the rest of Boy Scout Troop 78 will continue their tradition of community service when they tackle an environmental service project at Lake Perris, Calif., later this month.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Kappas and his mother stand proudly in front of Boy Scout Troop 78 Feb. 27 during a ceremony in the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School Technical Controllers Course classroom, Kappas earned the award after saving his mother's life Jan. 5, 2008.

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B1



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Roger Fox, a Tennessee native, fights past the opposition's defense during the All-star game Wednesday night. The yellow team triumphed 89-84. See B3

Coffee shop moves to new location

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Jasmine's Espresso Cafe, the coffee shop in the Combat Center's Marine Corps Exchange, was recently moved from its location in the front of the exchange to an area next to the Quick Break.

The change to the PX was made following recommendations from the last routine inspection," said Darlene Hull, the assistant fire chief of the Combat Center's Fire Department. "The coffee shop itself disrupted the flow in and out of the exchange, in case of a fire. It took up too much space by the entrance, and

needed to be moved to accommodate the rule."

"The Marine Corps has adopted some of the National Fire Protection Association's requirements," said Hull, who comes from South Lake Tahoe, Calif.

Codes One and 101 specifically are the ones adopted by the Marine Corps from the NFPA.

Aside from the NFPA, the Marine Corps also goes by regulations from International Building Codes and Unified Facility Criteria for their safety standards.

"The placement in the front of the exchange did not allow for adequate egress of people through the main part of the

exchange in case of an emergency," said Crosier, who is a native of Lewistown, Mont.

Even though the movement of the coffee shop was necessary, the movement did create some minor issues that were quickly resolved.

Overall, the move will not inconvenience patrons.

"A lot of Marines are around getting breakfast, and they like coffee with it," said T. C. Dowden, the division head of purchasing and contracting for MCCS and a native of Indianapolis. "Also, while waiting in line to get their hair cut, they get coffee as well."

Youth Sports starts Start Smart Tennis

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Community Services Youth Sports program is currently hosting a pilot Start Smart Tennis program to teach children the fundamentals of the sport while giving the youth an opportunity to bond with their parents.

This program will help parents understand what a child needs to learn the fundamentals of tennis and

gives parents an opportunity to spend time with their child outside their busy schedule, said Courtney Chambers, an MCCS youth sports recreation assistant.

MCCS Youth Sports will critique the new tennis program, that began in February, and report their findings to the National Alliance for Youth Sports at the end of the Start Smart Tennis season. The

See TENNIS, B2

Fight Club 29 receives shiners



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Members of Fight Club 29, the Combat Center's mixed martial arts team, display their awards from the Grapplers Extreme Tournament in San Diego at the Crossfit Ripper gym Feb. 26. The team took home the silver medal for the overall competition. Fighters Nate Wolf, Trevor Scelso and Jarrett Edwards also won gold medals, and Dan Marquez and James Fehr won silver medals. Fight Club 29 is currently training for the Mixed Martial Arts Festival at Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, Calif., March 21.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Christopher Pacheco, 5, balances on one foot while trying to keep the tennis ball on his racket during a Start Smart Tennis practice Feb. 28 at the tennis courts on the corner of Fourth and Bourke street.



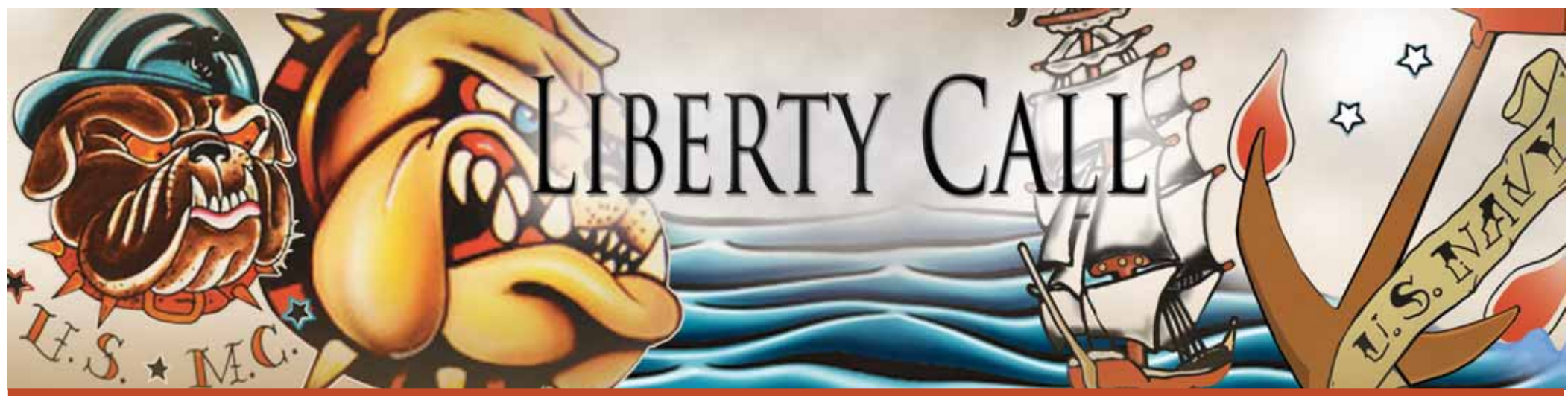
LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Mackenzie Hanners, 7, tries taking a few steps while balancing the tennis ball on her racket.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Madison Carpenter, 5, practices her backhand swing during a Start Smart Tennis session Feb. 28.



FRI. 3/6 – SAT. 4/4 I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change! Time: Fri. & Sat. 7 p.m., Sun. 3/29, 2:30 p.m. matinee, Thurs. 3/19, 7 p.m. Where: Theatre 29, 73637 Sullivan Rd., Twentynine Palms For info call 361-4151 or visit http://www.theatre29.com	FRI. 3/6 & SAT. 3/7 Improv Comedy Club, John Caponera Time: 8 & 10 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy., Indio For info call (800) 827-2946 or visit http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com	FRI. 3/6 Alexandra Hope, Voices Time: 8:30 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's 53688 Pioneerstown Rd. Pioneerstown. For more info call 365-5956 or visit http://www.pappyandharriets.com	SAT. 3/7 Puddle of Mudd in concert Time: 9 p.m. Where: Agua Caliente 32-250 Bob Hope Dr. Rancho Mirage For more info call (888) 999-1995	SAT. 3/7 The Shadow Mountain Band Time: 7 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's 53688 Pioneerstown Rd. Pioneerstown For info call 365-5956 or visit http://www.pappyandharriets.com
MON. 3/9 Yoga For Bereaved Persons Time: 5:30-7 p.m. Where: Hospice of Morongo Basin 61675 29 Palms Hwy. Joshua Tree For info call 366-1308	WED. 3/11 Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Wildflower Exhibition Opening Reception 3/13, 4:30-6 p.m. Time: All day event Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum 57090 29 Palms Hwy. Yucca Valley For info call 369-7212 or visit http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org	THURS. 3/12 – SUN. 3/15 La Quinta Arts Festival Time: All day event Where: La Quinta Civic Center Calle Tampico and Washington St., La Quinta Follow signs to parking For more info visit http://www.lqaf.com	FRI. 3/20 Concert: Conjunto Prima Vera Time: 9 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For more info call (800) 252-4499 or visit http://www.morongocasinoresort.com	SAT. 3/21 Frankie Valli in concert Time: 8 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy. Indio For more info call (800) 827-2946 or visit http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com

'Coraline' a rush of weirdness and wild imagination

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

Coraline
Rated PG

A young girl discovers a secret passageway in the animated "Coraline" that leads to an exotic, explosively colorful fantasyland where her daydreams can come true. But when the colors start to fade, those daydreams start looking more like nightmares. Caroline, voiced by Dakota Fanning, is bored after moving with her parents into a large apartment in a creaky old Victorian house. Her mom and dad are too wrapped in their busy lives to pay her much attention. When she finds a hidden doorway and goes exploring,

it takes her to a bizarre-opposite realm where all the things in her drab "ordinary" life—including her dull parents and eccentric neighbors—are crazily recast in a quirky, irresistibly inviting "otherworld." Coraline is a modern-day Alice in Wonderland, escaping to the unbridled fun of the otherworld whenever she can. But there's one catch, and it's a deal-breaker: Coraline's "other" mother wants her to stay forever, not just visit occasionally—and she wants to sew buttons over her eyes. Uh-oh. Intoxicatingly visual, "Coraline" was filmed using old-fashioned stop motion, where every action you see onscreen was meticulously fashioned by hand, one tiny movement at a time, with

pose-able figurines and actual props. Director Henry Selick used the technique in two previous movies, "James and the Giant Peach" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas." In "Coraline," the effect is nothing less than stunning, a kaleidoscope of dazzling sights that come alive with handcrafted detail and textures so real-looking you can almost feel them brushing across your face—especially if you see the movie in 3-D, for which it was shot. The sinister undertones could be unsettling for preschoolers, but "Coraline" is a rare treat for kids old enough to appreciate its exotic rush of wonder, weirdness and wildly imaginative adventure. The heroine is a plucky, resourceful tween. The look



Coraline, voiced by Dakota Fanning, travels through a portal between worlds in Henry Selick's stop-motion animated 3-D adventure "Coraline", from Laika Entertainment for release by Focus Features.

is flat-out mind-blowing. And viewers of all ages will benefit from a message—be careful what you wish for—that's true no matter what dreams you're chasing.

Comedy and melodrama clash in 'Madea Goes to Jail'

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

Madea Goes to Jail
Starring Tyler Perry
Rated PG-13

Comedian Tyler Perry trots out his favorite character for "Madea Goes to Jail," his latest cinematic soufflé of bawdy comedy and moralizing melodrama.

Madea—whom Perry plays in drag, mostly in a mumu—is a large, loud woman with anger-management issues. Perry has portrayed the blustery, brawling granny in three previous movies, and she's also cropped up on his successful TBS television series, "Tyler Perry's House of Payne." After recurring run-ins with the law, including a parking-space altercation in which she picks up the other vehicle with a forklift, Madea is sent to the big house by an exasperated judge (TV adjudicator Judge Mathas—don't ask how or why) who can't understand why she hasn't been locked up long ago. Despite the title, Madea's trip to prison isn't the movie's primary focus, which instead revolves around a young assistant district attorney and his engagement to a co-worker. The signs that their trip


down the aisle is headed for trouble are planted early—and obviously—in the movie, and, sure enough, lead exactly where you expect. Fans of TV's "The Cosby Show" will probably not know quite how to process the sight of Keshia Knight Pulliam, best remembered from her role as that show's pint-sized moppet Rudy Huxtable, portraying a drug-addicted prostitute who comes between the lawyer and his fiancé. That the two storylines of the movie don't intersect, or even run parallel, is just one of the problems. But Perry (who also wrote and directed, and plays two additional roles) barges ahead anyway, cross-cut-sawing back and forth between rip-snortin' silly and heavy-handed serious. There are also numerous plot holes, script shortcomings, bargain-basement pro-

duction standards, wall-to-wall stereotypes and a cameo by Dr. Phil that runs out of ha-ha steam long before it wheezes to a conclusion. The audience at the screening I attended was obviously made up of a lot of Tyler Perry enthusiasts, and they giggled at Madea's every

grandstanding mannerism, Southern-fried euphemism and law-flauntin' blowup. Perry clearly knows what his fans like, and he gives it to them—by the shovelful. But for those not so tuned to his talents, "Madea Goes to Jail" is two excruciating hours of hard time.



Comedian Tyler Perry portrays his favorite character for "Madea Goes to Jail".



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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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TENNIS, from B1

Combat Center's Youth Sports program was one of 10 national sites that were asked to test the new program since they are one of the few programs who include Start Smart in their sports curriculum, said Joe Rosselli, the MCCS youth sports director.

During the pilot program, Chambers, who is also the Start Smart Tennis coach, is teaching 12 children the fundamentals of tennis. Children will learn the different types of swings, rules and regulations, balancing techniques and agility.

"I was pretty excited about coaching this tennis class because I used to play

tennis," said Chambers, a Twentynine Palms native. "I really hope this new program is available next year for the children."

Start Smart Tennis is different from basic tennis lessons because it is an interactive experience between a parent and child. During the session, parents can interact with their child throughout practice and under a coach's supervision.

"It is a really neat program," said Elizabeth Carpenter, whose 5-year-old daughter Madison participates in Start Smart Tennis. "It gives the children a learning experience they wouldn't normally get."

Start Smart Tennis does not have children participate in scheduled games, but holds practice once a week.

During the practices, at the tennis courts on the corner of Fourth and Bourke Street, are split into four different sections. At each section of the court the children are required to practice a different aspect of the game through drills and practical application before moving on.

Drills include having to balance a tennis ball on their racket while moving in different directions, bouncing the ball on their racket as many times as possible, hitting the ball in midair in the direction of their parent, and negotiating an agility course created by the coaches before the practice.

For more information, contact Youth Sports at the community center at 830-8421.

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Confessions Of A Shopaholic (PG) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thu: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	Coraline (PG) Fri-Sun: 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 Mon-Thu: 2:30, 4:45, 7:00	Coming March 13 Race To Witch Mountain The Last House On The Left

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Combat Center sports standings



Michael Allen, a player with Fainting Goats, narrowly evades a shot from the opposing team during their second match.

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Brandon Fellows, a player with Fainting Goats puts all his muscle behind a ball to knock out a player of the opposing team.



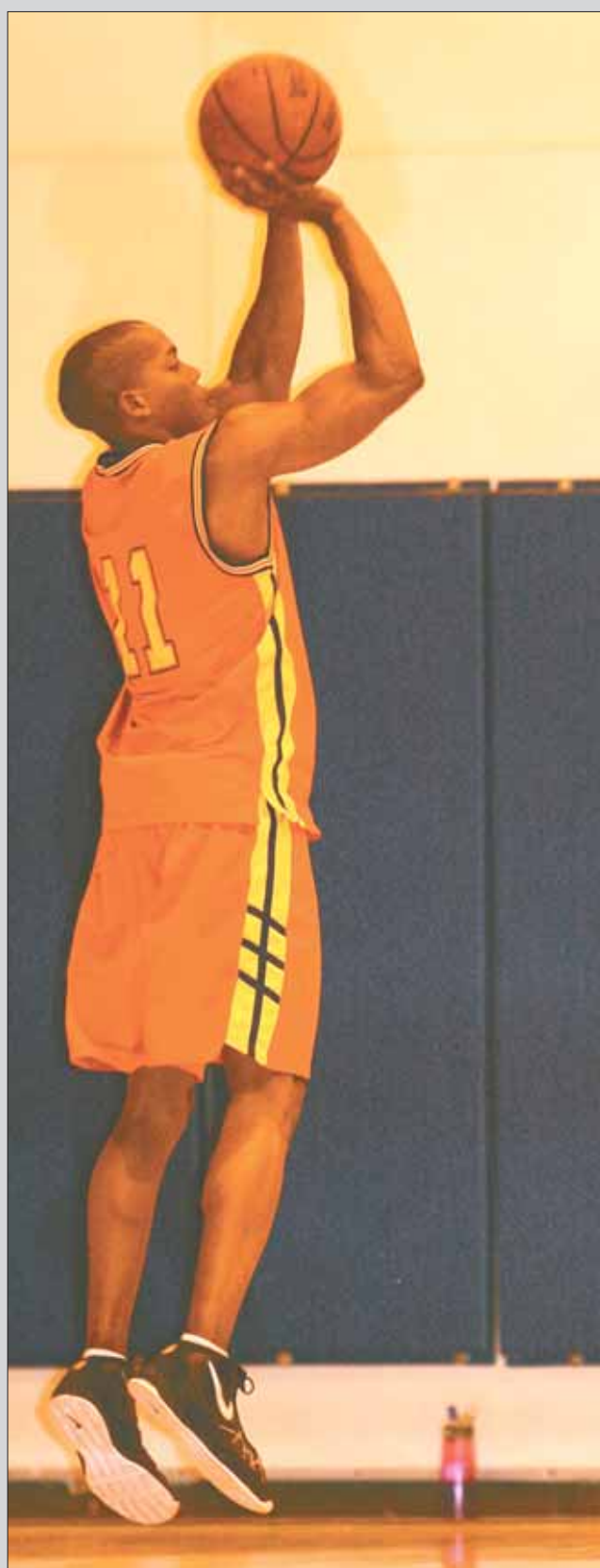
LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Jose Hernandez, a player with Fainting Goats, blocks a shot from the opposition while trying to run out the clock and save his team.

Intramural Dodgeball league standings as of Tuesday

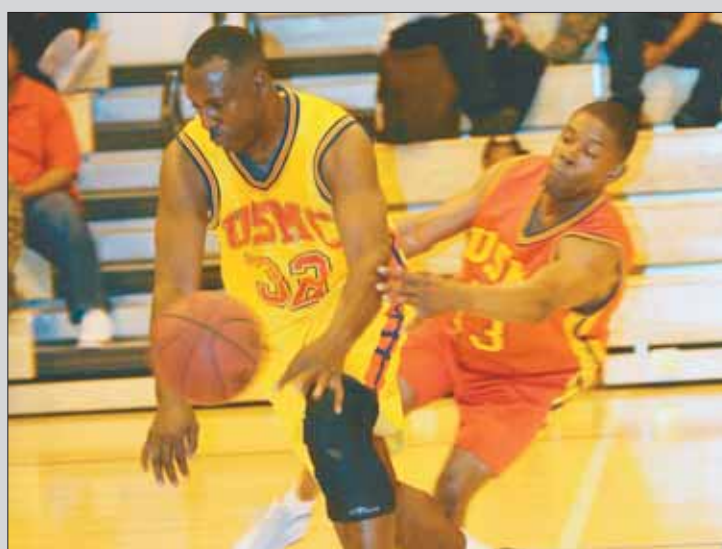
Team	Wins	Losses
Fainting Goats	7	1
MCCES A Co.	6	2
Jive Turkeys	6	2
Sapper	4	2
MTU	5	3
4 Horsemen (boot's)	5	3
Tanks #4	3	5
Dental	1	7
Hospital	1	7
Justice League	0	8



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
Edwin Nuñez, a player with Tanks #4, makes a powerful throw as he tries to win the first match for his team Tuesday night during the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
Jasper Orr, a player for the red team, shoots a three pointer. They ended up losing 89-84.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
James Stanley, the shooting guard, drives past Altie Holcomb. The yellow team fought hard to win 89-84.

2009 Intramural Basketball Standings as of Thursday

Team	Wins	Losses	%
NHTP	6	0	1000
MCCES All-Stars	5	0	1000
Ole School Plus	4	1	800
1/7	4	2	667
1st Tanks	4	2	667
IPAC	3	3	500
MCCES A	2	3	400
MWSS-374 (B)	2	3	400
MWSS-374 (A)	2	4	333
MCCES Party	2	4	333
CLB-7	0	6	0
3rd CEB	0	6	0



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
Keith Mahan, a player on the red team, prepares to drive down the court. His team lost 89-84.

Treading up Half Dome, lifting the warrior spirit

CPL. PRISCILLA VITALE
HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

WASHINGTON — Organizers for a Yosemite National Park mountain hike are seeking volunteers to plan and support an annual event that commemorates the sacrifices made by service members fighting in the Global War on Terrorism.

The Lewis B. Puller Memorial Hike, which takes place annually the first week in August during Purple Heart Day, is an eight-mile trek up Half Dome in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California.

The hike was named after Lewis B. Puller Jr., the son of the infamous and late Lt. Gen. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, a highly-decorated war hero and an everlasting Marine icon.

The idea to turn the hike into a memorial was inspired by fallen Cpl. Mark A. Evin who was killed during combat operations April 3, 2003, in Iraq, said Philip Aaron, an organizer for the event.

"Everything came about in an attempt to bring public awareness to the warriors, past and present, who have given so much for their country," said Aaron.

The goal is to inspire people to appreciate the nation's servicemen and women, and honor those who have sacrificed their lives or parts of themselves, he added.

The hike begins at the park's Happy Isles and continues through Vernal Falls, also known as the Mist Trail. The group then stops to swim in the Emerald Pool before proceeding up past Nevada Falls and to the Cables.

Once participants reach the summit, a small ceremony is held followed by a brief prayer. Photos of those being remembered are placed on the mountain to create a small memorial in their name, said Aaron.

Those who cannot participate in the hike can participate in the ceremony from Glacier Point, which overlooks Yosemite Valley, said Aaron.

"It is the most spectacular spot in the world," he added, referring to the view.

The initial idea for the hike was to bring wounded warriors up to the top of Half Dome, although it's too expensive to coordinate, Aaron said.

It's a rather difficult trek up the mountain and completing the hike is quite an accomplishment, said Scott Gediman, National Park Ranger and

spokesman for Yosemite National Park.

Event coordinators say the experience of being at the top of Half Dome would be a "paradigm shift," or a change from one way of thinking to another, for those in attendance. It can give wounded warriors a new outlook about life and their experiences.

"The wilderness provides a sense of rejuvenation and the experience of being in a park owned by the American people offers a sense of pride," said Gediman.

Although the National Park Service is not involved in the coordination of the event, they encourage people to visit the park and participate in such events, he said.

According to Aaron, there were about 20 people in attendance for the hike last year, and even though not everyone who wants to participate can on Aug. 7 every year, they can hike up Half Dome as close to that date as possible.

Aaron has big hopes for the future of the memorial hike. If all plans come together, it will be scheduled to start Aug. 7 every year.

Future plans include having a Marine-specific hike that begins near Marine Corps

Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., just outside Pickel Meadow, and trying to get a large Marine following, due to its proximity to West Coast Marine Corps bases.

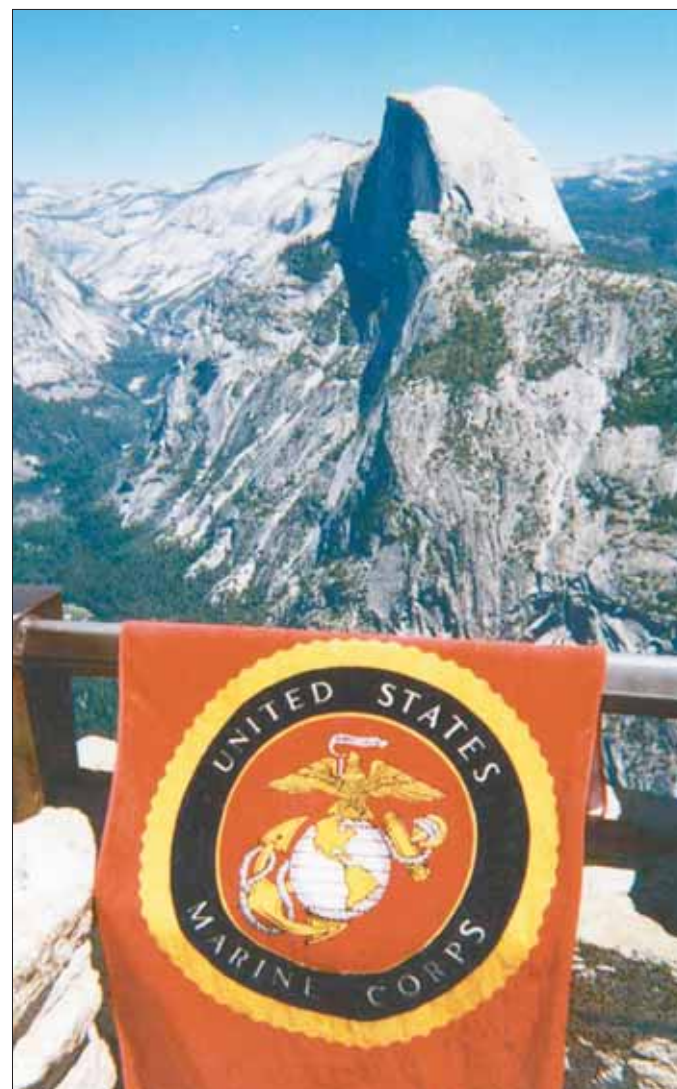
"This hike will bring more of a Marine identity and hopefully get more injured Marines involved," said Aaron.

If the Pickel Meadow hike comes together, the location would make the use of pack animals more convenient, said retired Maj. Gen. O. K. Steele, who went on the hike last year with his grandson in commemoration of the anniversary of Guadalcanal. This would assist the injured veterans during the hike.

"We're looking for more people to get involved with the hikes," said Aaron.

"Mainly, we would like volunteers who love nature and service members to assist with providing [participants] with the most memorable experience of their life," he added.

This year, the fourth annual Lewis B. Puller Memorial Hike will begin Aug. 5 with the memorial ceremony being held Aug. 6. For more information call (718) 670-6718 or e-mail theedgedancer@gmail.com.



PHILIP AARON

Organizers for a Yosemite National Park mountain hike are seeking volunteers to plan and support an annual event that commemorates the sacrifices made by service members fighting in the Global War on Terrorism.

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