

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

AUGUST 14, 2009

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7th Marines prepare for Afghan deployment

CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7

Marines and sailors of the 7th Marine Regiment held small, training sessions during Enhanced Mojave Viper, a pre-deployment exercise at the Combat Center, July 27 through Aug. 14 to prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan as part of Regimental Combat Team 7.

The regiment participated in a mine-detecting, practical application, which covered improvised, explosive device attacks on vehicles, and were introduced to counter-IED systems.

Marines and sailors of the regiment were also subject to simulated attacks, including suicide bombers and indirect fire, as well as a base-wide mass casualty drill.

The smaller sessions provide a more accurate gauge of the Marines' combat readiness and ability to retain the information learned at more formal training exercises.

"The realism of a combat situation isn't necessarily done when you say, 'Okay, everybody get ready, at this time we're going to do this, and this



CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Marines with Headquarters Company, 7th Marine Regiment, practice room-clearing techniques during the early evening hours here Aug. 8, during a pause from Enhanced Mojave Viper, the regiment's pre-deployment training.

is going to happen and this is going to be your part.' It does no good," said Gunnery Sgt. Henry J. Rimkus, Jr., the

Headquarters Company gunnery sergeant for 7th Marines. "I like to keep everything as small as possible, the fewer

amount of people knowing as possible, so when [the attack] comes, I can actually see their reaction."

No matter how small or trivial the training may seem, it plays a role in a Marine's combat readiness, Rimkus said.

"They need to realize that every bit of training you get, everything you do, plays into a combat situation and it plays for combat readiness," said Rimkus, a 33-year-old native of Great Falls, Mont. "No matter what your rank is, no matter where you are, take on every bit of training, every procedure and every SOP [standard operating procedure]. It's there for a reason."

A simulated attack on the camp's front gate was a good way to help educate some of the regiment's junior Marines about base security, said Cpl. Daniel Lindenlaub, a rifleman who was the acting corporal-of-the-guard during the attack.

"This is vital for them," said Lindenlaub, 25, from Layton, Utah. "They come from all the different shops, so interior guard is obviously something new to them, and also something that is very important as far as base security goes."

The mass casualty exercise gave Marines the chance to practice coordinating with the corpsmen they will

See TRAINING, A8



CPL. GP INGERSOLL

Marines with 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Camp Fallujah, Iraq, take the Combat Fitness Test Oct. 9, 2008, becoming the first group to take the CFT for an official score while forward deployed.

CFT will be scored once a year

SGT. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

ARLINGTON, Va. – Effective immediately, Marines will now run the Combat Fitness Test for score.

Gen. James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, recently approved a scoring system for the CFT and a new schedule of CFT's and Physical Fitness Tests – one CFT and one PFT a year.

The Marine Corps Physical Fitness Program order, MCO 6100.13 W/ CH 1, has been changed with the new CFT instruction and scoring system. Marine Corps Training and

Education Command also provides CFT standards, guidance and other information on their Web site, www.tecom.usmc.mil/cft/cft.htm.

During the initial phase-in period, the CFT was pass/fail. There are now three new passing classes based on a 300-point scoring system. Similar to the PFT, the CFT is on a 1st, 2nd, 3rd class and fail system, under appropriate age and gender classifications.

"It was [the commandant's] original intent that the CFT be pass/fail during the initial phase-in period, with migration to a scored system after a period of time," explained Mr. Brian

See CFT, A8

Marines train with Brits and Aussies

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When bulldogs, dingoes and coyotes are found roaming the Combat Center's training areas, they're not scavenging for food or water. Instead, they're calling the shots.

The Australian military forces, nicknamed dingoes and British bulldogs respectively, have embedded their

Marines and soldiers with the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group coyotes here to help train U.S. Marines and learn from them.

"They may wear different uniforms, but they still give valuable guidance," said Maj. Craig P. Himel, the TTECG Infantry Battalion Team East officer in charge. "They do a great job of bringing fresh

See INSTRUCT, A5



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Capt. Richard Sharp, a British Royal Marine with the British Operations Training Advisory Group, lays out a village entry plan with Sgt. Chris Young, an infantry assaultman and vehicle commander with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, at Combat Center Range 215 Tuesday.



PFC. TYLER WARREN

(Right to left) Lt. Col. Clay C. Tipton, the incoming commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment; Lt. Col. James B. Woulfe, the departing CO; Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black, the inbound sergeant major; and Sgt. Maj. James J. McCook, the outbound sergeant major, salute during change of command and relief and appointment ceremonies Aug. 7 here.

3/7 receives new CO, sergeant major

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines, sailors, friends and family members gathered at the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Aug. 7, for the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's change of command and relief and appointment ceremonies where the battalion received a new commanding officer and sergeant major.

Lt. Col. James Woulfe relinquished command to Lt. Col. Clay Tipton, and Sgt. Maj. James McCook handed over the senior enlisted seat in the battalion to Sgt. Maj. Troy Black during the ceremony.

Tipton returned to the Combat Center after serving with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and Black, a Louisville, Ky.,

See 3/7, A6



A cut above ~ See A3



Despite all my rage... ~ See A7



Pitching to become an All-Marine ~ See B1



Farm fresh just minutes away ~ See B1

Semper Moto

Built for speed, not for comfort

JOHN FLEMING

Many Marines who are considering purchasing a motorcycle are attracted to sport bikes. They are sensational looking with sleek designs, glistening paint schemes and all the "go fast goodies" like powerful brakes, sticky tires, light-weight components and high-performance engines. Many of them can accelerate from 0 - 60 mph in less than three seconds and stop even quicker.

But all this performance comes at a cost; sport bikes are uncomfortable. Just ask any sport bike rider who has ridden for more than an hour at a stretch and he'll tell you that it's genuinely unpleasant. The seats have little padding. The forward-leaning riding position puts pressure on the hands and wrists. The minimal wind protection can cause serious fatigue.

Yet for some, there is no substitute for the incredible cornering ability, the nimble handling, the rocket-like acceleration and phenomenal braking of a sport bike.

However, these characteristics can never be fully utilized except on a closed-course circuit or a racetrack. For the rider who plans to commute to work, or rides a few hundred miles on the weekend to the city for recreation, something other than a sport bike might be a better choice.

Next week we'll talk about motorcycles that provide a good combination of performance and comfort - the "standard" motorcycle.

John Fleming is a rider coach with Cape Fox Professional Services, providing motorcycle safety training for Marines and sailors aboard the Combat Center. To submit your comments or contributions about motorcycling, his email is michael.j.fleming@usmc.mil.

School liaison office Q & A



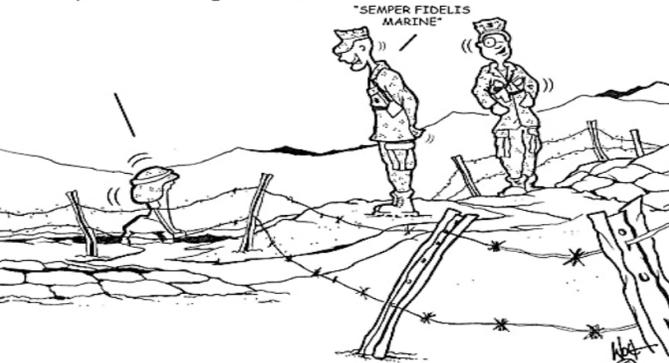
Have questions about primary schools, secondary schools or homeschooling in the Morongo Basin? Visit the Back-To-School information booth Tuesday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Marine Corps Exchange. For more information, please contact smbplmsmccschooliaison@usmc.mil or call 830-1574.

Q: Will my children have an 'excused' absence for any pre-deployment leave our family decides to take?

A: Currently, the California Department of Education has stated that only deaths in the family and illnesses are determined as an 'excused' absence.

For more information regarding the attendance policy please visit the California Department of Education Web site <http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp>.

"...MORE @#I\$ AMMO... A LITTLE &*%\$ SUN BLOC... A HOT #@\$% MEAL EVERY ONCE AND AWHILE... AND MOST IMPORTANTLY...MORE I\$@#% MAIL..... Other than that,..... I am proud to serve my Corps and Country. Thank you for asking..... SIR!"



- When Marines are allowed to speak Freely -

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

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Ashley Nicole Lee
Office: Jasmine's Espresso at Camp Wilson
Hometown: Yucca Valley, Calif.
Job Title: Barista
Job Duties: "Handle money, clean, stock items, make smoothies and coffee, make sure the boss is happy and supervise other workers."
What do you like most about your job? "Serving the Marines coming through for training."
Greatest accomplishment: "I helped redesign and redecorate the coffee shop."
Military service: none
Time aboard the Combat Center: "Two years, but five months with Jasmine's."

Hot Topics

BLOOD DRIVE

The Community Blood Bank will host a blood drive at the Combat Center's Protestant Chapel Aug. 20 from 12 to 7 p.m. All donors will receive free tickets to Knott's Soak City in Palm Springs, Calif. For more information, call 830-7321 or 830-7394.

FOOTBALL OFFICIALS NEEDED

The local football leagues are looking for officials to help with Junior-All American, High School, and Marine Corps football officiating. Yearly dues of \$70 are required to get a game schedule, plus you must buy your own uniforms. You will receive a rule book, a mechanics manual and study guides. Most officials earn between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per season. Weekly meetings will be held every Tuesday night starting Sept. 1, and are mandatory for all officials. Interested parties should call Mike Harris at 880-0676.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT STUDY SURVEY

Protecting Marines and sailors from sexual assault and supporting those who have already been victimized is a high priority. The Navy and Marine Corps are conducting parallel, service-wide assessments on individual attitudes and experiences along with the insight of related program staffs by conducting an online survey. The key is to gain the best insight into protecting and taking care of our own. The survey will remain open until Sept. 1 at <http://www.manpower.usmc.mil/sas>.

TRAINING TANK CLOSURE

The training tank will be closed Monday through Friday from Aug. 10 to 28 until 5 p.m. for Marine Corps Instructor Water Survival training. Regular hours on the weekends. Lap swim lanes will be available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Officers' Club pool. Water aerobics will still be at 5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at the tank. Tuesday afternoon class will be at 1 p.m. at the Officers' Club pool.

This Day in Marine Corps History

August 14, 1945

President Truman announces a cease fire is in effect with Japan. He also appoints General MacArthur as Supreme Commander of Allied Powers.

Centerspeak

If you could have a theme song, what would you choose?

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



CAPT. JULIO GONZALEZ
HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON, MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 16

"Santana's 'Black Magic Woman', because it has a nice Latin beat."



SGT. CRAIG GRAY
COMPANY E, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"The 'Top Gun' theme song cause everyone calls me Sgt. Maverick."



PFC. MITCHELL SPROULL
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 1ST TANK BATTALION

"It would be 'Renegade', by Head PE because it is a great song. It motivates me."

SUDOKU #1531

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	9			3	5	6		
	7			8				

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2009 HOMETOWN CONTENT

FOUR-WAY SCRAMBLE

[puzzle Solutions on A5]

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18							19			
20									21	22				
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49					50		51				52	53	54	55
56					57	58								
59					60						61			
62					63						64			

ACROSS

- Word before rock or rain
- Dropped off
- Cathedral recess
- Lacking company
- Seismograph detection
- Bullet point
- Comic who ran several presidential campaigns
- Thumbs-way-up review
- Workers' sit-down, e.g.
- Be a whiner
- Suffix for many ores
- Like a sot's breath
- Poker call
- Far from flustered
- Swimming pool marking
- Lean eater of rhyme
- Inning half
- Back muscles, in short
- Geico submission
- Critter in house dust
- Boot one
- Hippie sign-off
- Seasonal temp position
- Change over time
- Cask feature
- Penultimate tourney round
- Neptune's realm
- Shappy shrub
- Happiness, plus
- Get pooped
- Gregory Hinesforte
- Calligraphers' supplies
- Worth a ten
- Jewish wedding dance
- Digs in twigs
- Many new drivers
- Make uniform, maybe

DOWN

- Hannibal's hurdles
- Checked garment
- Gung-ho about
- Willy Wonka Johnny
- Consider identical
- Shoplifter's tip-off, maybe
- High-pH substance
- ___ out a living
- Refuse to agree to
- B-29 crew
- After-school event
- Break off
- Manicurist's need
- Sillily imitative
- Help in a heist
- Twiddling one's thumbs
- Keister
- Fitting words
- TGIF part
- "#" to a proof reader
- Niagara River source

- Try to sink, perhaps
- Czech or Serb
- Camp Swampy dog
- Bog fuel
- Animation fan's collectible
- ___ tai cocktail
- Sit for a centerfold
- Warren, the all-time winningest left-hander
- Most disgusting
- Flower parts
- Joined the jam session
- Web mag
- Large African country
- Keep ___ (persist)
- Olympics blade
- "Draft Dodger Rag" singer Phil
- Barrel of laughs
- Crucifix letters
- Ice cream thickener
- Suffix with orange

OBSERVATION POST

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Setting the example; NCO's leadership recognized with award

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Sgt. David J. Lang said he never saw it coming.

This is what Lang, a combat engineer with Company A, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, said regarding his selection as the noncommissioned officer of the year by the Marine Corps Engineer Association July 9.

"I was at a wedding in Wisconsin and got a text message saying congratulations for winning. It was pretty cool.

"My company commander, executive officer and company gunnery sergeant submitted the package," said Lang, a Port Orchard, Wash., native.

Lang said he was told he won the award for his actions as a squad leader in Afghanistan last year, where his squad was attached to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.

"We did a lot of mobility and IED [improvised explosive device] breaching operations, mine and IED detection operations and night sweeps," Lang said.

1st Lt. Patrick J. Caffrey, the executive officer of Company A, 3rd CEB, said Lang's squad met diverse situa-

tions in Afghanistan and excelled.

"Despite being undermanned, under-equipped and out of touch from his platoon headquarters for weeks at a time, he continued to perform above and beyond all expectations," said Caffrey, a Long Valley, N.J., native. "For every large platoon and company sized deliberate offensive raid, Sgt. Lang personally led his squad and the rest of Fox Company from the front, often exposing himself to enemy direct and indirect fire and risking stepping on pressure plate IEDs to complete his engineer mission."

Lang remembered one obstacle in particular he and his men had to overcome while in Afghanistan. The squad's mine clearing line charge, perhaps the most destructive tool in a combat engineer's arsenal, could not make it through Afghanistan's rough terrain.

"We ended up having to take the rocket system off our MICLIC and secure it to a 7-ton truck," Lang said with a laugh. "It was unconventional but it got the job done."

Cpl. Kyle W. Page, a combat engineer with 3rd CEB, who was in Lang's squad during the deploy-



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Sgt. David J. Lang, a combat engineer with Company A, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, was selected as the noncommissioned officer of the year by the Marine Corps Engineer Association July 9. Lang and his squad found innovative and unconventional ways to accomplish their mission despite being under-manned and under-equipped while deployed to Afghanistan last year.

ment, said Lang always took care of his Marines.

"He was a good leader," said Page, a native of Denver. "He's very knowledgeable, and if our squad ever needed anything he was there for us."

Now that Lang is back stateside, Caffrey

said he still sees those outstanding leadership qualities in him.

"The most impressive thing about Sgt. Lang is how humble he has remained despite all of his accomplishments," Caffrey said. "When you ask him, he'll tell you that all of

the credit belongs to his Marines and that, to me, is the biggest sign of a true leader. His performance and level of motivation alone compel Marines both above and below him in the chain of command to bring themselves up to his level."

Lang said he still seeks ways to become a better noncommissioned officer.

"The best way I can continue to improve as an NCO is to push for lessons learned," Lang said. "I have to make sure Marines know what to expect before they go

overseas. My best advice for Marines is to be ready to think, be unconventional and go beyond the textbooks."

Lang and the rest of the award recipients are scheduled to attend an awards banquet at the Golden Nugget Hotel in Las Vegas Oct. 14.

Looking for 'Guardian Angel' Marines

Editors note: The Observation Post recently received this letter from a very thankful Mrs. Lafond, desperately seeking the Marines who helped her and her husband during an accident at the Combat Center's Marine Corps exchange. We're asking your help to find these "Guardian Angels," so the Lafonds can thank them personally.

To Whom It May Concern:

On Thursday morning, July 6, around 10:30 a.m., my husband and I were coming down the steps at the exchange.

As my husband reached the last step, he fell and landed in the street. He wanted me to pick him up, but I couldn't. There was no one around, and then out of nowhere, five Marines helped me. They got him into the car as he was bleeding badly from the head and hands.

Since this was an emergency, I thanked them and took my husband to the emergency room. It was not enough just thanking them, as my husband and I talked and cried thinking about those wonderful Marines, who went out of their way to pick him up and help me.

We are truly grateful and would like to know if there was some way that we could either have them at our home for dinner or take them out to eat.

I know there are a lot of Marines out there, but maybe, someone must know who these Marines are.

They were our "Guardian Angels," on that day.

Semper Fi.

Sincerely Mrs. Gene Lafond
Twenty-nine Palms

If you are, or know one of the Marines who helped the Lafonds the morning of July 6 at the exchange, please contact us at the Public Affairs Office, 830-6213.

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More aviation improves Enhanced Mojave Viper

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center has added crucial increases of aviation elements to add more realism to its Enhanced Mojave Viper ground training beginning Aug. 10.

The Combat Center's Tactical Training Exercise Control Group has initiated a new aviation training contingency plan to integrate with EMV, a month-long pre-deployment package required for all Marine Corps units deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Under this plan, the Marine Corps is bringing an aviation contingent to the Expeditionary Airfield here for approximately 21 days, according to an Aug. 4 Combat Center press release.

Lt. Col. Keith C. Darby II, the TTECG aviation training team officer in charge, said this improved training will emphasize the importance of practicing authentic aviation and ground integration.

"This training gets us back to our Marine Corps roots of air-ground integration," said Darby, a Charlottesville, Va., native. "It's a core skill we've gotten away from in the last few years and we need to get back to it. The way the Marine Corps wins the nation's battles is through application of air fires and maneuver ... in conjunction with the young Marine standing on the ground. You achieve a synergistic effect having those two elements working together to accomplish the task."

The standard template for

the aircraft, involved in the training is estimated to be 10 or 12 tactical aircraft, such as jets; 10 assault support aircraft, such as CH-46 Sea Knights; and 15 skid aircraft, such as AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys; averaging around 35 aircraft total, Darby said.

Capt. Shea Allen, the airframes officer in charge of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., said this is his first exposure to combined arms training and said the logistics, communication and planning needed to organize the training is exactly what the units need to prepare for theater operations.

"HMM-364 operates in support of infantry," said Allen, an Aspen, Co., native. "The more we practice our skills with ground elements, the better prepared we will be for deployments in the future. I think we will learn what to expect from each other and put faces with the names on the other side of the radio."

Lt. Col. Bob Boucher, the HMM-364 commanding officer, had participated in similar combined arms exercises at the Combat Center in 2002.

"I think the biggest improvements I've seen since then is how they have integrated everyone so much more," said Bouche, a Spokane, Wash., native. "We're deploying with 3/24 [3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment], who happens to be here training with us. It's an outstanding opportunity to train with them and get to know their staff before we deploy."



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Marines and sailors of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, gather their gear before loading a CH-46 Sea Knight that will bring the unit from the Combat Center's Battalion Team East training area to Combat Center Range 220 Tuesday.

The Marines of 3/24 and HMM-364 are scheduled to deploy to Iraq later this fall.

The Marine Corps expects the aviation contingent to become a recurring piece of each EMV exercise as it continues to train Marines and sailors for deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and wherever the nation's leadership sends them, according to the press release.

Darby said the goal is to increase this type of training steadily over the next year or two so it may take place on average six times a year.

"We should have all pieces in place by next summer," Darby said.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

A CH-46 Sea Knight with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 out of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., takes off after picking up Marines and sailors of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment near Combat Center Range 215 Tuesday. The new Enhanced Mojave Viper allows aviation and ground units to have better integration to prepare them for operations in theater.

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Perry L. Ford, Senior Pastor

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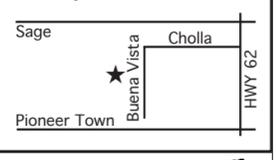
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Sergeants Major Corps-wide discuss issues, future

CPL. SCOTT SCHMIDT
HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

WASHINGTON – Many of the Marine Corps' top enlisted conferred in Washington for the 2009 Sergeants Major Symposium July 27-30, to discuss the current issues and agenda facing the Corps.

The week-long forum yielded discussion on an array of topics ranging from suicide prevention to the Wounded Warrior Regiment, but kept to one central theme – the future of the Marine Corps.

The sergeant major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, was pleased to say that the senior staff noncommissioned officers "came with a focus, and the focus was on the future of the Marine Corps, taking care of Marines, sailors and their families."

He said the key was to talk about the issues facing the Corps and issues they can fix, not just for the present, but for the future Marines.

One of those key issues was suicide.

According to the suicide presentation given at the symposium, the Marine Corps had 42 suicides in 2008, which put the Corps on par with civilian suicide numbers.

"We evaluate our problem with suicide by looking at a 100,000 Marine population which is in line with how the civilian community looks at suicides," explained Sgt. Maj. Michael Timmerman, personnel and family readiness sergeant major.

Timmerman said this is a mark the Corps has come unfortunately close to and that suicide is a human problem.

"Suicide is a problem that all cultures experience and the Marine Corps is no different than that," he said.

The response to the growing problem, however, is unique to the Marine Corps. A new suicide prevention program will put experienced noncommissioned officers at the fore front of the fight.

"This is a problem that, knowing it is a human problem, can be controlled at the peer group level," Timmerman said.

Kent explained that the corporals and sergeants are critical in engaging suicide because "The NCO is the one closest to the Marines, and that's why we're educating them and giving them the tools to understand the issue and to know where they can send a Marine to get help."

The forum also opened up the discussion on family readiness issues.

The role of a sergeant major in dealing with family readiness "is to assist the family readiness officer and the commander with addressing the issues for the families so that when the



CPL. SCOTT SCHMIDT

Sgt. Maj. Brian K. Jackson, the sergeant major of Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., listens to a presentation about suicide prevention during the 2009 Sergeant Major Symposium July 27. Each year sergeants major come together in an open forum to discuss the issues facing the Corps and their Marines.

[Marine] is deployed, the family knows the resources that are available to them," said Sgt. Maj. William F. Fitzgerald, the sergeant major of Marine Forces South.

Fitzgerald said the symposium allowed sergeants major to "cross pollinate" their ideas and concerns and offers a unique line of communication between the individual Marine and Corps leadership.

"It gives a Marine the opportunities to address issues up his chain of command," Fitzgerald said of the symposium. "Then we bring it here and vent these issues amongst our peers."

Training and education command sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Dave Howell, explained though more discussion was given to some agenda items it is hard to pin point what may be considered the most pressing.

"They're all a priority. There's no one particular

thing that overrides another," said Howell. "It's all about readiness. It's all about good order and discipline. It's all about developing and taking care of your Marines and leaders as well."

According to Howell and other sergeants major, the next step is to implement some of the agenda topics because "the bottom line is if something is on the commandant's radar screen then it's a priority."

The sergeant major of the Marine Corps said the recommendations he will make to the commandant will be based on what agenda items aren't working well.

"We had numerous agenda items come up and we didn't put any of them on the back burner," Kent explained. "The ones we forward to the commandant are the ones that aren't working right now and the ones we felt we're important to the future of the Marine Corps."

INSTRUCT, from A1

pairs of eyes and perspectives to the things going on here. Some of these guys have been in 28 years, and even if some of them haven't deployed as many times as some Marines, 28 years of experience is 28 years of experience. They certainly have things to bring to the table."

Both international forces help TTECG Marines train units in the Clear, Hold, Build training concept at two major Enhanced Mojave Viper areas controlled by Infantry Battalion Teams West and East. Team West controls the Combined Arms Military Operations on Urban Terrain Range and Combat Center Range 220 by Camp Wilson and the platoon and company live-fire Ranges 410 and 401. Team East has oversight of the urban villages at Combat Center Ranges 200 and 215, as well as the platoon and company live-fire Ranges 410A and 400.

The bulldogs and dingoes normally focus on the hold stage of CHB I, Himel said. The hold stage, which involves a cordon and search, is the trickiest and most complex because it forces Marines and sailors to walk a tightrope between cultural sensitivity and mission priority, he said.

There are currently five dingoes and three bulldogs aboard the Combat Center. Two dingoes and two bulldogs work out of Team East, two dingoes and one bulldog with Team West, and one dingo is assigned to a Scout Sniper section of TTECG. The bulldogs here are the first to train as TTECG instructors in the U.S.

Although this is only the bulldogs' second rotation, dingoes, who have six-month rotations here, have been working on scene with units training since 2005, said Sgt. David Wilson of the Australian Army.

"We spend a lot of time on counter insurgency assistance," said Wilson, a Darwin, Australia native. "They spend time with the Marines and examine how they operate and help them make any needed changes."

The internationals act as

the TTECG Corridor Coyote's eyes and ears, much like the TTECG instructors, called coyotes. They typically follow a platoon or company commander during live-fire and urban training to offer guidance about tactics, techniques and procedures, Himel said.

The bulldogs' two-month rotations at the Combat Center mark only one aspect of their training prior to deploying to Afghanistan in three to four month intervals. These frequent rotations in theater make them familiar with the most recent activities in Afghanistan. This makes them great assets to the Combat Center's training team, Himel said.

"We'll get sent to Afghanistan and embed with the Brits for about a month at a time," said Color Sgt. Kevin McCauley, a soldier with the British Operations Training Advisory Group and native of Nottingham, England. "One of the prerequisites for being in the Operational Training Advisory Group is having had recent experience in Afghanistan with decent reports on your work there. That's what the command is

aiming for – high standards."

Capt. Richard Sharp, a British Royal Marine with OPTAG, agreed.

"We're passing on a load of what we've learned on to these guys," said Sharp, a native of London. "We've lived those mistakes some people make here. We're familiar with the climate and geography in Afghanistan, but we can also really benefit from going through [Enhanced] Mojave Viper."

Sharp said there is a similar village training area in England, but it does not compare to the ranges here. A similar number of bulldogs are slated to participate in similar training at Marine Corp Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., some time in October, Sharp said.

Himel said he enjoys the time and knowledge shared among the three country's military representatives.

"It's important to build camaraderie with our allies," Himel said.

Although the patterns and colors of uniforms may differ from one country's fighting force to another, the concept of fighting for one's country is something all warriors can appreciate.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Color Sgt. Kevin McCauley, a soldier with the British Operations Training Advisory Group, gives advice to Marines with 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, about taking cover behind cement barricades during training at Combat Center Range 215 Tuesday.

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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

8:30 a.m.-West Wing

Non-denominational:

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9 a.m.-Worship*

9 a.m.-Children's

Church

10:30 a.m.-Sunday

School*

6 p.m.-Youth Group

Lay-led Gospel Service

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(except holidays)

Tuesday

Christ Chapel

9 a.m.-Christian Women's

Fellowship*

September through May

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

7 p.m.-Lay-led Gospel Bible

Study

Immaculate Heart of Mary

9:30 a.m.-Military Council of

Catholic Women*

September to May

6 p.m.-Youth Teen

7 p.m.-Knights of Columbus

(First Wednesday each month)

Thursday

Christ Chapel

6 p.m.-Praise Band Rehearsal

Immaculate Heart of Mary

6-7:30 p.m.-RCIA

Resumes Sept. 11

11:30 a.m.-Bible Study

Chaplain Moran 830-6187

Friday

Christ Chapel

5 p.m.-Gospel Rehearsal

Immaculate Heart of Mary

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2	1	6	8	7	4	9	3	5
6	3	5	7	9	2	4	1	8
1	9	8	4	3	5	6	7	2
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New Learning Resource Center opens for Marines, sailors

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Learning Resource Center opened another computer lab Monday to help accommodate base personnel who do not have access to a computer, but need one to complete training or work.

The new lab, located at the back-half of Paige Hall in building 1612, has added 40 new computers and a printer to existing resources. Marines, sailors and civilians now have 60 computers available for their use between both centers. The computers are connected to the Navy Marine Corps Intranet and do not require a common access card to log in, but base personnel need their CAC to access their Outlook e-mail.

"I'm impressed with this set up," said Tom Sulick, an aviations analyst for the Battle Simulation Center, who was invited to use the new center after the grand opening. "Having something like this in place is a good thing, since not every Marine has a CAC card



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Michael Antu, a canine handler attached to the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office, uses a computer at the new Learning Resource Center for training purposes after the grand opening Monday.

and they may need a computer to get training in, finish up some work or even do college courses. Besides, it is an air conditioned building. What

more could a Marine ask for?" Combat Center personnel built the new lab because Marines and sailors were getting turned away from the

previous center due to overcrowding. More than 1,600 service members were using the 20 computers throughout the year, said Jay W. Nelson,

the senior network analyst and manager of the new center.

The computers are set up to easily access testing sites including motor transporta-

tion training, range safety and the 3,500 online courses available through the Marine Corps Learning Network.

"What is neat about our setup is that we can proctor the tests," said Nelson, a Yucca Valley, Calif., native. "All Marine Corps tests require a proctor, and we have that capability, so now the unit doesn't have to find someone to come in so all their Marines can take a test."

The Marine Corps College of Continuing Education was the most responsible for the building of the new lab, Nelson said. The computer workstations at both centers are available during and after normal working hours.

Both of these centers are staffed with full-time personnel who can help students access online training, testing, and general information.

The office hours for building 1612 are Sunday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and building 1527 is Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, contact the service help desk at 830-7145.

3/7, from A1

native, returned after serving as the sergeant major of the Officer Candidates School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

In addition to training Marines at OCS, Black has also served in various billets aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., and as the regimental drill master.

Other highlights of Black's career include his involvement in the Malta Summit between President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, and Operations Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Millennium Falcon, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Tipton, an Orrville, Ohio, native and former member of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, said he is happy to return to the Combat Center and the 7th Marines.

"I was obviously excited, honored and humbled," said Tipton. "I think the desert is

a great place to challenge Marines. Marines here work hard, train hard and are focused on preparing themselves to go fight battles. My philosophy here is to accomplish the mission while taking care of Marines and keeping them combat ready through training."

He also said he expects four major things from the Marines and sailors under his charge.

"The things that are important to me and what I expect are good order and discipline, mental and physical hardness, doing the right thing and having strong backs and hard feet."

The battalion is gearing up to head to the Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., next week and is slated to deploy next year.

"The Marine Corps' first priority is to accomplish the mission at hand," Tipton said. "The first and foremost thing in my mind is to get this battalion combat ready, and if sent in harm's way, to bring everyone back home safely."



PFC. TYLER WARREN

Lt. Col. James B. Woulfe, the departing 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's commanding officer (left) and Lt. Col. Clay C. Tipton the new 3/7 commander speak to Marines, sailors, friends and family members during change of command and relief and appointment ceremonies Aug. 7 at the Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field here.

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The warrior mindset; 3rd CEB hones hand-to-hand skills

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four Marines from Company A, 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, are currently honing their close-combat skills in a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program gray belt course here.

The engineers are adhering to the standards set by Gen. James T. Conway, the commandant of the Marine Corps, through All-Marine message 034/07, that encourages all combat arms Marines to have at least gray belts.

The Marines practiced their hand-to-hand combat techniques during a pugil sticks bout Wednesday.

For some Marines, like Lance Cpl. Justin Brock, a student in the course, the opportunity to strap on a helmet and pads and knock someone to the dirt doesn't come often.

"This was the first time I've done pugil sticks since boot camp," said Brock, a Loveland, Ohio, native. "I love the intensity we have out there."

Gray belt student Pfc. Nicholas Weissgerber agreed.

"It was some really good training out there," said Weissgerber, a Bloomington, Ill., native. "I got a great workout and got my adrenaline going."

Sgt. Chris Belcher, an instructor in the course, gave a class after the training session stressing the importance of being mentally combat ready at all times.

He told the story of Medal of Honor recipient Cpl. Jason Dunham, who was killed in action, saving the lives of his entire squad, by using his helmet and body to smother the blast of a grenade dropped by an insurgent.

Belcher also said the Marines need to remain in the warrior mindset throughout the course.

"Every Marine needs to take MCMAP seriously," said Belcher, a Philomath, Ore., native. "Everything we do as Marines has a purpose and these hand-to-hand skills the Marines are learning will come in handy one day."

With nearly half of the 39 training hours required to graduate the course under their belts, the Marines will continue to train this week, with an aquatic event, the obstacle course, medical evacuation training and other drills that aim to push the Marines to their mental and physical limits.

The students are scheduled to be tested on their proper execution of the moves Friday. Those who pass will also receive their gray belts that day.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Pfc. Frank V. Manandik, a combat engineer with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, encourages, Pfc. Bradley Rehdantz, a student in the unit's Marine Corps Martial Arts Program gray belt course during a pugil sticks bout at the unit's headquarters Wednesday. Instructors are helping 24 Marines adhere to All-Marine message 034/07, which encourages all Marines in combat related job fields to have their gray belt.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Students in the 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion's Marine Corps Martial Arts Program gray belt course, duke it out during a pugil sticks bout at the battalion's headquarters Wednesday. The Marines still have several training requirements to accomplish before being tested on their proper execution of the moves Friday.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines going through the 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion's Marine Corps Martial Arts Program gray belt course donned helmets and neck supporters Wednesday, during a pugil sticks bout. The Marines have completed nearly half of the 39 training hours required to receive their gray belts. They are scheduled to take a test and complete the course Friday.

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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

Six years ago in this very newspaper I wrote the following words: "Tiger Woods is possibly the finest golfer of all time."

It is now time for me to strengthen that sentence: "Tiger Woods is the greatest golfer who ever played the game."

Tiger Woods is a tough minded optimist and he became a world class golfer because he has always been a person who believed in himself and what he could achieve if he listened to the wisdom of his father and obeyed the instructors who guided him as a youth and while a student at Stanford University.

Skip Bayless, a golf writer for the Chicago Tribune, spent considerable time studying Tiger Woods and following him around various golf courses. Bayless then reported his findings. He announced that the secret to Woods greatness was that "Tiger has immediate negative memory loss." Wow! Think about it.

Every tough minded optimist should practice that positive outlook in every aspect of life. Don't let the mistakes of today destroy the possibilities of tomorrow.

Have hope. Tomorrow will be different. Tomorrow you may hear the music, meet the person, read the book, have the insight, think the thought that changes your life in a beautiful way. Believe it and anticipate with optimism tomorrow, next week, and all your days.

In a paraphrase of a well-known popular song "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch onto the affirmative, don't mess with Mr. In-between."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

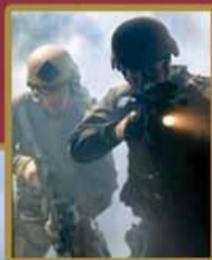
approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

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

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TRAINING, from A1

deploy with, said Petty Officer 3rd Class William Morell, a hospital corpsman with Regimental Aid Station, 7th Marine Regiment.

"There is absolutely no level you can put on this

training," said the 21-year-old Morell, from Ontario, Calif., who has previous deployment experience with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. "It's extremely beneficial, and it's of the utmost importance, especially for the type of environ-

ment we are going to."

Once the training concludes in mid-August, the regiment will be better prepared to conduct counterinsurgency operations as the ground combat element for Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan.



CPL ZACHARY J. NOLA

A humvee is struck by a simulated improvised explosive device during an IED lane training exercise Aug. 9 at Combat Center Range 102 as part of Enhanced Mojave Viper, Regimental Combat Team 7's pre-deployment training exercise.

CFT, from A1

McGuire, TECOM's physical readiness programs officer. "Of all the input we've received from Marines about the CFT, there was a consensus that the CFT should be a scored event. This isn't surprising knowing the competitive nature of Marines."

Necessity for the CFT is partly based on a realization that combat-related demands include a variety of movements and task done at high intensity.

"Generally speaking, the CFT places a greater premium on a Marine's anaerobic capacity and functional core strength in comparison to

the PFT," McGuire said.

McGuire added that the CFT will factor into a Marine's composite score and be reflected on the fitness report. The composite score conversion table, developed by Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&R) can be found on the TECOM Web site.

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B1

Weekly farmer's market brings community together

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

JOSHUA TREE, Calif. – Shoppers wearing sunhats and sunglasses migrated from one stand to another, arms loaded down with bags of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables hand-picked by farmers just the day before.

Joshua Tree's certified Farmer's Market sells fresh produce every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. near the intersection of Highway 62 and Park Avenue. Approximately a dozen vendors can be found under the shade of their tents on any given Saturday.

Shoppers can find common seasonal fruits and vegetables, free-range eggs, freshly baked bread, nut assortments, flowers and exotic and imported goods in a modest setting. Prices are hand-written on cardboard signs and rival most super market stores.

Hassan Ghassemi, a sales associate with Alik's Greek Taverna, travels from Los Angeles every Saturday to sell traditional Greek cuisine and ingredients, including olives, olive oils and cheeses imported directly from Greece.

"This is good business and you do see a lot of regulars here," Ghassemi said. "But there are plenty of new faces I see every Saturday, too."

On the opposite side of the market, Geri Mastroianni sells handmade gourd cups traditionally used to drink her main product, Yerba Mate Tea, which is imported from Argentina.

Terresa Doolittle, a Joshua Tree native, is one

See **MARKET, B3**



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Fresh tomatoes are just one of the various seasonal fruits and vegetables that can be found at inexpensive prices at the certified Farmer's Market in Joshua Tree on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

RDS reaches out to families

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When Marines and sailors pack their bags, load onto the bus and deploy for seven months, people may not think about the spouses, children and even fiancés they leave behind to watch over the household while they are away.

The Readiness and Deployment Support Program with Marine Corps Family Team Building ensures these family members are remembered and taken care of while their loved ones are deployed.

"Our main mission is to help Marines and their families be proactive, not reactive," said Secret Brown, a Readiness and Deployment Support trainer and a Chicago native. "We want to make sure they are prepared now instead of trying to find the help they need when they are in the midst of a crisis."

RDS works closely with commands and family readiness officers to hold a plethora of briefs that will help single Marines, married Marines, spouses and children.

While hosting briefs for adults, the trainers will go over a pre-deployment checklist that highlights the importance of having financial, legal and family care plans, as well as plans for emergency notification, communication and personal affairs.

"We will bring in subject matter experts from [the Staff Judge Advocate's Office] and [Installation Personnel Administration Center] to go over things they need to get in order before they deploy," Brown said. "We never close our doors to the spouses. We want everybody to hear the same message going across."

Brown and Lee Risper, who is also a trainer for RDS, try to keep families in Twentynine Palms informed.

"We try to show them there is something here for them to do so they feel connected while their loved one is away," said Risper, a St. Louis, native. "We want them to know their neighbors-make friends. If they go home and then come

See **FAMILIES, B2**

Marines to take swing at regionals, shoot for All-Marine softball team

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

"You need dedication, determination and desire to make it to the All-Marine Softball

team," said T.C. Gray, the assistant coach for the All-Marine team and a player for the base team.

Combat Center Marines who proved their heart was in the game gathered at Felix

Field Wednesday to practice and scrimmage one another before their team travels to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to compete in the West Coast Regional Softball tournament Aug. 21 through 27.

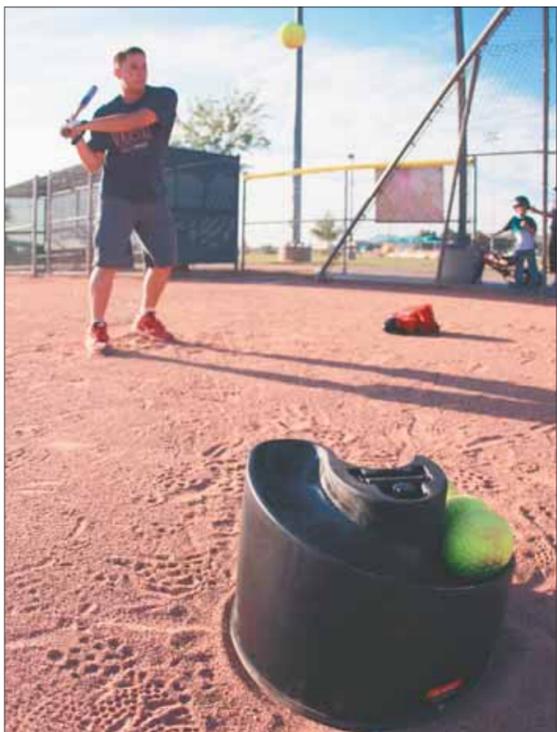
While at regionals, teams from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., will compete against the Combat Center to determine who has the best team.

The best players from the seven teams will be scouted to participate in the All-Marine Trial Camp in Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., from Aug. 28 through Sept. 18.

"We have a real shot this year of getting these players on the All-Marine team," said Gray, a Jacksonville, Ala., native. "The thing we need to work on is to remember the fundamentals of softball; such as working on getting three outs an inning."

Debra Sullivan, the coach for the base team, said they have an extremely strong team that is evenly mixed

See **SOFTBALL, B3**



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

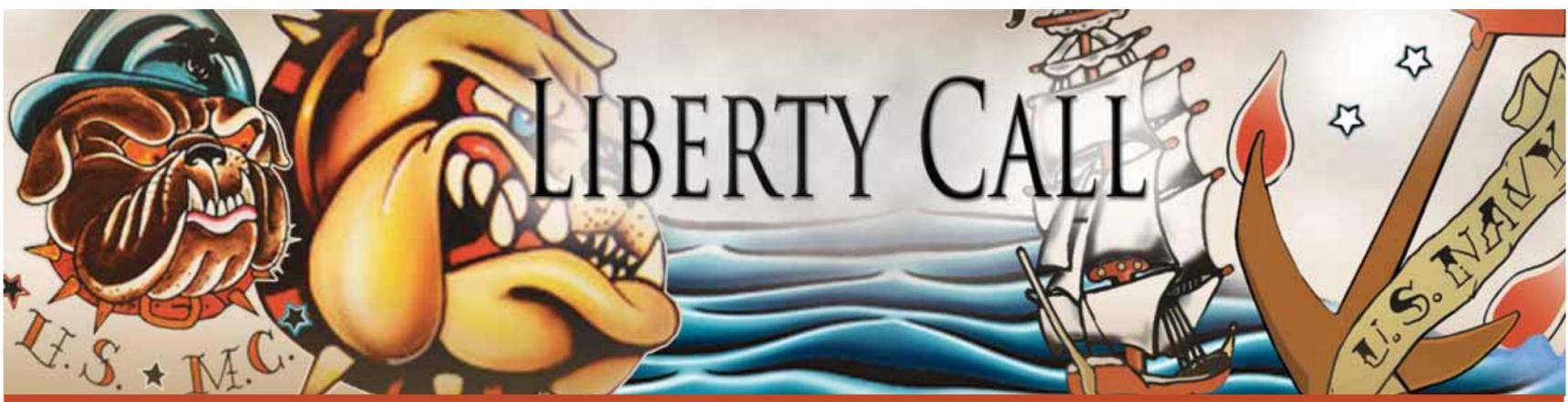
Joe Cavins, a player for the Combat Center's Softball team, practices hitting as a machine spurs out softballs during a practice Wednesday at Felix Field.

Fight Club 29 dominates another SoCal tourney



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Four fighters from the Combat Center's Fight Club 29 won medals at the International Karate and Pankrat Championship in Long Beach, Calif., Aug. 8. Fighters Omar Askew, Joseph Yeampierre and Matt Wheeler took home gold medals in their respective weight classes, and Michael King won the silver medal. The club's next bout is slated for Sept. 12, where the fighter's will participate in the Grappling Experience Tournament in Murrieta, Calif.



<p>FRI. 8/14</p> <p>Mel Brooks' "The Producers" Time: 7 p.m. Where: Theatre 29 73637 Sullivan Road Twentynine Palms For more info, call 361-4151 or visit http://www.theatre29.com</p>	<p>SAT. 8/15</p> <p>Pioneer Posse old west re-enactment troupe Time: 2:30 p.m. Where: Pioneertown Mane Street at Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown For more info, call 364-3544 or e-mail coyotepines@earthlink.net</p>	<p>SUN. 8/16</p> <p>The Thriftstore All Stars Time: 7 p.m. Where: Pappy & Harriet's 53688 Pioneertown Road Pioneertown For more info, call 365-5956 or visit http://www.pappyandharriets.com</p>	<p>MON. 8/17</p> <p>Art in Public Places: Color Photography by Bruce Miller Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Where: Twentynine Palms City Hall 6136 Adobe Road Twentynine Palms For more info, call 367-6799 or visit http://www.ci.twentynine-palms.ca.us</p>	<p>TUES. 8/18</p> <p>Chris Walters acoustic old school blues Time: 7 p.m. Where: 29 Palms Inn 73950 Inn Avenue Twentynine Palms For more info, call 367-3505 or visit http://www.29palmsinn.com</p>
<p>WED. 8/19</p> <p>Exhibit - Abe Lincoln at LaQuinta Museum Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Where: La Quinta Museum 77-885 Avenida Montezuma La Quinta For more info, call 777-7170 or visit http://www.la-quinta.org</p>	<p>THURS. 8/20</p> <p>Impressionist and Modern Masters: Nature and Light Time: All day Where: Palm Springs Art Museum 101 Museum Drive, Palm Springs For more info, call 325-7186 or visit http://www.psmuseum.org</p>	<p>FRI. 8/21</p> <p>Art - Ann Magnuson "30 in 30 x 1" Time: All day Where: Art Queen 61855 29 Palms Highway Joshua Tree For more info, call 366-2519 or 366-8429</p>	<p>SAT. 8/22</p> <p>Ruby & The Rock Spiders Time: 9 p.m. Where: Joshua Tree Saloon 61835 29 Palms Highway Joshua Tree For more info, call 366-2250</p>	<p>FRI. 9/4</p> <p>The Pretenders Time: 9 p.m. Where: Agua Caliente 32-250 Bob Hope Drive Rancho Mirage For more info call (888) 999-1995 or visit http://hotwatercasino.com</p>

An inventive 'Summer' fling that will leave you smiling

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

500 Days of Summer
Starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt & Zooey Deschanel
Rated PG-13

An inventive take on an old movie standby, "500 Days of Summer" is a boy-meets-girl tale with a fresh twist.

The boy, in this case, is Tom, a writer for a small Los Angeles greeting-card company. The girl is Summer, the new office assistant, a recent L.A. transplant for whom Tom falls head over heels.

Tom is smitten, but Summer isn't – or is she? She's maddeningly difficult to read, constantly keeping Tom guessing. She's not a tease, but a mystery.

Like the season for which she's named, their relationship (the 500 days of the title) doesn't last. But the movie lets you know that up front. First-time director Marc Webb brings his music-video and TV-commercial back-

ground into zestful play with a quirky chronological shuffle of the events, toggling back and forth to various out-of-sequence points in the relationship from Tom's perspective.

Because the movie "sees" things through Tom's eyes, we're treated to several scenes that defy normal movie conventions as they reflect his feelings at a particular moment. After his first night with Summer, he breaks into a full-on movie-musical number choreographed to the Hall & Oates hit "You Make My Dreams Come True," with every pedestrian he meets on the street joining in. One scene, presented in split-screen, shows the heart-tugging differences in Tom's "expectations" and the "reality" of a social encounter. Tom projects himself into the impressionistic, black-and-white gloom of an arty French film he watches during an emotional low.

It all makes for a unique and totally exhilarating movie experience, unlike anything else you'll see this year – and giving a shot of redemption to the genre of "romantic comedy," which has always been a tricky recipe to pull off successfully. That's why a lot of romantic comedies are straight-out-of-the-oven stinkers.

But this one soars, and much of its buoyancy comes from its two wonderful leads. Joseph Gordon-Levitt, all grown up from his child-star days as little Tommy on TV's "Third Rock From the Sun," positively glows with infectious charm as Tom. He totally pulls you into his journey of yearning, exuberance, confusion, hurt and heartbreak – just not necessarily in



COURTESY PHOTO

"500 Days of Summer", is a twisting romantic comedy starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt as a smitten writer and Zoe Deschanel as a mysterious hot and cold beauty who takes poor Tom on a wild ride.

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that order.

As Summer, Zooey Deschanel is an enchanting, blue-eyed mixture of nearness and distance. You can see why Tom loves her, even as she stomps on his heart.

This is "not a love story," as the movie's tag line explains. Rather, it's "a story about love." And there's a difference—espe-

cially when two lovers, like Tom and Summer, as compatible as they might seem to be, can't quite get their two souls to sync.

And life moves on... A touching, funny, smart and sweet movie with a wildly imaginative way of looking at things, "500 Days of Summer" is a summer fling that will leave you with a smile.



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15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday							
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			
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday							
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Stater Bros 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
15 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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FAMILIES, from B1

back they have to start all over again."

The workshops they have for children run differently and are structured to deliver the tools needed for children to cope during a deployment. The workshops target children ages 4 to 18 years old, and will split the children up into groups by age.

"With the kids workshops it is a more fun hands-on approach," Brown said. "We try to keep them interacting with us and each other while

keeping them in a relaxed environment.

"Deployment is a scary thing for kids and we try to have other children their own age there who have been through this scary process already, so they can talk to them about their fears."

Although Risper and Brown work tirelessly to help prepare families before Marines or sailors deploy, they also know how stressful and alone a person can feel in the middle of a deployment. To help combat these stresses, they have

created various workshops to help spouses cope by going through different venues designed to enhance the tools needed for inner strength and endurance.

Children also have a wide range of workshops they can attend, including Kids-N-Deployment, Kids-in-the-Midst, and Kids-N-Reunion, that help them deal with their feelings when a parent is deployed.

The work Risper and Brown do doesn't stop when a unit returns to Twentynine Palms. Instead, they hold Return and Reunion Briefs and bring in subject matter experts to explain what to expect from their combat-hardened service member. Some of these subjects

include how to recognize post traumatic stress disorder and tips to help ease a service member back into the role they were in before the deployment.

Although many of the briefs are set up through a battalion or squadron, RDS opens its doors to all family members and continuously holds training sessions to anybody from any unit who wishes to attend.

To receive a schedule of upcoming classes or for more information regarding the Readiness and Deployment Support Program call 830-3127 or 830-3124, or visit Risper or Brown at the Village Center in building 1551.

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CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

The Combat Center's softball team is competing in the West Coast Regional softball tournament, where players may be scouted to participate in the All-Marine Trial Camp and possibly go on to play for the All-Marine team.



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Chris Petty, the pitcher for the Combat Center's softball team, catches a softball during a warm-up with fellow players during a practice Wednesday at Felix Field.

SOFTBALL, from B1

with young players and veterans, which helps the players out.

"We have an advantage because we have the All-Marine assistant coach on our team and the All-Marine Women's Softball coach on our team," said Sullivan, the only female coach in the base league. "These guys worked really hard and I think if we keep practicing we can have up to three players advance to the camp."

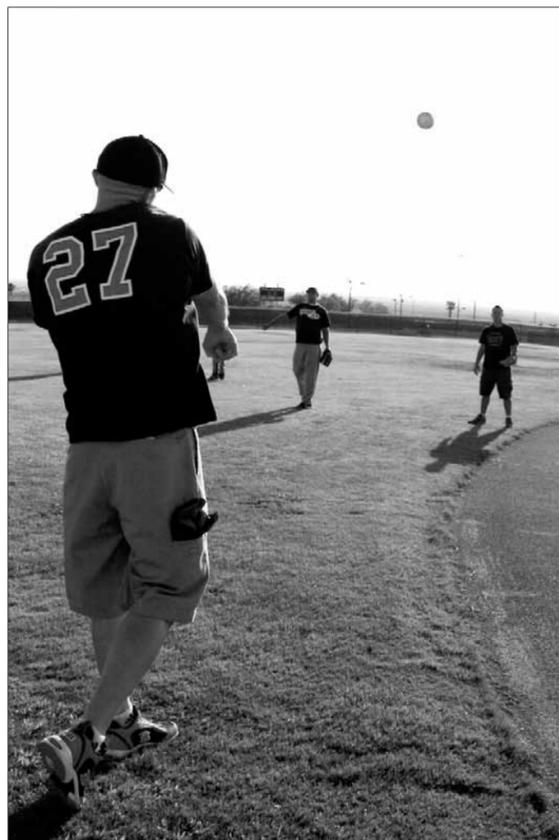
Only 12 players from the West Coast bases can attend the camp, Gray said. "I hope I can surpass that number and take 15."

Gray said the camp takes

a lot of endurance and causes a lot of wear and tear on the body, which is why players need to be determined, dedicated and have desire to play for the All-Marine team.

"You are eating, breathing and sleeping softball 24/7," said Gray, who has also played on the All-Marine team multiple times throughout his Marine Corps career. "Seven days a week and you have two-a-days which really kick it out of you."

After the camp, the Marines chosen to play on the All-Marine team will participate in an Armed Forces tournament in Pensacola, Fla., where they will compete against the Navy, Army and Air Force teams.



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Chris Petty, the pitcher for the Combat Center's softball team, lobs the ball to his partner during a practice Wednesday at Felix Field.

MARKET, from B1

of the market's regulars.

"I come here every Saturday to buy my Mate Tea and brussels sprouts," she said. "I'm a diabetic so these healthy foods help keep my numbers in check. The vegetables here last for such a long time, too. They don't go bad for two weeks or so, since they're usually picked the day before."

Terry Mayes, a multimedia specialist with Marine Corps Community Service marketing here, said he also makes a weekly trip to the market.

"This is a great place to buy really fresh vegetables," he said. "I usually come here to get my cantaloupe and carrots. It's great and it's really cheap."

The Farmers Market was

first held in Yucca Valley four years ago by its original proprietor, Lori Herbel, a native of Yucca Valley and member of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce.

This October will mark the second year since the market moved to Joshua Tree, she said.

"It's a good experience to come here and get to know the farmers who grow the food you eat," Herbel said. "It's an open-air market and a chance for people to come together as a community and socialize while they shop."

Herbel said the town of Twentynine Palms City Hall is currently examining regulations to determine what they need to do to set up their own certified Farmer's Market in the near future.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Farmers, such as Margarita Rios pictured here, from across Southern California gather under tents to sell their seasonal fruits and vegetables at Joshua Tree's certified Farmer's Market Saturday.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Jose Magang, a farmer from Redlands, Calif., sells his fresh vegetables at Joshua Tree's certified Farmer's Market every Saturday. Other farmers from Southern California pick, wash and sell their own fruits and vegetables alongside each other.

Athlete of the Week

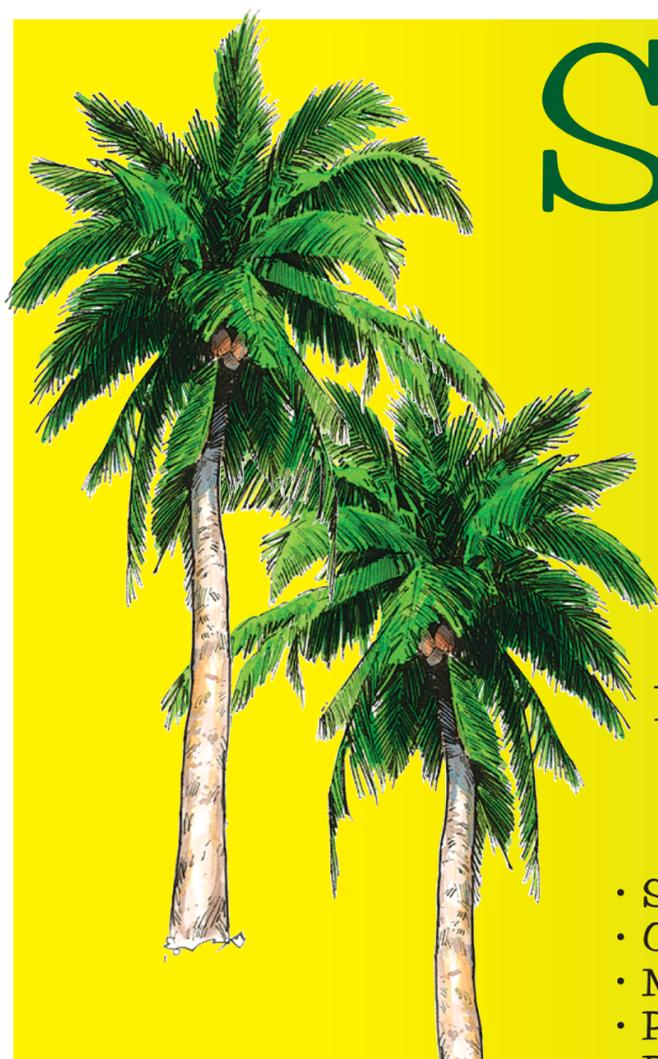


Name: Joseph Cavins
Age: 28
Job Title: Anti-tank missileman
Recognition: Plays for the Combat Center's All-Star softball team
Major sports accomplishments: His last team won the Triple Crown Michigan State Championship
Favorite aspect of the sport: "The competitive side of it."
Advice for aspiring players: "Just go out there and play."

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390 South Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, CA 92262

Come Play In Palm Springs
 Bring the Kids... Come Play Like Kids

life=fun

Kids are FREE this summer
 Great FREE stuff for you too!

Make your summer getaway an even cooler deal with these special offers...
 ComePlayInPalmSprings.com

ClassicShaving.com

10% Active Military Discount

The Men's Room
 SHAVING & GROOMING GEAR FOR MEN

174 North Palm Canyon Drive
 Palm Springs, CA 92262
 760 778 6787
 Sun & Mon & Wed 11-6 Thur 11-10
 Fri 11-8 Sat 10-8 Closed Tuesday
 TheMensRoom@XPECT

Straight Razors
 Double Edge Blades & Handles
 Colognes
 Shaving Creams and Soaps
 Skin Care

COURTYARD
 Marriott

Courtyard by Marriott
 1300 Tahquitz Canyon Way
 Palm Springs
 760-322-6100

\$79 Rate
 To Sept 30, 2009
 Subject to Availability

29 Palms Marines Friends & Family Rate
 offered year round

Go to www.courtyard.com/pspch
 Enter promotional code G51
 or Call 1-800-321-2211 & Ask for the "Government Local" rate

Holiday Inn
 HOTEL

Palm Springs City Center
 1800 E. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264
 760-323-1711
 www.hipalmsprings.com

Ask for the Drive In, Dive In, Dine In Rate
\$55.00 + tax
 Expires August 29, 2009

- Completely Renovated
- Beautiful pool area with 2 whirlpool spas, tented cabana bar, misters and fire pit.
- Restaurant - Bar - Fitness Center

P.S. WE LOVE MARINES!

The Palm Mountain Resort & Spa in the heart of downtown Palm Springs honors and supports our brave servicemen and families for all their sacrifices for our great country. Here is one way we say "Thank You" this summer... *Getaway and Play with us in P.S.!*

SPECIAL P.S. PASS RATE \$49*

*Courtyard Room
 Midweek • \$79 Weekends
 Plus tax & resort fee. Subject to availability.
 Offer expires Oct. 15, 2009

Reservations: 1-800-622-9451 or palmmountainresort.com
 155 So. Belardo Palm Springs, CA 92262



Get To Palm Springs!

RIDE MBTA

The Reliable, Easy and Economical Way to Go!

15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday							
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	YVTC	Palm Springs Airport
5:00	5:25	5:30	5:40	5:45	6:00	6:10	7:00
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday							
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)			YVTC	MCAGCC	
7:00	7:10	7:15			7:50	8:30	
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*							
Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	YVTC	Palm Springs Airport
10:00	10:25	10:30	10:40	10:45	11:00	11:10	11:45
4:00	4:25	4:30	*4:40	*4:45	*5:00	*5:10	*5:45
15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*							
Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)			YVTC	MCAGCC	
12:00	12:10	12:15			12:50	1:35	
*6:00	*6:10	*6:15			*6:50	*7:35	

*SUNDAY SERVICE BEGINS AT 29 PALMS COMMUNITY CENTER. All weekend service is for Saturday only except for the final return trip which includes both Saturday and Sunday service.

Fares from 29 Palms
 One-way Regular Fare \$20.00
 Round Trip Regular Fare \$25.00

For more information call MBTA Customer Service at 760-366-2395.

