

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 13, 2009

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'Thundering Third' blaze through IED, convoy combat operation training

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. – Marines and sailors of the Combat Center's Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, conducted a 35-mile convoy training exercise on an unpaved road stretching from the town of Bridgeport, Calif., to Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot, Nev., Saturday.

The scenario-based convoy exercise was designed to prepare the unit to avoid, detect and report improvised explosive devices in similar roads and terrain found in mountainous environments like Afghanistan, said Mike LaBarge, the course development specialist.

The exercise was used as practice for a final test in which the unit was hit harder with notional IEDs, enemy ambushes, vehicle malfunctions and other issues Monday.

Marines from 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, also based out of the Combat Center, supported the unit by overseeing the IED portion of the convoy training.

1st Lt. Michael A. Jevons, the Weapons Company commander, said he believes this type of training does leaps and bounds "for preparing his men for combat in country."

"We want to make sure the Marines are equipped to conduct military operations to react to and defeat the enemy if

See CONVOYS, A4



Four Marines of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, dismount their vehicles and punch out to provide unit security while fellow Marines notionally call the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team to investigate a hoax IED during a convoy training exercise outside of Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot in Hawthorne, Nev., Saturday.

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Combat Center paves way for 'going green'

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center is on its way to making a greener footprint on the environment by becoming the first Marine Corps base on the West Coast to install E-85, a type of ethanol fuel used in flex-fuel automobiles.

Ethanol is a corn-based fuel widely believed to be better for the environment because of its reduced tailpipe emissions.

The E-85 pumps current-



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

The Combat Center has followed suit with Marine Corps Installations on the East Coast and become the first Marine base on the West Coast to install ethanol fuel, otherwise known as E-85.

ly being installed at the Combat Center are scheduled to be ready for use later in the month for government vehicles, said Ken Tyree, the fleet manager for the Southwest Region Fleet Transportation, based here.

"We have 76 of our 300 government vehicles already replaced with flex-fuel vehicles," said Tyree, who comes from Beckley, W. Va. "Flex-fuel means they are able to use both unleaded gas and E-85."

Installation of ethanol pumps and the use of flex-fuel vehicles has gone smoothly on other installations, but has been difficult in this part of the country because corn is not as abundant on the West Coast.

"In the Midwest and on the East Coast the fuel is very popular," Tyree said. "It's more popular in those areas because they grow corn."

With all the possible environmental benefits from using E-85, there are still a few drawbacks.

Typical concerns are people being afraid of the lower gas mileage coming from ethanol use, and the fact fuel-grain corn is used to make E-85.

"The same corn used to make feed stock is used in ethanol," Tyree said. "People

See E-85, A7

40 'War Dogs' receive Purple Heart

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-nine Marines and one sailor from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, received the Purple Heart Medal at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Monday.

The men, who recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan, received the Purple Heart Medal for

wounds sustained during combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

After the 40 service members marched onto the field with the rest of their battalion standing behind them, Lt. Col. John M. Reed, the battalion commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brookshire, the battalion sergeant major, approached the formation.

As the men stood at the position of

attention, the CO and sergeant major awarded each man his Purple Heart.

"I am proud of their efforts in Afghanistan and the Purple Heart shows the sacrifice they and the battalion made for their country, Marine Corps and fellow Marines," Brookshire said. "Those Marines put a lot of sweat, blood and unfortunately, tears with the

See AWARDS, A6



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Michael R. Gravitt, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Company E, stands at the position of attention while Lt. Col. John M. Reed, the battalion commanding officer, pins on his Purple Heart Monday for wounds received during 2/7's recent deployment to Afghanistan.



Lifting NCOs higher - See A4

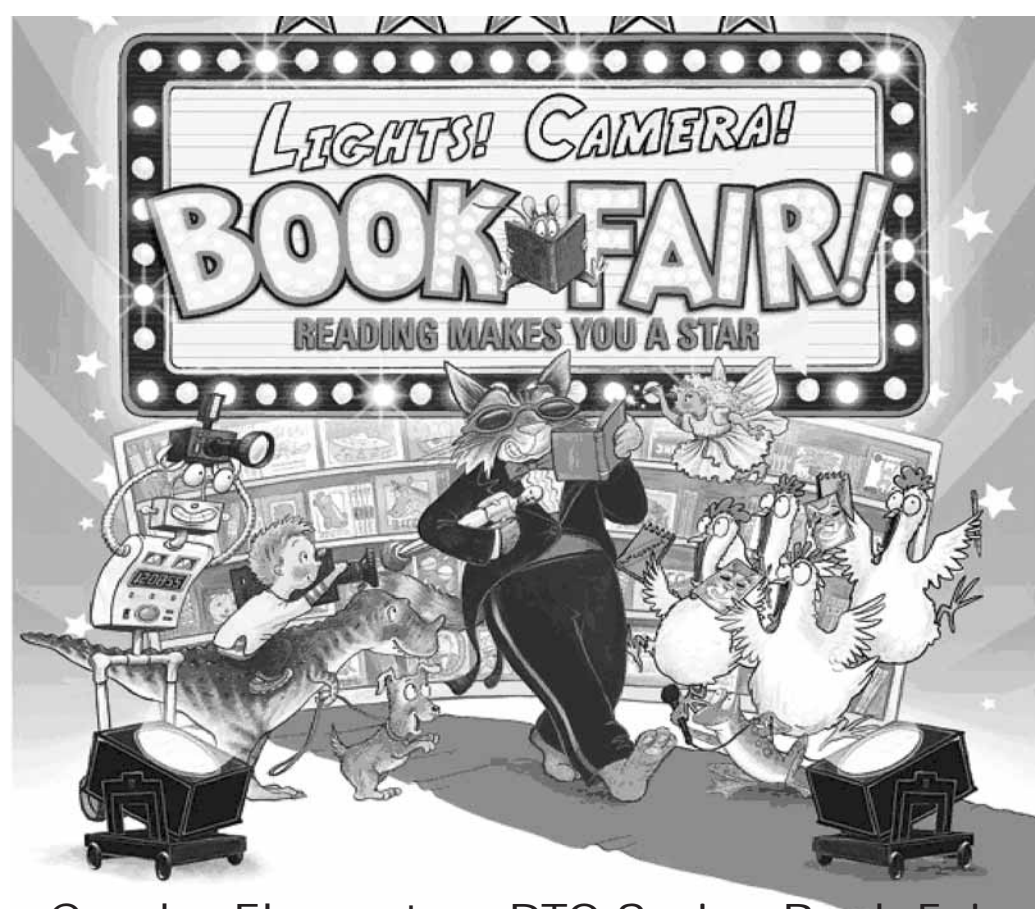


Desert lioness - See A5

CLB-7 pushes past MWSS-374
See B1



"Why that's Lt. Dan!" - See B1



Condor Elementary PTO Spring Book Fair

Family Reading Night with Condor Community Connections
March 13, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

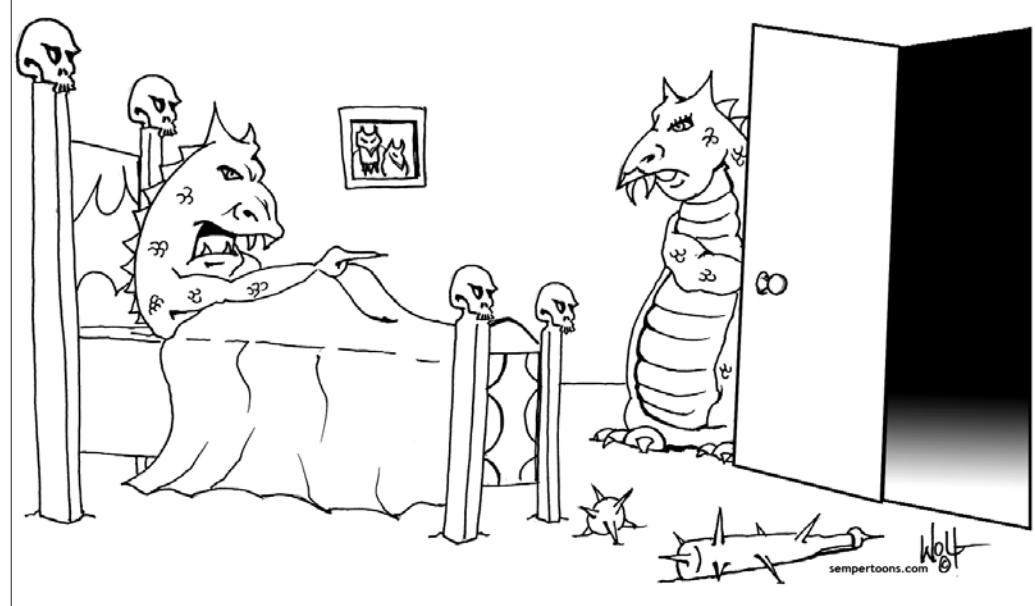
Condor Elementary

2551 Condor Road, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

<http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/publish/condor29palms>

SemperToon Fact 001:

Before going to sleep every night, the "BOOGIE MAN", makes his mom check the closet for U.S. Marines.



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

LAUNDRY DAY

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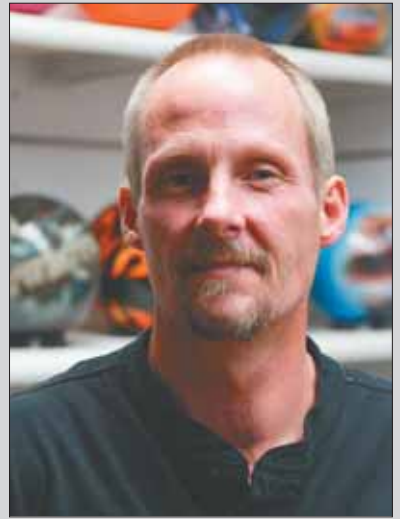
American Profile Hometown Content 02/15/2009

- ACROSS**
- Mercury is one
 - Hardly a he-man
 - Rarely read mail
 - "_ at the office"
 - "Milk's Favorite Cookie"
 - Bit of verbal fanfare
 - Donnybrook
 - Rocker Clapton
 - Groundhog Day mo.
 - Toll rds.
 - 24-hour race site
 - Smelly smokes
 - Litter's littlest
 - __ Lingus
 - Celeb on TV ad, e.g.
 - Rack up
 - Cost of a call, once
 - The good life
 - Compete in log rolling
 - In great shape
 - Ballet attire
 - Jai __
 - Space chimp of 1961
 - Test episode
 - "Let's Be Heard" radio host
 - Word on U. S. currency
 - Word before crime or mail
 - Kix and Trix
 - "Good fellas" star Ray
 - Catches some rays
 - Headstone letters
 - Ranch unit
 - Razzberry
 - Arena sound
 - X-ray vision stopper
 - Gate squeaker
 - King of Siam's visitor
 - Water a whirl
 - First name in cosmetics
- DOWN**
- Puts into an irritable mood
 - Marsh wader
 - Billy Blanks fitness system
 - Forum greeting
 - Babe Ruth & Barry Bonds, for two
 - Does the trick
 - Nest eggs, briefly
 - Alice's sitcom boss
 - Loaded with industrial waste
 - Check an assault
 - Prefix with glide or sail
 - Deuce follower
 - They're big at McD's
 - Telephone button abbr.
 - Envelope abbr.
 - Late nineteenth century time
 - Country music's LeAnn
 - __ grigio (wine)
 - Stake driver
 - Regarding, on memos
 - Not masc. or fem.
 - "The Purple Cow" rhyme scheme
 - O'Shea of "The Verdict"
 - Graceful steed
 - "No man is an island" poet
 - 4 p.m. service holder
 - Boxster automaker
 - Slum pest
 - Boomers' kids, collectively
 - It's sold in bars
 - "Looks __ everything!"
 - Loyal subject
 - Mall binge
 - "Tomb raider" Croft
 - Revered one
 - Algerian seaport
 - Wart giver of folklore
 - Symbol of deficit
 - "__ Master's Voice"

[puzzle Solutions on A8]

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Todd Makovsky
Job Title: Bowling Center Manager
Unit: Sandy Hill Lanes
Job Duties: Front desk operations, snack bar operations, Pro Shop services, and overall maintenance.
Like most about job: Being able to provide products and services that cause repeat usage of the facility.
Major Accomplishments: To have earned the confidence and support of upper management in successfully operating the bowling center in a manner that best supports our local community.
Hobbies: Riding my motorcycle and trying to make the most of my limited free time.
Military service: 20 years as a Staff NCO in the Marine Corps
Time at Combat Center: 14 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.

SUDOKU

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Centerspeak

What do you think of the plan to move more troops to Afghanistan?

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



SSGT. WILLIAM RYAN
 TECH CONTROL, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"We need to stabilize the region, and it keeps us employed, so I'm for it."



CAPT. CARLOS CUERAS
 COMPANY G, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Being a Marine that just got back from Afghanistan, troop movement is in the best interest of our military involvement at this time."



SEAMAN CODY DOWNS
 CHAPLAIN'S AID, 3RD LIGHT ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION

"I think it's important because to accomplish the mission we need a service level like we had in Iraq two years ago."

OBSERVATION POST

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- Public Affairs Chief Gunnery Sgt. Sergio Jimenez
- Press Chief/Editor Lance Cpl. Corey A. Blodgett
- Layout, Design Leslie Shaw

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This Day in Marine Corps History

March 9, 1847

Capt. Alvin Edson leads Marine Battalion ashore with Army forces at Veracruz, Mexico

MCTOG helps Marines stay one step ahead of enemy

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The scope of the modern battlefield is constantly changing; new enemies, weapons, tactics and terrain are frequently encountered.

To successfully adapt to and counter the shifting threats, the Marine Corps has instituted a variety of training entities to keep deploying Marines and sailors proficient in modern warfare.

The Combat Center's Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group is equipped to train select Marines at the battalion and regimental levels to combat the enemy – an enemy who has also adapted to the rigors of the contemporary battlefield.

According to White Letter 04-08, published by the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway May 27, 2008, MCTOG's mission is to provide advanced and standardized training in Marine Air-Ground Task Force operations at the battalion and regimental levels, and to enhance the training and operational performance of Ground Combat Element units.

"Historical patterns and future trends point to potentially significant shifts in the character and forms of warfare, and the OTTP [Operations and Tactics

Training Program] will maintain the balance of traditional and irregular warfighting skills and standards within the GCE," Conway said in the letter. "I see the OTTP as absolutely critical as we shift our stance toward fighting and winning in the Long War while not losing the combined arms skills which have defined Marines for generations."

The primary training program at MCTOG, known as the Operations and Tactics Instructor Course, begins with two weeks of academics where students learn skills in intelligence, counterinsurgency operations, amphibious operations, joint and interagency integration, and campaign planning, said Lt. Col. Tim Barrick, the MCTOG operations officer.

"We're focused on training battle staff teams of battalions and regiments ranging from operations NCOs [non-commissioned officers] to operations officers," Barrick said. "The goal is to increase proficiency in command and control, and the processes, systems and procedures of command and control."

OTIC also features two full-length simulation exercises designed to put the Marines' newly-acquired skills to the test, he said.

The first exercise, called the Combined Arms Network Exercise, applies the



LANCE CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Marines from Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment participate in the final exercise of the Enhanced Company Operations Limited Objective Experiments 2 at the Combat Center's Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group Building Aug. 21. The main focus of the ECO LOE-2 was to train Marines in company level operations during larger and more distributed battlefield missions.

use of fire support coordination, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance management, and battle management, Barrick said.

Major Combat Operations, the second OTIC exercise, is set in the scenario of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade-level amphibious assault with complex urban operations, hybrid threat, and transition to coun-

terinsurgency and stability operations similar to those conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said.

Hybrid threat refers to activities such as those conducted by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006, in which they merged state-of-the-art weaponry with unconventional warfare tactics.

With a battle lab containing four battalion combat operations centers, a regimental COC, and company and MEB-level response cell networks, MCTOG instructors are training battalion and regimental battle staff teams to counter these hybrid threats, Barrick said.

Two OTICs have already been successfully completed,

the first ran in March 2008 and the second in October 2008. The third course is scheduled to begin May 10. A fourth OTIC is slated to be held next spring.

For more information, or to enroll in OTIC, contact Gunnery Sgt. Julian Frank, the MCTOG resident course coordinator, via e-mail at julian.frank@usmc.mil.

MARADMIN announces changes to BCP, MAP guidelines

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

For over-weight or unevenly distributed Marines who thought they had 120 days to shrink down to a smaller size before being formally assigned to the Marine Corps Body Composition Program

or Military Appearance Program -- think again.

According to Marine Administrative Message 0145/09, signed March 2, the informal program that allowed Marines time to lose or redistribute weight before being placed on a formal program has been terminated.

"The informal program

wasn't in the best interest for the Marine Corps," said Debra Watts, the operations and training office assistant for the Combat Center's Headquarters Battalion. "Although, it did bring awareness to some Marines and give them a chance to lose weight."

Before the correction, MCO 6110.3 stated that Marines initially determined by their unit to be out of standards would be issued an informal letter of concern and a 60 day action plan. If the Marine was still out of standards after the allotted time, a letter of caution immediately followed giving them an additional 60 days to fall within standards before being assigned to BCP or MAP.

Although the MARADMIN eliminates both letters, it does specify that commanders will ensure that all Marines that do not fall into standards will be processed in BCP or MAP within 60 days. If a Marine falls within standards during the assignment processing they will not be placed on the program.

The commanding officer will decide how long the Marines will have out of the 60 days to meet their weight standards before all the paperwork and counseling are finalized. A Marine can be processed into BCP or MAP in about two weeks, Watts said.

"This gives them a little grace period to lose the weight," Watts said.

According to the order, once the Marine and their chain of command are notified that the Marine exceeds established weight standards, a medical evaluation is required.

The officer in charge of the Marine will conduct an assessment with the medical information and make a BCP assignment decision. If assigned, the Marine will be counseled on their deficiencies and corrective actions.

If a Marine is placed on BCP for the first time, they will not be removed from the program until the initial six-month assignment has expired. This is required to ensure healthy weight and body-fat loss techniques are employed, and appropriate

attitude and lifestyle adjustments are made.

During this time, Marines are not able to reenlist or be promoted, and they lose their eligibility for special school assignments.

If you're a squared away Marine, but can not seem to meet the standards, do not sweat it; according to the message a waiver can be submitted by the commander for the rare Marine who exceeds weight and body composition standards, yet still presents a military appearance.

A detailed explanation behind the basis for the request and all relevant evaluation metrics are required. If approved the waiver is valid for one year from the date of the approval.

Geronimos light up the night



LANCE CPL. JEREMIAH HANDELAND

A Marine with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, fires tracer rounds at a target during a React Fire Ambush Exercise at Range 410A aboard the Combat Center Monday.

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NCOs prepare for their future Corporal's Course offers new experiences

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Corporals are learning new skills that will help them throughout their careers during this quarter's Corporals Course at the Combat Center.

On Tuesday the Marines in the course, which started

March 6th, participated in the Combat Fitness Test, a first time experience for most.

"Corporals Course is the foundation, the building blocks of a career in the Marine Corps," said Cpl. Lee Pieper, a Corporals Course student. "It teaches you how to be more professional."

As part of the course, NCOs are trained to always be prepared for whatever situation is thrown at them.

As part of that training, Marines that are going through the course do many things to prepare for success, said Pieper, a New Prague, MN native. These include

making sure all their uniforms are inspection ready and getting back into a garrison, classroom state of mind.

Marines also prepare by getting in good physical condition, said Cpl. John Guthrie, a Corporals Course student. The NCOs do physical training everyday and take both a Physical Fitness Test and a CFT.

"Maintaining that state of readiness is a skill that any Marine, especially NCOs should strive for at all times," said Sgt. LaVon Petersen, the chief instructor for the course. "NCOs lead their Marines so they need to maintain themselves both in and out of uniform."

Close-order drill is taught in the course for its ability to instill discipline, teamwork and instant obedience to orders.

"Drill is something most Marines don't get the chance to practice much after boot camp," Guthrie said. However, he said, it is something that Marines need to be proficient at.

Many units that are consistently in the field and deployed don't get a chance to practice drill, Pieper said. Corporals Course reinforces drill taught at boot camp and also teaches NCOs how to properly drill with their NCO sword.

In the course so far, the NCOs have learned skills ranging from healthy eating habits and physical training regiments, to sword manual and counseling junior Marines, said Cpl. Josh Anderson, the 2nd Platoon sergeant with the course.

For many of the NCOs, learning sword manual is a 'new monster' to tackle, he said. It requires hours of practice on the individual Marine's personal time.

Because the NCO sword is used ceremonially and when leading troops, Marines need to know how to use the sword



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Cpl. William Wolf, a Corporal's Course student from Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, executes an 'ammo can lift,' one of the three exercises in the Combat Fitness Test that the Marines in the course participated in Tuesday.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A Corporal's Course student 'fireman carries' her buddy during the 'maneuver under fire' portion on the Combat Fitness Test that the Marines in the course participated in Tuesday.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A Corporal's Course student dives into the sand to begin low-crawling during the 'maneuver under fire' portion on the Combat Fitness Test that the Marines in the course participated in Tuesday.

properly, said Guthrie.

In addition to tangible skills, the course focuses on helping promote better small unit leadership by having the Marines work as a team and helps enhance the leadership skills the Marines learned from their leaders, said Anderson.

"I've gotten more confident in talking to higher ups, peers and Marines below me," said Cpl. Jessica Conceicao, a Corporals Course student and native of San Francisco.

On top of teaching Marines to be more effective leaders, Corporals Course gives Marines an edge over their peers that haven't gone through the course.

"I've been a Corporal for two years and seven months," said Guthrie. "I've been on several promotion boards and was denied for promotion because I hadn't taken Corporals Course."

With this much emphasis placed on the course, any Marine who reaches the rank of corporal should request to participate in the course, he said.

Corporals that participate in the course learn many new skills that they will be able to implement from every day and for the rest of their lives. These skills help them to become more valuable to the Marine Corps and ultimately to the civilian world.



TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

One of my favorite Roman Catholic saints is St. Patrick. I have him right up there with St. Thomas, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and, of course, St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Patrick was probably born in 389 in what is now England. His family name was Sucat. The name Patrick is the English form of his Latin name, Patricius.

St. Patrick had a romantic early life, filled with adventure. He was captured by pirates from Ireland at the age of 16 and spent six years tending flocks for a feudal lord. While in Ireland he became a devout Christian. He escaped in 411 and fled to France. It was in a monastery in France that St. Patrick committed himself to the Roman Catholic Church for life and became a monk. After years of spiritual preparation, St. Patrick was ordained a priest at the age of 27.

In 432 a compelling vision led St. Patrick to return to Ireland as a tough minded optimistic missionary bishop. He worked zealously all over Ireland for the rest of his life. He founded more than 300 churches and personally baptized more than 120,000 people. He died in 461.

Please know, however, that there was also a fun side to this great man and he brought much joy and good cheer to the Irish people. It was said that people knew where Patrick had been by the trail of gladness that he left behind.

He was a hard working, hard playing, tough minded optimist. He was my kind of guy.

This message sponsored by:

Skip and Gloria Wulf
Yucca Valley

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

CONVOY, from A1

they decide to attack," said Jevons, a Manhattan, Kan., native. "This will help develop tactics, techniques, and procedures for mountainous operations."

As the company, which was divided into two Combined Anti-Armor Teams, negotiated the curves and hills to Hawthorne Saturday, they were critiqued on their speed and the techniques they used to observe the terrain. They were also evaluated on their ability to identify potential IEDs, set up security, maintain communication, assess casualties and handle notional vehicle failures.

Along the road, instructors planted two hoax IEDs made of trash bags and large plastic jugs as well as two "real" IEDs made to detonate and cause notional damage to equipment, vehicles and personnel.

For some of these Marines and sailors, the training honed skills and concepts they've already learned while others, fresh out of the School of Infantry, were learning some of these tactics for the first time.

"About 90 percent of our Marines are brand new and have never even been in a vehicle before," said Sgt. Mario Desalvo, the acting CAAT 1 platoon sergeant for the exercise. "It's good to get these guys started on good habits early on"

After the initial exercise, the unit gathered around their company commander and the instructors for a debrief and review of their actions. Although the Marines made some mistakes early on the battalion's capability shone through much brighter at the end of the day.

LaBarge said the unit showed good distribution while driving, reacted quickly to scenarios, and used keen observation for enemy activity and potential IED indicators.

While in Hawthorne, the unit also took advantage of the live-fire ranges to further polish their weapons training, Jevons said.

"We're going to do a range reaction to an ambush with live fire, have more remediation to IED drills, and work a little more on comm [communication] and casualty assessment skills," he said. "We just want to refine our TTPs [tactics, techniques and procedures] and identify areas we need to improve on."

The unit is expected to return to the Combat Center early next week to continue preparing for the possibility of an Afghanistan deployment.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Lance Cpl. Nathan Rojas, a rifleman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, sets up security while fellow Marines search the area for notional enemy activity during a convoy training exercise stretching from Bridgeport, Calif., to Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot in Hawthorne, Nev., Saturday.

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LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When the focus of military operations in Iraq shifted from direct combat actions to stabilization and peacekeeping missions, Marines in combat units manning tactical control points throughout the country began using search and seizure methods to capture insurgents trying to smuggle weapons and other contraband through the checkpoints.

However, since Muslim tradition does not allow a man to touch a woman who is not related to them and knowing American military personnel would not search them unless a female service member was present, insurgents began to use women to smuggle contraband and act as suicide bombers.

To counter this threat, the Marine Corps developed the Lioness Program, which was formed five years ago to provide culturally-sensitive searches on Iraqi women, according to an article written by Regina T. Akers, a Ph.D. historian at the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C.

The Lioness Program attaches female Marines to combat units to search Iraqi women and children who may be trying to smuggle money or weapons through security checkpoints in Iraq. The "lionesses" also train Iraqi women how to conduct proper searches on other women.

"Any time you're talking about cultural differences, or any other situation, if there is a female involved, you want a female to search them," said Staff Sgt. James Baker, the Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office operations chief. "If you don't follow that rule, you could potentially subject a Marine to the potential hardships of sexual harassment or cultural infringement."

"When you're in a foreign country or hostile environment, there are a lot of considerations you want to take into account, like cultural differences, language barriers and overall situational awareness," added the Lexington, Ky., native.

Baker said the Lioness Program observed those differences and successfully struck a balance between maintaining good rapport with the Iraqi people and still

allowing Marines to safely do their jobs while deployed.

Cpl. Jacqueline Parker, the Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 supply warehouse noncommissioned officer, was a member of the Lioness Program while on her second deployment to Iraq with her squadron last year. During the deployment, Parker was the only female in the squadron to attend the program.

After attending a week-long training program, she was attached to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, to provide security and search authority for the battalion's corpsmen while they offered medical treatment to local Iraqis.

"I led a group of female Marines attached to 1/3 in [Camp] Baharia, Iraq," said the Mobile, Ala., native. "Basically what we did was set up a tent to search Iraqi women and children prior to giving them medical treatment."

"When I first went to the program, I was nervous - you never know what to expect," Parker said. "Overall, it was an exciting experience for me, though, and I have no regrets whatsoever. It's good to know you're doing something to help



PHOTO COURTESY OF CPL. JACQUELINE PARKER

Cpl. Jacqueline Parker, a member of the Lioness Program from Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, poses while providing security for corpsmen in Camp Baharia, Iraq, in September 2008.

people, and I like helping out."

By affording female Marines like Parker the opportunity to serve directly alongside combat units, the Lioness Program inadvertently provided women with more equality on the frontlines.

"Twenty years ago, seeing a female [Marine] at a checkpoint with a bunch of 03s [infantrymen] would've been

really uncommon," Baker said.

"Now, it's almost become a norm. It really isn't a big deal to see women on the frontlines or at these checkpoints."

With "lionesses" continuing to serve in Iraq, the significance of women Marines serving side-by-side with combat units has been accentuated by their ability to perform their duties as well as any other

Marines manning the checkpoints.

"I don't think there was a Marine out there who didn't understand the importance of having females there," Baker said. "No one I know ever questioned their abilities or their knowledge. We didn't look at them as females serving at a checkpoint, we just saw another Marine."

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AWARDS, from A1

lose of their fallen brothers to make Afghanistan a better, more secure place for the Afghan people."

As the ceremony came to a close, the awarded Marines marched off the field as the rest of the battalion moved forward to congratulate them.

"The Marines of 2/7 did an outstanding job on a daily basis during Operation Enduring Freedom," Brookshire said. "I am honored and proud to be the sergeant major of this great battalion and to serve along these outstanding Marines."

According to <http://www.americal.org>, which explains the origin and reason for the medal, the Purple Heart is different from all other medals and awards because a service member is not "recommended" for the medal; rather he warrants it due to wounds

received from enemy action. Although the Purple Heart Medal is requested for all Marines wounded in combat, each request must be

reviewed to ensure wounds were received during combat. For example, Lance Cpl. Allen Thurlow and Pfc. Trenton Walter, riflemen

with Company E, received the Purple Heart due to wounds they received from an improvised explosive device that exploded and sent

shrapnel into both the men. "We were hit with a daisy chain," said Walter, a Benton, Miss., native, who explained that a daisy chain was a string of four of five IED's that detonate at the same time. "We both were caught in the blast." Thurlow, who was hit with shrapnel in the arm, side and back, said he was lucky to leave the attack with his life. "It sucks because everyone who got hurt or killed was a friend or brother to

someone," said the Baldwin City, Kan., native. "They'll be missed, but this is what we do, it comes with the job." Walter said the deployment went well overall despite the high amount of wounded. "All of 2/7 as a whole did a damn good job at cleaning up the area we were in," Walter said. "Everyone took casualties and that always sucks, but we did our jobs and we did them well."



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Marines and a sailor from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, stand in formation during an awards ceremony March 9 at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field. The men received the Purple Heart due to wounds sustained during their deployment to Afghanistan.

2/7 Purple Heart recipients

- Gunnery Sgt. Harry H. Kendrick Jr, Company F.
- Staff Sgt. Kevin A. Buegel, Company F.
- Sgt. Brian A. Kern, Weapons Company
- Sgt. William W. Rollins, Company G.
- Cpl. Joseph A. Billington, Company G.
- Cpl. Christopher J. Cowley, Company G.
- Cpl. Joseph S. Culliver, Headquarters and Service Company
- Cpl. Andrew M. Lynam, Company F.
- Cpl. Raymond S. Ruitter, Company E.
- Cpl. Blake R. Weller, Headquarters and Service Company.
- Cpl. Alexander D. Williamson, Headquarters and Service Company
- Lance Cpl. Brendan O. Ahern, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Alexander R. Allman, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Jeremy J. Boucher, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Beaux A. Cochran, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Brandon S. Cookson, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Edward J. Corona III, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Thomas S. Davenport, Headquarters and Service Company.

- Lance Cpl. Michael W. Erickson, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Brian A. Fisher Jr., Company E.
- Lance Cpl. Michael R. Gravitt, Company E.
- Lance Cpl. Noel A. Guerrero, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Clifford G. Heart IV, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Nicholas M. Harris, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Geoffrey T. Kamp, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Deshaun D. Longfellow, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Ryan R. Matibag, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. Raymond L. Mestas, Company F.
- Lance Cpl. James C. Nielsen III, Company E.
- Lance Cpl. Tanner R. Ruchti-Cleveland, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Michael A. RuizRodriguez, Company E.
- Lance Cpl. Allen M. Thurlow, Company E.
- Pfc. Trenton N. Walter, Company E.
- Lance Cpl. David M. Ybabien, Company G.
- Pfc. Theodoro J. Celaya, Headquarters and Service Company.
- Lance Cpl. Charles R. Cozart, Company E.
- Lance Cpl. Luke N. Mantalica, Company G.
- Lance Cpl. Andrew J. Wolf, Company E.
- Navy Seaman Samuel Vallejo Jr.

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
 + For Appointments for Confessions call 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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 Albert L. Perez, Pastor (760) 819-9669
 E-mail: creyente-y-siervo@verizon.net

Spirit and Truth Worship Center
 Perry L. Ford, Senior Pastor

Service Times:
 Sunday Morning Worship 9:45
 Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00

(760) 361-2450
 4751 Adobe Rd.
 29 Palms, Ca. 92277
 spirit_truthworshipcenter@yahoo.com

Evangelical Free Church
 Bill Wilcox, Senior Pastor Marcus McDaniel, Youth Pastor

Sundays: Sunday School 9:00 AM
 Worship 10:00 AM
 Nursery and Children's Church Available

Wednesday: Adult Bible Study 6:30-8:00 PM
 AWANA (during school year) 6:15-8:00 PM

Youth Groups:
 Jr High Wednesday 6:30-8:00 PM
 High School Sunday 6:30-8:30 PM
 Refinery (young adults) Saturday 6:30-8:30 PM

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 Wed. Bible Study 5pm
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 10:30 A.M. & 6:30 P.M.
 Wed. Bible Study 6:30 P.M.
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 Pastor Abe Casiano
 Church (760) 366-9119

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 Holy Eucharist 10:00 A.M.
 Onaga at Church St., Y.V.
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 365-2205
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Yucca Valley 57273 Onaga Tr., 365-3671
The United Methodist Church

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 Worship 10:30 AM (Child Care Available)
 Bible Study: Mon., 10:30 AM; Wed., 7:00 PM

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
 (Missouri Synod)
 WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM
 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 AM
 LIVING UNDER THE SON
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 CHURCH: 365-2548 Preschool & Daycare: 369-9590

This Week's Spotlight Church

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 82575 Amboy Road (at Kuhns Road)
 Office: 367-0279
 Bible studies: 9:15AM Sun., 10:00AM Wed.
 Worship: 5:30PM Sat., 10:30AM Sunday
 Pastor: Rex Shaver
 Youth Pastor: Michael Taber

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 Worship.....10:45am

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OSC gives back to military community

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Officers' Spouses Club works hard every year to raise money to award scholarships to military spouses and to military dependents who are graduating from high school that reside in the local community.

The spouse or child must be related to, or married to an active duty, retired or deceased service member.

According to the club's mission statement, OSC was founded to foster friendship, promote goodwill among the club's members, and to support social, educational, community, and welfare projects for the Combat Center and Morongo Basin area.

"It provides spouses with an opportunity to reach out to other spouses that are experiencing the lifestyle as a Marine or navy spouse," said Kaprece James, the vice-president of OSC. "OSC also gives members the chance to give back to their community by helping spouses and dependents achieve educational goals by

giving a little of their time to help raise funds through the special events held by the OSC."

Jennifer Driscoll, the president of OSC, agreed with James, saying new officer spouses have a chance to join a good group of friends when they come to the Combat Center.

All money acquired throughout the year will be used for the sole purpose of providing scholarships to military dependents and educational organizations, said Driscoll, a Stockton, Calif., native.

This year the club has raised \$35,000 through various events.

OSC made more than \$2,000 during the Roll Out the Barrel wine tasting event and from the Mardi Gras auction made more than \$23,500.

The club also holds monthly luncheons to help raise money for scholarships and grants.

During the luncheon they sell opportunity tickets that give club members a chance to win various gift baskets and prizes. During these luncheons, mem-

bers can also purchase small military trinkets and charms that the club purchased through home businesses of Combat Center residents.

The American Friends of our Armed Forces also donates \$10,000 to the OSC every year to help boost the amount of scholarships and grants given out.

To be eligible for a scholarship or grant, the spouse or senior must reside in the Morongo Basin area. Also, applicants must have applied to or be currently enrolled in an accredited two to four year institution and be working toward a Bachelor's of Science or Art degree.

Organizations, such as the Armed Forces YMCA, are also eligible to receive grants from the OSC to help pay for first aid and baby sitting classes they offer, which give participants a chance to attend the classes for little or no cost at all.

Last year, OSC awarded over \$15,000 in scholarships and \$17,000 in grants, said James, a Conway, S.C., native.

For more information, contact the OSC at 910-9576.

E-85, from A1

get scared at that, but we don't use the same corn so it isn't detracting from the food people could eat.

"Also, ethanol does use more gallons than unleaded gas would, because it is a somewhat weaker mixture, and requires more fuel to make the automobile work," he said. However, "the difference in terms of how much lower ethanol's emissions are, is massive. They do benefit the environment, even though it requires more to burn than unleaded gas."

Tyree said while there will be changes in the government vehicles aboard the base, tactical vehicles will not be effected by the change in fuels.

"We are going to keep the same systems in all our tactical vehicles," he said. "The only things changed would

be the commercial fleet we have."

By fiscal year 2010, Tyree said they are scheduled to have replaced all 300 commercial vehicles with flex-fuel cars.

Brian Muzii, a lead fuel systems operator at the Combat Center's fuel issue point for government vehicles, said the installation of the base's first fuel pump is moving smoothly and is right on schedule.

"The system has been around for a while, we should have no problem running it. Two weeks after it is completed we should be ready to dispense it," said Muzii, a Twentynine Palms native.

Muzii said the new fuel should work fine and he expects the 20,000-gallon tank of ethanol to be filled and be put to use.

"Everything's gone well so far and all we have to do is start using it."

Combat Center Trader Ads

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Coyote mural beautifies base

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A mural depicting five coyotes drinking together at a watering hole was painted on the water tower across the street from

Subway to help beautify the Combat Center Feb. 26.

The mural was painted from a picture taken by Stephen Lomax, a range safety inspector for the Range Safety Office, who took the photo while waiting

for a unit to show up to Range 107 for a training exercise four months ago.

While Lomax was waiting in his truck, five coyotes appeared and ran to a watering hole to get a drink and play. Lomax quickly grabbed

his camera to photograph the moment.

"I thought it was pretty cool, that many coyotes all lined up to take a drink," said Lomax, a Dallas native. "We normally see them alone every day, but it is rare to see them all together like that."

Lomax said he thoroughly enjoyed being able to contribute to the beautification of the Combat Center, and is glad his photograph made it onto the water tower.

"It is pretty awesome to see a photo you took get blown up and put on public display like that," Lomax said. "The artist did a great job in painting it too."

The original plan was to paint the tower a solid color, but after Col. Wes Weston, the assistant chief of staff for Installation and Logistics, saw the picture, he decided it



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
Tim O'Connor, a graphics designer for O'Connor Graphics, paints a mural on the Combat Center's water tower Feb. 26.

would be perfect as a mural on the water tower.

"I knew the tower had to

be repainted," Weston said. "I remember seeing the photo and saying, 'We have to repaint the water tower, why not paint this on it?'"

Tim O'Connor, the graphic artist who was hired to paint the mural, said he enjoyed working aboard the base with all the Marines, and was glad his painting would be the first one to help beautify the Combat Center.

"This was a great project for me," said O'Connor, who began painting the mural on Feb. 2. "I had pretty decent working conditions and no big setbacks while painting the mural."

O'Connor said onlookers would frequently stop to see how the painting was coming along, or honk their horn and wave as they drove by.

With the water tower now finished, the Combat Center is awaiting the completion of a handful of other projects that will give Marines, sailors and family members a place to relax and have fun with friends and family.

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3	6	7	5	2	9	4	8	1
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1	7	3	9	6	2	5	4	8

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CLB-7 fights past MWSS-374 A



Soltes Tiaago, a player with CLB-7, fights past the defense in the final seconds of Wednesday night's game. The regular season game was tied 47-47 at the ring of the buzzer and the game went into overtime. After two more minutes of struggling for the win, CLB-7 overcame MWSS-374 A 54-52. Wednesday night also featured MCCES A beating Tanks in a hard-won 59-53 victory.

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Lt. Dan Band to make fifth MCAGCC appearance



PFC. R. LOGAN KYLE

Gary Sinise jams out on his bass guitar during the Lt. Dan Band concert at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema March 16, 2007. The band has been performing for service members and charity organizations for over four years.

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band will make their fifth annual appearance at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema March 28 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The concert, a widely anticipated event every year, will be open to all Combat Center personnel and their families at no cost. Doors to the show will open at 4:15 p.m.

"Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band are always received very well in Twentynine Palms as it is one of the most talked about events of the year," said Kelley M. Coe, the Marine Corps Community Services special events coordinator.

"Mr. Sinise has been instrumental each year in bringing the show back to Twentynine Palms."

Erin Martinez, the MCCS Marketing graphic design supervisor, said the band plays a wide variety of music genres to entertain audience members of all ages.

In past performances at the Combat Center, the Lt. Dan Band has performed hit songs by Jimi Hendrix, Linkin Park, The Who, The Police, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Aretha Franklin, Lee Ann Womack, Marc Cohn and many others.

Sinise, a long-time supporter of the military, tours with his band as part of the United Services Organization. The USO entertains troops around the world every year.

He also co-founded a charity with author Lauren Hillenbrand called Operation Iraqi Children, an organization that delivers school supplies to needy children in Iraq.

The famous television and movie star is also involved with the Disabled American Veterans, an organization that assists disabled service members with Veterans Affairs benefits. Sinise said he feels honored to participate in such services and to be invited to the Combat Center to play for installation personnel.

"We love coming here," Sinise said before his performance in 2007. "It's a great feeling to come out and help our defenders. You guys deserve it."

Bowling League gives wives a chance to get out, have fun

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center is hosting their third annual Operation Enduring Families Spouses Bowling League for wives of active duty military this month.

The league begins Thursday with a meeting at the bowling center to designate teams and explain the rules and regulations for the season. Matches will begin March 26, and continue for 12 weeks, every Thursday at 6 p.m.

The league is just for active duty military spouses,

said Todd Mackovsky, the manager of the bowling center.

"As a retiree I personally understand the importance for Marine Corps Community Services to offer recreational activities for military spouses," Mackovsky said. "This league is a chance for active duty spouses to get out, relax and mingle with other spouses while having some recreational fun."

The bowling center will also set up free coaching for wives who wish to improve their bowling techniques.

"Spouses with any level of bowling experience are encouraged to participate," Mackovsky said. "This is a

handicap formatted league with professional coaching available for individuals or groups."

Spouses are encouraged to bring their children during bowling and the center will attempt to save lanes for the children to have fun while their mothers bowl.

The bowling center has bumpers that eliminate gutter balls to enhance the child's experience.

"If they can push the ball" they can bowl, Mackovsky said. "Even if they are in diapers they can come and bowl."

At the end of the season, the bowling center will hold an awards ceremony where

plaques will be presented to the winning team and to the most improved player of the league.

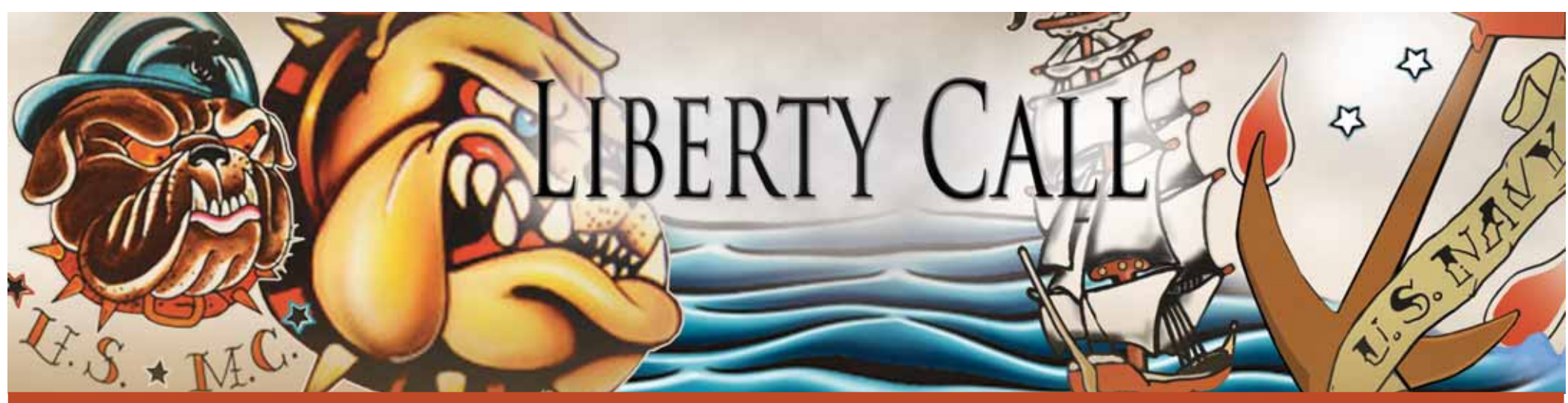
"The league is a great way to support spouses whose husbands are deployed," said Kent West, the recreation assistant and a bowling coach at the bowling center. "It gives these wives a chance to get a girls' night out and just have fun once a week."

Although there is no deadline to sign up, Mackovsky said to help keep things in order, he would like spouses to call and sign up by March 26. For more information, or to sign up for the league, contact the bowling center at 830-6422.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Spouse's Bowling League is a great way for military wives to enjoy an easy-going evening with friends.



FRI. 3/13 - 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. 3/13 Improv Comedy Club Time: 8 & 10 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	SAT. 3/14 The San Bernardino County Regional Parks Trout Derby Time: 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Where: Mojave Narrows Regional Park 18000 Yates Road Victorville For more info, call 245-2226	SAT. 3/14 18th Annual Spell-A-Thon Time: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Where: Helen Gray Education Center at Hi-Desert Medical Center 6601 White Feather Road Joshua Tree For more info, call 366-6324	SUN. 3/15 1950s Dance Party Time: 5:30 – 9 p.m. Where: Kokopelli's Lounge 57154 29 Palms Highway Yucca Valley For more info, call 365-0475
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Jonas Brothers' 3-D 'experience' a missed opportunity

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

Jonas Brothers: The 3-D Concert Experience
Starring the Jonas Brothers, Rated G

It's hard to objectively review this movie from wholesome teen heartthrobs Nick, Joe and Kevin Jonas, the singing sibling trio catapulted to stardom after their appearances on TV's Disney Channel. It's not a "movie" in the traditional sense.

There's no plot, no character development, no dramatic "arc." It just plops

you smack down in the epicenter of the JoBro musical 'youthquake', and away you go.

Like Disney's other breakout musical star, Miley Cyrus, the JoBros make their multiplex debut with a film that's basically a concert filmed in 3-D for an already established fan base. (Not surprisingly, Cyrus' "Best of Both Worlds" and the Jonases' "Concert" films share the same director, Bruce Hendricks.)

As the cameras sweep across teeming seas of hyperventilating teens, it's hard to spot many faces that don't belong to girls aged 11 to 14, the trio's target audience. That's also the audi-

ence that'll be most interested—or, really, interested at all—in seeing this movie, which does a solid job of capturing the music, energy and effects of a Jonas Brothers show.

The Jonas Brothers aren't the Beatles. But they also aren't—as their detractors like to portray them—some manufactured, made-for-TV band of poseurs. They're hard-working musicians, singers and songwriters who have honed their act into a big-ticket, arena-worthy road show that pulls heavily from the time-tested rock-and-roll playbook. Watch closely and you can spot a



COURTESY PHOTO
Nick, Kevin and Joe Jonas escape from adoring fans in "Jonas Brothers: The 3D concert experience", a Disney Enterprises, Inc. release.

See MOVIE, B3

SMP gives Marines a fun place to hang out on a dreary day

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Single Marine Program has a broad selection of events, trips and games available weekly for Marines and sailors who live and work aboard the base.

LaVonne Lessard, the SMP coordinator, said the program was designed to cater to the needs and wants of single Marines, which include geographical bachelors, aboard the Combat Center, while giving them an outlet to relax and have fun.

"We are the most active Single Marine Program in the world," said Lessard, a San Diego, native. "It is important for us to let the Marines and sailors know we support them."

Lessard listed off the numerous events the program hosts on base throughout the year, which include quarterly barracks bashes and pool tournaments.

The SMP also hosts free bowling and pizza night every month. During some of these events, Marines can compete against each other to win prizes such as Xbox 360's, Wiis and iPods.

"We help these service members get out of the barracks," said Lora Hamm, a recreation assistant for The Zone. "We give them a place to relax and have fun outside of work. It's not Marines addressing Marines in here. We're all a big group of friends."

The program also holds various trips every weekend to give service members a chance to get off the base

and experience the grassy side of California, said Lessard. Those trips include kayaking in La Jolla, Calif., Magic Mountain, Hollywood Movie Star Home tours, Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm, Las Vegas and Universal Studios.


"Our goal is to give Marines quality events at affordable prices while providing transportation and entertainment," Lessard said.

"In addition to that, we are reducing the DUI's [driving under the influence] and suicides aboard the installation."

Monthly trips to Westfield Mall in Palms Springs, Calif., and trips to various zoos and parks are also scheduled, Lessard said.

"If a Marine wants to go somewhere we will try our

See SMP, B3



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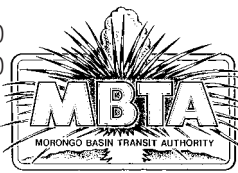
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15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday						
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Palm Springs Airport
10:00	10:25	10:30	10:40	10:45	11:00	11:10
4:00	4:25	4:30	*4:40	*4:45	*5:00	*5:10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

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The Combat Center's Information, Tickets and Tours is a one-stop shop for discounted and free tickets for many Southern California attractions, including hotels, tours, dinner shows and much more.

"We have a lot of service members, spouses and retirees come in to take advantage of the discounts and deals," said Beverly Miller, a leisure travel assistant with ITT. "There are still some that come in and have no idea some of these tickets are free or the deals available to them."

Some of the major deals this year are Disneyland's Armed Forces Salute, and Anheuser-Busch's Here's to the Heroes, said Miller.

Disneyland's Armed Forces Salute provides any active duty or retired service member one complimentary three-day park hopper ticket to be used before June 12. The service member may also buy up to five three-day park hopper tickets for \$89 each. The voucher must be picked up at ITT before traveling to the park.

Anheuser-Busch's Here's to the Heroes provides one complimentary single-day admission for all active duty military and up to three dependants to any Anheuser-Busch adventure park, to include SeaWorld, San Diego, valid any day throughout the year.

Many local attractions also offer free admission year-round or on specified months throughout the year. Palm Springs Aerial Tramway allows service members to ride free in July. The San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park are free all year for active duty service members.

Another popular attraction that ITT provides is reservations for vacation rentals at Lake Havasu, Ariz. Marine Corps Community Services maintains nine cabin-like trailers situated on a small island in Lake Havasu, said Paul D'Amico, the ITT manager for MCCC. Each trailer sleeps four adults comfortably and prices range from \$45 to \$60 a night.

For more information visit the ITT office located in the back of the Main Exchange or call 830-6163 extension 252. The office is opened Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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Combat Center sports standings



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Tiago Soltes, from CLB-7 (left), battles a player from MWSS-374, for the ball in the two minute overtime period in which CLB-7 edged out its opponent 54-52.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player for MCCES A fights past his opponent from Tanks. MCCES A beats Tanks 59-53.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A MCCES A player watches intently as his opponent from Tanks takes a shot during an MCCES A victory Wednesday night.

2009 Intramural Basketball Standings as of Thursday

Team	Wins	Losses	%
NHTP	7	0	1000
MCCES All-Stars	6	0	1000
Ole School Plus	5	1	833
1/7	4	3	571
1st Tanks	4	2	571
MCCES A	3	3	500
IPAC	3	4	429
MWSS-374 (B)	2	4	333
MWSS-374 (A)	2	5	286
MCCES Party	2	5	286
3rd CEB	1	6	143
CLB-7	1	6	143



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Rod Beachum jumps out of the way of an incoming dodge ball as teammate Jacob Velasquez braces for impact.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Rudy Davila, a MCCES A player, works with teammate Matthew Cuplin to hit members of the opposing team.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Colby Thompson and teammate Chad Allen, both members of the Fainting Goats, work as a team to hit Justice League players.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Jacob Velasquez of the Justice League puts everything he has behind a throw at a member of MCCES A Co.

Intramural Dodgeball League standings as of Wednesday

Team	Wins	Losses
Fainting Goats	8	0
Jive Turkeys	7	2
MCCES A Co.	7	2
Sapper	6	3
MTU	5	4
4 Horsemen (boot's)	5	4
Tanks #4	4	5
Dental	1	8
Hospital	1	8
Justice League	0	9

SMP, from B2

hardest make it happen," she said.

When not hosting events and trips off base, SMP invites service members to visit The Zone, the recreation center for SMP.

The Zone, located next to Taco Bell, was designed to give service members a place to relax and enjoy free games of pool, foosball and ping-pong. Arcades and a jukebox line the walls, and there is also a gaming center and a theater room.

"They help us out a lot by giving us a place to come and hang out," said Pfc. Richard Turner, a student with Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, Company B. "It is great because they don't just sit back in their offices and work, they come out and mingle with the Marines and have fun with us."

The gaming center is outfitted with multiple computers that are programmed with well-known games such as World of Warcraft,

Halo and others. The theater room has a big-screen television and is lined with couches and chairs. Marines can choose from more than 700 movies to watch.

"Our movies are always changing and we are con-

stantly adding the newest movies when they become available," Lessard said.

For more information regarding the Single Marine Program, contact The Zone at 830-4767.

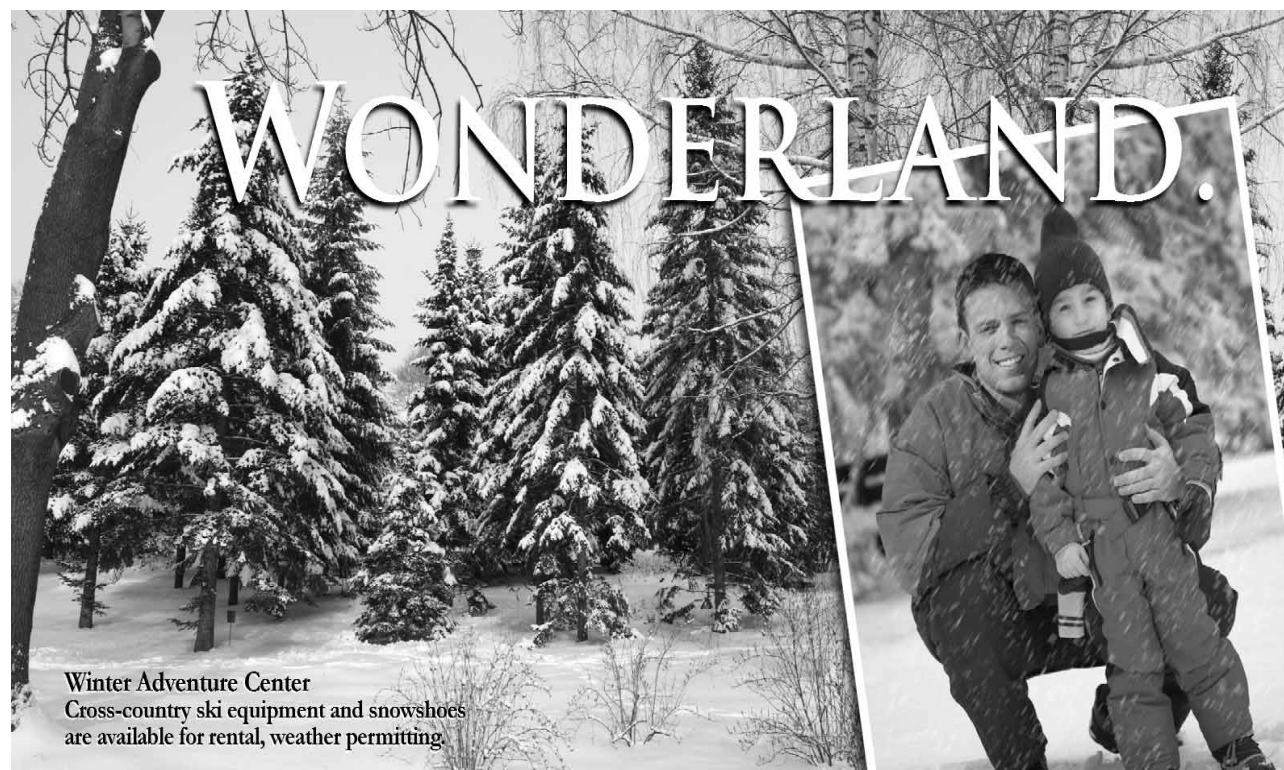
MOVIE, from B2

little Mick Jagger in Joe Jonas' fidgety, can't-stand-still lead-singer moves—that is, if you're old enough to know who Jagger is, which most of the audience for

this movie won't be.

This "Experience" will be sweet music to the young ears of the already faithful. But it's a bit of a sugar-coated drone, and a missed opportunity, for grownup tagalongs who might have

hoped to learn something—anything—about this trio of dark-haired young men, whose rock-star-cherub faces stare down from bedroom walls each night at millions of adoring teen girls all across America.



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St. Patrick's Day

DON'T DRINK & DRIVE! HAVE A SAFE & FUN HOLIDAY If you Drink, Designate



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About three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

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On average someone is killed by a drunk driver every 40 minutes. In 2007, an estimated 12,998 people died in drunk driving related crashes - a decline of 3.7 percent from the 13,491 drunk driving related fatalities of 2006.

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As few as one or two drinks can significantly impair your driving ability. With law enforcement patrols out in droves, as well as eight to ten times more impaired drivers than usual, it's more important to drive without any alcohol in your system.

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Whether you'll be hoisting a pint of green beer or tipping back a wee bit of whiskey this St. Patrick's Day weekend, it's sure and begorrah that you'll be taking part in one of the nation's most alcohol-soaked holidays.

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The Story Of St. Patrick

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is one of Christianity's most widely known figures. But for all his celebrity, his life remains somewhat of a mystery. Many of the stories traditionally associated with St. Patrick, including the famous account of his banishing all the snakes from Ireland, are false, the products of hundreds of years of exaggerated storytelling.

Taken Prisoner By Irish Raiders

It is known that St. Patrick was born in Britain to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D. Although his father was a Christian deacon, it has been suggested that he probably took on the role because of tax incentives and there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family. At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. (There is some dispute over where this captivity took place. Although many believe he was taken to live in Mount Slemish in County Antrim, it is more likely that he was held in County Mayo near Killala.) During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian. (It is also believed that Patrick first began to dream of converting the Irish people to Christianity during his captivity.)

Don't count on the luck of the Irish to keep you out of trouble if you drink and drive this St. Patrick's Day

Guided By Visions

After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. According to his writing, a voice-which he believed to be God's-spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland.

To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo, where it is believed he was held, to the Irish coast. After escaping to Britain, Patrick reported that he experienced a second revelation-an angel in a dream tells him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than fifteen years. After his ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission-to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish. (Interestingly, this mission contradicts the widely held notion that Patrick introduced

Bonfires and Crosses

Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honoring their gods with fire. He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish. (Although there were a small number of Christians on the island when Patrick arrived, most Irish practiced a nature-based pagan religion. The Irish culture centered around a rich tradition of oral legend and myth. When this is considered, it is no surprise that the story of Patrick's life became exaggerated over the centuries-spinning exciting tales to remember history has always been a part of the Irish way of life.

If you are going to drink, designating a non-drinking driver before you head out for the evening is the way to go.

Statewide alcohol-related traffic injuries and deaths are higher on St. Patrick's Day compared with similar days in February, March and April, says the Automobile Club of Southern California.