

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

SEPTEMBER 18, 2009 SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957 VOL. 52 ISSUE 37

Remembering the unforgettable



PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS CHAD J. MCNEELEY

President Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates participate in a commemoration ceremony in Arlington, Va., Sept. 11 marking the eighth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon which killed the 59 passengers onboard hijacked American Airlines flight 77. Al-Qaeda operatives crashed the plane into the Pentagon, killing 125 service members and civilians working inside.

Local school honors Marines, sailors in ceremony

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

TWENTYNINE PALMS. — Palm Vista Elementary honored service members from the Combat Center, local police, fire fighters, sheriffs deputies and highway patrolmen during their Patriots Day Memorial Service Sep. 11 at 9 a.m.

The service took place at the flag pole in the center of the school.

Dr. Cynthia McVay, the principal of Palm Vista Elementary, opened the event by reading an excerpt from President Barack Obama's speech to school children and her remarks praising everyday heroes.

"When you hear about 9/11, make sure to think about all the brave people who rushed to the help of those in need," said McVay, a native of Sheyenne, Wyo. "Firefighters, police officers,

See SCHOOL, A6



LANCE CPL. JASON HERNANDEZ

Maj. Brian C. Pate, the commanding officer of Company E, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, talks with a fellow officer after a meeting with Iraqi Border Police commanders north of Sahl Sinjar, Iraq, Aug. 1. By coordinating the efforts of all commanders operating in temporary area of operations Tripoli, commanders are now able to communicate better with their essential Iraqi counterparts.

'Team Tripoli' clears path to stability, success

LANCE CPL. JASON HERNANDEZ
MULTI NATIONAL FORCE-WEST

NINEWA PROVINCE, Iraq — Service members from all branches of the U.S. military currently operate in Iraq and conduct a wide variety of missions from Air Force jets transporting cargo across the country to Navy doctors providing care for U.S. forces and Iraqi civilians.

Even though each service wears a different uniform, operate different weapons systems and equipment, and even speak in its own jargon, they are all bound together by a shared purpose.

There are few places in Iraq where this bond is as

strong as in temporary area of operations Tripoli in Ninewa Province, Iraq.

"Team Tripoli" is the nickname of a unifying project created by Lt. Col. Kenneth R. Kassner, the commanding officer of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

"The idea for Team Tripoli came about to ensure that all [U.S.] forces operating in the area of operations were in sync," Kassner said. "Together, we've been able to deny the enemy freedom of movement through unit coordination and daily operations."

Team Tripoli is comprised of various U.S. military commands operating in the area

and encompasses many different operating units such as Border Transition Teams, U.S. Army operational detachments and Marine Corps light armored reconnaissance units.

Together, the Army and Marine Corps units deployed there conduct combined operations in cooperation with local Iraqi Army and police forces while working to ensure security needs are met with speed and efficiency.

"I traveled the battle space, meeting all of the coalition leadership in the area then invited all of them to a meeting that included

See TRIPOLI, A5

Motivational speaker visits base, films documentary

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A well-known Christian motivational speaker from the Cavalry Chapel in Diamond Bar, Calif., visited and toured the Combat Center with his film crew Sept. 10 to shoot footage for a documentary titled "Taking the Hill" about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Raul Ries, a former Marine and pastor from the chapel, took time to

explore the base while speaking to combat-hardened Marines and sailors for his documentary.

While touring the installation, Ries and his team visited Camp Wilson and stopped at the convoy simulators. After a quick introduction, instructors started up one of the humvees and loaded Ries and his crew inside the vehicle, letting them patrol the virtual streets of Baghdad, Iraq, with computerized M-16 A2 service rifles.

"You know that saying,

"Once a Marine, always a Marine?" said Charlene Voelkl, the project manager for Ries. "Well, that is Raul all the way through. You can tell he loves the Marine Corps just by the way he acted during the simulation."

"He told the camera man to move or else he would shoot him through the vehicle window," she joked.

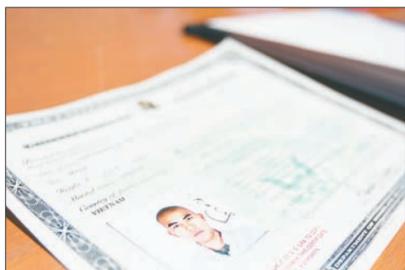
After the convoy simulation, Ries made his way back to mainside, where they met

See SPEAKER, A4



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Raul Ries, a former Marine and pastor from the Cavalry Chapel in Diamond Bar, Calif., speaks to Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, after they completed a five-mile hike with a full combat load Sept 10. Ries spoke about his hardships when he was growing up, his time in the Marine Corps serving in the Vietnam War and how he found God.



Realizing a dream ~ See A3



Chili in the heat ~ See A5



Tour de 29 ~ See B1



'Like piece of iron' ~ See B1

Semper Moto

What are you looking at?

BY JOHN FLEMING

More single-vehicle motorcycle crashes take place in curves than anywhere else. A casual observer would conclude that too much speed is the cause, but it's not that simple.

Curves can be especially dangerous for a variety of reasons beyond excessive speed. For example, curves often prevent a rider from seeing obstacles, which could include gravel or other debris in the roadway.

Oncoming drivers may cross over the center line. Deer and other wildlife can spring onto the roadway without warning. And in the mountains, shady curves can be wet or icy.

We teach a technique in negotiating curves that requires a rider to "look through the curve." Instead of looking straight ahead, as many auto drivers do, we teach riders to turn their heads in the direction of the turn, so that they can scan the roadway as far ahead as possible. This has multiple benefits.

First, it can enable a rider to gain some valuable reaction time if he or she has to stop quickly or swerve to avoid an obstacle. But looking through a turn will actually produce a smoother, more controlled path of travel.

Studies have shown that riders who look down at the road immediately ahead are not nearly as capable of judging a turn radius or proper entry speed as the rider who is looking well ahead.

The bottom line? The rider with "a big head turn," will usually be a smoother and safer rider, especially in the curves, where many accidents often take place.

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.

Hot Topics

CHANGES TO SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Effective immediately, students who are eligible to receive home-to-school transportation are those students in kindergarten through sixth grade who live at least two miles from the school of their enrollment. Students in seventh and eighth who live at least two-and-a-half miles from the school of their enrollment, and students in grades nine through 12 who live at least three miles from their school of enrollment are also eligible.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CHILI LUNCH

Tickets are now on sale for the Combat Center Fire Department's 12th Annual Chili Lunch. This year's lunch will be held Oct. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$2 and are good for your choice of a hot dog or a bowl of chili. Blood Mobile will be on site and those who donate a pint of blood will receive a free ticket. Bring the kids - a Jupiter Jump, free popcorn and balloons will be provided. Call 830-5239 to request tickets.

VARSITY BASKETBALL TRYOUTS

The Marine Corps Community Services Sports Department is now hosting tryouts for the base's Men's Varsity Basketball Team Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 to 10 p.m. at the East Gym. Tryouts will be held until further notice and are open to active duty service members only.

COMMISSARY OPEN FOR "MAD MONDAYS"

Mad Monday at the commissary allows shoppers a chance to purchase groceries provided on the store shelves. No sandwich or sushi bar services will be available without booking them in advance. Mad Monday store hours will be from 12 to 7 p.m.

Centerspeak

What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you?

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



CAPT. WALTER MAESSEN
3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT,
BATTERY M

"When moving, my ex-wife drove into a motel parking lot and got the roof of the truck pulled off."



PVT. CHARLES BAKER
MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATIONS-
ELECTRONICS SCHOOL, COMPANY A

"When I was moving here, a tire completely fell off my car and it took a few hours to find it."



RAY GRIFFITH
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

"I got married in the middle of a hurricane."

School Liaison Question of the Week



Question: Is there a good Web site you can recommend for encouraging children to read?

Answer: Book Adventures is a free reading motivation program for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. Children create their own book lists from more than 7,000 recommended titles, take multiple-choice quizzes on the books they have read, and earn points and prizes for the literary success.

For more information, please contact smbplmsmccsschoolliaison@usmc.mil or call 830-1574.

This Day in Marine Corps History

Sept. 18, 1944

The 7th Marine Regiment captures the southern cape of Peleliu, leading to the collapse of the Japanese defenders on the island.



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

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Gunnery Sgt. Matthew Yaninas
Job Title: Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, operations chief
Job Duties: Coordinating training and operations for the battalion
What do you like most about your job? "Military benefits."
Significant achievements: "Getting ready to retire in two months."
Hobbies: "Being with my family, being a dad, shopping and going to the park."

Military service: Nearly 20 years
Time at Combat Center: Two-and-a-half years

SUDOKU #1556

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		8		9	6			2

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2009 HOMETOWN CONTENT

STRIPERS

[Puzzle Solutions on A7]

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68									69				70		

ACROSS

- Styptic stuff
- Some bunts, for short
- Angelic strings
- iPod model
- Sea (Amu Darya's outlet)
- Disney's mermaid
- Peruvian of old
- Infamous "fiddler"
- Like winter winds
- Malodorous plant
- Bothers incessantly
- Go to the mat, in dialect
- Hit head-on
- Scottish port town
- King in 1922 news
- Bulgaria's capital
- Gumbo veggie
- RPM-measuring gauge
- 1968 Rock Hudson movie
- Keeping one's cool

DOWN

- "Miracle" team of 1969
- Jimmy of the Daily Planet
- Right-angle bend
- Impresario Hurok
- One of Dumbo's "wings"
- Vintner Paul
- Sporty Fords, for short
- Comerica Park replaced it
- Of the Vatican
- Assign a PG to, say
- Inner: Prefix
- In flames
- Nest eggs, for short
- Golden-(senior)
- Knights' mount
- Coworker of 44-Across
- Get out scored

DOWN

- Abs in the flavoring
- Sri ___
- Full-length, as a movie
- Responses to bad puns
- Holy places
- Plane measure
- Pasta or potatoes, to a marathoner
- Oscar Madison, e.g.
- Plane's home
- Sign of spring
- Storied Van Winkle
- Get-up-and-go
- Full of guile
- Measure of gold purity
- Indo-___languages
- Wild guesses
- "Filthy" money
- Hawkey of Hollywood
- "Vacancy" sign displayer
- Cropped up
- Command to an attack dog

- Florida citrus city
- Chops down
- Ideology suffix
- Hobby store buy
- K-___ (big name in records)
- In the thick of
- Anthony Quinn's Greek
- In need of laundering
- Declare under oath
- Glassy-eyed look
- Worthy aim
- Musical Starr
- Weekend ranchers
- Chocolaty campfire treat
- Estrada of "CHiPs"
- Like proverbial hen's teeth
- Spider-Man creator Lee
- Faux ___ (blunder)
- Toward the stern
- Missile from Moe

OBSERVATION POST

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Marine becomes U.S. citizen on 9/11 anniversary

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON, Nev. — It's been eight years since the 9/11 attacks that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 Americans, and each year on the anniversary of that fateful day millions gather in memory of those departed.

But for Lance Cpl. Thang Doan, an administrative clerk with Headquarters Company of Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., the day will forever have a new meaning and importance in his heart.

Doan, a native of Nha Trang, Vietnam, became a U.S. citizen during a naturalization ceremony at the station's annual air show here Sept. 11.

"I am so happy to be a citizen now," Doan said. "I can't think of a more perfect place to become an American."

Patriotism engulfed the air station. Several patrons donned their best

sets of red, white and blue attire to attend the ceremony that was followed by a performance by the Blue Angels, the Navy flight demonstration team.

John Kramar, the district director for the Arizona and Nevada U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said the atmosphere was just right for the ceremony.

"This is a fantastic event for the naturalization of Lance Cpl. Doan," said Kramar, a Phoenix, Ariz., native. "This is the first time we've had a ceremony during an air show."

Lance Cpl. Grant Burger, an administrative clerk who works with Doan, attended the ceremony and said Doan is a good Marine and American with or without the citizenship certificate.

"He's a hard worker and really knows how to put his nose to the grind stone," said Burger, a Warren, Ohio, native. "I was honored to be at his ceremony today. I'm proud of him."



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Lance Cpl. Thang Doan (second from right), an administrative clerk with Headquarters Company of Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., raises his hand while taking the oath of allegiance during a naturalization ceremony at the air station's annual air show here Sept. 11. The event was open to the public and included a performance by the Navy flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels.

Doan said the process of becoming a citizen didn't take as long as he thought it would.

"I started the package in April," Doan said. "So it only took six months for everything to be finished with my paperwork."

Doan first came to America in 2007 and said it was a huge culture shock.

"In my village we didn't have any cars or fast food places and stuff like that," he said. "We had our own chickens and grew all our own vegetables. Our only transportation was bicycles

and scooters."

Doan and his family moved in with his grandmother, who has lived in America for several years.

Doan said one of the first places he went when he got to America was McDonald's to get "a real American cheese burger."

Doan said attending his local church helped him overcome the language barrier. Thanks to the support of volunteers, Doan said he quickly learned to speak English.

"They worked with me all the time," said Doan with a smile. "It didn't take long before I could speak English a little bit, but I still need to get a lot better."

Doan joined the Marine Corps July of last year and said it is something he wanted to do ever since he came to America.

"I wanted to join the military to have a better life for myself, and now I do," he said.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Members of the Blue Angels perform an aerial maneuver during the NAS Fallon's annual air show Sept. 11. Thousands of service members and civilians gathered at the air station to attend the show, which included a naturalization ceremony where four military personnel became U.S. citizens.



Ball Gown Fashion show

16th Annual Ball Gown Fashion Show
Wednesday, September 30th

4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Main Exchange

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Sale will run from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., September 30th ONLY!

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Microchipping a must for all Combat Center pets

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combat Center residents will be required to microchip their dogs and cats by Oct. 15, to comply with changes to the pet policy set forth in Marine Corps Order 11000.22 Chapter Five, change six.

Microchips are a small pill-shaped computer chip that is embedded with a number. The chip is then placed under the animals' skin where it can be scanned easily by a veterinarian. When a pet runs away and is picked up by the local pound, they will automatically scan for a chip. The number associated with the chip will be matched up with the owner's information, making it easier to return lost animals.

The policy was set in place and is strictly followed by Lincoln Military Housing to ensure the safety of all Combat Center.

"To ensure everybody received word about the

changes, we hand delivered notices to each resident," said Diana Torres, the district manager for Lincoln Military Housing. "The notices explain what needs to be done if a resident owns a pet."

The Marine Corps Order states that every dog and cat must be microchipped, and certification must be shown to the Veterinary Treatment Facility.

To help ease owners' concerns about having to make an appointment to get their animal microchipped, the VTF will allow walk-ins, said Spc. Nathan Kuhnle the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Combat Center's Veterinary Treatment Facility. It costs \$30 for the VTF to implant a chip, but it lasts for a year.

One of the first things explained in the policy are the prohibited dog breeds. Pit bulls have already been banned, but Rottweilers, wolf hybrids, or any canine breed with dominant traits

of aggression that can cause an unreasonable risk to the housing area have been added to the list, Kuhnle said. The Combat Center has added onto the policy, and has also banned boxer breeds.

Residents who currently own one of the prohibited dogs must submit an administrative action form for a grandfather waiver to keep their pets. Before submitting the request, the pet must complete a nationally-recognized temperament test, such as the Canine Good Citizen and Delta Society test. The grandfather period ends Sept. 30, 2012.

"Pet owners who own one of the newly banned breeds must take their dog to the animal control office and take a temperament test," said Kuhnle, a Chicago native. "After their dogs test, they need to receive a red tag saying they are not aggressive and they are up to date on all their vaccines."

If an animal does not



COURTESY PHOTO

Marine Corps Order 11000.22 Chapter Five, change six is requiring Combat Center pet owners to microchip their dogs and cats, and to present the certification to the Veterinary Treatment Facility by Oct. 15. Although the VTF prefers pet owners to make an appointment, walk-ins will be accepted.

pass the test, the owners must remove the dog from aboard the Combat Center and Vista Del Sol housing.

If the pet owners change duty stations, their grandfather waiver will be cancelled and they need to get rid of the dog, unless it is a boxer breed. If the service mem-

ber owns a boxer, they should contact their new duty station to determine the base policy.

"If they do not comply with the order they can lose their pet privileges," said Torres, a Twentynine Palms, native. "First they will get a warning, then a

citation and then they will be taken to magistrate."

For more information regarding Marine Corps Order 11000.22, contact Lincoln Military Housing at 368-4500. To make an appointment to microchip an animal, contact the VTF at 830-6896.

Prefer your news from the web?



READY FOR A CHANGE? CHECK OUT **ONE EIGHTY** Some Jesus, Some Message, Different Attitude. Worship with a coffee house atmosphere. Sundays 10:30 a.m. Located directly across from the Post Office in the heart of Twentynine Palms, CA. 366-8429 / One80j@hotmail.com



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Raul Ries looks through the Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight of an M-16 A4 service rifle while 1st Lt. Ben Brewster, the executive officer for Co. G, 2nd Bn., 7th Marines, explains the difference of an ACOG and iron sights.

SPEAKER, from A1

with Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, who had just completed a five mile trek with a full combat load.

As the service members began to settle into their seats, Ries began his speech. He talked about his life and how he slowly lost control and how he decided to kill himself, his wife and his child.

"I was sitting at home and I remember my wife's suitcases were by the door—she was packed and ready to leave me," Ries said to the crowd of listening Marines. "I had it in my mind I was already going to kill her, and

while I was waiting for her to come home from church, I had destroyed my house and I hit the T.V. with my rifle, which caused it to turn on.

"There was a man on the T.V. talking about Jesus and it seemed that he was talking directly to me," said Ries. "I didn't see lightning or hear a voice, I just prayed — and I felt a complete change in my life."

As he continued his speech, he commended the devil dogs sitting in front of him and spoke about his time serving with Company A, 1/7, during the Vietnam War.

"His story was short and to the point," said 1st Lt. Ben Brewster, the executive officer for 2/7's Co. G. "But in his speech he connected more with the Marines than any hour-long sermon."

Brewster later sat down with Ries for a one-on-one interview for the documentary, agreeing to tell the story of his deployment to Afghanistan.

"If he can take my story and use what I have to say to help people, I think it is great," said Brewster, a La Plata, Md., native. "The fact that he is here today, taking his time to talk to me, and speak to the Marines is an awesome concept—especially from a Vietnam veteran."

Ries spent the rest of his time aboard the Combat Center speaking to Marines and sailors about their experiences while deployed, and told them stories about his time in Vietnam while comparing how much the Marine Corps has changed since then.

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- Friday Night Intercessory Prayer - 7 P.M.

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Sat. 9-Noon (Except Holidays)
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Corner Apache Trail, Yucca Valley

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Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Study 6:00PM
367-9400

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Holy Eucharist 10:00 A.M.
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365-7133

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Christ Centered Church
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Yucca Valley Church of Religious Science
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365-2205
yvcrs.org

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59077 Yucca Trail, Yucca Valley
CHURCH: 365-2548 Preschool & Daycare: 369-9590

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Annual chili and chocolate contest raises CFC funds

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The large conference room was packed almost shoulder-to-shoulder with Marines, sailors, foreign force representatives and civilians, abuzz with what would

happen in the next few minutes. This room, which is typically reserved for formal briefs, emitted a much lighter mood that day, along with an alluring aroma of stewing meat and spices.

The Combat Center's Operations and Training Branch held their fourth annual

G-3 Chili and Death by Chocolate Contest at the Emergency Operations Center here Sept. 11.

The contest, which was open to the entire installation, raises funds for the Combined Federal Campaign, the world's largest annual workplace charity campaign. The CFC gives contributors a choice of which non-profit organizations their donations will be sent to, according to the CFC Web site, <http://www.opm.gov/CFC>.

Funds are raised by charging the chili cooks and chocolate connoisseurs for their food entries, as well as charging a \$5 or \$6 fee for those interesting in eating the food.

This year, the event raised more than \$600 in the first hour, thanks to the generosity of Marines, sailors, civilians and families aboard the Combat Center.

"I think this speaks for itself," said Maj. Craig Smith, a future operations officer with the Operations and Training Branch and a judge for the contest. "The CFC is an important fundraiser in the Marine Corps. By virtue of putting together small events like these each year, we show our willingness to help fellow Americans. It's obvious we feel strongly enough about it to continue each year."

Capt. Michael A. Nolan, the Exercise Support Division ordnance maintenance officer here, and winner of the hot chili category, made his first entry in the contest

this year, and agreed with the importance of supporting the campaign.

"The most important part of this whole thing is supporting the CFC," said Nolan, a Kennewick, Wash., native. "It's great that individuals can choose to donate to the organizations that interest them the most. We need to continue to raise awareness and bring visibility to the CFC through events like these."

Other contest winners, like Maj. Stephen Ford, a current operations officer with the Operations and Training Branch, and his wife, Tiffani, also enjoyed their first entries in the contest.

Ford, a native of Gage, Okla., won the exotic chili category, while his wife took the winning title of the chocolate contest with her cake.

Tiffani said she chose her cake recipe since she gets so much positive feedback from friends who normally try it.

Some contestants, like Nolan, saw no point in limiting his entry to either just chili, or just chocolate; he combined the two for his winning concoction.

"I put chocolate in my chili because it puts the right amount of sweetness with the spicy kick," he said.

The cookbook was the limit for the creative and tasty contributions made to the CFC by contestants. The operations section expects to host their fifth annual contest around this time next year.



CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

Personnel from across the Combat Center gathered at the Emergency Operations Center at the Command Suite here Sept. 11 to enjoy homemade chili, desserts and good company during the fourth annual G-3 Combined Federal Campaign Chili and Death by Chocolate Contest.

TRIPOLI, from A1

security and intelligence officers," Kassner said. "From there, not only were we able to establish the frequency of future meetings, but we were also able to lay the ground work for what would become Team Tripoli."

Coordinating efforts is vital to the task of securing the

province. In an area containing different ethnic groups, having everyone on the same page becomes essential to understanding activities taking place across the province.

Capt. Chad C. Brooks, the judge advocate for 3rd LAR, explained when the battalion first arrived in Ninewa, arranging meetings with key figures throughout

the province was slowed by having to coordinate with various chains of command.

"Team Tripoli was a way to get everyone on the same page. This includes everyone from border security units to Army operational detachments," Brooks explained.

The different units are working together, coordinat-

ing efforts on everything from counter-smuggling to professionalizing the Iraqi military and police forces in the province.

The professionalization of the Iraqi army and police is something that men like Brooks and Kassner feel they are achieving with astounding success.

"The Iraqi army and

police are doing an outstanding job of growing and organizing," said Brooks. "When the insurgents and terrorists commit violent acts, it's near the homes of men in the IA and IP. As we depart, the insurgents will no longer have the excuse of trying to target Americans. After that, police support for the military and police can

only grow stronger."

As Kassner and Brooks prepare to pack their bags to return to the United States, they can leave knowing that their work on "Team Tripoli," which was formed from an idea, has grown into an interconnected series of military units that will continue to flourish as long as U.S. forces operate in the area.

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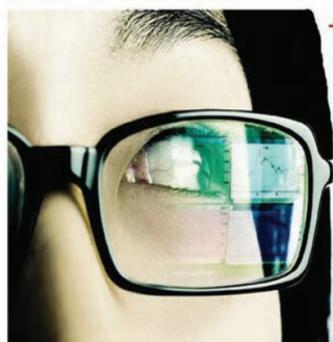
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Deployed service members reflect on 9/11 attacks

LANCE CPL. JASON HERNANDEZ

MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-WEST

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Sept. 11 marked the eighth year since the terrorist attacks of 2001, known by many as simply '9/11.'

That morning, parents sent their children to school, husbands and wives kissed their spouses and told them they'd be home for dinner, employees left for work, and buddies planned to hang out that evening.

Nearly 3,000 of those husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, friends and co-workers didn't pick their children up from school, didn't see their spouses for dinner, and didn't meet up with their buddies after work because those people were taken from their families and friends.

Eight years ago, al-Qaeda operatives denied countless families their rights to see their loved ones ever again. They denied a nation the right to a day of peace for the rest of the decade. On that day, America found itself in its newest war, the War on Terrorism.

Eight years later, service members and civilians met at the base chapel aboard Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, to remember those individuals who were forever taken away.

As those of 'The Greatest Generation' remember where they were when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, so too did most of the service members when asked where they were the day terrorists brought their war to U.S. soil.

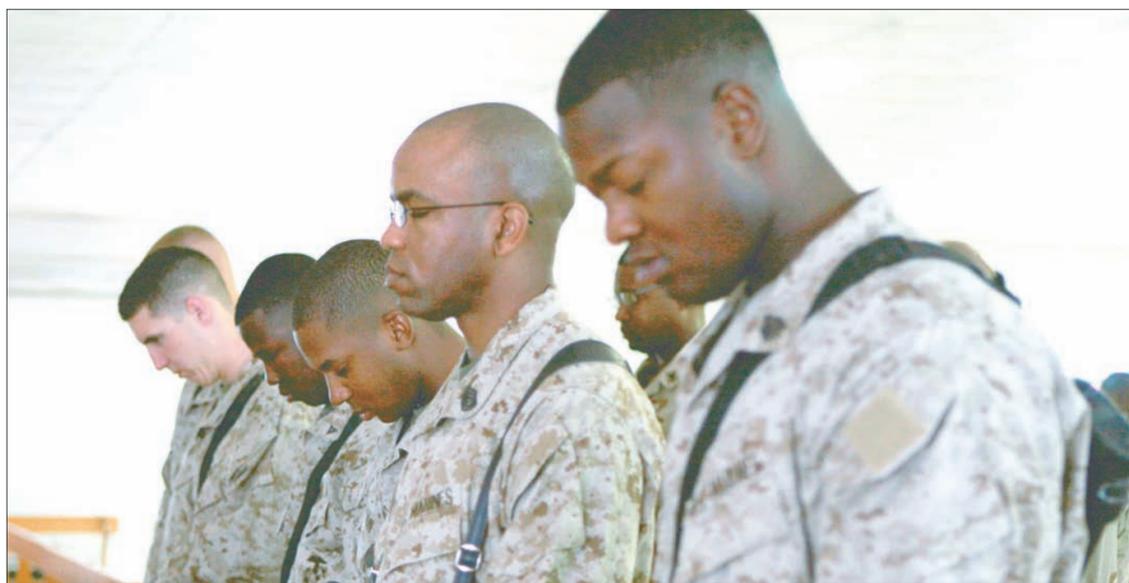
The ceremony was short, simple and sobering. Service members from every branch of the military were in attendance, all with heads bowed in silence.

"I came here to remember the attacks and those who were lost in the presence of others serving out here with me," said Sgt. Michael K. Burns, the II Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group (Forward) administrative section noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "I feel it's important that we pay our condolences to those lost."

Through the entire ceremony, a single image remained projected on the rear wall of the chapel. It was the photograph of a young woman in her early twenties, smiling.

Her name was Sarah and she was a graduate of Boston University. Her brother drove her to work one morning, then went to get a cup of coffee.

Later, he saw the floors below Sarah's office ablaze after a plane slammed into the building. The illusion that this might be some dreadful accident was



CPL. JAMES F. CLINE

Marines with Multi-National Force-West take a moment to reflect during a 9/11 memorial service aboard Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Sept. 11. The service was held in observance of Patriots Day.

shattered moments later, when another plane crashed into the World Trade Center.

All over the world, people were slowly coming to the realization something much larger was at play, and it was unfolding right before their eyes.

"I remember I was on a carrier off the coast of Oman when we heard that a plane had accidentally crashed into the twin towers," said Lt. Cmdr. David L. McBeth, the II MHG (Fwd)

chaplain. "I thought it was some terrible accident. Then I heard that a second plane had crashed into the other tower."

As McBeth was getting word of these events over the news, Sarah was in the towers calling her father. Already hearing that the escape routes to lower levels were blocked by fire, Sarah called her father and said her goodbyes.

Sarah's father stayed on the phone with her until the line was disconnected. The final

'click' he heard marked the moment that religious extremists denied him his right to see his daughter again.

"We stand here not only to remember those who were taken from us on September 11th, 2001," said Col. Scott D. Aiken, the II MHG (Fwd) commanding officer. "Even for those of us who don't know anyone who died on that September day, many of us know someone who has been killed in combat in the

conflicts which have spawned from those attacks."

The anniversary of the attacks is officially referred to as Patriots Day.

As Americans wake up for work, school or to simply enjoy another day of freedom, the price of which may never be known, they do so with the assurances of hundreds of thousands of service members who have served, and are serving, in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Are you ready for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball?

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It's that time of year again — time to start preparing for the 234th-

annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

"The birthday ball is a time where all Marines should celebrate their heritage and strive to look

their best," said Pfc. Justin Crump, a automotive technician with the Combat Center's Exercise Support Division, and Jonesborough, Ark.,

native. "The last thing I'd want is to show up and look like garbage."

With all the Marines aboard the Combat Center preparing for the same event, the Marine Corps Community Center Tailor Shop and Uniform Shop will be overloaded with shoppers and will soon start running out of uniform items, said Derline Pickens, the assistant manager at the MCCA Uniform Shop.

Every year, some Marines come into the uniform shop trying to buy their entire uniform with just days left before the ball, said Pickens, a Chicago native.

Although Pickens strongly cautions Marines from waiting until the last minute, she said uniform shop personnel would never turn away anyone who needs help.

"We will call around to any of the Marine Corps bases around California

trying to find a uniform item a Marine needs if we run out," said Mary Fuga, a product specialist at the MCCA Uniform Shop. "We do anything we can, but if it's too late, it's too late."

Pickens advises Marines to come to the uniform shop early. If the items are not in stock, they can be ordered and shipped to the Marine with plenty of time to spare.

Pickens also advises to make sure they have all the dress blue uniform items they need before leaving for the ball, especially if it is far away.

"We've had Marines call us from Las Vegas asking if there is any way we can send them things they need for their uniforms — sometimes we can and sometimes there's no one that can," she said.

The tailor shop also gets extremely backed up

with uniform item Marines need fitted for the ball, said Eddie Benitez, a fitter and tailor for the Marine Corps Community Services Dry Cleaners and Tailor Shop.

"Some Marines don't try on their uniform until right before the ball," Benitez said. Those that do run the risk of something not fitting correctly with little or no time to get it fixed, he added.

The Marine Corps Birthday Ball is coming up, and Benitez urges all Marines to get everything they need for the Dress Blue Uniform before it is too late.

The uniform shop is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and can be reached at 830-6516. The tailor shop is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and can be reached at 830-6860.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

The Marine Corps Birthday Ball is coming closer and now is the time to get items needed for the Dress Blue uniforms, before it is too late. The Marine Corps Community Services Uniform Shop is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and can supply Marines with any uniform items they need. The MCCA Dry Cleaners and Tailor Shop is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Lest we forget



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

The 94 Combat Center Marines and sailors who lost their lives during Operation Iraqi Freedom are remembered in a memorial created by the Armed Services YMCA outside their administrative building Sept. 11. The Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, who were killed during Operation Enduring Freedom are listed underneath the OIF victims. An angel figurine sits next to the memorial to watch over the fallen service members.

SCHOOL, from A1

everyday people and small children were being helpful and being kind."

Once McVay was done with her speech, students were lined up in front of all the special guests and presented them with medals of appreciation.

Four Navy corpsmen from the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital marched out and performed the flag

folding ceremony while Petty Officer 2nd Class Jose Mata, another corpsman with the naval hospital, read about the importance of each fold.

Cpl. Omar Askew and Cpl. Donald Fowler, both Staff Judge Advocate paralegals, raised the flag. As the flag was raised, taps was played by Seaman Renato Batallones, a cook for the naval hospital, to remember those who have made the

ultimate sacrifice.

McVay then led the school in reciting the National Anthem, then released the students to either return to class or stay behind for a chance to talk with the special guests.

"I think that it was a success," said Carey McElroy, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education officer for the school. "I hope that the Marines and sailors can come back next year."



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Petty Officer 3rd Jessica Reyes, a corpsman with the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, folds the flag during Palm Vista Elementary School's Patriots Day Memorial Service in Twentynine Palms Sept. 11. As Reyes, a native of Midland, Texas, folded the flag, another sailor was explaining the significance of each fold.

MCCES receives 2008 Motorcycle Safety Foundation award

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION

IRVINE, Calif. – Every year, based on nominations submitted by the training community, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation recognizes individuals, groups, business, military services and state programs for outstanding contributions to motorcycle safety in the

United States.

Since 1973, MSF has set internationally recognized standards which promote the safety of motorcyclists with rider education courses, operator licensing tests and public information programs.

Nominees are carefully reviewed and judged within their respective categories by a panel of

motorcycle safety professionals, and for 2008, the Combat Center's Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School was selected as "Best Motorcycle Club" by the judges.

"As the demands upon the rider education community grow, MSF desires to acknowledge those outstanding contributors whose accomplishments

exemplify the spirit and intent of rider education," said MSF president Tim Buche. "Please join us in recognizing this year's true leaders and role models in motorcycle safety, education and public awareness."

The MSF is appreciative of the hard work and commitment and commends the dedication it took MCCES to earn this

achievement. MCCES's award winning accomplishments include three mandatory motorcycle training sessions per year. The motorcycle safety program is overseen by the MCCES safety officer, Dr. Joyce Teters and Staff Sgt. Christopher Fulgum, who works along with Teters in addition to his instructor duties.

However, the success of the program belongs to a commanding officer who believes in motorcycle safety, the MCCES personnel who support the program and the commitment of the MCCES motorcycle riders to safety.

For more information about the MCCES motorcycle safety program, contact Teters at 830-6026.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Combat Center's Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School received the "Best Motorcycle Club" award from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation last year for their commitment to motorcycle safety. MSF has set internationally recognized standards which promote the safety of motorcyclists with rider education courses, operator licensing tests and public information programs since 1973.

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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

M. J. "Mac" Dube is my kind of guy. He is an excellent example of what it means to be a tough minded optimist.

"Mac" is more properly identified as Colonel M. J. Dube, retired Marine Corps officer. He served in the Corps for almost 37 years. He was an outstanding Marine who fought with passion and unflinching courage in heavy combat. He was awarded four (not one, not two, not three) bronze stars each with a "V" for valor. He was wounded three times and received three (not one, not two) purple hearts. In addition he received many other ribbons, citations, awards and commendations from the United States and other nations.

"Mac" is a sensitive, loving, and faithful husband. He and his wife Patti have been happily married for better than 38 years and have twin sons Erik Sean and Marc Christopher. They also have five grandchildren.

"Mac" is a proud father and can tell you how each of his sons is doing in their chosen careers.

In addition, "Mac" has always been a dedicated and involved citizen. He has served on many boards and committees and more than once has been the Mayor of Twentynine Palms.

In his personal life "Mac" is a very disciplined man. He controls his mind and is constantly improving his understanding of life and people. He holds a degree from San Diego State in Educational Psychology and is still thinking about completing work on a master's degree.

There is so much more I want to share with you about this fascinating man and I'm going to be writing about him again very soon.

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

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SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

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B1

Varsity Cycling Team takes on Hi Desert

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT



With sweat dripping off their faces, the sun in their eyes and leg muscles burning, two members of the Combat Center's Varsity Cycling Team pushed their bodies to the limit Sept. 9 as they travelled through the desert surrounding the Combat Center at a brisk 25 mph average speed on only two, one-inch wide tires.

The team, which boasts nearly 40 members, uses their weekly excursions through the desert to stay in shape for local races and triathlons they compete in on a regular basis.

"We get flagged down all the time when we're riding with people asking when and where we ride," said Donald J. Tolbert, a logistics specialist at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School, and a member of the cycling team. "We want to take that interest and turn this Wednesday group of two into a group of 20."

Tolbert explained cycling is not only about the individual, but about teamwork. The motivation which comes from riding with a group helps make the ride more enjoyable and helps each rider strive to maximize their potential.

Members of the team have traveled throughout California, Las Vegas and Arizona, Tolbert said.

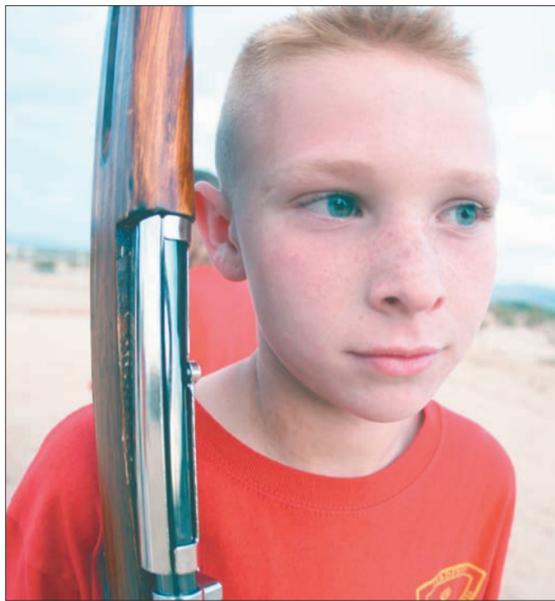
He said the Marine Corps Community Services Sports Department reimburses the entrance fee for active duty military members of the cycling team if they are one of the top three finishers of any race they attend.

In addition to the races the team attends locally, Tolbert talked of a race the team

See CYCLING, B3

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Tom Gardner and Don Tolbert, both members of the Combat Center's Varsity Cycling Team, power their way up one of the few hills that pepper their 25-mile riding course Sept. 9. They were the only two participants that day, but encourage other cyclists from the base and surrounding community to join them on future rides. The team meets every Wednesday at 11 a.m. outside of the training tank.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Young Marine Pfc. Tanner Tipton, a member of the local Young Marines chapter, practices drill movements with a mock M-1 Garand Sept. 11 at the troop's one-year anniversary in Twentynine Palms. Tipton was preparing for an upcoming community service project.

Local Young Marines chapter celebrates one-year anniversary

PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. – A local Young Marines chapter, the Mojave Vipers, celebrated their one year anniversary at their commanding officer's house just outside of the Combat Center and honored the men and women who lost their lives Sept. 11, eight years ago.

The 'Mojave Vipers' chapter celebrated with an award and promotion ceremony, a pot-luck style meal, and games for the Young Marines.

The Twentynine Palms chapter first started holding meetings July of last

year, but it took them two months to officially become chartered.

The children start off in "Boot Camp" where they meet every Saturday for six weeks and learn basic drill movements, and customs and courtesies, said Kathy Horde, the executive officer for the Mojave Vipers.

They then meet every Friday to learn new skills and knowledge and to practice what they have been taught, said Staff Sgt. Daniel Montague, the commanding officer of the chapter who works at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School while

on duty.

"We also do community service, and take trips to air shows, and we're planning on going to the air museum in Palm Springs soon," said the Redwood City, Calif., native.

The program is designed around a rank structure similar to the Marine Corps and aims to teach children self discipline, pride and leadership at a young age, said Staff Sgt. Trevor Jennings, the training officer for the Mojave Vipers and an instructor at MCCES.

"We are not trying to groom kids to join the Marine Corps," he said. "We're just trying to help

children become better citizens in their community – helping them learn to give back to the community, not just to take and to always be respectful."

To be a Young Marine, a child must maintain at least a "C" average in school and be free of trouble with the law, said the Brooklyn, N.Y., native.

The Mojave Vipers are always looking for more children to participate in the program and committed adults to volunteer, Horde said.

For more information about enrolling your child or to volunteer, contact Horde at 830-6520 or 559-3041.

Bodybuilding becoming a growing interest at Combat Center

CPL. NICOLE A. LAVINE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Some Marines aboard the Combat Center spend hours trying to pass the next level on their favorite video games, and many toil days and nights underneath the hoods of their cars. While others focus on building their music collection or beer can pyramids, a small and dedicated number of men focus on attaining physical perfection.

Staff Sgt. Xavisus Gayden, the career retention specialist for Headquarters Battalion, is one of those individuals. Gayden won three awards this month for his performance in two bodybuilding shows, the San Diego National Armed

Forces Natural Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships, and the San Diego Natural Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships Sept. 5.

Gayden, who had never competed in a bodybuilding championship before, took two second-place trophies in the tall class for the Armed Forces Championship, and took fourth place in the same class in the more advanced second competition, said Dean Tait, Gayden's coach and a recreation assistant at the Combat Center's East Gym.

"He skipped right through the beginner's level of the San Diego Championship because the judges were so impressed with him," said Dean, a Twentynine Palms resident.

"I spotted him at the East Gym about six months ago, and I knew he'd have talent. He responded incredibly well to the training, and now finds himself in this incredible spot."

Gayden said he got hooked on working out recreationally with his friends as a means of stress relief while deployed to Iraq in 2007. The habit stuck with him when he returned to the states.

Gayden said he had a lot going on in his personal life when he first started lifting.

"I used to get chronic migraines and short chest pains, and working out really helped me get through all that," he said. "Then when I

See BODY, B3



PHOTO COURTESY OF STAFF SGT. XAVISUS GAYDEN

Staff Sgt. Xavisus Gayden, the career retention specialist for Headquarters Battalion, poses prior to the San Diego Natural Bodybuilding and Fitness Championships Sept. 5.



Liberty Call

Local Events

Officers' Spouses Club's Steins & Wines Oktoberfest
 Description: For all hands 21 and over, German music, food, drinks and fun. Shuttle to and from on-base housing
 When: 7 to 11 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 19
 Where: The Officers' Club
 For more information call 760-910-9027 or e-mail: OSC29Palms@hotmail.com

Starry Nights Festival and Space-Themed Family Fun Day, everyone welcome-free admission
 When: All events are on Saturday, Sept. 19
 Family Fun Day is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 Astronomy lectures 1:30 through 7 p.m.
 Twilight Reception from 7-8 p.m., Stargazing is 8-10 p.m.
 Where: The Yucca Valley Community Center
 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 For more information call 369-7212 or visit <http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org>

Karaoke Night at PJ's hosted by Troy Michaels
 Description: High tech musica; merriment
 When: 8 p.m., every Tuesday and Saturday nights
 Where: PJ's Pub, 57564 Twentynine Palms Highway Yucca Valley. In the Von's Shopping Center
 For more information call 228-1199

Morongo Basin Historical Symposium
 Description: Two days of free lectures and programs relating to our colorful local history
 When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Oct. 9-10
 Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum
 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 For more information call 369-7212 or visit <http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org>

Horseshoes Tournament
 Description: A double elimination tournament
 When: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 10
 Where: The Yucca Valley Community Center
 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 For more information call 369-7211

Lower Desert

Comedy: Cheech and Chong
 Description: Hippie comedy duo comes to town
 When: 9 p.m., Friday, Sept. 18
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Dr., Cabazon
 For more info call (800) 252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>

Music: Crosby, Stills and Nash
 Description: Classic rock and roll
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 25
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy. Indio
 For more info call (800) 827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>

Music: Bontaj Roulet
 Description: Bonnie Raitt and Taj Mahal performing alone and together
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 25
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage
 For more info call (888) 999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>

Music: Alice Cooper
 Description: The original "shock rocker" who forever altered the face of rock and roll
 When: 8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 30
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy. Indio
 For more info call (800) 827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Sept. 18
 6 p.m. – G-Force, Rated PG
 9 p.m. – Funny People, Rated R
 Midnight – The Ugly Truth, Rate R

Saturday, Sept. 19
 11 a.m. Free Matinee – Coraline, Rated PG
 2 p.m. – Aliens in the Attic, Rated PG
 6 p.m. – G.I. Joe: Rise of the Cobra, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – The Hurt Locker, Rated R
 Midnight – A Perfect Getaway, Rated R

Sunday, Sept. 20
 2 p.m. – TBA
 6 p.m. – TBA
 9 p.m. – TBA

Monday, Sept. 21
 7 p.m. – TBA

Tuesday, Sept. 22
 7 p.m. – TBA

Wednesday, Sept. 23
 7 p.m. – TBA

Thursday, Sept. 24
 7 p.m. – TBA

'Taking Woodstock' re-creates magical, musical summer of '69

NEIL POND
AMERICAN PROFILE

Taking Woodstock
 Starring Demetri Martin
 Rated R

Based on the autobiographical memoir of the same title by Elliot Tiber, director Ang Lee's "Taking Woodstock" is a more-or-less factual, comically fanciful recreation of the events leading up to the Woodstock festival 40 years ago this summer.

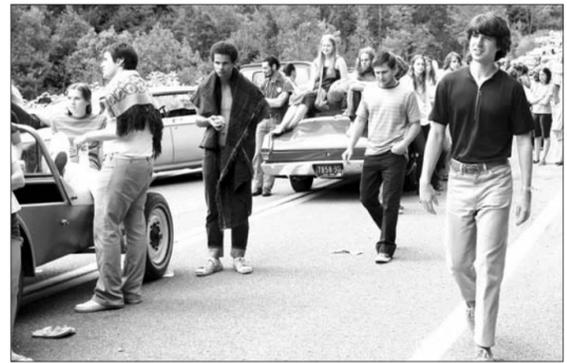
In the movie, the character based on Tiber, Elliot Teichberg, is a young Jewish interior designer helping his parents maintain their seedy "resort" motel in the sleepy community of Bethel, N.Y. Elliott is also president of the local Chamber of Commerce, such as it is—there's just not a lot of commerce in Bethel.

When the big planned "Woodstock Music and Arts Festival" gets bumped at the last minute from the town of Woodstock—nervous

about a bunch of longhairs roosting for three days—Elliott, wearing his Chamber of Commerce thinking cap, gets a bold idea.

He invites the festival to Bethel, where the event's organizers like what they see. They quickly go about setting up a command center at the motel.

The storyline swirls around Elliot, the calm at the center the kaleidoscope of colorful characters either working frantically to get ready for the festival, drawn to Bethel to bask in its preparational vibes, or protesting against it. Emile Hirsch is a standout as Billy, one of Elliot's childhood friends emotionally fractured by his combat experiences in Vietnam. Leiv Schreiber has a hilarious role as Vilma, a burly cross-dressing ex-Marine who volunteers as the motel's head of security. Eugene Levy is Max Yasger, the hippie-friendly local farmer who agrees to lease out part of his cow pasture



COURTESY PHOTO

Elliott Teichberg (Demetri Martin), walks down the highway leading to Yasger Farm where Woodstock is being held in his hometown of Bethel, N.Y.

for the event. Essentially a coming-of-age account of young Elliott's self-awakening on the cusp of an event that would go down in pop cultural history, "Taking Woodstock" stays away from depictions of the actual concert. Once it starts, we hear music, but it's always in the background, in the distance. We see Woodstock—and its communal cocktail of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll—as Elliott sees it. One particular scene, as he weaves his way on a motorcycle toward the concert, is a single long, remarkable camera shot, with a cast of hundreds lining the clogged roadway.

Later, as Elliott surveys the muddy, trash-strewn

pasture after the fans have headed home after "three days of peace, love and music," he's still awestruck by what he's experienced. "It's beautiful," he says.

Nobody knew it at the time, but the beauty wouldn't last. The movie drops a hint of the dark days ahead, at a free concert by The Rolling Stones in Altamont, Calif., just a few months later, where out-of-control Hells Angels would stab a fan to death. There would never be another event like Woodstock.

"Taking Woodstock" does a great job of recreating the time, place and people that came together to make something magical in the middle of the summer of 1969.

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

*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.

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You may bring submissions to The Desert Trail office, 6396 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms, or the Hi-Desert Star office at 56445 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley or e-mail them to osullivan@deserttrail.com. If you have questions or need help writing your story, call Kelly O'Sullivan at (760) 367-3577.



PFC. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Don Tolbert (left) and Tom Gardner launch off to a quick start Sept. 9 as they begin their weekly 25-mile ride through the desert surrounding the Combat Center. Both Tolbert and Gardner are always happy to have new riders join them on their Wednesday jaunts through the desert.

CYCLING, from B1

hopes to put together through the Combat Center's mainside area in February.

If the team can set the race up, they plan to have the course run in a circuit-style fashion in the hills surrounding mainside, said the Canton, Ohio native.

The team seeks any endurance athlete regardless of their skill or the sport they usually participate in. Members of the team will do whatever they can to help novice riders, explained Tom

Gardner, a rider on the team.

"We train and race together for the betterment of each other, as more seasoned athletes assist the beginners," wrote Tolbert in a Sept. 4 press release. "Don't be bashful; the sure fire way to get faster is to train with someone with more experience," he said.

"There is a passion in this sport — a passion in seeing yourself improve, in setting goals and in reaching them. It's hard to explain, but it's easy to see it and feel it once you start riding," said Gardner, who

has ridden competitively for 30 years.

Most experienced riders with a love for the sport will do everything they can to be ambassadors to the sport — from motivating novice riders to giving away their old equipment, Gardner

explained after his 25-mile ride Sept. 9.

The Cycling Team meets every Wednesday at 11 a.m. outside of the training tank. For more information about riding with the team, contact Tolbert at 830-5581 or Gardner at 830-4870.

BODY, from B1

got back here, I'd work out during my lunch period to get away from everything."

Gayden, a Houston native, said after he was approached by Tait and began training, his eyes were opened to the possibilities of competing.

He began following Tait's advise on how to diet, lift, pose and prepare for the competitions. Tait, 66, has lived the bodybuilding lifestyle for more than 40 years and said he was proud to coach Gayden to his victories and is glad to offer free guidance to men and women interested in learning about his passion.

Sgt. Carlos Dideles, an antitank missileman with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, also works closely with Gayden and

Tait at the gym.

"I was approached about five months ago by Tait," said Dideles, a Houston native. "I'm motivated to continue this. It's like showing art produced by your body. It feels good working hard for the kind of body you know every man wants to have."

Gayden agreed and said he is just as dedicated to getting the type of results he could only dream of before.

"It's hard," Gayden said about the training. "My diet is pretty much made up of plain chicken breasts, egg whites, tuna, salad with no dressing and minimal carbs [carbohydrates]. I think I lost about 14 pounds in the first two weeks."

Gayden said he believes the Marine Corps ethos and warrior mentality helps him to maintain the level of ded-

ication required. He has noticed that in addition to improving his physical fitness score and physique, the workouts have also helped his mood, energy levels and general health.

Tait has been with NABBA for more than 20 years and offers coaching off-base and at various gyms in Palm Springs, Calif., to novice or amateur bodybuilders looking to increase their competitiveness and get involved with competitions.

"This is my passion," Tait said. "I'm not getting paid to do this, it's all voluntary because I just love doing it. What I would like to do in the future is homogenize the organization with the Marine Corps around the country."

Tait said his teaching methods are all natural and fit perfectly with the Corp's

anti-drug use policy.

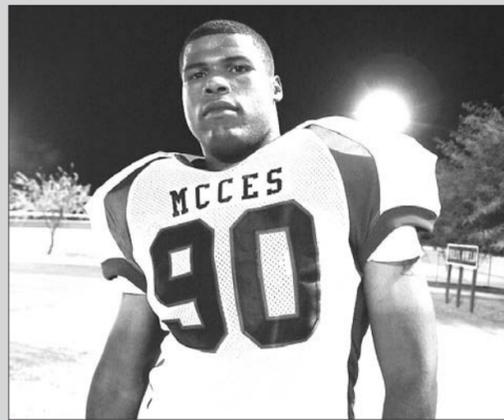
"I think they already have a podium to start off on since they're in the Marine Corps and are used to getting tested," he said.

Tait also mentioned he has a one-day initiation program in Palm Springs set up for teaching others how to pose with a real photographer.

He has registered Gayden to appear in the National Amateur Bodybuilding Association Team USA competition Sept. 19 in Los Angeles. From there, Gayden will go on to the most elite natural bodybuilding competition in the world, the Mr. Olympia competition in Gold Coast, Australia Oct. 17.

To learn more about bodybuilding, visit the Web site <http://www.nabba.com> or call Tait at the East Gym at 830-6440.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Travious Evans

Hometown: Greene County, Ga.

Job title: Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School student

Recognition: Outstanding effort and abilities on the football field.

Major sports accomplishment: "I won an award in high school for most improved defense."

Favorite aspect of the sport: "Being on the field with my friends."

Advice for aspiring players: "Work hard, play hard."

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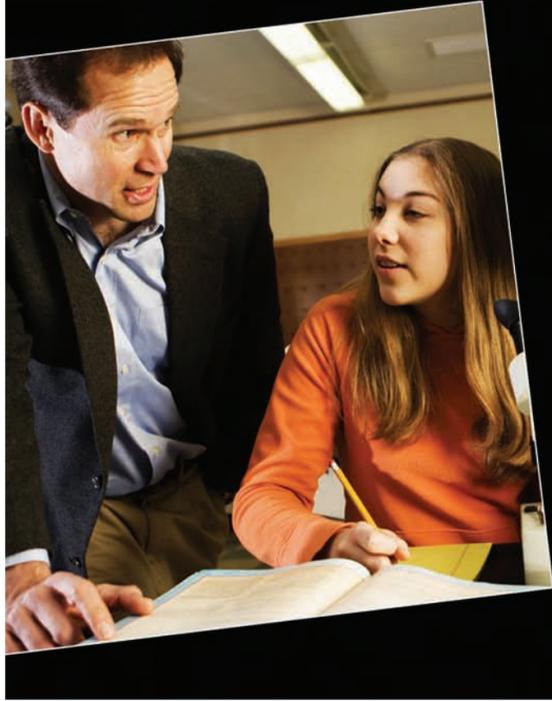
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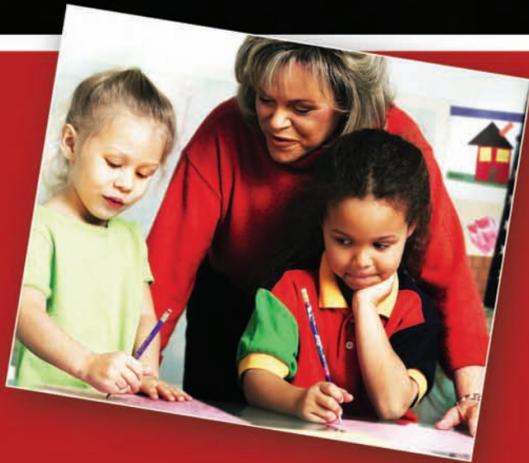
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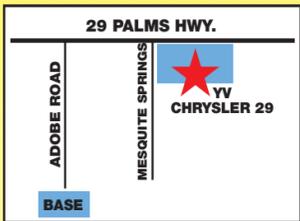
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