

# OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 20, 2009

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 52 ISSUE 11

## Tanks, Strykers blow-away training

### 1st Tanks complete co-op exercise with Army's 1/23

Infantrymen with Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, fire off their 120mm mortar during the final exercise of the battalion's co-op training with Company C, 1st Tank Battalion.

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Army's 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, based out of Fort Lewis, Wash., concluded their side-by-side integration exercise with their armored infantry vehicles, known as Strykers, and Company C, 1st Tank Battalion Wednesday in the Combat Center's Delta Prospect training area.

The exercise is meant to better affiliate the Marine Corps' and Army's units and tactics with the other branch of service, said Capt. Peter M. Rummel, the Company C, the commanding officer and a native of Oscar, La.

"This is an excellent exercise for both branches to engage in," Rummel said. "It provides a great opportunity for both us and the Army to learn the other branches' strategy."

"Both groups are seeing other ways of doing things," he said. "Being different branches we of course are going to use our capabilities and resources differently."

Rummel said working with the Army was a good experience and they are

See TANKS, A10



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

## City of Hemet embraces the 'Wolfpack'

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

As more young Americans volunteer to serve in the military, support from communities across the country has poured out in honor of the nation's men and women in uniform.

The city of Hemet, Calif., in a heart-felt display of support for the armed forces, formally adopted the Combat Center's 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion during a ceremony at the battalion's vehicle ramp Monday.

"Recently, the economy has taken the conflict overseas off of the front pages," said Eric McBride, the mayor of Hemet. "We wanted to reinforce that we still have men and women over there, and we as a community need to support them."

McBride said the decision to formally adopt the battalion was presented at the March 10 city council meeting after learning the "Wolfpack" is slated for a deployment in the near future.

The official adoption

See HEMET, A10



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Hemet, Calif., mayor Eric McBride and council member Jim Foreman present Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, the commanding officer of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, with the official adoption proclamation during a ceremony at 3rd LAR's vehicle ramp Monday.

## Team leaders train for next combat rotation

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Team leaders with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment are preparing for their next combat deployment with the Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course on Range 105A aboard the Combat Center March 10 through Thursday.

TSULC focuses on training team leaders with every weapon system they will use

on patrols in a combat environment, said Staff Sgt. Brian Fairchild, the company gunnery sergeant for 2/7's Company E.

This is the first training exercise for the battalion's noncommissioned officers and other junior enlisted Marines as they begin work-ups for their next scheduled combat deployment in September, said Staff Sgt.

See LEADERS, A3



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

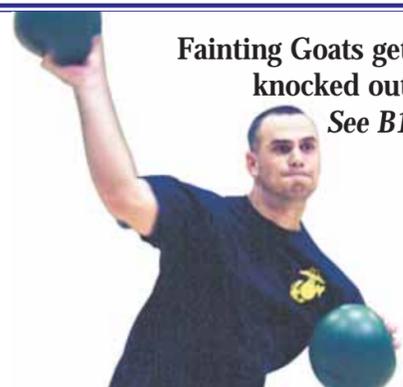
Cpl. Nick Romano, a fire team leader with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, practices the prone position for firing the AT4 anti-armor weapon. The AT4 is so powerful it can take out a light skinned vehicle or immobilize a tank.



Wolfpack expands litter  
See A3



Training at its peak  
See A4



Fainting Goats get knocked out  
See B1



It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a Fun Run - See B4

## New Phone System for Hospital Approved

The Naval Hospital is well underway with obtaining a new phone system and would like to keep you abreast on the progress.

A new phone system is being installed in the hospital and will be ready by late summer, in the meantime the hospital is concerned with phone access. The following are alternatives to contact the hospital.

1. The Quarterdeck at 830-2190.
2. Walk-in Appointment Desk on the first floor near TRICARE. From 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.
3. The Customer Relations Officer 830-2475.
4. Tricare online: <http://www.tricareonline.com>. Mr. Bob Knight, Template Manager, can be reached at 830-2590 for registration difficulties.
5. The Outpatient Business Manager, 830-2942, if you have not received a call back from someone in Primary Care you may contact Cmdr. Sharon Kingsberry who will assist you.

As always the Emergency Medicine Department is always open.

Another option is to leave a message for the Medical Officer from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. by calling the Quarterdeck. You may experience a delay with their response to you since they are also caring for inpatients on the Labor and Delivery Unit, Multi-Service Unit and the Emergency Department.

## The eggs come from all over the United States to YOKE Depot, CANDY EGGO. Where they meet their Senior Easter Egg Instructor "HARD BOIL".

His job, to get these ordinary eggs Hard Boiled and ready for coloring before Easter!

They arrive on the Depot EGG-SPRESS.



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

## WEDDING WEAR

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American Profile Hometown Content

02/22/2009

### ACROSS

1. "Animal House" group, for short
5. Home run gait
9. \_\_\_ down (simplifies)
14. Nevada casino town
15. Verdi slave girl
16. Daddy Warbucks's ward
17. 1957 Disney classic
19. All in knots
20. Alumna bio word
21. Brewmaster's creations
22. Fancy neckwear
23. Old car named for an explorer
25. \_\_\_ mater
26. Dutch settlement of 1624
32. Louisiana cuisine
35. Georgia State Fair city
36. "Much \_\_\_ About Nothing"
37. Rainbow gradations
38. One of two proverbial sure things

### DOWN

1. Fern feature
2. U.S. Grant adversary
3. El Misti's range
4. Gift from Santa
5. Candle maker's material
6. Ruffle the feathers of
7. Horatian works
8. Surfacing stuff
9. Offensive players in cricket
10. Garage capacity, often
11. \_\_\_ way, shape, or form
12. Lean to one side
13. Calls, as a bet
18. Moth-\_\_\_ (worn out)
22. Some choir members
24. Cross to bear
25. Trip to the top
27. Bowled over
28. \_\_\_ out (like some credit cards)

### DOWN

29. It may result in a prank
30. Port of Yemen
31. Stockyard calls
32. Thick-bodied fish
33. Prefix with -crat
34. Give a razzing to
38. Cellular network structure
39. Is in hock
41. Marks, like a book page
42. Fails to include
44. Came down
45. Goof-offs
48. Hosiery hue
49. On one's toes
50. Heeds the alarm
51. Slim-waisted insect
52. Folkie Guthrie
53. Equestrian's control
54. Prelude to a duel, maybe
55. Angelic glow
58. Telly watcher's network
59. Keystone lawman

[puzzle Solutions on A10]

## Combat Center Spotlight

**Name:** Navy Lt. Michelle Sanabia  
**Job Title:** Clinic Nurse at the Adult Care Medical Clinic  
**Hometown:** Seattle  
**Job Duties:** Provide care for the nearly 5,000 Marines in Headquarters Battalion and MCCES.  
**What do you like most about your job?:** Being part of the Naval healthcare team and being able to take care of Marines.  
**Significant Achievements:** As a prior hospital corpsman, returning to the military as a naval officer and being able to combine skill in nursing and service to my country.  
**Hobbies:** Swimming and running  
**Military service:** Seven years as a hospital corpsman and four years as a commissioned clinic nurse.  
**Time at Combat Center:** Nearly three years.



## Hot Topics

### MADD CLASSES

Have you received a DUI and are you required by law to attend a MADD class by court or DMV orders? Contact the Combat Center's SACC at 830-6376 for more information on dates and times.

### PLEASE GIVE BLOOD

MCAGCC Headquarters Battalion and the Community Blood Bank are holding a blood drive from 12-5 p.m. on Thursday, March 26 at the Protestant Chapel.

### VARSITY SOFTBALL TRYOUTS

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

### CG TOWN HALL MEETING

The Combat Center's commanding general will hold a Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, March 25 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Combat Center Officers' Club, in the Mesa Room. The topic will be the Combat Center Officers' Club. All officers and retirees are encouraged to attend.

## This Day in Marine Corps History

March 20, 2003

After the expiration of the 48-hour ultimatum, coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom. I MEF is responsible for liberating the eastern half of Iraq and securing the right flank of the U.S. Army's V Corps.

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	2			7		8	9

SUDOKU

## Centerspeak

How does the current economic situation affect you as a Marine?

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



SSGT. ENRIQUE LOPEZ JR.  
 BATTALION MESS CHIEF, PHELPS MESS HALL,  
 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"It doesn't matter; I have job security right now."



MAJ. LEE HELTON  
 BATTALION EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 2ND BATTALION,  
 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"I'm aware of it because of house and gas prices, but the affect is minimal because of the solid job security I'm so thankful for in the Marine Corps."



LANCE CPL. JASON DUECKER  
 RIFLEMAN, Co. 1, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH  
 MARINE REGIMENT

"Since I'm getting out soon, I save more per paycheck so I can have money to live on until I find a job."

## 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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# Company E officially rolls into the Wolfpack

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines and sailors with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion gathered in formation for a ceremony to officially activate Company E and its guidon Thursday at the battalion's Light Armored Vehicle ramp.

Company E, known as Erie Company, is the newest addition to the Wolfpack. Since August, the company has grown to over 120 Marines and sailors, said 1st Lt. Brett Nungesser, the new company's commander.

"This is a big day for all the Marines," said Nungesser, a San Marino, Calif. native. "This is our official activation, or final stamp of approval."

In fiscal year 2004, the Force Structure Review Group presented to the commandant that each active component of LAR battalions should add a fifth LAR company, said Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, the commander of 3rd LAR. Company E is the first company to do so from all LAR battalions Marine Corps wide.

Company E as a war fighting LAR company and welcome them to the Wolfpack," said Kassner, a Coupland, Texas native. "The company will soon be fully operational, capable and ready for world wide deployment."

3rd LAR was officially established in May 1983, when the Marine Corps realized that there was a need to enhance mobility and firepower of the units tasked with frequent deployments. The LAV family of vehicles filled this void by being highly mobile and able to move on water and land.

The Wolfpack has fought in support of multiple wars since, to include Operation Desert Shield, Operation Restore Hope and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The battalion will be returning for their fifth deployment to Iraq this spring.

Company E will be part of the battalion's Remain-Behind Element and will continue to train to maintain their combat readiness for any future deployments.

"The strength of the pack is the wolf, the strength of the wolf is the pack," Kassner said nearing the end of the ceremony.



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

Lt. Brett Nungesser, the company commander for Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, salutes Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, the commander of 3rd LAR, before revealing their guidon during the company's activation ceremony Thursday at the battalion's Light Armored Vehicle ramp. Company E is the newest addition to the Wolfpack.



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

Lt. Brett Nungesser, the company commander for Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, unravels the company's guidon as Sgt. Matt Talbot, a squad leader and the company's guidon bearer, maintains control during the company's activation ceremony Thursday at the battalion's Light Armored Vehicle ramp.

## LEADERS, from A1

Stephen Schrepfer, the assistant staff noncommissioned officer in charge for 2/7's support deck.

"The goal of this training is for Marines to be confident and capable fire team leaders," Fairchild said. "Team leaders must be proficient in all weapon systems so they can teach and train their younger

Marines for combat."

The training is broken down into three main stages. The Marines progress through these stages and ultimately learn to work effectively as a fire team, Fairchild said.

In the first stage, each student learned about the weapon systems they will utilize in combat. These include the M16A2 service rifle with rifle combat optic, M249 squad

automatic weapon, AT4 anti-armor weapon, M203 grenade launcher and hand grenades.

The Marines then learned the characteristics of each weapon, such as, minimum and maximum effective range, firing and positions, and other pertinent information. After learning the information they were taught how to fire each weapon in various positions.

Marines training on the

AT4 were taught about the weapon's capability and its importance in combat.

"Any rifleman can carry it," said 2nd Lt. Mitchell Steen, the Company E platoon commander. "The AT4 can immobilize a tank, but it is catastrophic for a light-skinned vehicle."

After the students learned individual training standards, they moved on to combined training tasks, Fairchild said. They each employed different weapons to eliminate the target.

"This is when they learn to bring it all together," Fairchild said.

The final stage of the training exercise will combine everything they have learned, and have them attack simulated targets as a complete fire team, Fairchild said. The skills learned during the course are the building blocks to be successful in combat.



CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

Lance Cpl. Kristofer Simmons, a fire team leader with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, throws a practice hand grenade into the kill zone of a simulated vehicle during a Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course on Range 105A aboard the Combat Center March 10 through Thursday. TSULC focuses on training team leaders with every weapon system they will use on patrols in a combat environment.



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# UTG plays crucial role in combat success

**CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

MARINE CORPS MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER BRIDGEPORT, Calif. - The mission of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., is unique compared to other Marine Corps installations and training centers. Its mission is to conduct unit and individual training courses to prepare Marines, joint, and allied forces for operations in mountainous, high altitude, and cold weather environments in support of

the regional combatant commanders.

This mission, like the rest of the missions in the Marine Corps, is carried out by the individual Marines and sailors who oversee the training and preparation of their fellow warfighters.

The Unit Training Group is responsible for taking on all unit-based training that takes place at MWTC to prepare Marines and sailors for combat in mountainous countries like Afghanistan, said Sgt. Raymond E. Carnwright, a team leader with UTG.

While training at MWTC, units can expect to learn about basics such as mountain weather and conditions, mountain communication, mountain safety, snow mobility and tactics, avalanche awareness, survival techniques and navigation, building shelters, treatment of cold weather and high altitude illnesses and injuries and layering clothing the correct way.

Col. Norman L. Cooling, the commanding officer of MWTC, said there has been an increase in also training units in communicating and sustaining forces over broad expanses of complex, compartmentalized terrain and in aggregating units from distributed security positions to address conventional threats.

Service members who do not come to train at MWTC for a unit package still learn this material through MWTC formal schools ranging from the animal packers course to the advanced scout sniper course.



**CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE**  
Sgt. Nicholas Strommatt, an instructor with the Unit Training Group at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., gives guidance to Marines with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, on building proper snow shelters at training area Penguin Thursday.



**CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE**  
Cpl. John G. Hatcher, an instructor with the Unit Training Group at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., reviews the outlined roles being played by two Afghan role player Marines with 3rd Combat Engineers Battalion, based out of the Combat Center, at training area Penguin Thursday.

Capt. Lance W. Seiffert, the officer-in-charge of the instructor cadre, said each unit first begins training at MWTC in the classroom, learning about how the harsh environment affects many combat elements like weapon systems, casualty evacuation drills, and tactics, techniques and procedures.

"Marines receive progressive exposure to the cold weather environment and the many challenges it provides," Seiffert said. "Short term goals include being able to comfortably operate in this environment while planning and executing realistic rates of travel based on available equipment, weight carried, and the experience level of the Marines."

Sgt. Eric Akey, a UTG instructor, said he believes the training units and individual

service members receive at MWTC will be paramount in their success in country.

"The war on terror has changed atmosphere severely with going from Iraq to Afghanistan," said Akey, an Auburn, Ind., native. "Marines must have a great understanding of the climate and ground they are operating in. The enemy has such a better understanding of how to operate in mountains, and now MWTC is trying to overcome that by making mountain leaders, mountain docs, mountain communications experts, and individual mountain unit leaders."

The terrain at MWTC may reach as high as 11,500 feet and temperatures can plummet to negative 25 degrees, demanding much physical and mental fortitude for those in training, Akey said.

"No where else in the Marine Corps can you find such extreme conditions that challenge the body and mind to levels unknown," he said.

Sgt. Bradley L. Kramer, a fellow UTG instructor, said success in combat involves more than becoming familiar with the harsh mountain environment.

"Marines cannot successfully fight in compartmentalized terrain until they have learned successfully how to survive and move in it," said the Saline, Mich., native. "We teach units what they need in order to do those things. This training makes the Marines more likely to get off the roads and take the fight to the enemy."

Carnwright said he has done his time in Afghanistan and said he believes MWTC has the proper elements to

fully prepare service members for mountainous combat.

"I have been to Afghanistan and the terrain sucks," said Carnwright, a Bassett, Va., native. "This place is perfect for the Marine corps to train. Everyone knows that our mission is changing and we need to be ready to fight in any environment."

Cooling said since there is such a vast variety of terrain Marines can expect to operate in, conditions at MWTC can best prepare those warriors for sustainment, mobility and communication in any environment due to its high difficulty.

As the instructors of UTG continue to pull through early mornings and cold weather, they also pull their fellow service members closer to success in future deployments.

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Perry L. Ford, Senior Pastor

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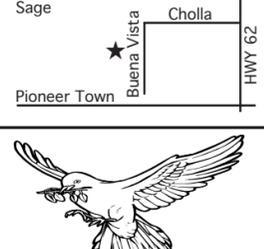
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# CLB-8 supports 'Geronimo' during Mojave Viper

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines and sailors from Marine Combat Logistics Battalion 8, stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., conducted a combined arms exercise movement to resupply and transport Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

The CAX was part of Mojave Viper, a month-long pre-deployment training program that most units must complete before deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. This specific mission was important to CLB-8 since they will be deploying to Afghanistan with 1/5.

"Doing this training now will help us understand how each other work while we're in Afghanistan," said 2nd Lt. Bentwan Taylor, the 1st Platoon commander of Transport and Support Company with CLB-8. "This type of training is important for us since we will have the

same mission in Afghanistan."

The day began at 4:30 a.m. when Marines and sailors from the 1st Platoon, Transport and Support Company with CLB-8, returned to Camp Wilson after completing an overnight training operation. Instead of getting some shut-eye, they grabbed breakfast and reloaded their vehicles for the upcoming convoy mission.

Taylor briefed the Marines and sailors on what to expect during the convoy and the route they would take.

"This is a two-part movement operation," said Taylor, a Dublin, Ga., native. "We will be moving from Camp Wilson to Range 215, then 215 to Lead Mountain."

As the convoy rolled out, the Marines and sailors of 1st Platoon fell into a watchful silence as if they were already in Afghanistan.

The first part of their mission went by without a hitch as 1st Platoon met up with 1/5 and began loading their gear and personnel in their extra vehicles. Within ten minutes, everybody was in place and ready to move on



Marines and sailors from 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment load their gear onto a 7-ton truck at Range 215 before hitching a ride with 1st Platoon, Transport and Support Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, during a combined armed exercise Tuesday.

to Lead Mountain.

"These logistical runs and linking up with other units is a very important aspect of our training," said Sgt. Rodney Williams, the 1st Squad leader for 1st Platoon. "It is necessary for us to train like this so we can become timely and efficient at moving troops in Afghanistan."

Always on the lookout, Marines manning the turrets reported various areas and items on the side of the road that could contain possible improvised explosive devices. Marines from 1/5 also pitched in, manning turrets and keeping their eyes on the side of the road, reporting anything suspicious.

"Training like this is great when you get a bunch of Marines who come together from different units," said Staff Sgt. Robert Wilder, the platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon. "This is what you need to bring them together and have them working



Marines and sailors from 1/5 climb into a 7-ton truck at Range 215 with 1st Platoon, Transport and Support Company, CLB-8, during a combined armed exercise Tuesday.

together without a hitch."

As 1st Platoon reached Lead Mountain, 1/5 quickly unloaded their gear and

entered their makeshift home for the next three days, while CLB-8 began their long journey back to

Camp Wilson, knowing their deployment to Afghanistan will be easier due to their new relationship with 1/5.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

The convoy of 18 vehicles pulled to the side of the road to allow Light Armored Vehicles by before continuing the mission of dropping off the Marines, sailors and supplies of 1/5 at Lead Mountain, a training area aboard the Combat Center, Tuesday.

## 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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# Get more bang for you buck at the gas pump

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Americans may not be able to do much to change the current economic crisis, or the recent rise in fuel prices and mortgage payments, but there are a few tricks they can use to improve the mileage of their vehicle.

Guy Hippen, the shop supervisor at J.T. Automotive here, had a little to say about the facts and myths of getting good gas mileage.

When a car is first tested by its manufacturer, the driving conditions are completely pristine, Hippen said.

For example, components like the spark plugs and oxygen sensors are brand new, and each vehicle is tested using high-octane fuel and driven on flat ground.

"That's why manufacturers say their car can get 36 miles per gallon, but after the driver buys the car and tests it on their own, they are only getting 30," Hippen said.

Factors like weather conditions, tune-ups, type of gas, preventative maintenance and tire pressure also contribute to the mileage your vehicle can get, Hippen said.

Although many people are under the impression that filling up with premium gas costs more, Hippen said the number of extra miles you get from premium actually makes

the cost break even in the end.

"Running your car off low-octane [unleaded] fuel actually takes more to give you the power you need," said Hippen. "Premium gives you that power. I run my car on premium because I know better, but it really comes down to what people can afford at the pump."

For those who want the advantages of higher-octane fuel, but don't have enough green to fill up with premium, an alternative called octane boost is available over the counter at most auto stores and ranges from \$7 to \$15 in cost, Hippen said. A bottle of octane boost enables low-octane gas to mimic high-octane.

Aside from fuel quality, tire pressure also plays a large role in giving your odometer a break.

"Try pushing your car with a flat or low tire," Hippen challenges. "You'll find that you get quite a work out."

Although low tire pressure is one of the biggest physical contributors to losing mileage on your engine, Hippen said the biggest element in gaining or losing mileage is always the driver.

"Hot rodding is going to cost money at the pump," Hippen cautions. "Driver habits are a big deal. If you stay consciously aware of

saving gas by easing on the breaks and gas, you'll save money and fuel."

Hippen added that driving at an average of 55 miles per hour for 25 miles will most likely use less gas than driving at 75 miles per hour for 25 miles.

"When you're going 75 or over, you're constantly pushing down on the gas peddle to keep up speed," he said. "But when you drive around 55 miles per hour, you tend to cruise a lot more and your engine is pretty much in idle."

There is also the belief that manual cars always get better mileage than automatics. This too also falls back on the habits of the driver, said Hippen.

"Automatics are for the masses since their engine management systems always stay at the right level," he said. "If you drive a stick, you need to know how to drive it if you're going to get great mileage. In my opinion, a manual can give you up to 15 percent more fuel efficiency."

The best measure any driver can take to ensure the best potential mileage on his or her vehicle is preventative maintenance, Hippen said. "Get your car checked out as soon as something seems wrong, change your O2 [oxygen] sensors at the recommended time, get regular oil



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Although many external elements like weather, tire pressure and fuel quality impact the gas mileage of a vehicle, a driver's habits may ultimately determine how much mileage he or she can get with every dollar.

changes, and check your tire pressure at least once a month," Hippen said.

Steve Derbyshire, a service writer at J.T. Automotive, said another long-debated myth about mileage was addressed in episode 22 of "Myth Busters" where the hosts conduct an experiment of mileage impact from air conditioning versus driving with the windows down.

The end result was that a

vehicle moving slower than 45 miles per hour gets better mileage with the windows down, while a vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour gets better mileage with the air conditioner on.

Sgt. Trevor Scelso, a Marine who opts to ride his bike more frequently than his car to save gas, points out that great vehicle mileage can relieve a good amount of stress on those

with a thin wallet.

"I have a Mustang, but I usually drive my bike around since the mileage on my Mustang is so bad," Scelso said. "Saving money on gas frees you up to spend money on other things."

So next time you may be in a hurry and feel like punching your gas pedal at the next stop light, remember that prudence now can add up to more money later.

## 'Sub-Marine' program benefits busy patrons

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Phelps and Littleton mess halls are now offering a weekday take-out sub-sandwich program during hours the dining areas are normally closed.

The "Sub-Marine" program is six months in the making and started March 2. It provides patrons with a sub-sandwich on fresh baked bread, chips, fresh fruit, a choice of

dessert and a drink. The program is free for those service members with a meal card and \$4.25 for those without.

The take-out program will be open Monday through Friday at Phelps Hall from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 1:30 to 4 p.m. and at Littleton Hall from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

The main purpose of the program is to give Marines and sailors who don't get a chance to eat during regular dining times a healthy food

option, said June Richardson, the food-service area general manager. With this program implemented, patrons now have six opportunities a day to use the mess hall facilities.

Mess hall patrons have been asking for deli bars again since they removed the original deli bar from the mess halls two years ago, said Richardson, a Sacramento native. This is a way to have both a deli bar and meet the needs of busy service members.

"The 'Sub-Marine' program is very convenient," said Lance Cpl. George Cabell, a first-time patron of the 'Sub-Marine' program. "I also save money by not having to worry about spending money at other places."

"The Marines really seem to appreciate the program," said Kay Steelfox, a mess attendant at Phelps Hall.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Kay Steelfox, a mess attendant at the Phelps mess hall, displays a completed crispy chicken ranch sub-sandwich, one of the five specialty sub-sandwiches offered.



### TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

Forgiveness is one of the most important words in the lexicon of a tough minded optimist. As a counselor, I have spent considerable time helping men and women develop an attitude of mind and a graciousness of heart that enables them to throw off the unholy burden of an ugly, unforgiving spirit. Sometimes it took hours of therapy but the happiest men and women I know have forgiven much.

Author Gregg Easterbrook describes emerging research data indicating that in most cases, people will be better off if they forgive others for the wrongs experienced during life—anything from small transgressions to horrific tragedies.

A survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan indicated that older people are more likely to forgive than younger ones; moreover, that the older people who forgive are rewarded by improved health.

A study at the University of Wisconsin also showed that older people are more likely to forgive, suggesting that forgiveness is a form of wisdom that is learned in the process of living. Of special interest was the fact that the benefits of forgiveness to the forgiver seem to increase with age.

A study of elderly women, published in the journal "Psychotherapy," found that those who scored well on a standard test of forgiveness traits had higher self-esteem and fewer episodes of anxiety and depression compared to those who scored poorly.

Yes, dear friends, tough minded optimists believe strongly in an inner peace that is experienced by people who possess a forgiving spirit.

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# Combat Center graced by bishop's visit

**CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center welcomed a visit from Bishop Rutilio J. del Riego, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino, Calif., and Rev. Eliseo Lucus, pastor of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Tuesday.

Riego and Lucus joined a group of others, including Navy Capt. Conrad Targonski, the Combat Center director of religious ministries, for a tour of the Combat Center and its training facilities to learn about the role the base plays in preparing warfighters for combat.

The first portion of the tour included a brief at the Catholic Chapel about the base's role in the mission of the Marine Corps, the community, and the lives of the families, service members and employees living here.

The brief was followed by a trip to Ranges 200 and 215, two mock Iraqi villages intended to simulate the culture and environment service members can expect to encounter in Iraq or Afghanistan.

There, the bishop and other tour members saw some of the Marine Corps' training unveiled as they walked the sandy streets of the village "market" and watched Iraqi role players interact with the units training.

The group then loaded onto their bus and made their way to Phelps mess hall, where Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus, the

commanding general of the Combat Center, and Sgt. Maj. Susan M. Bellis, the Combat Center sergeant major, joined them.

"I don't think we need to remind our Marines and sailors how important our chaplains are," Gurganus said. "This is to represent that support and make sure the Marines and sailors have constant access to chaplains."

Any opportunities for representatives like Riego to see Marines and sailors at work and in training gives them credibility so they can go back to their communities, share what they know, and impart just how important their support is to the base community, Gurganus said.

Riego, along with Lucus, said they enjoyed soaking up all the information they gained.

"I loved the conversations with the guide," Lucus said. "I really enjoyed his informative character and the sense of welcome from all the officials."

After lunch, the group then drove to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal facility where they learned about techniques insurgents use to create improvised explosive devices, and what EOD does to counter their efforts and save lives. The group was also allowed to try out the EOD robots used to investigate and disarm IEDs.

The final stop of the day was the munitions recycling plant where Randy Palmer, the facilities maintenance supervisor,



Bishop Rutilio J. del Riego, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino, Calif., (left) and Rev. Eliseo Lucus, the pastor of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, look around at the buildings and broken down cars of Range 215, a mock Iraqi village used to train warfighters prior to deployments, while on a base tour Tuesday.

walked the group through the stages of receiving, sorting, melting, crushing and packaging, spent ammunition, and casings for resale.

The recycling plant is the only one of its kind in the world and is completely self-sustaining, Palmer said.

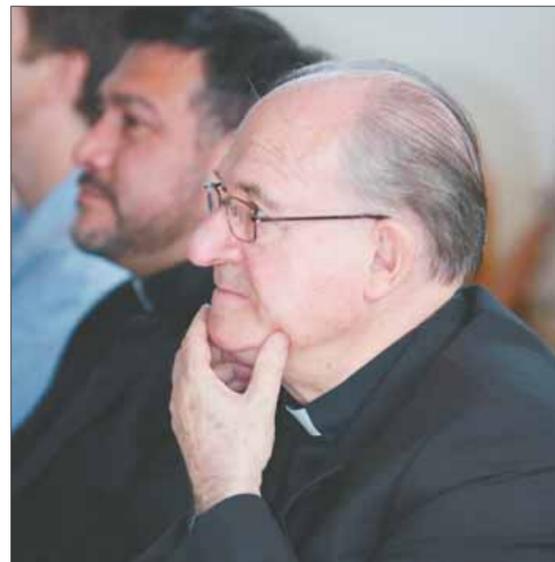
Before the tour group departed the base, Palmer presented them with .50-caliber round casings crushed into small, brass balls as souvenirs.

Riego said he attended the tour to learn as much as he could about the military training aspects and lifestyle.

"I wanted to learn more about how these young men and women serve and about the great risks they take," said Riego.

Riego said he was very impressed with the training he saw throughout the day, especially that of Range 200 and 215.

"I saw three things," Riego said. "First, I saw the cultural sensitivity they're trained in, which is very important. Second, I saw that the training was very open to change according to circumstances. And third, I saw the appreciation from the men and women and the welcome they gave us. I was very satisfied to hear the chaplains' mission is appreciated."



Bishop Rutilio J. del Riego, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino, Calif., listens intently to a brief about the logistics, operations and mission of the Combat Center at the Catholic Chapel Tuesday.

## MCAGCC helps save the Earth with one more vote

**CPL. MARGARET HUGHES**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center will be joining more than 80 countries and territories all over the world for Earth Hour March 28 at 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

According to the Earth Hour Web site, Earth Hour is an international event created by the World Wide Fund for Nature that asks households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights and electrical appliances for one hour to help raise awareness towards global warming.

This is the second year the Combat Center has taken part in the event, said Jim Lessard, the director for the base's Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division. Certain non-essential lights on the base will be shut down for the hour.

"We want everyone to know that we care about the environment," Lessard said. "Actions speak louder than words. This sends a clear message that we are helping to sustain the environment."

All of the major com-

pounds on base to include 1st Tank Battalion and Exercise Support Division will have their lights turned out for the hour, said Lt. Cmdr. Yvonne Lyda, the public works officer for the Public Works Division. Base personnel also highly encourage everyone to minimize their energy usage as much as possible during that time.

WWF is urging the world to "Vote Earth" by turning off their lights. They hope to reach the target of one billion

votes, which they will present to world leaders this year at the Global Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

"Switching off your lights is a vote for Earth, or leaving them on is a vote for global warming," according to the event's Web site. "We all have a vote and every single vote counts."

For more information or to vote visit the Earth Hour Web Site at <http://www.earthhour.org>.

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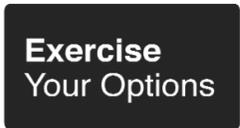
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# Corpsmen pass knowledge to 2/7 Marines

**PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Since 1898, Navy hospital corpsmen have been serving the Marine Corps and saving Marines' lives during combat.

But what happens when the corpsmen go down?

That is exactly what approximately 50 Marines from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, prepared for during the Combat Lifesaver Course March 9 through March 13.

The course, which certifies Marines as combat lifesavers, is designed to teach Marines to properly assess, triage, treat and prepare casualties for evacuation during the stresses of combat.

Each day the Marines spent the mornings in the classroom learning the technical aspects of the course, followed by practical application sessions during the afternoons where they applied what they learned, said Petty Officer 3rd Class Kody Watkins, the training petty officer for 2/7 and course instructor.

This course allows corpsmen on the battlefield to call on combat lifesavers to assist them when there are situations with multiple casualties or when the corpsmen themselves are injured, said the Inez, Texas native.

Students learned how to treat many types of typical battlefield injuries including hemorrhaging, burns, broken bones, obstructed airways, severed limbs and sucking chest wounds, he said.

"One of the most important parts of the course is training students to realize which injuries are more life-threatening and should be treated first," Watkins said.

Students also learn the proper way to place an intravenous tube, or IV, in the casualty's arms, feet and head, although they only practice putting one in the arm.

"Placing an IV is nerve-racking your first time," said Pfc. Robert McCabe, a rifleman with 2/7 and student in the course. "The instructors helped us through it though."

After a week of training,



Pfc. Henry Lopez, a Combat Lifesaver Course student, performs a final check on his simulated casualty prior to transport. Students had to properly treat and evacuate casualties to pass the final test March 13 at Victory Field.

students' lifesaving knowledge was put to the test in their final evaluation to become combat lifesavers.

They first donned a combat load, including helmet, flak jacket and medical pack, then sprinted nearly 200 yards to a simulated casualty. As soon as they reached the "wounded" man they immediately assessed the victim to see what was wrong with him.

After treating the victim, they properly transported him to the simulated helicopter rendezvous point. Upon arrival the students had to tell a waiting instructor what was wrong with the victim and what they did to remedy the situation.

They then determined if the casualty was in need of an IV and if needed, an IV was given to the casualty.

Even though the training doesn't exactly replicate real combat scenarios, it does a good job preparing students for emergencies on the battlefield, said Cpl. Francisco Velazquez, a rifleman with 2/7 and Combat Lifesaver Course student.

"I think it's great that junior Marines are being taught to save lives," he said. "Early in their careers is a good time to go through training like this."

McCabe, a Woodland, Calif. native, agreed with Velazquez saying he feels very confident treating a casualty on the battlefield after this course.

"I've been deployed twice," Velazquez said. "I've seen this type of training pay off in real-life situations, so I recommend this to anyone, especially in an infantry MOS [Military Occupation Specialty]."



A student in the Combat Lifesaver Course inserts an intravenous tube, or IV, into his simulated casualty during the final test March 13 at Victory Field. After a simulated severing of his leg, it was determined that his casualty would have lost a great deal of blood and needed an IV to replenish his bodily fluids.



Pfc. Robert McCabe, a student in the Combat Lifesaver Course, applies a bandage to his simulated casualty during the final test March 13 at Victory Field.



A litter team prepares to transport a simulated casualty during the final test of the Combat Lifesaver Course March 13 at Victory Field. Students had to properly treat and transport casualties to pass the final test.

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# BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS



## JADEN PIERCE MARCHAND

Son of Sgt. Jesse R. Marchand and wife Larissa.  
Born Feb. 2, weighing 8 lbs., 3 oz and measuring 20.2 inches.

## GILLIAN MARIE

### JOHANNINGSMEIER

Daughter of 1st Lt. Benjamin Johanningsmeier and wife, Michelle.

Born Feb. 2, weighing 7 lbs., 10 oz and measuring 19.2 inches.

## BROOKS ANTHONY DAVIS

Son of Sgt. Jody Davis and wife Wendi.

Born Feb. 3, weighing 8 lbs., 8 oz and measuring 21 inches.

## JASON ALEXANDER CONTRERAS

Son of Lance Cpl. Justin Contreras and wife Veronica.  
Born Feb. 4, weighing 7 lbs., 3.9 oz and measuring 20 inches.

## PAYTON LYNN THOMPSON

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Brett Thompson and wife Caroline.

Born Feb. 4, weighing 6 lbs., 15 oz and measuring 20 inches.

## LOGAN DEAN HARRIS

Son of Cpl. Edward Harris and wife Cassandra.

Born Feb. 4, weighing 7 lbs., 4 oz and measuring 20 inches.

## LANDON ALAN HANCOCK

Son of Pfc. Lance Hancock and wife Colleen.

Born Feb. 5, weighing 7 lbs., 3 oz and measuring 19.7 inches.

## TRISTAN KYLER MIXON

Son of Cpl. Danny Mixon Jr. and wife Kallie

Born Feb. 7, weighing 6 lbs., 11 oz and measuring 20 inches.

## DAKOTA LEE YOUNG

Son of Sgt. Joshua Lee Young and wife, Angela.

Born Feb. 8, weighing 8 lbs., 8 oz and measuring 20.2 inches.

## KALLISTA FAITH KENNEY

Daughter of Cpl. Joshua F. Kenney and wife, April.

Born Feb. 10, weighing 5 lbs., 5.4 oz and measuring 18.8 inches.

## PEYTON ELIZABETH DYKE

Daughter of Lance Cpl. James Dyke and wife, Tatum.

Born Feb. 13, weighing 6 lbs., 10.3 oz and measuring 19.4 inches.

## TOBIAS RAY HUCKABA

Son of Sgt. Jonathan Huckaba and wife, Ave.

Born Feb. 13, weighing 6 lbs., 13 oz and measuring 19.7 inches.

## YESSELYN YUNAS RODRIGUEZ

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Sheila and Leslie Rodriguez.

Born Feb. 13, weighing 7.5 lbs. and measuring 19.8 inches.

## NAOMI YVONNE LOPEZ

Daughter of Staff Sgt. Benjamin E. Lopez and wife Lydia.

Born Feb. 14, weighing 7 lbs., 3 oz and measuring 19 inches.

## JAMES IRVIN MEDFORD III

Son of Cpl. James I. Medford II and wife, Seiko.

Born on Feb 14, weighing 7 lbs., 11.5 oz and measuring 20.5 inches.

## NATALIA GARCIA

Daughter of Lance Cpl. Myruam Chaldez and Jesse Garcia.

Born of Feb. 15, weighing 7.89 lbs. and measuring 21 inches.

## BRAXTON COLE POUNDS

Son of Lance Cpl. Craig L. Pounda and wife, Mackey.

Born Feb. 20, weighing 7 lbs., 2oz and measuring 19.7 inches.

## ALVARO ISAAC PEREZ

Son of Cpl. Brandi Perez and Sgt. Alvaro Perez.

Born Feb. 20, weighing 7 lbs., 10 oz and measuring 21 inches.

## RAPHAEL HERNANDEZ

Son of Lance Cpl. Jose T. Hernandez and wife, Monica.

Born Feb. 22, weighing 7 lbs., 11 oz and measuring 18.8 inches.

## JONATHAN TYLER MARTIN

Son of Gunnery Sgt. Jonathan D. Martin and wife, Jennifer.

Born Feb. 23, weighing 6 lbs., 11 oz and measuring 17 inches.

## ANTHONY NAJEH JACKSON III

Son of Lance Cpl. Anthony Jackson Jr. and wife, Denniece.

Born Feb. 26, weighing 6 lbs., 14 oz and measuring 18.7 inches.

## SHANE ALAN MERRITT

Son of Staff Sgt. Jason Merritt and wife, Devon.

Born March 1, weighing 9 lbs., 1 oz and measuring 20 inches.

## LOGAN THOMAS MCFADEN

Son of Staff Sgt. Stuart McFaden and wife, Anastasia.

Born March 3, weighing 8 lbs., 7.6 oz and measuring 21.2 inches.

## ZACHARY KENT LUCAS

Son of Staff Sgt. Leon H. Lucas and wife, Mary.

Born March 3, weighing 9.3 lbs. and measuring 20.7 inches.

## Combat Center Trader Ads

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**2006 SILVERADO 1500HD CREW CAB**, 36,000 miles, \$18,000, great condition, extras, call Bryan at 898-5549. 2/20/09

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**2000 PORSCHE BOXTER 3**, Excellent cond., call for details. \$23,000. See lemon lot. Cell 401-7315. 2/6/09

**2003 CHEVY BLAZER ZR2 EDITION**, 68,000 miles, 4x4, lots of extras, great truck. \$11,900 OBO. Call Ricky 865-0077. 2/6/09

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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.



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**HEMET, from A1**

proclamation was presented to 3rd LAR during the ceremony Monday. The battalion's Marines and sailors are looking forward to the unique partnership with the city.

"These adoptions are mutually beneficial for the Marines and their families, and the communities that want to show their support," said Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, 3rd LAR's commanding officer. "As the commanding officer of this storied battalion, it is my distinct honor and privilege to receive this adoption from the city."

"Our motto in 3rd LAR battalion is 'the strength of the pack is the wolf; the strength of the wolf is the pack,' and we are a stronger organization today for being members of the Hemet community."

Hemet, a city of approximately 75,000 residents, is home to a large number of retired service members, many

of them former Marines, said Jim Foreman, a Hemet city council member.

"A large part of our community are retired Marines, so it was ideal for us to adopt a Marine battalion," he said.

While the "Wolfpack" is deployed, Hemet's leaders plan to send them care packages filled with items the Marines need by working with veterans' organizations and by getting the battalion's contact information out to the city's residents.

The City of Hemet hopes to continue its formal relationship with the battalion after they return from Iraq, both in garrison and on future deployments.

"When they come back from deployment, hopefully we can have a big celebration in our city," Foreman said.

"We'll do anything we can to assist. You guys risk your lives for our country and it's important no one ever forgets it."



Lt. Col. Ken Kassner, the commanding officer of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, reads the official adoption proclamation presented by Eric McBride, the mayor of Hemet, Calif., during a ceremony at 3rd LAR's vehicle ramp Monday.

**TANKS, from A1**

great to work with. "The Army, from what I have seen, is a very professional group." Rummier said. "They are pretty good at what they do. Maybe in the future both groups can take what we learn during this exercise and use it on their own."

Rummier said the exercise was great training for what their jobs are overseas.

"This will help both parties with seeing different sides of the story," he said. "Overseas we could use a lot of the experience we get from this training to make ourselves better at accomplishing our mission."

Soldiers serving with 1/23 took a lot from the exercise and enjoyed working with another branch of service, and for some of them it was a reminder of past missions working alongside Marines.

"This is outstanding training," said Spc. Jeremy Wallace, an infantryman with Headquarters Company, 1/23, and a native of South Bend, Wash. "I fought alongside Marines in 2004 when we invaded Fallujah. They're great to work with and all the training we do with them is outstanding."

With their co-op training finished here, 1/23 is slated to deploy later this year.



Vincent Reynolds, an infantryman with Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, prepares to fire off a 120mm mortar during the final exercise of the battalion's co-op training with Company C, 1st Tank Battalion.

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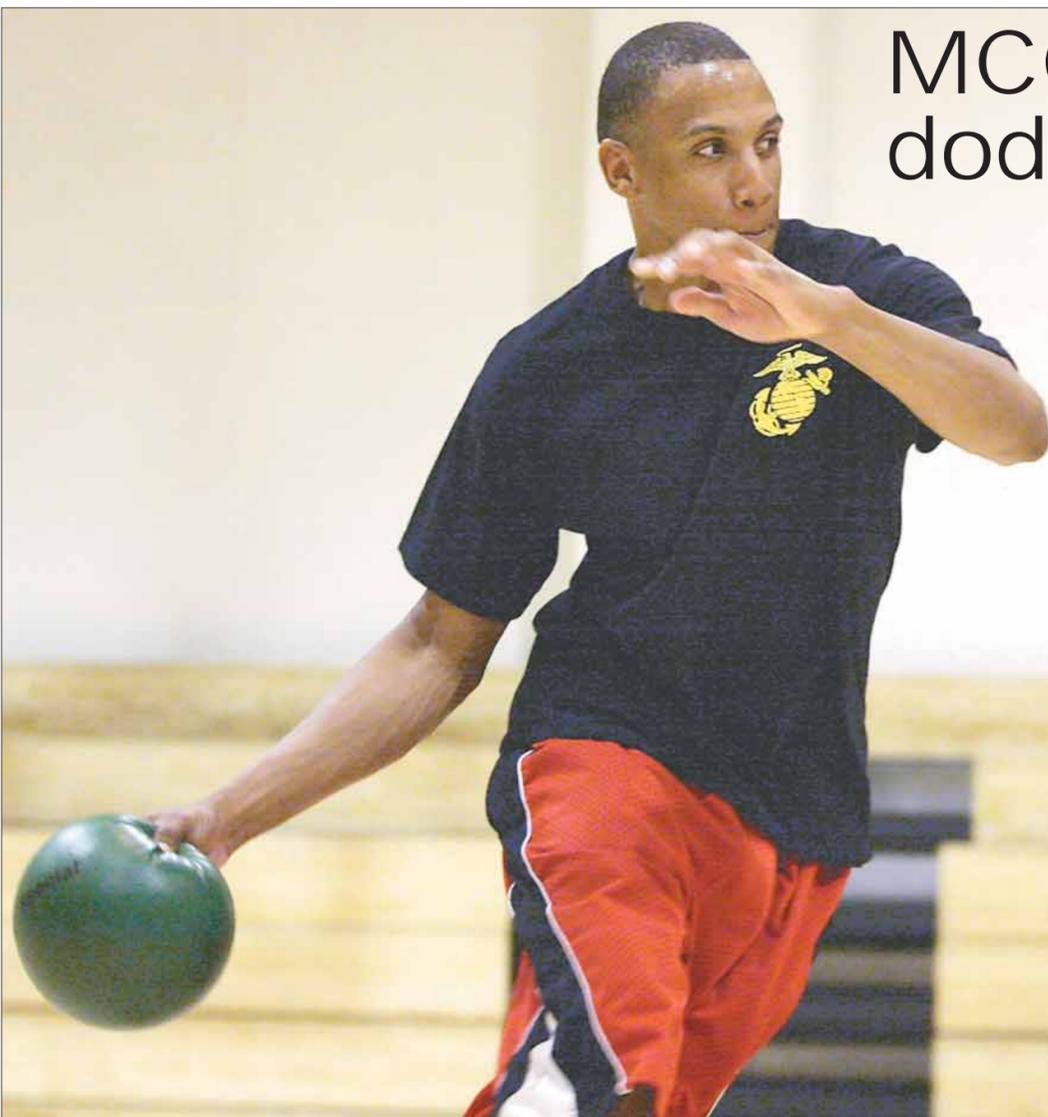
# SPORTS AND LEISURE

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B1



## MCCES A closes dodge ball season

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

After a grueling season of play, it came down to the wire for two dodgeball teams in the final double-elimination tournament at the East Gym Tuesday night.

The tournament started with the top six teams from regular-season play and dwindled down to only two. Teams played three matches per game, each lasting at most four minutes. Whichever team eliminated all the players on the opposing team or had the most players left on the court at the end of the match was considered victorious.

Teams had to win three out of five matches to be considered the winners of the game.

MCCES A dominated throughout most of the tournament, easily beating their first two opponents.

The Fainting Goats battled head to head with MCCES A in the second round of the tour-

namment and the Fainting Goats ended up in the loser's bracket. They didn't let that stop them though; they fought their way to the finals.

MCCES A continued their undefeated streak until the first game of the finals where they battled the Fainting Goats yet again.

The first three matches of the final duel saw the Fainting Goats dominate. They drew first blood and eliminated two MCCES A players within 30 seconds of the first match.

The next match gave MCCES A something to worry about. The Fainting Goats took out the entire MCCES A in 11 seconds with no time for fans to even blink.

The final match of the first game repeated an emerging pattern. The Fainting Goats seemed to make easy work of MCCES A, winning the match

See DODGEBALL, B2

Arthur Hopkins III, a player on the Fainting Goats team, launches a dodge ball at a MCCES A player during the dodgeball double-elimination tournament held at the East Gym Tuesday night.

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

## Volleyball, softball kick off spring season

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's intramural sports program, sponsored by Marine Corps Community Services, entered its spring season with the start of the Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League pre-season matches Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.

The competitors will be battling it out on the volleyball courts in a triple round robin season, meaning the teams will go head-to-head three times during

the regular season. The post-season will be culminated by a double-elimination tournament.

So far, the volleyball league has four teams participating, but MCCS Sports is looking for several more teams to sign up.

"Last year, we couldn't have an intramural volleyball league because only three teams signed up," said Randy Husted, an MCCS Sports specialist. "We're looking for two more teams to sign up, and the schedule can be changed to fit those teams in."

The deadline for two more teams to sign up and be added to the schedule for intramural volleyball is Tuesday, Husted said.

The Commanding General's Intramural Softball League is also gearing up for play and scheduled to begin next month. The deadline for softball registration is Thursday, where a coach's meeting is slated for noon at the MCCS Sports office.

"We had 21 teams participate in the softball league last year," Husted said. "This year, we're expecting anywhere between 18 and 22 teams to sign up."

The softball league's pre-season tournament is scheduled to be held April 13-16. The regular season will begin April 21 and will be held Tuesdays through Thursdays at Felix Field.

MCCS Sports hosts 10 intramural sports leagues annually, with several other sports programs available for Combat Center personnel and their families.

"These sports programs are important because they give Marines an opportunity to participate in a competitive event and they love it," said Skip Best, the MCCS Sports director. "Out of all the sports we run, about 95 percent of them are part of the Commander's Cup competition and units compete for points to win the cup."

The spring sports season is nearly in full swing and the MCCS

Sports Department is ready and willing to support the troops with good, clean, competitive fun.

"We're looking forward to the weather changing for softball," Best said. "Softball is one of our more popular sports and it gives Marines more opportunities to participate."

The Combat Center is also scheduled to host the Marine Corps Men's Varsity Softball Tournament April 18 at Felix Field, where teams Corps-wide will be competing for the championship trophy.

To register for an intramural sport, contact MCCS Sports at 830-4092.

## Scars to Freedom to host benefit concert for troops

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A non-profit charity organization created to help veterans receive treatment for scars is sponsoring a concert free to active duty service members, veterans and retirees, featuring live music from Megadeth, Mick Fleetwood, Aaron Lewis from Staind, Bobby Brown and Heads of State, and a surprise musical guest.

Scars to Freedom, Inc., will host the concert March 28 from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. the following day at the Palm Springs Air Museum in Palm Springs, Calif., to raise money and awareness for the organization.

Other famous celebrities will be attending the event to show support for the troops, including Jack Black, Stan Lee, Queen Latifah, Quincy Jones, Brittny Gastineau and many others.

According to <http://www.scarstofreedom.com>, tickets for the

event cost \$75 per person and VIP tickets cost \$200. Free tickets are available for the first 1,000 service members or veterans. All proceeds will benefit Scars to Freedom.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to bid on autographed guitars from Carrie Underwood, Faith Hill and other artists.

Tickets are available at <http://www.ticketmaster.com>, or by emailing [scarstofreedom@aol.com](mailto:scarstofreedom@aol.com). To be eligible for free tickets, service members must arrive in uniform carrying their military identification, Veterans Affairs card, or other proof of military service.

Scars to Freedom, Inc., was founded in 2008 by Guadalupe Ponte, D.M.P., the president, chairman and chief executive officer of The Scar Treatment Center of the Desert and founder of Scars to Freedom.

The initiative began when she decided to treat veterans' scars for free at her clinic in Palm Desert, Calif. Ponte feels she is not

only tackling the physical appearance of scars, but also the emotional pain associated with them.

"Bad memories are just one of the negative ways that scars affect someone," Ponte said. "Self esteem can be affected if the person is self-conscious about how they look."

"Times have changed since the 'tough guy' mentality of the past," she added. "When people feel good about their appearance, their self esteem is going to be better."

Ponte's current goal with Scars to Freedom is to open the first of many scar revision centers in the Coachella Valley, which will be dedicated to long-term recovery. The organization is also exploring the option of possibly conducting nationwide scar revision tours to raise awareness and assist veterans across the country.

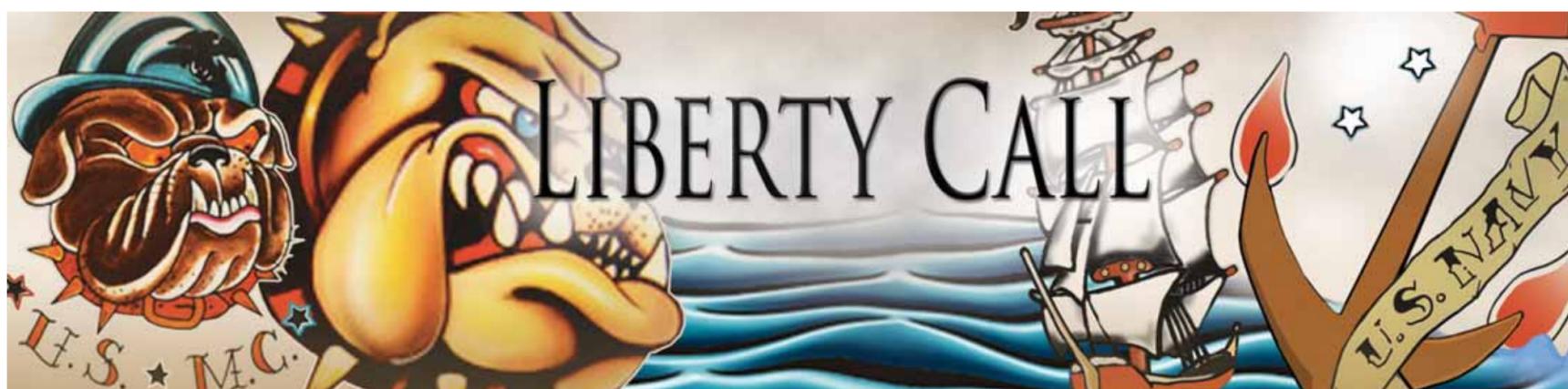
For more information regarding the event or Scars to Freedom, Inc., call (888) 837-0470 or log on to the Scars to Freedom Web site.

## Storming the rim



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player from Ole School Plus drives past the defense during their Wednesday night's game against 1st Tanks at the East Gym. Ole School Plus won 68-53.



<b>FRI. 3/20</b> <b>Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Wildflower Exhibition</b> Time: All day event Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum 57090 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley For more info call 369-7212 or visit <a href="http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org">http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org</a>	<b>SAT. 3/21</b> <b>Watercolor Painting in the Park</b> Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Where: Desert Institute at Joshua Tree National Park Joshua Tree Visitor Center, 6554 Park Bl., Joshua Tree For more info call 367-5535 or visit <a href="http://www.joshuatree.org">http://www.joshuatree.org</a>	<b>SAT. 3/21</b> <b>Water Wise High Desert Landscaping Class</b> Time: 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Where: Yucca Valley Community Center Complex 57090 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley. For more info call 228-6267 or visit <a href="http://www.hdwd.com">http://www.hdwd.com</a>	<b>SAT. 3/21</b> <b>Music: Amritakripa, Rock Art, Ruby &amp; The Rock Spiders</b> Time: 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Where: Blak Box Theatre 61231 29 Palms Hwy., Joshua Tree For more info call 366-3777 or visit <a href="http://www.hidesertplayhouse.com">http://www.hidesertplayhouse.com</a>	<b>TUES. 3/24 - THURS. 3/26</b> <b>American Crown Circus &amp; El Coloso de las Americas Circo Osorio</b> Time: 2 shows 6 p.m. & 8 p.m. Where: Next to Luckie Park 74329 Joe Davis Dr. Twentynine Palms For more info call 367-7562
<b>SAT. 3/28</b> <b>Mike Stinson Band &amp; Dave Gleason Birthday Bash</b> Time: 7:30 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's 53688 Pioneertown Rd. Pioneertown For more info call 365-5956 <a href="http://www.pappyandharriets.com">http://www.pappyandharriets.com</a>	<b>SAT. 3/28</b> <b>Concert for wounded troops, with Megadeth &amp; Aaron Lewis of Stained</b> Time: 7 p.m. Where: Palm Springs Air Museum For more info call (888) 837-0470 or visit <a href="http://www.scars4freedom.com">http://www.scars4freedom.com</a>	<b>FRI. 4/17</b> <b>India Arie &amp; Musiq Soulchild</b> Time: 8 p.m. Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy. Indio For more info call (800) 827-2946 or visit <a href="http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com">http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com</a>	<b>SUN. 4/19</b> <b>BB King in concert</b> Time: 7 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For more info call (800) 252-4499 or visit <a href="http://www.morongocasinoresort.com">http://www.morongocasinoresort.com</a>	<b>SAT. 5/9</b> <b>The comedy of Bill Cosby</b> Time: 1st show-7:30 p.m. 2nd show-10 p.m. Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon For more info call (800) 252-4499 or visit <a href="http://www.morongocasinoresort.com">http://www.morongocasinoresort.com</a>

# Preposterous plot twists pile up in revenge drama 'Taken'

NEIL POND  
AMERICAN PROFILE

## Taken

Starring Liam Neeson  
Rated PG-13

A former government special-ops agent comes out of retirement to track down the kidnapers of his teenage daughter in "Taken," a vengeful action drama with Liam Neeson as the kind of daddy every little girl in a jam would want to have.

Oh, Dad's always been a bit overprotective—or so thinks his ex-wife, now happily re-married to a super-rich businessman with a much saner schedule. But when 17-year-old Kim and her girlfriend are snatched just as

they're beginning a European holiday, nobody has any objections to Neeson's character, Bryan Mills, dusting off his counterintelligence chops and swinging into a one-man search-and-rescue mission.

It doesn't take long for Mills to discover that his daughter has been pressed into service in a human-trafficking ring that spreads across a rogues' gallery of brutish Albanian thugs, corrupt French policemen and glutinous Middle Eastern sheiks.

Neeson, a world-class actor best remembered for his title role in "Schindler's List," provides the emotional center and a bit of dignity to a tale that otherwise mires in formulaic pulp. As Kim, 25-year-old Maggie Grace is a bit too old to convincingly portray a boppy underage teenager,

although she appears to be giving her best to a one-dimensional role that essentially disappears during the movie's slam-bang midsection.

Preposterous plot twists and overly contrived coincidences pile up as quickly as the bodies. Do you really believe Neeson's retired spook can track down a kidnapper on the other side of the world based solely on a two-word recording of his voice? That the weaponless Mills can rout an entire building of heavily armed baddies? That when derring-do dad finally makes his way to the inner circle of the slavery cartel, the very next girl to be "auctioned off"...is Kim?

The audience for this kind of movie would seem to be made of up folks hankering for some old-fashioned,



STEPHANIE BRANCHU  
Bryan, played by Liam Neeson, prepares to take extreme measures during his interrogation of a man he suspects of being a key player in the kidnapping of Bryan's daughter. Taken is a Europa Corp., M6 Films and Grive Productions release.

straight-up get-even. In a world where the economy is in the dumpster, war is raging and people are generally hurting all around, perhaps it feels satisfying and even cathartic

to sit back and watch something as simple and uncomplicated as bad guys getting what's comin' to 'em.

But even as a cheap dose of revenge therapy, "Taken"

is nothing most moviegoers haven't seen before—and nothing, with the possible exception of Liam Neeson, that rises above run-of-the-mill.

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**DODGEBALL, from B1**

3-0.

Since the Fainting Goats were in the loser's bracket, they had to beat MCCES A in two back-to-back games. MCCES A only had to win one.

It seemed that if MCCES A didn't do something different, they would walk away without a championship trophy.

In the first match of the second game MCCES A struck quickly and immediately eliminated two Fainting

Goats players. The Fainting Goats tried to rally a comeback and eliminated two MCCES A players, but it wasn't quite enough. MCCES A knocked one more Fainting Goats player out and then let the time on the clock run out, taking the victory.

The next match started with Brian McCarthy, the Fainting Goat's coach yelling to his players, "We gotta win this one boys!"

They didn't.

MCCES A pulled ahead quickly again, eliminating two players in the first 12 seconds of the match. They then held onto the balls, letting the timer run out to ensure a victory.

With each match that MCCES A won by waiting out the clock, the tempers of the Fainting Goats' players rose.

During the last match of the season, MCCES A came out strong, hitting a Fainting Goats player square in the face. They eliminated one more player and started again with their strategy of holding onto the ball and letting the clock run out.

This drove the tensions through the roof and a yelling match broke out between the two teams. After the yelling was over, MCCES A emerged victorious and was crowned the number one team of the 2009 dodge ball season.

"Those games were definitely a challenge," said a cheerful Erik Amezcua, a player for MCCES A.

"Everyone was having a good time, it's always good to get out and do something with our Marines."

Even though the Fainting Goats lost, they were good sports about it.

"It was a great tournament, good competition," said McCarthy, the Fainting Goats' coach. "We had fun, you can't ask for much more."

Another dodgeball double-elimination tournament is scheduled in May. If you are interested in participating, call 830-4092 for registration.

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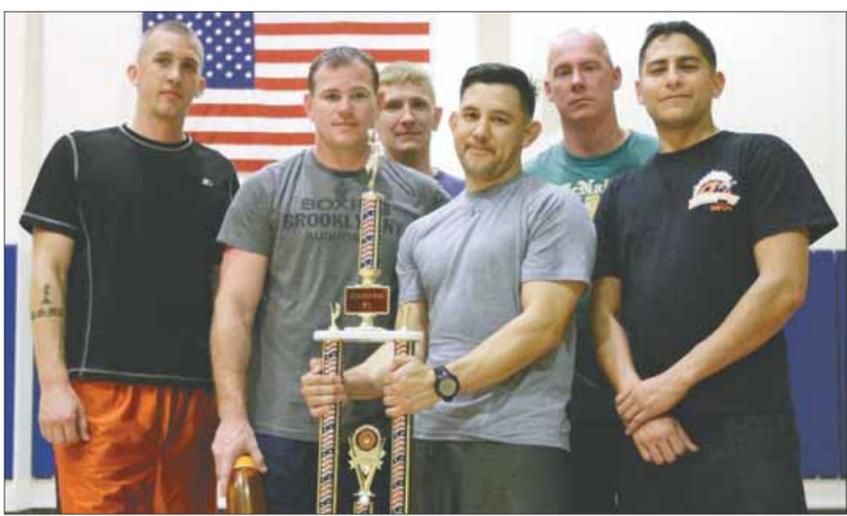
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Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WallMart	MCAGCC			
7:00	7:10	7:15	7:50	8:30			
<b>15</b>	MCAGCC-Palm Springs					Saturday/Sunday*	
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Stater Bros WallMart	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
<b>15</b>	MCAGCC-Palm Springs					Saturday/Sunday*	
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WallMart	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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PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS  
The number one MCCES A team stands proudly with their first place trophy after their hard-fought victories. Six teams participated in the dodgeball double-elimination tournament held Tuesday night at the East Gym.

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# Combat Center sports standings



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player on team Ole School Plus jumps high above the defense to aid in their 68-53 victory against 1st Tanks Wednesday night at the East Gym.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player for team Ole School Plus soars through the air as he makes the last shot of the first half Wednesday night at the East Gym. Ole School Plus won 68-53.

## 2009 Intramural Basketball Standings as of Thursday

Team	Wins	Losses	%
NHTP	8	0	1000
MCCES All-Stars	7	0	1000
Ole School Plus	6	1	857
MCCES A	5	3	625
MCCES Party	5	4	556
1st Tanks	5	5	500
IPAC	4	4	500
MWSS-374 (B)	3	4	429
MWSS-374 (A)	2	5	286
CLB-7	2	6	250
3rd CEB	2	6	250
1/7	0	11	0



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player for 1st Tanks fights past the defense during their Wednesday night game at the East Gym. 1st Tanks lost 68-53.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

A player from 1st tanks shoots a three pointer near the end of their Wednesday night game.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

The second place Fainting Goats hold up their trophy proudly after Tuesday night's dodgeball double-elimination tournament at the East Gym.

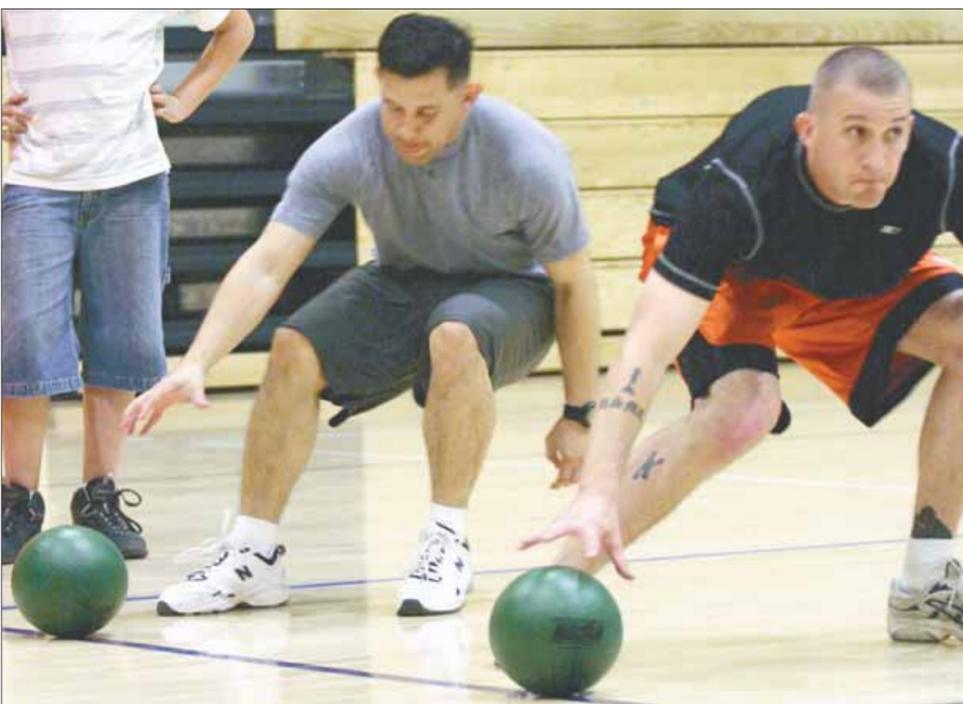


PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Jeremy Tolhurst, a player for the Fainting Goats, waits patiently as MCCES A players let the clock run out.

## Intramural Dodgeball League standings as of Wednesday

Team	Wins	Losses
MCCES A Co.	12	3
Fainting Goats	12	2
Sapper	8	4
Jive Turkeys	8	4
MTU	5	6
Tanks #4	4	6



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Erik Amezcua (left) and Jason Dean (right), players on the MCCES A team, snatch dodge balls off the deck at the beginning of a match during the dodgeball-double elimination tournament.

# MCCES hosts 7th biannual Fun Run

LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School hosted their seventh biannual Fun Run March 13 to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and raise money for their Marine Corps Birthday Ball. The run kicked off at 7 a.m. in front of MCCES classrooms, where more than 1,200 Marines, sailors, base personnel and family members participated.

All runners were encouraged to wear St. Patrick's Day costumes and prizes were awarded to the runner who had the best costume.

Participants had the opportunity to choose their running category, which included a 5K fun run, an individual 10K run, an individual half marathon, and a five-member team half marathon.

"The run was designed to promote cohesion, unit morale and physical fit-

ness," said Don Tolbert, a systems integration officer for MCCES. "The fun run is open to all base personnel. We've seen many repeat runners from base over the past seven funs runs we've hosted."

The run route had the participants running up Thirteenth Street, before turning around and running down to Del Valle Road. Those participating in the 5K turned around after reaching Del Valle while the rest of the runners kept running. The 10K runners turned around at the Center Magazine Area, and the half-marathon runners ran to Camp Wilson and back.

Medals were awarded to overall winners for the 5K, 10K and half marathon, said Tolbert, who created the fun run. Medals were also awarded to participants who placed in different age groups for the 5K, 10K and half marathon, and to the top three teams who competed in

the team half marathon.

"This was my first fun run and it was a blast," said Sgt. Christopher Murphy, who is currently training with MCCES. "I was just jogging through having a good time and motivating people along my way."

Murphy, who improvised his costume to include a Lilo and Stitch hat, sunglasses decorated with foam dolphins, arm floats and a boogie board, said the run was successful in giving all the participants a good time.

"Looking around you see everyone's got a huge smile on their face," said the Georgetown, Ky., native. "It's good for Marines to have something to do other than the daily norm. Get them out of the barracks and let them blow off some steam."

The next fun run is scheduled for Halloween. For more information, call 830-6786.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

A Marine dressed as Superman soars across the finish line during the Marine Corps Community Services Fun Run that started and finished in front of MCCES classrooms March 13.



LANCE CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Participants in the MCCES Fun Run wait for the clock to start at the start/finish line in front of the MCCES classrooms March 13.

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