

# OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

MARCH 27, 2009

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 52 ISSUE 12

## Rank on the line for some corporals

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Corporals, did you complete your Leading Marines Marine Corps Institute correspondence course? If not, you may want to jump on it fast or you may be reduced back to lance corporal.

According to Marine Administrative Message 0181/09, that went into effect Oct. 1, 2008, all Marines promoted to the rank of corporal are required to have either Leading Marines or Fundamentals of Marine Corps Leadership MCIs completed, or they may be administratively reduced in rank. Fundamentals of Marine Corps Leadership was replaced by Leading Marines, but either may be taken to fill that requirement for promotion to corporal.

"There were Marines picking up corporal that didn't meet the prerequisites," said Staff Sgt. Yvette Wise, the promotions staff noncommissioned officer in charge for the base's Installation Personnel Administration Center. "There are not very many Marines, but there are a few."

Marines have until June 30 to complete Leading Marines or they will be administratively reduced.

This still applies to Marines deployed, said Wise. Marines that are deployed and fall into this category will have 90 days from the date they redeploy back to base to complete the course.

The MARADMIN also states that lance corporals are held accountable now to finish the MCI before they can be recommended for promotion.

"Lance corporals have to complete this to pick up," Wise said. "There is no more getting around this."

## The boys are back in town

### 3/7 returns from 5th OIF deployment



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marines and sailors of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, returned to the Combat Center Wednesday after being deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The primary job of the Marines with 3/7, who deployed last fall, was to work with the Iraqi police and other local institutions in Al Anbar province, Iraq, said 1st Lt. John Meyer, the executive officer of Company K, 3/7.

"We worked alongside and helped build up the Iraqi security forces and their local government," said the Ft. Worth, Texas native. "It was a challenge working with them, but we did everything we could to accomplish our mission."

Meyer said he was proud of everything the battalion accomplished during their time overseas.

"We were absolutely successful in everything we did in Iraq," he said. "It feels good to help out a young nation's military and society grow."

Family's waited through the afternoon into the night for their loved ones, some of which had never had their son deployed before.

"This is my son's first deployment," said George Bailey, father of Lance Cpl. Blake Bailey, an infantryman with Company K.

George Bailey, who came from Dayton, Ohio, said it was not easy having a member of his family overseas.

"It's always a scary thing, but we supported him all throughout it," he said. "We all knew he was doing what he wanted. This was his dream, he wanted to be a Marine since he was a young man."

George Bailey said he and the rest of the family were looking forward to seeing their son.

"When he gets back we're just going to enjoy visiting him for now," he said. "He'll most likely be taking leave and coming home soon, we'll have more time to see him then."

With 3/7 now back in the country, they will be taking some well-deserved time off before returning to their training cycle.

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, exit the buses and search for their friends and loved ones upon returning to the Combat Center Wednesday from their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## MCCES Marine recognized with Bronze Star Medal

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It is said good things come to those who wait. But in the case of one Marine, waiting did not play as big a role as his hard work.

Sgt. Matthew P. Askren, an instructor for the multichannel equipment operators course for Company B, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, was awarded a Bronze Star Medal in a ceremony outside the MCCES Headquarters building Tuesday.

According to the citation, Askren was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his actions while serving as a driver and gunner noncommissioned officer in charge for the Regional Corps Advisory Command in central

Afghanistan from October 2007 to November 2008.

While serving as an advisor, Askren lead two other Marines and 28 Afghan National Army soldiers up 4,000 feet in elevation at midnight to set up observation posts to deter enemy attacks on two American forward operating bases.

The 12-day mission ended in success with 10 enemy positions and one enemy safe house destroyed, according to the citation.

Askren and his attachment also provided protection to an American patrol from enemy force fire in August 2008.

"It's humbling," said Askren after his award ceremony. "I just feel like I worked hard, and I'm thankful someone noticed it."

Askren said it was through inspira-

tion from his leaders that he was able to perform at a level that warrants this award.

"When I re-enlisted, I was around extraordinary leadership," said the Bolingbrook, Ill., native. "That made my choice very easy to make and my deployment awesome. They really inspired me and let me max my potential. I didn't want to stop that train's momentum."

Gunnery Sgt. Lafayette Waters, Askren's company gunnery sergeant when he served as an armorer with Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, in Okinawa, Japan, inspired Askren to become an advisor.

"He really was a class act," Askren said about Waters, who

See BRONZE, A8



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Sgt. Matthew P. Askren, an instructor for the multichannel equipment operators course for Company B, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for his actions while serving as an advisor with the Regional Corps Advisory Command in central Afghanistan from October 2007 to November 2008.



Uprooted  
See A3



"Rhinos" TRAP training  
See A5



"...that our flag was still there" - See A5



Damage dealt at Del Mar  
See B1

# Naval Hospital optometry clinic limited to active duty only

The Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms' Optometry Clinic services are limited to active duty personnel. Persons eligible for TRICARE benefits are encouraged to use their coverage to make an appointment with a network optometrist within the local area. The TRICARE Service Desk is available for a listing of current providers who accept TRICARE benefits.

The Occupational Health Clinic will continue to provide visual screening for evaluation for essential employment and Department of Transportation requirements. Refractive and prescriptive services requiring optometric specialty are no longer available. In the past, services were provided on a space-available basis, The Naval Hospital can no longer support this due to active duty workload. There are several optometrists and ophthalmologists within the local area who are qualified to perform refractive exams and prescription services for safety eyewear. Civilian employees are encouraged to contact their safety officers for further assistance.

For more information please contact Cmdr. E. Currie at 830-2172.

Training begins with the (EFT), "Easter Fitness Test", this is the first time "Hard Boil" gets to see what his Yokes are made of.

The EGG-HANG pull-ups are quite hard. The minimum is to do one. Yokes that can't do one EGG-HANG are dropped from training and shipped off to DENNY'S where they become part of the breakfast menu. The worst fear and greatest motivator for a Yoke is, to know if they don't give 100%, they can end up being scrambled into an omelet and served during the 3am club crowd.



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## HURRY!

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American Profile Hometown Content

03/15/2009

### ACROSS

- Times to call, in ads
- \_\_\_ out (lambaste)
- Targets of yeggs
- Classic war game
- Canal of song
- "One of Ours" novelist Cather
- In quick succession
- Model of excellence
- Stacks visitor
- Fats Waller's "Your \_\_\_ Too Big"
- Title with a "II," maybe
- "Is it soup \_\_\_?"
- Sri Lanka export
- Hauls in a wagon
- "Raiders of the Lost Ark" creatures
- Jackie's O
- "\_\_\_ we forget ..."
- "At Last" singer James
- Something to pick
- Rx bottle contents
- Nest eggs, briefly
- Sommer on screen
- Nash's one-l priest

### DOWN

- Slip up
- Route word
- Telepathic letters
- Vail trail
- Happen to
- Like Death Valley
- Do an electrician's job
- Smelling a rat
- Swallow like birds
- Man Friday, e.g.
- The press, in Britain
- Make joyful
- Chips go-with
- Park Place card
- Like old jokes
- "The Fog of War" director Morris
- Free-flowing metal
- Vittles
- Lamb's alias
- 1965 march site
- Shar-\_\_\_ (wrinkly dog)
- Serb or Croat

### ACROSS

- Body shop fig
- Word in a 1/1 song title
- Not at all in favor of
- Poli \_\_\_ (coll. major)
- Mr. Potato Head piece
- One on the Atkins plan
- Showy lily
- Texas hold'em declaration
- Lena or Don
- "The Hustler" role
- Hoopster Shaq
- Crosby, Stills and Nash, e.g.
- It's divided into cents
- County of Northern Ireland
- Seal in, as a steak's juices
- "That \_\_\_ it!"

### DOWN

- Selling point in old cigarette ads
- Big name in furs
- One of 88 on an eighty-eight
- "No contest," e.g.
- Not quite
- Perry White, for one
- Greet the judge
- Like a poppy bagel
- New England catch
- Captain Queeg's ship
- Breaks in relations
- Big name in small jets
- Desirable to collectors
- Home to much of Russia
- Batman and Robin, e.g.
- Ill temper
- Dawn goddess

[puzzle Solutions on A5]

## Combat Center Spotlight

**Name:** Angel R. Rios

**Job title:**

Occupational Health Specialist

**Unit:** Base Safety Office

**Job duties:** Building inspections, initial training for Marines, explosive driver's course instructor, respiratory manager and confined spaces manager.

**What do you like most about your job:**

I have a passion for training Marines

**Significant achievements:** Training more than 6,000 Marines in both the Defensive Driving and the Alive at 25 courses.

**Hobbies:** Umpiring baseball

**Military Service:** Retired as a first sergeant after 21 years of service.

**Time at Combat Center:** Two-and-one-half years.



## Hot Topics

### LIFEGUARD TRAINING

The American Red Cross is offering a Lifeguard Training Course April 6 - 10 from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.. Anyone 15 years of age or older is eligible to attend. Enrollment is limited. Locations are Luckie Park pool in Twentynine Palms or Yucca Valley pool. Cost is \$150. For more information and registration call 366-5330, or stop by the Red Cross office on 6416 Hallee Rd., in Joshua Tree.

### 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.

### ASYMCA FREE SUMMER CAMP

ASYMCA is hosting a free summer camp for children of active duty service members who are 8-14 years of age. Registration is limited to the first 86 children. The deadline to sign up is June 11. To register, visit the ASYMCA for a registration form at Building 192 across from Carl's Jr. Current physical and shot records required. The registration form must be brought by the parent or legal guardian. Service member or dependent's military ID is required. For more information call 830-7481.

### 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.

## This Day in Marine Corps History

March 27, 1944

3rd and 5th Marine Divisions begin departing Iwo Jima. Marine casualties were 5,931 dead and 17,272 wounded.

SUDOKU

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## Centerspeak

What do you think about military-style public schools as an option for high school?

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



SEAMAN BRIAN MANLEY  
CORPSMAN, 3RD COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION

"It just might work; hopefully it'll give kids more discipline. It's a good idea."



SSGT. JOHNNIE LASSITER  
PLATOON SERGEANT, CO. F, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"I don't see a problem with it at all. There's no such thing as too much education."



MAJ. SHANNON ROOS  
INSTRUCTOR, MARINE CORPS TACTICS AND OPERATIONS GROUP

"I think they should keep the military and public schools separate, just like they keep the military and the government separate."

## OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus

Public Affairs Officer Jennie E. Haskamp

Public Affairs Chief Gunnery Sgt. Sergio Jimenez

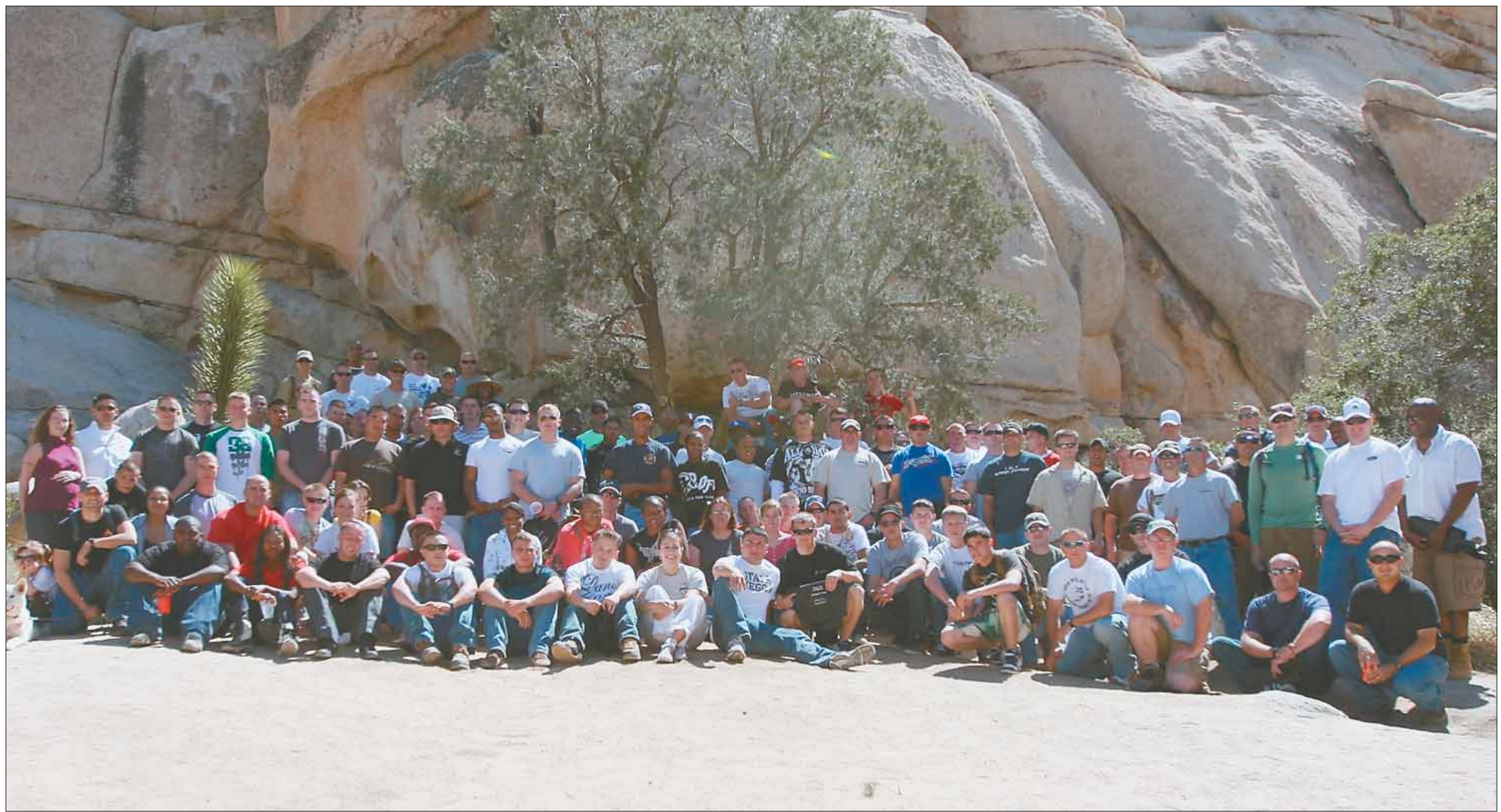
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# VMU-1 spends day saving natural 'back yard'



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Marines and sailors from Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 spent their morning March 20 serving the community at Joshua Tree National Park, Calif. They removed the Sahara mustard plant that was choking out indigenous plant life.

## PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The largest group of Marines and sailors to ever volunteer at Joshua Tree National Park, Calif., spent their morning March 20 cleaning their "natural back yard."

Nearly 140 Marines and sailors from Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 took time out of their busy training schedule to help beautify and preserve the natural landscape on Pinto Basin Rd. from mile marker 13-24 within the park.

The service members spent the morning removing invading, exotic weeds that have been introduced to the park accidentally by visitors and are attacking wildflower fields.

Lt. Col. Richard Jordan,

the commanding officer of VMU-1, said his family uses the park year-round.

"I wanted to get the Marines outdoors; show them how close and how nice the park is, and also be able to serve the community," he said. "We decided we could work for a couple of hours, and then have a picnic as a unit."

Once the idea became a plan, 2nd Lt. Rebecca Tilton, the intelligence officer of VMU-1, and Rachel Sandlin, the family readiness officer, worked hand-in-hand with park officials to plan a day serving the community and bonding as a unit, Jordan said.

Unit personnel met at 8 a.m. at the Combat Center to make the journey to the park. Once they arrived, they were

taught about one of the biggest threats to the landscape, the Sahara mustard plant, and why it was necessary to remove it from the ecosystem.

Most often thought to have been brought to Southern California during the transport of date palm-trees in the 19th Century, Sahara mustard is causing untold damages to the desert ecosystem, said Gloria Gillette, a retired park ranger.

These invaders not only take what little water the natural foliage can soak up, they provide fuel for flash fires, said Curt Sauer, the park superintendent.

Before the exotic species arrived, the desert landscape was made up of clump grasses which kept the fires, often

started by lightning, small, he said. Now with the new blanket grasses, fires can easily destroy 10,000 to 16,000 acres of wildlife.

The volunteers began removing the plant anywhere they saw it. They continued weeding for three-and-a-half hours until they had mountains of black trash bags filled with pulled Sahara Mustard.

After gathering at the Hidden Valley picnic area, they were able to enjoy their food with their families in the serenity of one of the most beautiful desert landscapes of Southern California.

During their lunch, Jordan spoke to his unit, followed by a thank you speech from Sauer.

Sauer stressed that the nation's parks are owned solely by American citizens and that Americans need to take the time to experience the breathtaking beauty these parks hold.

"My hope is that the Marines who volunteered see how nice the parks are and come back to visit, hopefully bringing their friends and family," Sauer said.

This kind of service can provide future generations with the same great parks that we enjoy today.

"Taking care of these parks does your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren a huge favor," said Gillette. "It helps them be able to see the same natural landscape we do."

The Marines enthusiastically did anything they could to help.

"It was a good opportunity for VMU-1 to show the community that we care,"

said Lance Cpl. Califf Matheson, an aviation operations specialist with VMU-1. "We're interested in helping."

VMU-1 is slated to complete more community service projects before they deploy next year, said Jordan.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Sgt. Martin Irons, a quality assurance representative for VMU-1, puts a Sahara mustard plant in his trash bag during the unit's community service project at Joshua Tree National Park, March 20.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Cpl. Shandra Jenkins, a field radio operator for VMU-1, carefully searches the bushes and picks the Sahara mustard plant during the unit's community service project March 20 at Joshua Tree National Park.

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# 'Watchdog' pilots sharpen skills

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Every Marine is a rifleman; this has been true since their origin as snipers on naval vessels, but some enlisted Marines at the Combat Center in the modern day must also learn to fly a plane on top of qualifying annually with a rifle. Marines in Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadrons, who have a UAV operator military occupational specialty, must qualify annually at both flying and operating the payload aboard their aircraft, which is what

Marines with VMU-1 did Tuesday at the Combat Center's Expeditionary Air Field. Staff Sgt. Jacksby Sewell, and Sgt. James Marquardsen, both UAV pilots with VMU-1, underwent their annual qualification as pilots of the RQ-7B, also known as the Shadow 200. "You need to be qualified on this in school to graduate," said Cpl. Derek Cooper, a UAV technician with VMU-1 and a Woodville, Ore., native. "They need to re-do their qualification every year, and it isn't just simply

flying or operating the payload of the aircraft." Cooper elaborated on how the Marines are tested while operating the aircraft. "It's pretty tough for them because they get verbally quizzed while they have to do things with the aircraft," Cooper said. "They need to know emergency procedures for mid-flight problems that might happen with the aircraft." For their re-qualification, Sewell who comes from Ft. Worth, Texas, and Marquardsen, a Sacramento, Calif., native, flew a simulat-

ed mission. Their test was not just operating the aircraft, they were both quizzed on basic knowledge of the aircraft and its systems as they went through the flight. "This has been the third time I've flown since I've been back from Iraq," Sewell said after his flight was finished. "I'm feeling a lot better knowing that I am still good at my job." With their qualification done, Sewell and Marquardsen will be further assisting their squadron in supporting units here at the Combat Center and units overseas.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
Cpl. Shane Hailey, an unmanned aerial vehicle mechanic with VMU-1, pushes the RQ-7B to perform post-flight checks. Staff Sgt. Jacksby Sewell and Sgt. James Marquardsen did their yearly qualification flying their primary aircraft, which is also known as the Shadow 200.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
Staff Sgt. Jacksby Sewell, an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle pilot with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1, pilots the RQ-7B, also known as the Shadow 200, at the Combat Center's Expeditionary Air Field Tuesday. Marines with a Military Occupation Specialty for UAV's must qualify annually with their aircraft.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
The RQ-7B, known as the Shadow 200, shoots off the ramp as Staff Sgt. Jacksby Sewell and Sgt. James Marquardsen, both unmanned aerial vehicle operators with VMU-1, begin their qualification flight.

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365-7133  
Yucca Valley 57273 Onaga Tr., 365-3671

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Healing Lives & Building Dreams  
Reverend Ron Scott  
Sunday Celebration & Junior Church 10 AM  
7434 Bamock Trail, Yucca Valley  
365-2205  
yvcrs.org

**The United Methodist Church**  
Sunday Classes for All Ages - 9:30 AM  
Worship 10:30 AM (Child Care Available)  
Bible Study: Mon., 10:30 AM; Wed., 7:00 PM

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Sunday Evening Worship 5:00PM  
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Worship.....10:45am  
Sage  
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Cholla  
HWY 62

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# Marines help vet fly Ol' Glory again

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Three Marines with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion used their engineering skills for a unique communal task Wednesday.

Sgt. Jeff Newton, an engineer equipment operator with Supply Company, Sgt. Rolando Delacruz, a combat engineer with Headquarters and Service Company, and Lance Cpl. Chris Nichols, supply administration and operations specialist with Headquarters and Service Company, made a trip to the house of a local Korean War veteran to erect a new flagpole.

Richard N. Blasongame, a Korean War veteran who was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism in combat while serving with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Division, in 1951, is a proud veteran who has flown an American flag over his home for years.

"I've always flown a flag outside my house," said Blasongame, who has lived in Joshua Tree, Calif., since 2003. "I think it's very important to do that."

Because Blasongame's flag pole was so close to his house, the rope that held the flags

aloft was frequently worn down from rubbing against the shingles. In his age, Blasongame was not fit to repair his ropes every time they frayed. Out of distress, Blasongame finally had his flag pole cut down completely.

It just so happened that Bob Halle, a fellow Marine who had fought alongside Blasongame that fateful day his actions earned him his Navy Cross, was in town visiting.

Halle secretly made a few phone calls and eventually got in touch with the Marines of 3rd CEB, who said they'd be glad to volunteer their time and effort in repairing Blasongame's flagpole.

"He did his part in serving his country," said Nichols, a Gresham, Ore., native. "If I was a veteran, I'd appreciate having young Marines come out and recognize the service and sacrifices that we made."

Nichols said although the Morongo Basin community may see convoys roll by, it is not enough for the community to feel like they know these young men and women.

"For a lot of people, the Marine Corps is just this foreign entity," Nichols said. "The only things they may know about us are the things



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE  
Korean War veteran Richard N. Blasongame attaches the Marine Corps flag to his new flagpole that was constructed by three Marines of 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, Wednesday.

they hear on the news. The media is quick to focus on the negativity, but they rarely show the positive stuff like this."

Delacruz said he agreed. "We are more than just warfighters," said Delacruz, a Courtlandt, N.Y., native. "It

would be nice for people to put faces with us. We can help our community bridge some of those gaps that are there."

As the Marines dug a hole for the pole, mixed cement,

See VET, A7

# 'Rhinos' train for overseas combat support

LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When Marine ground units deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, they receive support from medical, logistical and other personnel.

The same is true for Marine Air Wing Squadrons bolstered by Marine Wing Support Squadrons who provide airfield, engineer and logistical sustainment.

Marines and sailors from MWSS-374 spent March 16 - 20 immersed in a field training exercise in the Sand Hill training area near the Combat Center's Expeditionary Air Field to prepare them for operations in hostile environments during deployments in support of helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft squadrons.

Throughout the week, the Marines and sailors conducted security in and around their forward operating base near the EAF, warding off simulated insurgent rocket-propelled



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN  
Marines from the Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 aircraft recovery team load a helicopter hulk onto a Logistics Vehicle System during a mock Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel mission March 19. The TRAP mission was part of a week-long field operation to prepare the Marines and sailors of MWSS-374 for combat operations overseas.

grenade, mortar and small-arms attacks, said 1st Lt. Jose Ojeda, the MWSS-374 adjutant. They also conducted operations "outside the wire"

to familiarize themselves with convoy and patrol operations.

Each training scenario helped build up to the final exercise - a Tactical Recovery

of Aircraft and Personnel mission inside hostile terrain.

After the TRAP mission

See RHINO, A8

## CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

### Sunday

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel Roman Catholic Services**

8 a.m. Faith Formation /CCD  
Sept. - May building 1551

8:45 a.m. Confessions+  
9 a.m. Rosary  
9:30 a.m. Catholic Mass\*  
9:30 a.m. Children's Liturgy of the Word  
4:15 p.m. Confessions+

4 p.m. Choir Practice  
4:30 p.m. Rosary  
5 p.m. Catholic Mass

**Christ Chapel**  
Lay-Led Independent Baptist Breakfast, 8 a.m. West Wing

**Non-Denominational Christian Service**

9 a.m. Worship\*  
9 a.m. Children's Church  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School\*  
6 p.m. Youth Group

**Lay-led Gospel Service**  
11:30 a.m. Worship Protestant Chapel

**Assemblies of God Fellowship**

9:30 a.m. Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Morning Service building 1707, room G

**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)

### CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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### SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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



## TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

Tough minded Bob Bronski celebrated his 85th birthday last Saturday with his devoted and extremely talented wife Mary and a host of loyal friends participating in the delightful festivities.

Bob is a very lucky man. His boyhood dreams are still coming true. He has always achieved his goals and objectives. He wanted to serve his country as a Marine and immediately after high school graduation in 1943 he joined the United States Marine Corps.

For almost 30 years Bob was a "good warrior" (to use his phrase). He served our nation and the Corps with distinction through three major conflicts: World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam. He served in hot spots all over the South Pacific including Japan, China, Korea and South Vietnam.

He was recognized again and again for his outstanding leadership and his optimistic spirit. Bob retired in 1972 with the much deserved and proudly earned rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant.

It was then that Bob fulfilled the second part of his boyhood dreams. He enrolled in college in 1973 and graduated in 1977 with a major in Ornamental Horticulture and a minor in Business Administration. Space does not permit our relating to you the gorgeous landscapes he designed and maintained in the High Desert until his second retirement in 1995.

Bob was asked last week as we had lunch in the Carousel what motivated him now. He answered, "Almost everything I know someone taught me, a parent, a teacher, a fellow Marine. I believe I owe Someone for this wonderful life. I want to give back and I will to the end of my earthly days."

This message sponsored by:

**Milt Merritt**  
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*Copper Mountain College  
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25 years*



In 1981, a group of Morongo Basin residents had a dream of building a college campus. Three years later with funds raised by community volunteers, the dream was realized when the permanent campus opened. In 1999 CMC became an independent community college district. Continuing the dream, on October 1, 2008 the college broke ground for the new Bell Center. Today CMC continues to grow because of the strong desire for education and the dedication of our community. To our students and the community, thank you for the first 25 years.

*Thank you Morongo Basin for being a  
part of our history and sharing  
our vision for the future!*

# Military wives receive deserved recognition

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 250 wives and dependants of active duty, reserve and National Guard service members from the Combat Center and bases throughout southern California, along with women in the military, were honored at the Heart to Heart luncheon held at the Doral Resort in Cathedral City, Calif., Saturday.

The second annual luncheon was sponsored by Stonecroft Ministries, and the West and East Valley Women's Connection, held to show appreciation for what military wives overcome every day being married to a service member, said Nancy Carter, a regional representative with Stonecroft

Ministries.

The luncheon's patrons enjoyed a fashion show provided by Kohl's from La Quinta, Calif., and a classical musical presentation from Angela De Larie. Gift baskets were handed out as door prizes to all the attendants.

"We wanted to let the spouses know we care," said Nancy Carter, a Desert Hot Springs, Calif., native. "We did this to let them know we are here for them."

Carter said the most important part of the luncheon was to thank them for the sacrifices they make.

"It is important to recognize them because of what they have to deal with being associated with the military," she said. "Its rough for them to have to deal with deploy-

ments and the stress associated with what their family has to do."

Family members present at the luncheon felt they were lucky to be receiving appreciation like this from these organizations.

"Its really very nice of them to do this for us," said Lindsey Melanis, a native of New Orleans, who is married to Lance Cpl. Joseph Melanis, a warehouse clerk with the Combat Center's Exercise Support Division. "It just feels good to be appreciated. We don't do all the stuff our husbands do, but we have to put up with the stress just as much as they do."

With the second luncheon over, plans are in the works for next year's event, which will be in the spring as well.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
Nancy Carter, a regional representative with Stonecroft Ministries, addresses the crowd of active duty, reserve and National Guard spouses, during the Heart to Heart luncheon held at the Doral Resort in Cathedral City, Calif., Saturday.

## Clean water runs through dusty community

CPL. MARGARET HUGHES  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Protection from water pollution in Mojave Desert communities has started to become a major issue to local towns in recent years due to the use of septic tanks.

Hi-Desert Water District is in the forefront of this effort to ensure their community has clean water readily available, and to help set the example for other surrounding desert communities.

Residents and businesses in the majority of the Hi-Desert area dispose of their wastewater using individual septic tanks, said Jennifer Cusack, the public information officer for the HDWD. Many residences are not maintaining their septic tanks, which has caused the tanks to leak or overflow letting nitrates seep into the ground. These nitrates are making their way into the district's wells.

This is a dilemma for multiple surrounding communities, but Yucca Valley, Calif., is taking the first step solving this problem by proposing to build a wastewater treatment plant and water reclamation facility, Cusack said.

Building the facility and collection pipelines will eliminate the use of septic tanks for some businesses and residents. The pipelines will take the wastewater to the centralized facility for treatment and

existing septic tanks will be decommissioned, Cusack said.

Until the facility is completely constructed and operational, district personnel advise residences and businesses to maintain their septic tank in good working order.

Even communities under other water districts should take proactive steps into keeping their water clean.

According to the district's Web site everyone can take these proactive steps to help keep our drinking water clean:

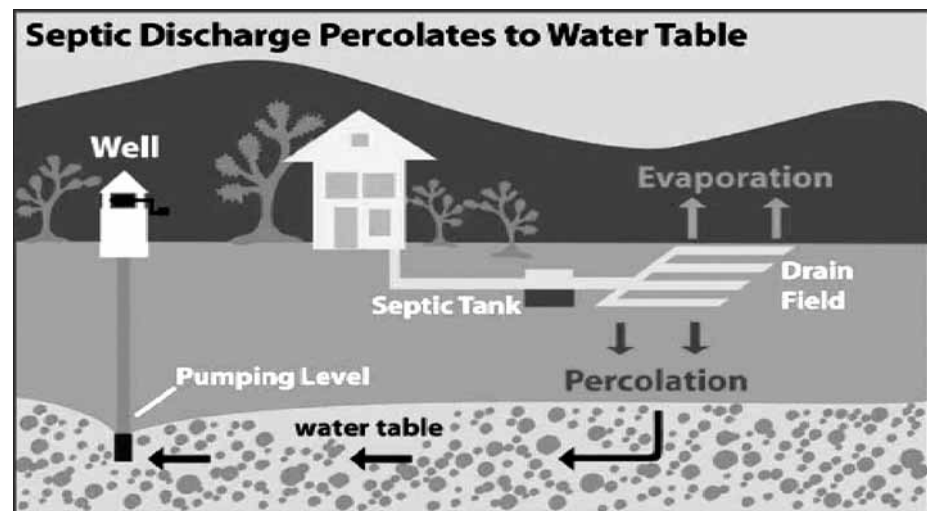
- Have septic tanks inspected every two to four years by a licensed specialist.
- Avoid pouring hazardous chemicals

down the drain or flushing them down the toilet, including paint, pesticides, household cleaners and engine oils.

- Do not use septic tank additives that are advertised to help the septic tank. They are unnecessary and can actually damage the system.

- Avoid any toilet-bowl cleaner that includes the chemical dichlorobenzene or formaldehyde; these can actually destroy the bacteria in a septic tank, which helps break down the nitrates and sewage.

- Avoid using chemicals used to clear clogged drains or leach lines, these can also destroy the bacteria in the septic tank, as well as a product with acid in it.



## VET, from A5

made measurements and assembled the flag pole, Blasongame, Halle and their wives, stood outside to watch the progress unfold.

"I'm really proud of these good Marines," Blasongame said as he sat in a folding chair nearby. "I think this is really an incredible thing they are doing for me. I just can't do very many things like I used to."

Halle said he recalls how Blasongame looked after Halle's injuries he sustain in combat Sept. 16, 1951, and was more than happy to return his friend's favor by making the phone call and inviting the Marines out.

"He really helped take care of me," Halle said about his and Blasongame's early friendship.

Opal, Blasongame's wife, expressed her thanks to the Marines, Halle and Halle's wife, Nancy.

"This is overwhelming," Opal said as she stood on her front walkway, smiling at her husband raising the new flag over their roof. "Bob

and Nancy were the instigators in this blessing, so I'm very thankful to them, as well."

Newton said he and the other Marines felt honored to present a gesture of gratitude to a veteran.

"I'm all about this," said Newton, a Vancouver, Wash., native. "This is a great situation, and I'd like to think that if I was a veteran who needed help, I could count on getting it from the same group of people I served with."

The two veterans, their wives and the young men enjoyed a lunch together before departing ways, but not before Delacruz offered to take on more of Blasongame's home projects free of charge in the future.

"We're just here to help out a fellow brother," Delacruz said. "Not only is this man a fellow Marine, he is someone who went far above and beyond his duties to help his Marines. This is something we can do for him and give back even though we are two totally different generations."

## Combat Center Trader Ads

### AUTOMOTIVE

**JETTA WOLFSBURG EDITION 1.8T**, 5 speed, 80,000 miles. \$5,700 OBO. 219-2184. 3/13/09

**2001 HONDA CIVIC DX**, 5-speed Transmission, Black, 140K miles 38+ MPG, (724) 113-2799. 3/13/09

**2005 HONDA ACCORD SE**. Moon window power 6 Cylinder \$16,500. Leave message 367-3326. 2/27/09

**TOYOTA TACOMA TRUCK BED DIVIDER**. Fits 2005-2008 models. Excellent condition. Asking \$200. Contact 835-4178. 2/27/09

**1986 FORD F-250 TRUCK** Extra-cab, diesel 6.9, 4 speed with overdrive. Set up for gooseneck or 5th wheel. \$3,500 OBO. Call 447-0499. 2/27/09

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

**1994 TOYOTA 4 RUNNER**, Needs transmission, everything else is good. Very reasonable. Free towing. Call 365-3039. 2/20/09

**2004 FORD F150 XLT 2X4**, Excellent condition, 45,000 miles. Asking \$11,000. Call 401-7315. 2/6/09

**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

**2005 YAMAHA V-STAR 650**, 1,700 miles, covered and garage kept. Excellent condition. Black. \$3,500. Call Bill Smith at (340) 332-5074. 2/6/09

**2001 MITSUBISHI GALANTE**, Excellent condition. Replaced engine, new tires, new brakes, new windshield and new radiator. Home phone (951) 845-1941. Cell phone 208-0002. \$5,500. 1/23/09

**2005 HONDA S2000 CONVERTIBLE** 19" wheels, new tires, low mileage. Asking \$21,800. See Lemon Lot. 696-7181. 1/16/09

**1990 CHEVROLET SILVERADO** Tourquoise show truck with gold flames. \$7500 OBO. Call Tim 367-7183. 1/16/09

### MISC.

**PUPPIES**. Toy poodle \$200, Chihuahua \$150, 1st shot, healthy, purebred, both females. Call 364-1133. 3/27/09

**HMC HOME GUN SAFE** 55" x 21"x16", will hold up to 12 rifles, with small internal pistol safe. Asking \$75. Will deliver locally if needed. Call Bill at (340) 332-5034. 3/27/09

**HORSE FOR LEASE**. Paint mare, barrel racer. \$220 per month includes feed and boarding. Call Tim at 367-7183. 3/20/09

**MOVIES FOR SALE**. \$5 per movie or 5 movies for \$20. Call Tim at 367-7183. 3/20/09

**HP 7250N DESKTOP COMPUTER 2.8GHZ**, 2GB RAM, 160GB HD + 500GB removable HD, \$500 and HP DV9308NR 17" laptop 1.6 Ghz, 2GB RAM \$500, 865-0076. 3/13/09

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**LARGE BREAKFRONT CHINA CABINET**. Modern style, oak finish. 4 glass doors, silverware drawers, storage below, and glass shelves. Excellent condition. \$300. Call Stephen at 567-7921. 2/6/09

**CHILD'S LOFT BED** With ladder and slide. \$50. 367-1630. 1/23/09

**OVER 600 UNOPENED DVD'S** Brand new. Many still in plastic. \$5 a movie, package deals are negotiable. Call Tim 367-7183. 1/16/09

**30", 14 KARAT GOLD CHAIN**, Italian cut, with 14 CT. gold cross. Paid \$1100 just for chain. \$800 OBO. Call Tim 367-7183. 1/16/09

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors. Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-3762.

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**BRONZE, from A1**

attended his award ceremony. "He was the first Marine Corps advisor and Bronze Star recipient I met."

Waters said he was proud to see Askren excel in his career.

"It doesn't surprise me at all that he got this," Waters said about the award. "He was always a go-getter. He was always willing to stay late and go the extra mile with no complaining whatsoever. I'm glad this happened for him."

Gunnery Sgt. David Rogers, a fellow advisor who also served with Askren during his first deployment in 2007, agreed.

"I'm honored that I got to work with him," said Rogers, a Jonesville, La., native. "Have you ever heard of the saying 'a quiet storm'? That's him. You won't ever hear him talking about his accomplishments. Of the six months I was in Afghanistan with him, he covered more than 9,000 miles in convoys, but there wasn't a day he wouldn't volunteer to go out. He was well respected by all branches and ranks."

Another symbol of Askren's inspiration is found on his right wrist where he wears a black memorial band with the name "Capt. Jesse

Melton" and the date of his death, Sept. 9, 2008, inscribed on the front.

"Captain Melton didn't get to receive his Bronze Star," Askren said as he gripped the band and twisted it. "His parents did. I've had three folks I've served with whose parents had to receive their Bronze Stars and two more who got theirs in hospitals."

The unfortunate deaths of his brothers-in-arms helps Askren constantly assess his value as a Marine, he said.

"I have to look in the mirror daily and evaluate myself," Askren said. "You have to be able to ask yourself if you would want to work for you. It's easy to say others are messed up or say that the Marine Corps is giving you a raw deal, but what are you doing?"

Askren said self evaluation and opportunity are the secrets to success in the in the Marine Corps.

"Opportunity breeds success," Askren said. "Part of me thinks I'm lucky to have gotten opportunities that many other Marines don't ever get."

Askren said as he continues his service in the Corps, he also hopes to continue setting the example for his junior Marines and to share the leadership he feels is his responsibility to share.

**RHINO, from A5**

commander, 2nd Lt. Elena Darr, received the call, the team began donning their gear. The objective was to insert into the area, rescue the crew of the downed helicopter, and recover or destroy the aircraft.

"When an aircraft is down, we're there to treat anyone who's been injured and put out any fires on the aircraft,"



**LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN**  
Petty Officer 3rd Class Andrea Daggs (left) and Petty Officer 2nd Class Rebecah Wolfe, hospital corpsmen with Headquarters Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, load a simulated casualty onto a stretcher during a mock Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel mission March 19.

said Cpl. Damian Bachman, the aircraft recovery and firefighting team noncommissioned officer in charge. "Our first and foremost concern is safety for each other and for everyone in the area. The aircraft could have ordnance still on board, or there could be fuel leaking out."

The operation began as a convoy of security, medical and firefighting personnel, dubbed "Stick One," exited the FOB at sunrise March 19. The watchful eyes of the security team scanned the area for enemy activity as the vehicles rumbled toward the crash site.

When they arrived, the TRAP team discovered an old UH-1 Huey hulk lying on its side. Three crew member role-players lay sprawled out about 100 meters away from the aircraft, each in critical condition.

Security teams quickly spread out and set up a perimeter around the crash site while the ARF crew put out the notional blaze on the aircraft. Once the fire was out, ARF and medical personnel began treating the simulated casualties from the crash.

While the casualties were being treated, the security teams encountered several insurgent role-players in the area. As the insurgents were rounded up and the casualties

were treated, "Stick Two" departed the FOB with the aircraft recovery team.

Once "Stick Two" arrived, Capt. Joshua McKeighan, the squadron's air safety officer and Airfield Company commander, taught a quick class about TRAP missions and how they would be carried out in real-life scenarios.

"In reality, there are two extremes to this scenario," McKeighan said. "The first is a hostile environment, where there is heavy fighting and the first responders are generally personnel already on the ground. In this scenario, the goal is to rescue the crew and either recover or destroy the aircraft before the enemy can get to it."

"The second scenario is a permissive scenario, meaning something that would happen in a non-hostile environment," he said. "Civilian law enforcement could be the first responders on scene. The objective is to keep civilians away from the aircraft for safety reasons."

In the event of an aircraft crash, an investigation would also be conducted to determine the cause of the accident, McKeighan said. The investigation could take anywhere between 24-72 hours.

"As an MWSS, it's our job to maintain security and sup-

port investigators until they're ready to move so engineers can recover the aircraft," he said.

After the class, "Stick Two" ran back to the crash site to recover the aircraft. Using a wrecker vehicle with a crane attached, the recovery team was able to tip to helicopter hulk onto its skids, then lift it onto the back of a Logistics Vehicle System and haul it back to the EAF. Once the aircraft was recovered, the remaining elements of the TRAP team returned to the FOB for debriefing.

"Everyone did a great job on the mission today," Darr said. "Typically, we anticipate enemy aggressors in the form of sniper fire and IEDs [improvised explosive devices] when we train for a mission like this to prepare us for a combat environment, but we met little resistance."

"I think the Marines were definitely excited to just get out there and get some good training," she said.

The Marines and sailors of MWSS-374 will continue training to support Marine Air Wing squadrons on future deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan. Although no deployment is slated for the squadron, they will be ready for the challenges they may face in a combat environment.

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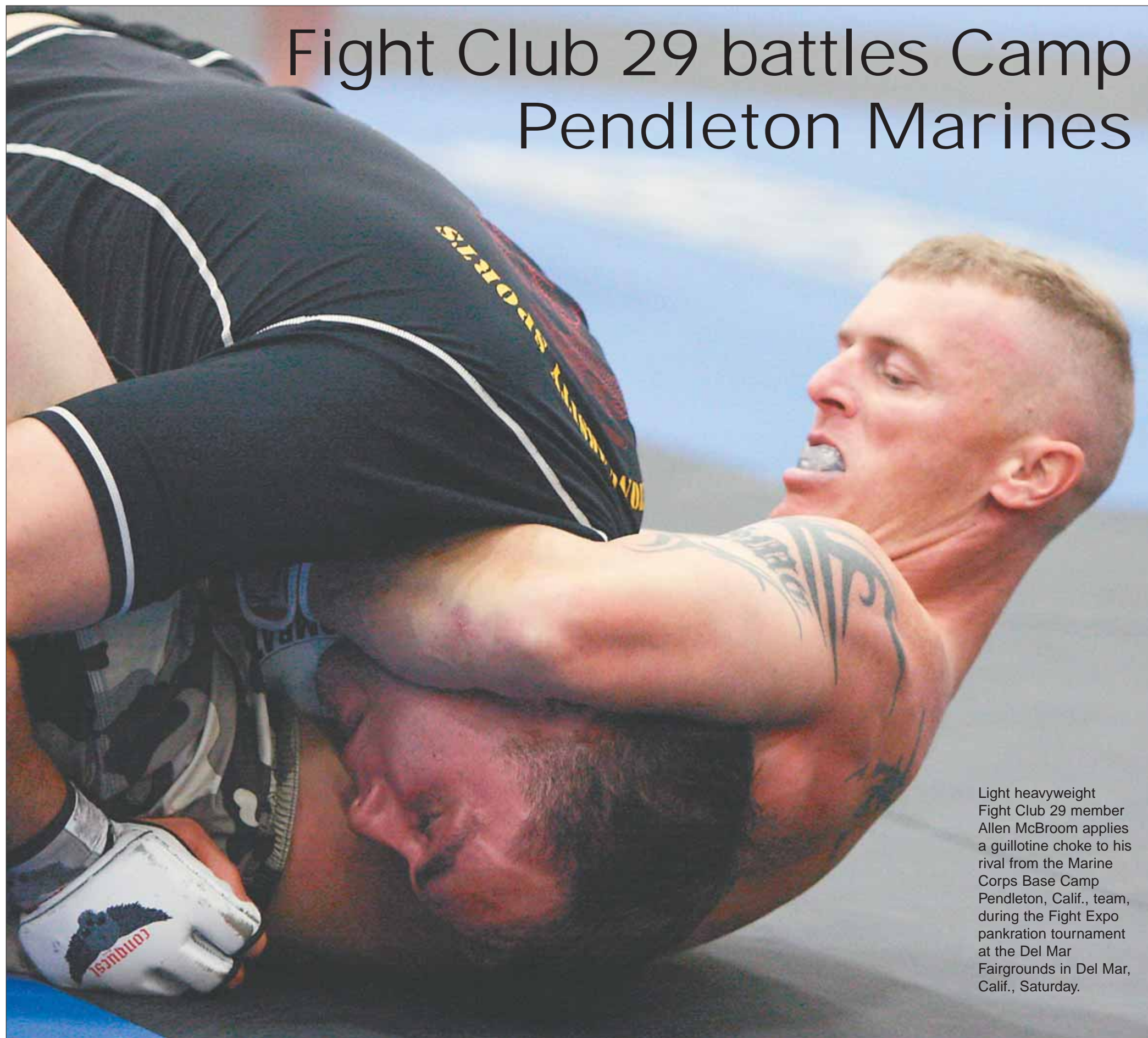
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B1

## Fight Club 29 battles Camp Pendleton Marines



Light heavyweight Fight Club 29 member Allen McBroom applies a guillotine choke to his rival from the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., team, during the Fight Expo pankration tournament at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, Calif., Saturday.

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

Six members of the Combat Center Fight Club 29 participated in a hard-fought Fight Expo mixed martial arts tournament against fellow Marines from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., in Del Mar, Calif., Saturday.

The two-day event, which took place in correlation with

the Grapplers Quest submission grappling tournament, featured the same rules as standard pankration tournaments and acted as a showcase for the sport, said Mark M. Geletko, the team's head coach.

Fight Club 29 was hand-selected along with three other teams by the Fight Expo staff to act as a showcase and bring more visibility

to the sport, said Geletko, a Pittsburgh native.

Big-time names from the world of Mixed Martial Arts and Jujitsu such as Brandon Vera, Eddie Bravo and Joe Stevenson also made an appearance at the event.

Fight Club 29 kicked off the show by battling with the Camp Pendleton team for a chance to compete in the final bout.

Despite the fact Fight Club 29 lost its first two bouts against the Pendleton Marines, the club made an intense comeback when 170-pound middleweight fighter James Clark bulldogged his opponent on the ground and raised his glove in victory at the end of the match.

The team's wins are results of the team's monthly tournaments, Clark said

after his match.

"I'm glad we get to keep fighting every single month," he said. "It helps us become more comfortable with our skills, get out there and get better experience."

Next on the mat was teammate Omar Askew, who defeated his state-championship opponent after an intense match that went into overtime, despite an injury he

sustained to his ankle.

Light heavyweight Fight Club 29 member Allen McBroom also continued the team's winning streak despite the fact that it was his very first fight.

Although McBroom's opponent had been classified as an intermediate-level fighter, McBroom seemed to not

See FIGHT, B4

## Marine, sailor selected for All Marine Volleyball Team

**LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Although a number of Marines and sailors aboard the Combat Center participate in intramural sports, many may not be aware they can represent the Marine Corps on the All Marine sports teams, which compete against the other armed services.

Maj. Cindiernie Blair, the military justice officer at the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Kapri Willis, a corpsman at the emergency department at the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, were both recently selected for the All Marine Women's Volleyball Team this season.

The three-week volleyball camp is slated to begin May 12 and will be held at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., said Peter Cruz, the Marine Corps' volleyball director. Sailors attached to Marine Corps units are also eligible for the All Marine Volleyball Team, as well as other sports teams.

"The first week is when we go through the selection process,"



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Maj. Cindiernie Blair, the military justice officer at the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and head coach of the intramural volleyball team HQBN 1, reaches high to return a volley during league play Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.

Cruz said. "When it comes down to it, you can either play or you can't play, and we generally see that after the first couple of days. Unfortunately, it's my job to make cuts if necessary."

Selections for All Marine teams are built on an application basis. According to Marine Administrative Message 0038/09, any player who

wishes to compete on an All Marine team must submit their application to Headquarters Marine Corps for review. Applications can be found at <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/SPORTS>.

Players who make the final cuts for All Marine sports teams

See TEAM, B4

## Free tutoring for Marines, families

**CPL. MARGARET HUGHES**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A young girl becomes frustrated as she sits at her dining room table; she is stuck on an algebra problem. Normally her father is there to help her solve the problem, but he deployed a few weeks before and her mother is not the best at math. She doesn't know where to turn.

Tutor.com, an online homework aid and tutoring service, is helping to relieve some added stress on families of deployed Marines by providing their services to them for free this fiscal year.

"We get a lot of calls asking if we offer tutoring services," said Claire Stults, a librarian for the base's Lifelong Learning Education Library. "This will provide them with that service that they can use in their own home and it gets out to a larger amount of people."

In October, Tutor.com and the Marine Corps signed a one-year contract to offer Marines and their families 24 hour access to the site's online Live Homework Help program through base libraries or at home. The online tutors provide

help in math, science, social studies and English.

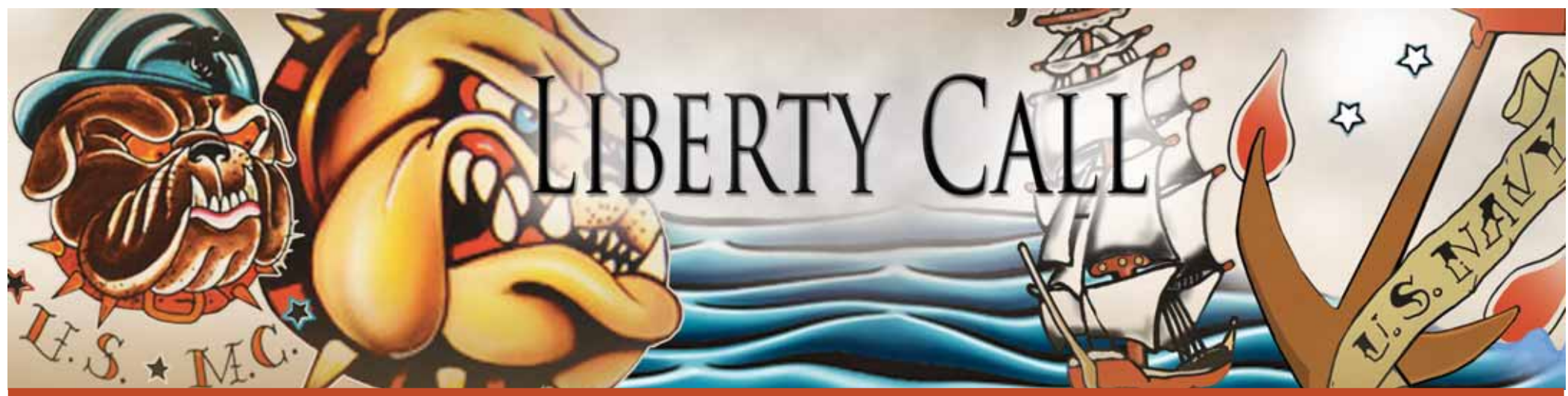
"This allows someone to get help in a specific area they need," Stults said. "It's also for children and adults of all ages, from kindergartners to college students."

According to the Tutor.com Web site, the network has over 2,200 professional tutors and has delivered more than 3.5 million one-on-one tutoring sessions. Each tutor has earned a degree; they are certified teachers, college professors, graduate students, select undergraduates from accredited universities and other professionals who have completed extensive background checks.

Although the contract is with the Marine Corps, every service member and dependent stationed aboard the Combat Center are able to use the service, Stults said.

To get connected with a tutor you can visit the base library or at home by visiting [www.usmc-mccs.org/library/tutor](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/library/tutor).

For more information or to receive the password to utilize Tutor.com for free contact the Lifelong Learning Education Library at 830-6875.



<b>FRI. 3/27</b> <b>Elixir Piano Trio</b> Time: All day event Where: Blak Box Theatre 61231 Twentynine Palms Hwy. Joshua Tree For more info call 366-3777 or visit <a href="http://www.hidesertculturalcenter.com">http://www.hidesertculturalcenter.com</a>	<b>FRI. 3/27 &amp; SAT. 3/28</b> <b>Mike Stinson Band &amp; Dave Gleason Birthday Bash</b> Time: 7:30 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's 53688 Pioneerstown Rd. Pioneerstown. For more info call 365-5956 or visit <a href="http://www.pappyandharriets.com">http://www.pappyandharriets.com</a>	<b>SAT. 3/28</b> <b>Elegant Junque Sale</b> Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Where: 29 Palms Art Gallery 74055 Cottonwood Dr. Twentynine Palms For more info call 367-7819 or visit <a href="http://www.29palmsartgallery.com">http://www.29palmsartgallery.com</a>	<b>SAT. 3/28</b> <b>Art Reception: Paintings by William Loveless</b> Time: 7 – 10 p.m. Where: Mount Fuji General Store (Behind True World Gallery) 61740C Twentynine Palms Hwy. Joshua Tree. For more info visit <a href="http://www.fujibird.com">http://www.fujibird.com</a>	<b>SAT. 4/11</b> <b>Don Felder, An Evening at the Hotel California</b> Time: 8 p.m. Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort 46-200 Harrison Pl. Coachella For more info call 866-377-6829 or visit <a href="http://www.spotlight29.com">http://www.spotlight29.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>SAT. 4/18</b> <b>Ramon Ayala in concert</b> Time: 8 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. 4/25</b> <b>UB40</b> Time: 8 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>FRI. 5/15</b> <b>The comedy of Lisa Lampanelli</b> Time: 9 p.m. Where: Agua Caliente 32-250 Bob Hope Dr. Rancho Mirage For more info call (888) 999-1995	<b>SAT. 5/23</b> <b>Allman Brothers Band &amp; Doobie Brothers</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>

# 'Race to Witch Mountain' short on Disney magic

**NEIL POND**  
*AMERICAN PROFILE*  
**Race to Witch Mountain**  
 Starring Dwayne Johnson, AnnaSophia Robb & Alexander Ludwig  
 Rated PG

Most of the audience for this new Disney flick wasn't around for the original Disney flick on which it's based, "Escape to Witch Mountain," a family-friendly adventure from 1975 about two "orphan" children with strange powers and an out-of-this-world area code.

In this version, the two kids are Nordic-looking space-alien teens who crash-land just outside Las Vegas. They enlist a cabdriver (Johnson) to help on their mission to save Earth from destruction—and elude the "space assassin" and U.S. government agents hot on their trail.

This new "Witch Mountain" is as family-friendly as its '70s predeces-

sor, but sub-par in almost every other way. The special effects are laughably cheesy, the storyline hopelessly muddled, the acting lame, the chuckles few and far between. Worst of all is the action, essentially a numbing string of car chases, explosions, shootouts and fist-fights.

C'mon, people—it's 2009. If you're making a movie about teenage space aliens, can't you come up with something a little more inventive, a smidge more advanced? And especially if you're trying to play in the same ballpark as "E.T." and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," you've got to bring a much better game than this.

Dwayne Johnson, the former wrestler known as "The Rock" and now an actor, has demonstrated considerably more comedic charm in other movies than he does here, saddled with a one-note starring spot that doesn't give him any room to roam. Carla Gugina, playing a sympathet-



"Race to Witch Mountain" starring [from left to right] Dwayne Johnson, AnnaSophia Robb and Alexander Ludwig, is a Disney Enterprises, Inc. release.

ic scientist, seems like she's wandered onto the set from another movie entirely. Comedian Cheech Marin is wasted in an unnecessary cameo, and Tom Everett Scott, whom many viewers will remember as the affable drummer in "That Thing You Do," plays a sidekick who's supposed to provide comic relief, but doesn't.


The movie depicts a paranoid, close-minded American government that—after half a century of aliens-have-landed movies—still only knows how to respond to visitors from outer space with a hail of bullets. True to form, the suit-and-tie Department of Defense in "Race to Witch

Mountain" even wants to blast the cute, here-to-help space siblings played by AnnaSophia Robb (from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "Because of Winn Dixie") and Alexander Ludwig. It's no wonder space-men don't drop by our neighborhood more often.

Every Disney movie can't be a classic, obviously. But this one is particularly disappointing, as it could have updated and re-energized a magical, three-decades-old romp for a new generation of young moviegoers. Everything about this "Race," however, comes off as a cheap also-ran, with little of that ol' Disney magic anywhere to be found.



The two kids are space-alien teens who crash-land just outside Las Vegas. They enlist a cabdriver (Johnson) to help on their mission to save Earth from destruction.



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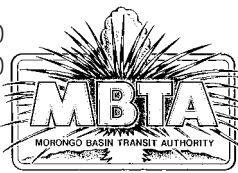
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4:00	4:25	4:30	*4:40	*4:45	*5:00	*5:10	*5:45
<b>15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday</b>							
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WalMart	MCAGCC			
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*6:00	*6:10	*6:15	*6:50	*7:35			

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# Combat Center sports standings



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Reggie Eddie, a player for MCCES A, jumps high to make a shot during their game against Ole School Plus Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym. MCCES A lost to Ole School Plus 69-70.

## 2009 Intramural Basketball Standings as of Thursday

Team	Wins	Losses
NHTP	9	0
MCCES All-Stars	9	0
Ole School Plus	7	2
MCCES Party	6	4
MCCES A	5	4
1st Tanks	5	5
IPAC	5	5
3rd CEB	4	6
MWSS-374 (B)	3	6
MWSS-374 (A)	2	7
CLB-7	2	7



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Nick Ravisto, a player for MWSS-374 B, fights past during their game against MCCES Party Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym. They fought hard, but were no match for MCCES Party losing 69-40.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

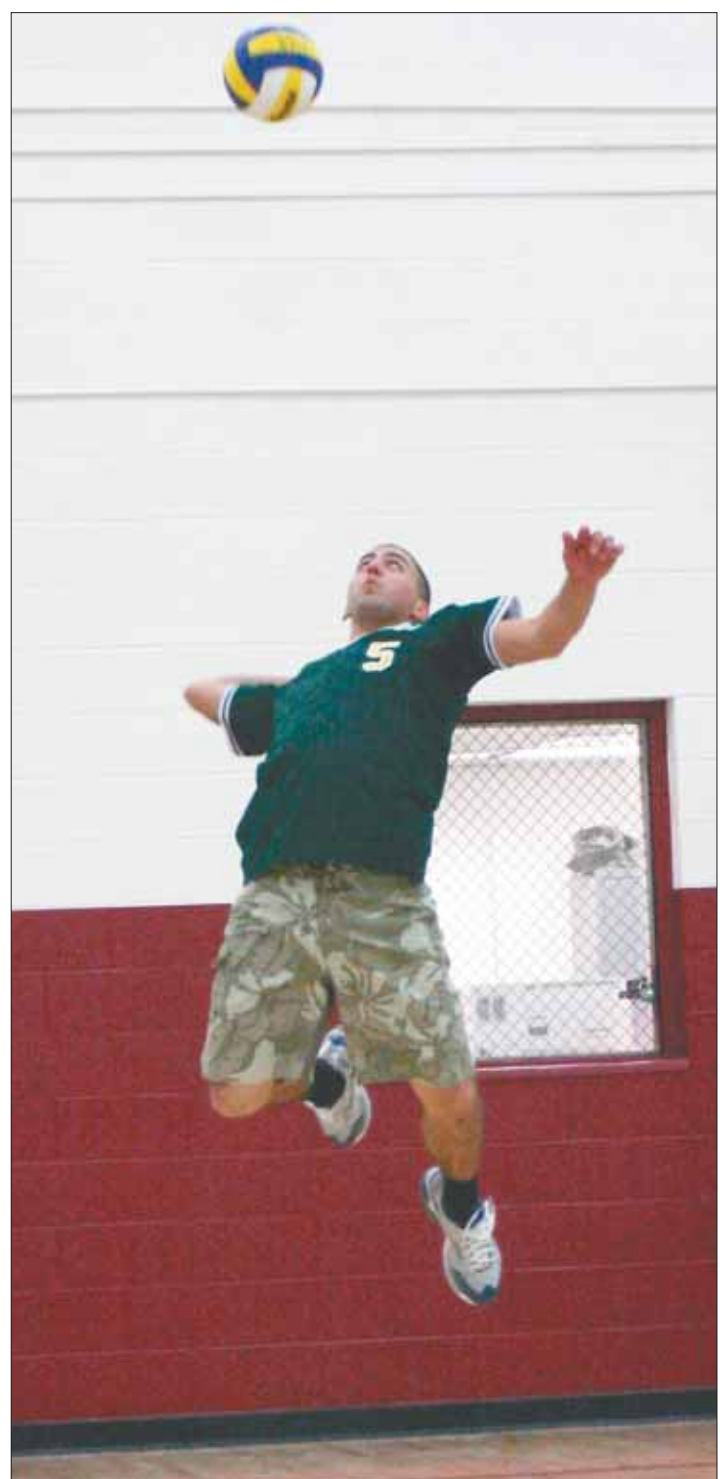
A player from MWSS-374 B fights past Michael Schneider, a player for MCCES Party during their game Wednesday night at the Combat Center's East Gym. They battled hard, but with only five players, they lost 69-40.

## Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League

Team	Wins	Losses
HQBN #1	1	0
Hospital	1	0
HQBN #2	1	1
MCCES	0	2

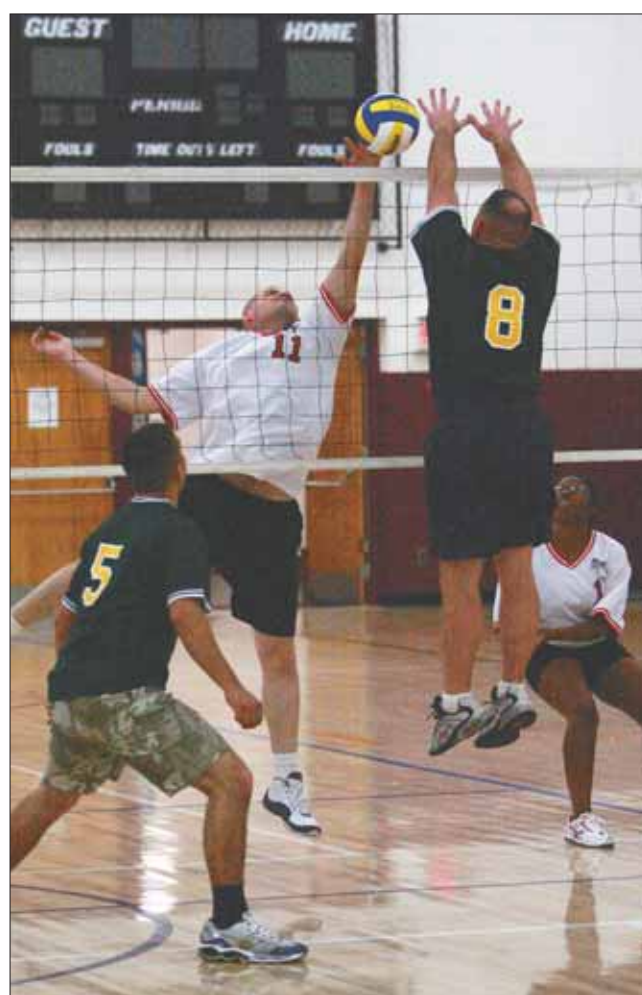
### Wednesday's scores

HQBN #1	defeats	MCCES
HQBN#2	defeats	MCCES



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Christopher Apodaca, the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School volleyball team head coach, vaults through the air while serving the ball during league play Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Players from teams Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School and Headquarters Battalion 2 battle for volleyball victory Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

David Segraves, a player with Headquarters Battalion 2, leaps high to block a volley from Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School player Cristina Warnest during league play Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.

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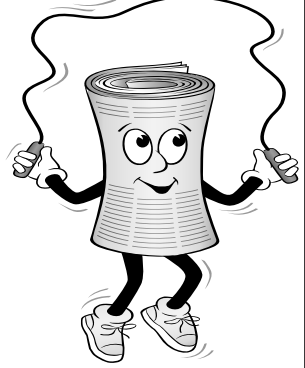
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**TEAM, from B1**

will represent the Marine Corps and compete against teams from the other branches of the armed services. They may also be selected to compete against teams from other militaries around the world.

Blair, an avid player, has played on the All Marine Women's Volleyball Team twice before in 2001 and 2006. She also played volleyball for Orting High School in her hometown of Orting, Wash. Blair is currently the head coach for Headquarters Battalion 1, a team in the Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League here.

"I'm proud to be representing the Marine Corps this way," Blair said. "As an older player, I can mentor the younger players and help coach a good team."

"I think it's important to be well-rounded and to be able to represent the Marine Corps like this is an honor."

The veteran volleyball player also shared a few words of advice for any women who desire to play on the All Marine Women's Volleyball Team.

"I think the biggest misconception about the camp is that you already have to be a superstar volleyball player to go," she said. "The majority of women would say 'I'm not good enough

for that,' but that's not true. The camp helps players with their skills and teaches them to work as a team."

Willis will be a first-time player on the All Marine team, but said she played volleyball at South Hills High School in Fort Worth, Texas, Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas, and San Diego City College. She is currently a member of the Hospital team in the intramural league.

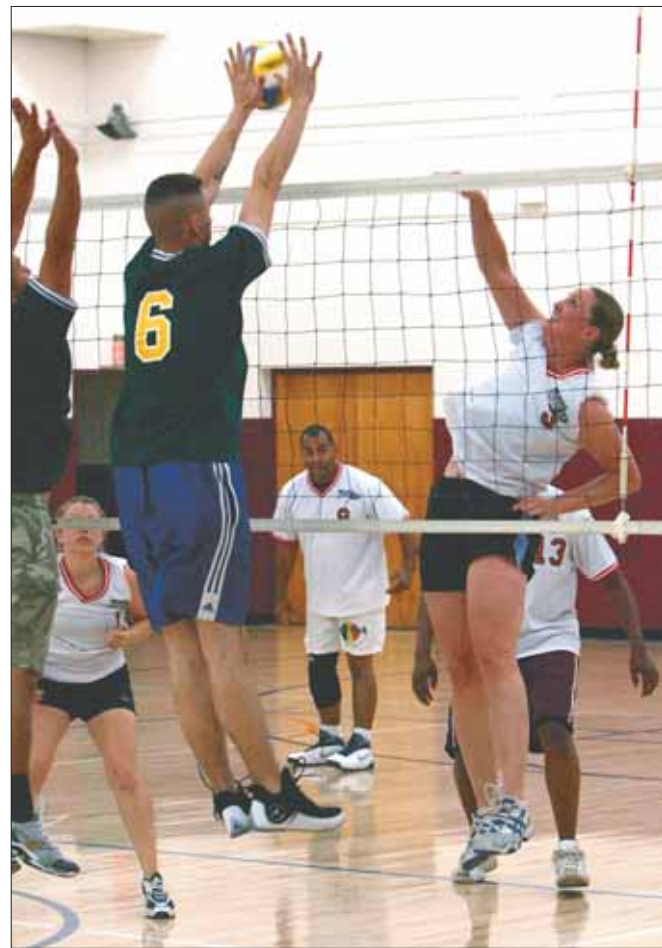
"I'm excited," she said. "At first I was a little scared, but now I'm just trying to stay focused so I can make the team in May."

After the three-week volleyball camp, the All Marine Women's Volleyball Team will compete in the Armed Forces Volleyball Tournament June 3 - 10, which will also be held at MCAS Cherry Point.

The team members may also get selected to play for the joint-service women's volleyball team to compete in the Military World Games, which will pitch them head-to-head against other military teams around the world.

The Military World Games is sponsored by the International Military Sports Council, or CISM. The acronym is derived from the council's French name, "Counseil International du Sport Militaire." The 2009 CISM tournament will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

For any Marines or sailors interested in competing on the All Marine Men's and Women's Volleyball teams, the deadline for applications is May 1. For more information on how to apply to an All Marine sports team, see MARADMIN 0038/09 or visit <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/SPORTS>.



LANCE CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Maj. Cindiemarie Blair, the military justice officer at the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and head coach of the intramural volleyball team HQBN 1, knocks the ball above players from the MCCES volleyball team during league play Wednesday night at the Combat Center's West Gym.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Fight Club 29 member Nate Wolf throws a powerful kick at his opponent from the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., team, during the Fight Expo pankration tournament at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, Calif., Saturday.

**FIGHT, from B1**

let that reputation stand between him and success. He rushed his opponent back and forth across the mat with a barrage of knees and fists.

At the sound of the buzzer, McBroom extended a hand to help his opponent up as the referee raised McBroom's other hand in the air.

"Judging by what I trained for, I fought the way I expected to," said McBroom, a Lubbock, Texas native. "My team definitely got me more prepared for this fight than anything else. I'm still a little uncomfortable on the ground, but the upcoming submission tournament will be more practice for me."

With a score 9 to 10 and Pendleton in the lead, teammates from both sides of the mat seemed to feed on the suspense as they cheered on

their final fighters.

The final match brought 220-pound Fight Club 29 contender Nate Wolf on the mat for his fourth match since he joined the club.

As Wolf pursued his rival with his fists guarding his face, he exchanged quick jabs and kicks with his equally skilled opponent. Despite his efforts, Wolf came short within five points of his challenger.

Even though both teams tied on their numbers of wins and loses, the Pendleton team won a bout with a submission, giving them an extra three points that contributed to their final winning score, Geletko said.

"We missed the gold by only a few percentage points," Geletko said. "It was a good, close fight."

Both military teams are very competitive, yet a good relationship still exists among the members of each team, Geletko said.

The number of fights

Camp Pendleton's team has been in, as well as the general skill level of their members, is higher than those in the fight club, Geletko added.

Although Fight Club 29 was slated to undergo another bout with civilian team Millennia, the competition was cut short due to time limitations.

"I'm disappointed we didn't get another fight in," Geletko said. "Everybody wanted to fight again since we already made the trip, but all experience is good experience."

Fight Club 29 ended up walking away with a bronze medal at the end of the tournament.

The fight exposition initiated the beginning of what Fight Club 29 anticipates as a three-week spread of fight events each weekend, continuing with a Grappling X pankration tournament at Disney Land on Saturday and a state pankration tournament April 5.

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