

# OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

NOVEMBER 20, 2009    SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957    VOL. 52 ISSUE 46

## Thundering Third builds trust through patrols

**CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA**  
*REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 7*

FARAH PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Marines and sailors from India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, made its way into the village of Kace Satar, Afghanistan, Nov. 11, with a mission: protect the locals, and gain their trust.

The Marine’s of 3/4 believe providing security and building relationships in these small villages will help disrupt enemy activity in their area of operations.

“The little towns are where most of the Taliban forces come and terrorize the people,” said Cpl. Bradley Penn, a section leader with 3/4. “They then have the opportunity to store things [in the towns]. So if we don’t go to the little towns, then we won’t have the opportunity to find those caches of ordinance they use in [improvised explosive devices] or any weapons systems they may have.”

The first of the four patrols headed into the town to visit with the local Afghans after setting up security and performing gear checks.

The Marines took necessary precautions with their



CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Marines with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, hand out water to local children during a patrol of the village of Kace Satar, Afghanistan, Nov. 11.

See TRUST, A3



PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Lance Cpl. Felipe Pech, a chemical biological radiological and nuclear specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, examines the Joint Chemical Agent Detector Tuesday at the CBRN warehouse aboard the Combat Center. Several units on base will receive the new, lighter detectors in the near future.

## Combat Center infantry units train on new chemical detector

**CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON**

*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

Combat Center infantry Marines trained as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear specialists were instructed on a new piece of equipment at the CBRN warehouse aboard the installation Tuesday.

The Joint Chemical Agent Detector, received great reviews from the Marines. Several said they hope the new equipment will be available soon to take on training mis-

sions and deployments.

“The JCAD is a lot smaller and lighter than our old equipment,” said Cpl. Matthew Davis, the CBRN chief for 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. “It detects nerve, blister and blood agents – and chlorine as well.

“The JCAD just makes things a lot easier to handle than this,” he said as he pulled out the older, heavier equipment.

The JCAD weighs only two pounds compared to the previous bulky equipment used to detect harmful chemi-

cals, which can reach nearly 19 pounds.

The JCAD will be replacing the two pieces of equipment; the M22 Automatic

Chemical Detector Alarm and Chemical Agent Monitor, both having radioactive sources to scan the surroundings wh ich require a lot of special handling and logging, said Warrant Officer Charles Villalobos, the CBRN Officer for 2nd Bn., 7th Marines. “This new equipment doesn’t have the radioactive source,

See DETECTOR, A4

## How to avoid ‘holidangers’

**CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE**

*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

The holidays are a time for families, friends and loved ones to come together and enjoy all the fine things associated with the joyful season. However, with the traditional meals, decorations and activities, the holidays are also a time to make safety a top priority.

Darlene Hull, the fire prevention chief with the Combat Center Fire Department, and South Lake Tahoe, Calif., native, said there are several tips for enjoying the holidays safely.

When looking to add some sizzle to a Thanksgiving-day meal, installation personnel may be thinking about deep-frying their holiday bird. Backyard deep-fryers are becoming more and more popular as consumers try to break away from traditional cooking methods. With the extra moisture and flavor that comes with a deep-fried turkey, there also comes a surplus of dangers involved in the process.

Hull said those who plan to use a deep-fryer to prepare their turkey may need to find alternative cooking methods.

“The use of a turkey fryer is prohibited in public housing and not recommended in single family dwellings,” she said. “Check with your homeowners or renters insurance company whether losses due to turkey fryers are covered



COURTESY PHOTO

Open flames are extremely dangerous around Christmas trees. Avoid open-flame decoration whenever possible.

and read the manufacturers instructions. Turkey fryers are considered unsafe by [Underwriters Laboratories Inc.] due to the high risk and the number of fires attributed to their use. Therefore, UL will not list them for use.”

UL is an independent product safety certification organization that has been testing products and writing standards for safety for more than a century, according to the UL Web site, <http://www.ul.com>. UL evaluates

more than 19,000 types of products, components, materials and systems annually with 20 billion UL Marks appearing on 72,000 manufacturers’ products each year.

Hull said there are several resources consumers can use if they still plan on cooking with deep fryers.

“Additional information and videos are available online,” she said. “Use a search engine and educate yourself well before

See SAFETY, A7



Into the breach ~ See A3



Fresh pairs of eyes ~ See A6



Finals rematch ~ See B1



‘Ugly’ is the new hot~ See B1

## Semper Moto

### Sitting is not a sport

JOHN FLEMING

When the vast majority of motorcyclists hear the words “body position”, they don’t usually associate the concept with motorcycling. What they don’t realize is that body position is a critical factor in motorcycling, and can make the difference between a decent rider and a great rider.

Most riders know initiating lean, which is necessary for cornering, is accomplished by pressing on the handlebars. The technique is called counter-steering. Press left...lean left. For low speed maneuvers, direct steering is more applicable. Turn left...go left. In either case, the degree of lean can be controlled with body position.

For slow speed maneuvers – like making a U-turn or negotiating a crowded parking lot – counter-weighting is the key to success. Shifting bodyweight to the outside allows a rider to lean his bike more than if he remained firmly perched on the seat. The increased lean yields a tighter turn.

In higher speed cornering, when a rider shifts his weight to the inside, the motorcycle actually leans less in a curve, and traction is improved. As a positive consequence, when the rider enters a curve with less lean angle he has a greater margin for error. If he needs to lean over more –in a decreasing radius turn, for example – he can do so with less risk of losing traction.

We’re just scratching the surface here. For experienced riders who would like to discover first-hand the benefits of adjusting body position, there’s no better place than the Military Sport Bike Rider Course. Coaches are standing by, ready to sign you up.

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 Information



**Question:** We will be moving to California this December. What are the requirements for High School Graduation?

**Answer:** The requirements for High School Graduation in California can be found at this Web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gc/hs/hsgrgen.asp>. Additionally, each student must pass the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) to graduate. Sample tests and study guides provide additional support for success: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/>.

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



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

### Combat Center Spotlight

**Name:** Lance Cpl. Jeremiah Handeland  
**Hometown:** Estherville, Iowa  
**Job Title:** Combat Cameraman  
**Job Duties:** Taking photos  
**What do you like most about your job?** Going to the field and taking photos of training at the Combat Center.  
**Significant Achievements:** Working in joint services training missions.  
**Hobbies:** Taking photos, watching movies and off roading  
**Military Service:** Two years  
**Time at Combat Center:** One year



### OBSERVATION POST

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## Hot Topics

### TECHNOLOGY EXPO

“Discover Solutions For Every Mission”. The exposition takes place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 1 at the Officers’ Club. All military, civilian and contractor personnel are invited to attend at no cost. Over 20 exhibitors will demonstrate the latest in wireless communications, computer and networking equipment, advanced education, hardware and software, VTC Systems, VolP, Disaster Response Systems, field measurements, Cyber Security, vehicle maintenance, audio/visual equipment and much more. Refreshments will be served and giveaways offered while supplies last! The event will be hosted by the Communication and Information Systems branch. For a list of exhibiting companies or to request a company, contact: Tanya Mirican, Mirican@ncsi.com. Phone: 443-561-2438. Pre-Register at <http://www.FederalEvents.com>.

### SEVENTH ANNUAL TOYS FOR TOTS GOLF TOURNAMENT DEC. 4

Sponsored by AC/S G-4 is scheduled to be held at the Desert Winds Golf Course, Friday, Dec. 4. Format: four-person scramble, shotgun start, 8:30 a.m. Showtime - 9:30 a.m. T-time Cost: \$50 per player, includes continental breakfast, lunch, green fees, cart rental and range balls. Entry deadline is Nov. 24. AC/S G-4 requests that all participants bring at least one new unwrapped toy valued at \$10 or more (or \$10 in cash), to be placed in a T4T barrel at check in. For every toy donated, you will receive a ticket for the drawing. In addition, four mulligans per team will be sold for \$5, money going to Toys for Tots. For more info contact Steve Johnson 830-3975.

### Marine Corps History

Nov. 20, 1917

The 9th Regiment is organized at Quantico, Va., to serve with the Advance Base Force.

## Centerspeak

### “What has changed the most about you since you joined?”

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



LANCE CPL. JON DEPINET  
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY,  
1ST TANK BATTALION

“I’ve grown more independent and self-sufficient as a man.”



SEAMAN APPRENTICE JOSHUA GARCIA  
COMPANY B, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH  
MARINE REGIMENT

“I went from being a salesman trying to sell things to people, to saving people from danger. I’ve achieved many of my goals in the military.”



CPL. JESSE BUTLER  
MARINE WING SUPPORT SQUADRON 172,  
OKINAWA, JAPAN

“I can sleep anywhere.”

SUDOKU #1631

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2009 HOMETOWN CONTENT

## COUNT UP

[puzzle Solutions on A6]

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
	20									21				
25	26	27				28		29				30	31	32
33						34			35				36	
37						38	39	40					41	
42						43					44	45		
46				47					48	49		50		
				51					52		53			
54	55	56						57					58	59
60						61	62							63
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

### ACROSS

- Teen hangouts
- Fresh-mouthed
- In \_\_ straits
- Nose around
- Pizzeria fixture
- How the duped feel
- Circus rider
- Rhames who played Kojak
- Hot, in Vegas
- Unhealthy-looking
- Wheels for a CEO, maybe
- Far-fetched
- Kemo \_\_
- Gear for a birdwatcher
- Far from tactful
- Smelter loads
- “Dapper” one
- Bloggers’ revenue sources
- Tribe infant

- Formula \_\_ auto racing

- Thumbs-downs
- Flaws and all
- Suit fabric
- Ironman competitor
- Tarot card reader
- Do some KP work
- Spacewalks, in NASA-speak
- Spelunkers’ needs
- Boob tubes
- Village Voice bestowal
- Center of many campuses
- \_\_ mater
- Rebuke from Caesar
- “Get lost!”
- Salt lick visitor
- Like one end of many pools
- Proctors’ handouts

### DOWN

- East Lansing sch.
- Part of AD
- Pork or beef cut
- Settings
- “Heidi” author Johanna
- Hoi \_\_
- Satan’s doing
- In medias \_\_
- Explosive stuff
- Hagen player in “The Godfather”
- Cow-horned goddess
- Monopoly payout
- Nervously irritable
- Rooster’s topper
- Added benefits
- Lawn mower brand
- Deck foursome
- Barely sufficient
- Intense passion
- Low men at theMet
- Oater “necktie”

- Be nuts about
- Place to practice driving
- Villain’s look
- Sudden outpourings
- Tennis great for whom a stadium is named
- Dosage unit
- Heart of the matter
- Come into view
- Prepared to drive
- Penultimate fairy-tale word
- Salt’s “Halt!”
- Dryer unit
- Up to the task
- Performer in white face
- \_\_ Modern (British museum)
- Swellheads’ problems
- Schedule opening
- Proof-ending letters
- Sport\_\_(versatile vehicle)
- Martians, e.g.

# Delta Company 1st Tanks breaches the wall

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combining the power and armor of the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and support from follow-on forces to breach an obstacle and push forward is essential in war fighting. Both elements support each other because each has the ability to do what the other cannot do in some cases, said Master Sgt. Timothy Tompkins, a tankerman with Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, and a native of Kensington, Kan. The Mine Clearing Line Charge is the largest charge on the ground side of the military, said 2nd Lt. Devin Jewell, a platoon commander with Company A, 3rd

Combat Engineer Battalion, and a native of Vestabure, Mich. “It’s a great experience to breach like that,” Jewell said after an exercise. “You get a chance to make things happen, and that’s what it’s all about in training.” Breaching is meant to clear obstacles and prepare for a second punch delivered by supporting elements, Tompkins said. Tompkins elaborated on the different ways the exercise can be performed. “We can use MCLCs, plows on Assault Breacher Vehicles or on tanks,” he said. “The MCLCs are used to blow up mine fields or berms so those coming behind us

See DELTA, A6



A mine clearing line charge explodes Oct. 24 at the Combat Center during breaching exercises at the Combat Center. First Tank Battalion worked hand-in-hand with other units from 1st Marine Division in their breaching exercises.

## TRUST, from A1

route and made sure not to disturb the local farm fields as they carefully navigated their way through the outskirts of the town. The first patrol, led by Penn, was met by local elders and other villagers upon entering the town. Following an exchanging of pleasantries, the elders guided the patrol down the village’s many dusty pathways, while talking with the Marines about their key concerns which include the village’s water shortage. The second patrol into the city proved a test of the Marines’ training. The Marines had spotted a possible enemy observer on a ridge overlooking the town. Once the patrol’s security element confirmed their belief of possible enemy observation, the Marines switched into high gear and surrounded the possible threat. “I thought worst-case scenario, it could be someone with [binoculars] looking at our patrol, and that he could be a forward observer and maybe [the Taliban] were going to try to [indirect fire] on us,” said Cpl. Nic Rodriguez, 22, a vehicle commander with India Co. “The only thing that was going through my head was that I wanted to get my guys up there as soon as possible to see what it was and assess the threat at the time.” The patrol identified the individuals as an Afghan man and some children who were playing in holes they claimed were created by mortars during the Afghan-Soviet War in the 1980s, the platoon’s interpreter explained.



CPL. ZACHARY J. NOLA

Cpl. Nic Rodriguez, a vehicle commander with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, speaks with Afghan villagers during a patrol of Kace Satar, Afghanistan, Nov. 11. The incident allowed the vehicle commander to observe his Marines in a real-life situation in a combat environment. “There were some good points,” Rodriguez said. “The intensity [the Marines] had was amazing, even if it was just someone we thought had [binoculars]. They treated it very professionally. I liked the way I saw the Marines take it seriously.” The Marines and sailors of 1st platoon were ready to return to their forward operating base after the third patrol had concluded, but not before addressing the town’s water shortage and determining a possible course of action. “At that time, I began to talk to the village elder, who seemed very happy we were there to help out,” said Rodriguez. The fourth patrol was able to help the village by passing

out additional food and water to local children. Once the patrol reached the village center, the Marines distributed all remaining food and water to the local Afghans in need. “The food and water was a gesture of ‘Hey, we’re here to help,’” said Penn, from San Antonio.

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# Traffic investigators putting pieces together



Lance Cpl. John Nelson, a military policeman with the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office, hands paperwork to a Marine involved in an accident on 4th Street, Tuesday.

**LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL**  
*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

The Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office has a special crew of military policemen whose jobs are to investigate accidents and determine the causes and faults off and on the installaion at any time.

"Our mission is to investi-gate traffic accidents involving military personnel, depend-ents or anyone on base in a traffic accident on the base or in the Hi-Desert area," said Staff Sgt. Michael Stahl, the chief of the section and a native of Saugus, Calif.

"We only handle ones off base that involve serious damage or injury. For a fender bender we wouldn't go out into town to investigate it. We've gone as far as Amboy [Calif.] and the [Amboy, Calif.] exit before."

Stahl said the department keeps in touch with unit's higher-ups for the active duty personnel involved in the accident as well as with local authorities.

"We notify the commands of the Marine or Marines involved with the accident to give them a full report of what went on," he said. "We also compile material from our investigations with the [California Highway Patrol] or the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department."

Stahl described the process the investigators go through when they get to the scene.

"When we arrive at the accident, our first priority is to help out anyone injured," he said. "We can try and care for them if the medical aid hasn't arrived yet. We also prevent evidence on the road or in the vehicles from being destroyed before we gather it for our investigation."

"After all that is done, we use what we have to deter-mine who is at fault and what circumstances lead to the acci-dent," he continued. "After we get all the facts in order, we make our reports to insurance companies, the Marine or Marines' command and the local authorities if it was out in

town."

Stahl said the circum-stances for traffic accidents can change depending on many variables.

"Causes of the accidents are different between those out in town and accidents aboard the base," he said. "Off base, a lot of traffic accidents are caused by speed, fatigue and alcohol. People coming back from a long drive, drink-ing and driving or not obeying the traffic laws are what cause almost everything out in town."

"On base however, it's a matter of careless drivers," he said. "A lot of accidents caused here are because Marines don't pay attention to the road when they're on base. Those distractions are usually caused by the driver messing with the stereo or talking on a cell phone."

Stahl said there is another problem more prevalent on the installation's grounds than in the streets of the local area.

"Hit-and-runs are a big issue on base," he said. "Usually those types of acci-

dents are Marines backing into another vehicle and then just driving off."

Stahl said it is a matter of honor, one of the core values Marines need to uphold when they have a traffic incident and don't take the proper proce-dure.

"Marines need to remem-ber that even if they hit anoth-er car and no one is in it, they need to stay where they are and contact PMO," he said. "It's the best way to resolve that situation instead of just disappearing from the scene."

Stahl said the investigations section, as well as local author-ities are constantly taking steps to reduce the probability of accidents inside and outside the gates.

"We give safety and traffic awareness classes and briefs to all the Marines on base before holidays and on a regular basis," he said. "It's part of what PMO does, and we'll be doing more [driving under the influence] checkpoints on

See TRAFFIC, A7

## Stop-lossed Marines eligible for special pay

**CPL. PETE ZRIOKA**  
*MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. – The Marine Corps announced Oct. 23 Marines who were stop-lossed and kept on active duty after their end of active service or retirement date between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, are eligible for special compensation.

Marine Administrative Message 0624/09 states that Marines held on active duty during that time frame are entitled to \$500 per month or any por-tion of a month retained on active duty.

To submit a claim, go to <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/st> oploss and select "Claim for Retroactive Stop Loss Payment," under "Forms" in the lower right

hand corner.

To retain minimum numbers of active and reserve Marines, the Corps stop-lossed troops between Jan. 7, 2002, and Sept. 30, 2003, following 9/11 and continuing into Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"This shouldn't affect many peo-ple," said Gunnery Sgt. Fred Suniga, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., installation personnel administration center's outbound department. "Ninety percent of the Marines who were stop-lossed back in 2002 and 2003 are most likely out of the Marine Corps now."

Active duty, reserve and former Marines are eligible for the special

See PAY, A6

### DETECTOR, from A1

which gives us more capabilities."

The JCAD fits in the palm of a hand, and is equipped with a shoulder strap so Marines can carry the detector across their bodies. When it detects a chemical it beeps a warning. The Marine can then look at an indicator on the side of the device to determine what chemical is in the air and how much is present.

An ear piece can be attached to the detector, and will not interfere with the gas mask seal when Marines are fully protected in a Mission Oriented Protective Posture suit, also known as MOPP gear. The ear piece will help Marines hear the warning beep.

"The device is easy to operate and will help us during deployments," said Cpl. Randy Blancett, a CBRN noncom-missioned officer with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. He also said he hopes a communications devices will be available to add to the detector so it can be attached to a vehi-cle or used to set up a perimeter.



Cpl. Matthew Davis, the chemical biological radiological and nuclear chief with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, adjusts the listening device on the Joint Chemical Agent Detector he and several other Marines were trained to use Tuesday at the CBRN warehouse aboard the Combat Center.

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Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am  
Nursery provided at 9:00am & 11:00am  
367-7812  
[www.oasiscommunitychurch.com](http://www.oasiscommunitychurch.com)

**Yucca Valley Church of Religious Science**  
Healing Lives & Building Dreams  
Reverend Ron Scott  
Sunday Celebration & Junior Church 10 AM  
7434 Bannock Trail, Yucca Valley  
365-2205  
[yvcrs.org](http://yvcrs.org)

**Two Mile Apostolic Tabernacle**  
74301 Two Mile Rd., 29 Palms  
(Next to Lucky Park)  
"Where Jesus Embraces You"  
Sundays 10:00 am 6:00 pm  
Wednesdays 7:30 pm  
Website: [TwoMileApostolic.com](http://TwoMileApostolic.com)  
760-367-0080

**First Baptist Church of 29 Palms**  
Childcare Available  
Sunday Services  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Evening Service 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Services  
Prayer Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
Young Married Couples Ministry 6:30 p.m.  
[www.fbc29.org](http://www.fbc29.org)  
6414 Split Rock Ave., 29 Palms, CA 760-367-7561

**Desert Hills Presbyterian Church**  
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367-4185  
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Wednesday Night Bible Study: 7:00 PM  
Acts 2:38  
"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

**29 Palms Church of Christ**  
72309 Larrea Ave. (1 block up from KFC)  
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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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### Hi-Desert Star and The Desert Trail

# Adopt a Marine program; family away from home

**PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS**  
*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

Marines and sailors aboard the Combat Center, who cannot go home for the holidays, have an opportunity to enjoy a home-cooked meal, a day away from the installation and good company during the holidays.

The Single Marine Program has organized the Adopt a Marine program for years now, and it allows families from the local community to open their homes to Combat Center Marines and sailors for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

“The community really wants to help our Marines,” said LaVonne Lessard, the SMP coordinator here. “We

just need to find Marines they can help.”

Many of the families are either former Marines or military supporters from the community who realize how hard it can be to spend the holiday season away from home and family— sometimes for the first time, said Lessard, a San Diego native.

“Marines sacrifice all day, every day,” said Walt VanBenthussen, who founded the American Friends of our Armed Forces, and has adopted Marines in the past and plans to do so again. “The least we can do is give back to them one or two days of the year.”

VanBenthussen and his wife, Judy, charter a bus to

pick the Marines up from the base in the morning, drive them to Indian Wells, Calif., feed them a home-cooked meal and open their home to the Marines for the day.

Ana Alvarez, an administrative assistant with the SMP, said they are just happy to be available on the installation to support Marines and sailors.

“We get a lot more out of it than the Marines,” VanBenthussen said. “We love meeting these young people and I feel we have the best part in it.”

For more information or to enroll in the program, call the SMP at 830-4767 or e-mail Lessard at lessardlr@usmc-mccs.org.



COURTESY PHOTO

Families from the local community are opening their homes to Combat Center Marines for Thanksgiving and Christmas feasting through the Adopt a Marine Program.

# First-time home buyer’s guide offers galaxy of benefits

**CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE**  
*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

Buying a first home is a big decision and an important step along the way to living “the American dream.” In the wake of the largest recession since the Great Depression era roughly 80 years ago, lawmakers have extended an incentive for reluctant home-buyers to purchase their first home.

The Worker, Homeownership, and Business Assistance Act of 2009, which was signed into law Nov. 6 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, expands the previous first-time home buyer tax credit for qualified first-time home buyers purchasing a primary residence and extends the previous deadline by six months.

Under the provisions of the bill, first-time buyers are eligible to receive an \$8,000 tax credit if they purchase a home for less than \$800,000 between Nov. 7, and April 30, and meet certain eligibility requirements.

Charles McMillan, the president of the National

Association of Realtors, said the new bill includes benefits for repeat homeowners.

“Current homeowners who have consecutively maintained the home they want to sell as their primary residence for five of the last eight years are also eligible,” said McMillan during a Nov. 5 Podcast. “However, the maximum amount for those homeowners is lower – \$6,500 for married couples and \$3,200 for those filing separately.”

The NAR was a major proponent in getting the credit extended and expanded.

“The income limits for both tax credits have been raised to \$125,000 for single buyers and \$225,000 for married couples,” McMillan said. “This is a major victory for our consumers, realtors and the housing market.”

According to the Internal Revenue Service’s Web site, <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204671,00.html>, there are also new benefits to service members underlined in the new bill.

“Members of the military

and certain other federal employees serving outside the U.S. have an extra year to buy a principal residence in the U.S. and qualify for the credit,” the Web site read. “Thus, an eligible taxpayer must buy, or enter into a binding contract to buy, a principal residence on or before April 30, 2011. If a binding contract is entered into by that date, the taxpayer has until June 30, 2011, to close on the purchase.”

On top of the tax credit, most service members are eligible for Veterans Affairs benefits, making the process of buying a home even more possible for low-income military personnel.

VA guaranteed home loans are made by private lenders, such as banks or mortgage companies to eligible veterans for the purchase of a home, which must be for their own personal occupancy.

The guaranty means the lender is protected against loss if the loan is not repaid. It also replaces the protection the lender normally receives by requiring a down payment

allowing borrowers to obtain favorable financing terms, meaning borrowers can choose not to place a down payment on the loan, according to the VA home loans Web site, <http://www.homeloans.va.gov>.

Service members must provide a Certificate of Eligibility to prove their service in the armed forces, by completing VA Form 26-1880. In most cases however, the lending institution can obtain the certificate for free.

VA does not require a minimum credit score for home loans to be approved, however most lenders do. Typically, most banks and mortgage companies require a minimum credit score of 620 to approve a mortgage loan.

To determine how much house a service member can afford, he or she must calculate their debt-to-income ratio. A DTI ratio is the percentage of a consumer's monthly gross income which goes toward paying debts. The maximum DTI a home-buyer can have to be approved for a VA loan is 41 percent.

For more information about the tax credit, visit the first-time home buyer tax credit Web site. To learn more about VA home loans visit their Web site or contact your local VA Regional Loan Center.



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## TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

*by Lou Gerhardt*

The physical death of John O'Connor III last Wednesday gives me an opportunity to share with you an example of true love that I have been relating to people who have been attending my positive living seminars for the past several years.

John was the husband of Sandra Day O'Connor, the first women ever appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court. They were a committed couple who demonstrated a love and concern for each other that could be an example for every husband and wife.

When Sandra was appointed to the Court John immediately resigned his partnership, in a law firm to accompany his wife to Washington.

Soon after the couple arrived, a reporter asked him, “How do you feel about being in the supporting role?” He responded, “Sandra’s accomplishments don’t make me a lesser man. They make me a fuller man.”

When John was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease about 20 years ago Sandra made some serious adjustments in her life. Finally, in 2006 she formally resigned to spend night and day with John.

As his memory faded, he no longer recognized his wife of more than 50 years and struck up a romance with a fellow Alzheimer’s patient. The O’Connor family publicly shared the poignant turn of events.

“Sandra sees this as a bright spot in his life that would otherwise be dark and lonely,” former FBI Director William Webster, a family friend, told People magazine. “She felt if this gave him a little sunshine, why, that’s great.”

So I emphasize once again that love is desiring and doing that which we believe to be in the best interests of the recipient of our love.

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# Erie Co. sharpens its claws at Range 109

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Third Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion's newest company, Co. E, known among its own ranks as 'Erie,' took part in training which was new to some, but all too familiar to the rest of the LAR world at the Combat Center's Range 109 this week.

The company completed tables one and two of qualification with their 25 mm Bushmaster chain gun, the primary weapon used by LAV crewmen when in their vehicles, said 1st Lt. Aryn Vastola, the executive officer of the company.

Tables one and two are live-fire exercises and basic gunnery courses all LAV crewmen must qualify in before moving on to more advanced courses. In the advanced courses, they shoot and maneuver on stationary and moving targets, said the West Palm Beach, Fla., native.

"We've recently gotten a lot of new Marines," Vastola said. "We're in the beginning



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Marines from Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, line up their vehicles Tuesday at the Combat Center's Range 109 before setting their basic combat zero on their 25 mm Bushmaster chain guns. The company participated in the exercise to establish their skills as crewmen.

of our crawl, walk and run phase right now. We're starting off with the basics, doing tables one and two," he said.

Vastola said they have to [basic combat zero], or calibrate, their weapons before firing the tables.

The exercise will help

build need-to-know skills as well as unit cohesion, said Vastola.

"Shooting at the stationary targets in the two tables will help our brand new Marines develop their basic gunnery skills," he said. "They'll build on crew cohe-

sion during the exercise. If you don't know your basics, then you can't be expected to perform at a higher level when you're needed to."

Marines with a deployment under their belt who

See ERIE, A8



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Gunnery Sgt. Orpheus K. Brown, a tank commander with Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, rides his tank Sunday during a breaching exercise at the Combat Center.

## DELTA, from A3

can get through safely."

Different types of terrains are traversed and several obstacles may be set up and overcome by using each of the techniques, he said.

"We can use any of our methods to clear out different obstacles," he said. "We can go through mine fields, ditches and berms."

Tompkins said the exercise itself is quite complicated.

"First you fire off the MCLCs," he said. "After those explode and clear the obstruction, the follow-on forces move through the 'lane' created by the explosion or the plowing done by the tank or [armored breaching vehicle]."

Tompkins said the techniques practiced have been shown to be incredibly useful in combat environments.

"We've used these more than once in Iraq," he said. "It's been proven to be more than effective when dealing with the obstacles we use it on."

Lt. Col. Tom Gordon, the commanding officer of 1st Tank Battalion, said the exercise is a vital part of any large scale training evolution.

"During Steel Knight, we did a lot of breaching," he said. "It is the culmination of a large [Marine Air Ground Task Force] level exercise. We bring in everything - the infantry to the artillery, air [support] and armored vehicles."

The Marines conducting the exercise preferred using some methods more than others, said Sgt. Kevin Booth, an assault breach vehicle operator with 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, and a native of Tulsa, Okla.

"Setting the MCLCs off has to be the best way to do it," Booth said. "It's always a good day when you're blowing something up."

The techniques of using MCLCs and manually clearing berms with plows and tanks will continue to be practiced by 1st Tanks to keep their skills honed for future deployments.

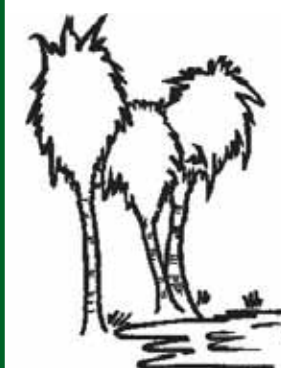
## PAY, from A4

payment, although reservists will only receive payment for the time they were activated. Inactive duty training is not counted toward compensation.

Marines discharged or released under other than honorable conditions are not eligible for payment.

Eligible personnel must apply to Headquarters Marine Corps for special payment no later than Oct. 21, 2010. Applicants must provide documented proof they were stop loss. Discharge papers and separation documents, a personnel record or orders stating EAS date or retirement from service prior to actual date of retirement are acceptable forms of documentation.

For more information, visit <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss>, or reference MarAdmin 0624/09.




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SAFETY, from A1

attempting the use of a turkey fryer. They can be dangerous.”

There are several dangers involved with cooking with deep fryers which could ruin anyone’s holiday weekend. Some hazards include instability of the cooker resulting in a significant spill, flame ups, and oil burns resulting in intense pain and disfigurement.

Hull said to take precautions when cooking with any type of cooking appliance.

“Never leave an in-use stove unattended,” she said. “Keep combustibles away from cooking surfaces. Don’t wear loose sleeves or loose clothing, and ensure the stove is clean inside, outside and where any grease might pool or accumulate.

“Have a portable fire extinguisher on hand, and if a fire does ignite, shut off the source of heat, cover the pot or close the oven and use a fire extinguisher where necessary,” she said.

Along with appliance fires, there are other precautions which need to be taken with holiday decorations like Christmas trees and lights.

“Keeping fresh Christmas trees well-watered is not only vital to the tree’s decorative longevity, but also to keeping consumers safe this holiday season,” according to a report on the National Christmas Tree Association’s Web site, <http://www.christmastree.org/home.cfm>. “If ignited, a dry tree can become engulfed in flames in a matter of seconds, as opposed to a well-watered tree.”

Hull said there is a simple way to check the dryness of a Christmas tree.

“Consumers should check the needles daily by grabbing the branches and pulling,” she said. “If the needles break and pull free, begin to drop or show signs of dry-

ing, remove the tree.”

Keep all sources of ignition away from Christmas trees - heaters, candles and cigarettes can easily ignite a tree.

Hull said another major contributor to fires during the holidays are light strands.

“Check the strands before putting them up, replace any worn, kinked or damaged strands, and do not use more than three strands together,” she said. “Check for the UL listing, and do not use more than one extension cord per three strands.”

Installation hours of display are regulated by the Energy Management and the Protocol Office, and information is normally published around the beginning of December, she added.

Hull also said the use of candles is discouraged and are prohibited for use in public buildings.

“Battery-operated candles are a great alternative and safe to use,” she said.

Hull said to also make sure home smoke and carbon monoxide detectors function properly.

“Smoke detectors and carbon

monoxide detectors save lives,” she said. “Test detectors routinely, and ensure they are working. Know what to do if your detector’s alarm sounds, practice exit drills with your family, and report non-functional detectors to base housing, the barracks manager or your landlord as applicable. Your life depends on it.”

To report an on-base emergency from cell phones and voice over internet protocol phones, dial 830-3333 or 830-3334, or 830-FIRE. For all other emergencies, dial 9-1-1.

Hull also said to be careful implementing the new area code overlay procedures, “If you accidentally call 9-1-1 stay on the line,” she said. “Hang-ups require a follow-up and or law enforcement investigation.”

Contact the Combat Center Fire Department’s Prevention

Office at 830-5400 for more information and safety tips for the holidays.

TRAFFIC, from A4

base. The local police will also be increasing their number of checkpoints off-base as well, to help get drunk drivers off the road or discourage them.”

One of Stahl’s Marines, Cpl. Brett Wolff, an accident investigator from Columbus, Neb., described how he feels about his occupation and one of his more unique cases.

“I like it, it’s pretty interesting,” Wolff said. “One strange case I did was when there were two drunken Marines driving off base. One of them was so drunk he fell asleep at the wheel and collided with the other one. That’s not something you see all the time.”

Many Marines aboard the Combat Center have been

involved in regular accidents like Cpl. Chad Bloomquist, an optics technician with Company D, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

“I remember when I got hit about a year and a half ago,” said the Rome, N.Y., native. “I just saw the guys taking statements, pictures and getting all our information.

“They really helped me out,” he added. “I knew I didn’t cause the accident, and now, thanks to them, the insurance companies do too.”

The Accident Investigation section at PMO shows no sign of slowing down their round-the-clock duties. To report an accident, always remember to dial 911 for off-base emergencies, 830-3333 for incidents on base, or 830-6800 for non-emergencies.

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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.

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**FOOTBALL CARD COLLECTION.** From mid '80s to mid '90s, many heroes, many hero sets, many team sets. Will sell individual cards, or individual or team sets, or entire collection. Call Stephen at 567-7921. 9/4/09

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.



**LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL**  
Lance Cpl. Patrick Sharr, a light armored vehicle crewman with Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, aligns the bore sight on his 25 mm Bushmaster chain Gun Tuesday at the Combat Center's Range 109. The bushmaster is the main weapon on the LAV-25.

ERIE, from A6

have spent time in the unit, said they saw how the training would benefit those who will soon fill their shoes.

“The company got put together with a mixture of older and newer Marines,” said Cpl. Rob Ray, an optics technician with 3rd LAR, from Kenton, Ohio. “It really gives us a chance to talk to them and walk them through basic stuff because we’ve already done it a hundred times and know it like the back of our hands.”

Ray said the Marines who haven’t been around long should catch up to those who are more experienced.


“With this stuff, it’s easy,” he said. “It’s stuff they learned in the first couple days of their [military occupational specialty] training. I know it and I’m a different MOS altogether. The faster you do this stuff, the faster you move on to more important things to make you a well-rounded Marine.”

Pfc. Thomas Walker, a light armored vehicle crewman who joined after the company was established earlier this year, testified to the usefulness of the training he will receive.


“I haven’t even been in a year yet,” said Walker, who is from Fayetteville, Ga. “The last time I did a BZO on the main gun was back in [the

School of Infantry]. The more I learn now, the better I’ll be after I’m a sergeant.”

The company is scheduled to continue team-building and training for their next deployment as the rest of the battalion returns from post-deployment leave.



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# SPORTS AND LEISURE

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NOVEMBER 20, 2009

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B1

## HQBN, MCCES clash in finals rematch



**LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL**

*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

The players of both Headquarters Battalion and the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School shut out their opponents Wednesday night during the Commanding General's Intramural Football Championship League playoffs at the Combat Center's Felix Field.

The HQBN and MCCES victories will pit both teams in a rematch of last year's championship bout at Felix Field, where HQBN took home the title for the third straight year.

"We'll hopefully take the base championship for the fourth year in a row," said Tony Hall, the assistant coach for HQBN and a native of Houston. "We've played them before and it's always been a good game. Either way, whoever wins, it's going to be a good show between the two teams."

Hall said HQBN will have to keep up their performance if they expect to win.

"As long as we keep playing as good or better than we have, we should be fine," he said. "We played a good game tonight shutting

**See FOOTBALL, B4**

**LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL**

Kevin Spurgeon, a player with Headquarters Battalion, gets tackled by a 1st Tanks player during their game at the Combat Center's Felix Field Wednesday. HQBN shut them out 36-0 by the end of the game.

## Ladies bring out epitome of ugly during Ugly Gown Ball



**CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON**

Theresa Puga, wearing a fur coat, dances with her friend, Stephanie Orozco, on the dance floor during the Ugly Gown Ball at the Officers' Club Nov. 13.

**CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON**

*COMBAT CORRESPONDENT*

The Combat Center's Operation Enduring Families celebrated their sixth annual Ugly Gown Ball Nov. 13 at the Officers' Club for the wives of deployed Marines and sailors.

The Officers' Club opened an hour before the ceremony, so wives dressed in their mismatching dresses could mingle, eat some food

and drink refreshments from the Officers' Club Pub.

After the five-minute warning was called and the wives took their seats, Marines with the Headquarters Battalion color guard marched into the dining room followed by Marines escorting the ceremonial birthday cake.

Following Marine Corps tradition, the guest of honor, Hillary Newman, wife of Col. Randall Newman, the 7th Marine Regiment commanding offi-

cer, was given the first piece of cake. The second piece of cake was given to Peggy Ladd, who has been married to her Marine the longest. They were married March 13, 1977. Ladd then passed the cake to Bobbi Lowder, who has been married the shortest amount of time, being married Dec. 31, 2008.

"My favorite part of the night was during the ceremony when I passed the cake to the wife who was married the shortest

amount of time," said Ladd, who is married to a retired gunnery sergeant. She said although the ceremony was done with spouses instead of Marines, she felt proud to be part of the Marine Corps tradition and experiencing it first-hand.

A message from Gen. John A. Lejeune, the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was read to the wives, along with a message

**See UGLY, B3**



**THEATRE PHOTO**

The show, set at the end of the Cretaceous period, tells the story of a meteor colliding with the Earth and wreaking havoc on the ecosystem.

## Family-friendly, "The Dinosaur Musical", now at Theatre 29

**PRESS RELEASE**

Audiences coming to see "The Dinosaur Musical" are in for a family-friendly treat in this madcap, jazzy prehistoric musical comedy running weekends at Theatre 29 in Twentynine Palms until Dec. 19.

This is the final show for the very successful 10th year 2009 season for the all-volunteer, IRS tax-exempt, non-profit community Theatre.

Director Les Taylor said his biggest challenge was "trying to convert a group of 20-plus, modern day actors ranging in ages from 10 to 61 into 65-million-year-old Dinosaurs. The closer they have become, the more they have discovered they have more in common than their outward appearances may suggest."

The show, set at the end

**See DINOSAUR, B3**



Local Events

**“Season of Light” holiday exhibition**  
Description: A display of different holiday customs  
When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays, Nov. 20 through Jan. 3, 2010  
Where: Hi-Desert Nature Museum, 57090 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley  
For more information call 369-7212 or visit <http://www.hidesertnaturemuseum.org>.

**Real Country Music with Hellbound Country**  
When: 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Friday  
Where: Pappy and Harriet's  
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown  
For more information call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

**Scotland Road of the Titanic**  
Description: The Theatre of Mystery and Madness Series continues.  
When: 2:02 to 7:02 p.m., Saturday  
Where: Blak Box Theatre  
61231 29 Palms Highway, Joshua Tree  
For information or tickets call 366-3777 or visit <http://www.hidesertplayhouse.com>.

**Theatre: “The Dinosaur Musical”**  
Description: A delightful family-friendly musical  
When: 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights, from Nov. 20 through Dec. 19. A Thursday performance will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3, and a Sunday Matinee at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 13.

**Music: Chris Walters**  
Description: Acoustic old school blues with guests  
When: 7 p.m., Tuesday  
Where: 29 Palms Inn  
73950 Inn Avenue, Twentynine Palms  
For more information call 367-3505 or visit <http://www.29palmsinn.com>.

Lower Desert

**Monster of Classic Rock Tour**  
Description: Band members from AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Steve Miller Band and more  
When: 8 p.m., Nov. 21  
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino, 46-200 Harrison Pl., Coachella  
For more info call (866) 377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

**Music: Joe Perry**  
Description: Guitarist and song writer of Aerosmith  
When: 8 p.m., Saturday  
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: Willie Nelson**  
When: 8 p.m., Dec. 4  
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: Craig Chaquico**  
Description: Former lead guitar for Jefferson Starship  
When: 9 p.m., Dec. 11  
Where: Agua Caliente  
32-250 Bob Hope Dr., Rancho Mirage  
For more info call (888) 999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

**Boxing: Chad Dawson vs Glen Johnson**  
Description: Dawson puts his record on the line  
When: 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 12  
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, Nov. 20**  
6 p.m. – The Invention of Lying, Rated PG  
9 p.m. – Surrogates, Rated PG-13  
Midnight – Jennifer’s Body, Rated R

**Saturday, Nov. 21**  
11 a.m. Home Alone, Rated PG  
2 p.m. – Couples Retreats, Rated PG-13  
6 p.m. – Whip It, Rated PG-13  
9 p.m. – The Stepfather, Rated PG-13  
Midnight – Zombieland, Rated R

**Sunday, Nov. 22**  
2 p.m. – Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Rated PG  
6 p.m. – Where the Wild Things Are, Rated PG  
9 p.m. – Law Abiding Citizen, Rated R

**Monday, Nov. 23**  
7 p.m. – The Stepfather, Rated PG-13

**Tuesday, Nov. 24**  
7 p.m. -Fame, Rated PG

**Wednesday, Nov. 25**  
7 p.m. – Jennifer’s Body, Rated R

**Thursday, Nov. 26**  
2 p.m. – Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Rated PG  
6 p.m. – Couples Retreat, Rated PG-13  
9 p.m. – Surrogates, Rated PG-13

## Special effects overrun ‘Disney’s A Christmas Carol’



COURTESY PHOTO

Ebineezer Scrooge, voiced by Jim Carrey, visits his nephews home, his employee's family and two cowering children representing “ignorance” and “want” in the company of the ghost of Christmas present.

**NEIL POND**  
*AMERICAN PROFILE*  
**Disney’s a Christmas Carol**  
Rated PG

Jim Carrey plays multiple roles in this big-budget Disney take on the familiar fable of miserly Ebineezer Scrooge and his classic Christmas day of reckoning. Through a process called “motion capture,” where sensors combine actors’ real movements and expressions with all sorts of computer-animated wizardry, Carrey is Scrooge old and young, as well as all three ghosts that visit him that fateful Christmas Eve. Director Robert

Zemeckis marries his hi-tech, modern-age embellishment to the authentic Victorian roots of the tale. Characters speak many lines verbatim from the 1843 Charles Dickens classic. The tale has been told and re-told many times on TV and in the movies, in versions starring everyone from Lionel Barrymore to Mr. Magoo: Scrooge, a penny-pinching grouch, is transformed after being shown the error of his greedy, selfish ways by ghosts of Christmases past, present and future. Dickens’ tale is best remembered for its God-bless-us-everyone Christmas coziness. But it’s also a supernatural parable of terri-

fying, chain-rattling spirits and mind-warping time travel, with a theme of social responsibility that extends far beyond seasonal cheer. In one chilling scene, Scrooge is confronted with the specters of two cowering, feral children representing “ignorance” and “want.” Before his horrified eyes, they transform into a knife-wielding criminal and a shrieking woman in a straightjacket. Today, as in Victorian England, it’s a pointed, politically charged warning: A society that ignores its disadvantaged risks a descent into chaos. The whole movie looks terrific. The ghostly visits are things of eye-popping wonder, with the computer animation allowing for all sorts of fantastic manipulations of bodies, faces and settings that wouldn’t have been possible otherwise. But director Zemeckis lets the special effects run wild in the last half, and all the razzle-dazzle overshadows much of the evergreen

emotional resonance at the core of Dickens’ story. Scrooge’s transformation from miser to merryman seems more a result of being harassed, mortified and worn down than due to an uplift of life-altering goodwill. And for a movie starring funnyman Jim Carrey, one that puts him in a variety of roles calling on his gifts for broad comedic physicality, it’s surprisingly humorless. The meager laughs come from a barrage of special-effect slapstick. Young children will be frightened, if not downright freaked, by some of the harrowing sights encountered by Scrooge, like the nightmarish cemetery finale in which Ebineezer falls, head-first and screaming, into a seemingly bottomless grave. Everyone knows Scrooge is going to be scared straight. But most people will probably see “Disney’s A Christmas Carol” expecting something with a little more heart and a bit more humor.

Cinema 6

MOVIE TIMES 365-9633

Showtimes Effective 11/20/09 - 11/26/09

2012 (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 6:00, 9:00	Twilight: New Moon (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	A Christmas Carol (PG) Fri-Tues.: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
The Fourth Kind (PG13) Fri-Tues.: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	Old Dogs (PG) Wed-Thu.: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	Ninja Assassin (R) Wed-Thu.: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

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COURTESY PHOTO

Scrooge’s transformation from miser to merryman seems more a result of being harassed, mortified and worn down than due to an uplift of life-altering goodwill.

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Erin MacPhee, (left) walks out onto the dance floor with her friend Amy Gerber, dressed similarly in ugly hats and velvet dresses, during the Ugly Gown Ball at the Officers' Club Nov. 13.

UGLY, from B1

from the current commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James T. Conway.

After the ceremony, the disk jockey started blaring the music and the wives swarmed the dance floor to show off their best – or ugliest moves.

During the dancing, members from the Combat Center's Marine Corps Community Services, including Kelley Coe, the events coordinator, judged the spouses and selected the ugliest to the funniest attire. Those who ranked highest in eight different categories won prizes. The categories included Joe Dirt Queen, Washed-Up Bridesmaid, Ugliest Gown, Most Original, Funniest Gown, Worst 80's Impersonation,

Nerdiest Outfit and the Ugliest Unit.

"All the ladies seemed to have a really good time," Coe said. "They were very creative in what they wore to the ball."

To add to the experience, spouses could also get their faces engraved on dog tags by Computer Experiences, a company based in Twentynine Palms. John Osika, who was manning the booth, said the wives could get as many as

they wanted at no cost.

"This night is such a hoot," said Erin MacPhee, who attended her first Ugly Gown Ball this year. "It is so great these women can get together and have a good time without any pretenses."

As the night dwindled to an end, and the wives left the club, many left with good memories, and new friends with whom to share their military wife lifestyle.



(From left to right) Andrea Scherpich, Beverly Sharp and Terri Haskell, 'get low' on the dance floor during the Ugly Gown Ball at the Officers' Club Nov. 13.

DINOSAUR, from B1

of the Cretaceous period, tells the story of a meteor colliding with the Earth and wreaking havoc on the ecosystem. In order to avoid extinction, the Dinosaurs sign a peace pact called the Treaty of Meat. The problems start when the wise king of the Tyrannosauruses suddenly dies and his none-too-clever 13-year-old son rises to power. Bring in a Parasaurolophus singing star, a Triceratops comedi-

an, borsht-belt comedy, an erupting volcano and the invention of spaghetti, and you have a delightful production for all ages.

Taylor chuckles when he says "The sight of 6-foot, 6-inch Marv Schmelling, as Mr. Glut the Tyrannosaurus, chasing the 4-foot 2-inch Kaylie Coughlin, as a peaceful plant eater, is visually very funny and always makes me laugh".

"The Dinosaur Musical" runs Friday and Saturday nights at 7 p.m. through Dec. 19. A

Thursday performance has been set for 7 p.m. Dec. 3 and a Sunday matinee at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 13.

Tickets are \$12 for regular admission, \$10 for seniors and military, and \$8 for children under 12 and students with a valid student ID.

2010 Season tickets, which include admission for six shows and the theatre's

annual Halloween Haunt are now available for \$68 for regular admission, \$56 for seniors and military, and \$46 for children under 12 are now available.

For tickets to "The Dinosaur Musical" or 2010 season tickets, call the Theatre 29 Box Office at (760) 361-4151 or go online to <http://www.theatre29.com>.

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**Public Notice**

On October 16, 2009, Sunnylands Broadcasting LLC filed an application with the FCC to construct a new Class A FM station on channel 238, serving Twentynine Palms Base, California from studios at a location to be determined with 6 kw from an antenna 50 meters above ground at a site 34 degrees 08 minutes 00 seconds north, 116 degrees 03 minutes 55 seconds west.

The attributable owners are David E Hartman, 37th Avenue Group LLC, Gregory J Smith, Carol J Smith, Patricia Thurman, Angela Koplan, Walter Smith, Gwyn Schneider, Denise DeBleck and Russell Smith.

A copy of the application, amendments and related materials are on file for Public Inspection at the Lifelong Learning Library, MCCS Building 1528 MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, CA. 92278

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LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Mark M. Geletko, the head coach of Headquarters Battalion, talks to his team Wednesday during their game against 1st Tanks. HQBN will play the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School in a Championship rematch Nov. 25 at Felix Field.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Escareno Greyson, a player with Combat Logistics Battalion 7, gets hit after dropping a pass from a Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School player at the Combat Center's Felix Field Wednesday.

**FOOTBALL, from B1**

out Tanks 32-0. If we could play like that against MCCES, we'd take the title by a long shot."

Players on the former base championship team also backed up their coaches' bold statements.

"We're going to do well," said Roderick Beachum, a running back from Florence, Ala. "We want to repeat last year and keep going with another championship this year – and we can against MCCES or anybody."

On the opposite side of the field, MCCES said they plan to diligently prepare for their game against the reigning champions.

"We only have a few small holes in our game to fix," said Tu Tran, the head coach of the MCCES team. "We made a few mental mistakes. Nothing we won't be able to fix without a little fine tuning."

The team will have to step up their game to get past the best on the installation, added the San Diego native.

"We'll have to play another very physical game," he said. "If we keep it to a few mental mistakes, we'll be fine. We beat [Combat Logistics Battalion 7] 21-0, so we should be pretty good against headquarters."

Tran said MCCES has plans on how to deal with HQBN.

"We'll just have to focus a little more on our conditioning before next week," he said. "We'll make fewer mental errors and mistakes if our minds are sharp and we're in shape."

The Commanding General's Intramural Football League's championship game is slated for Nov. 25 at the Combat Center's Felix Field.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Eric Charles, a player with Headquarters Battalion, interceptions a pass from 1st Tanks during their playoff game at Felix Field Wednesday.

**Commanding General's  
Intramural Football League**

**Playoff Game Results**  
Game 1 HQBN 32 – 1st Tanks 0  
Game 2 MCCES 28 – CLB-7 0

**Schedule**  
**Championship Game**  
**Wednesday Nov. 25**  
10 a.m.  
MCCES (White) vs HQBN (Red)

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