

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

DECEMBER 11, 2009 SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957 VOL. 52 ISSUE 49

Family, friends, brothers in arms gather to mourn loss of CLB-7 Marine

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines and sailors from Combat Logistics Battalion 7 packed the Protestant Chapel here Dec. 4 to pay their respects and say farewell to one of their own during a memorial service in honor of Lance Cpl. Brian J. Adams, a motor vehicle operator with the battalion, who was killed in an automobile accident Nov. 26.

After the CLB-7 chaplain, Lt. j.g. Robert Hess delivered a message, "Amazing Grace" rang out from the piano and brought some of those attending to tears.

Lt. Col. Craig Barnett, the battalion's commanding officer, and friends spoke about Adams and about the impact he had on their lives.

"If I had to describe him in one word it would be persistent," said Barnett, a Phoenix native. Adams was a humble Marine who would work until the job was done. He was not too proud to ask

for help when needed and could take criticism well, he said.

Lance Cpl. Mathew Sheek, a logistics vehicle system operator with CLB-7, remembers Adams as a motivated Marine who was always willing to help others even if he was busy.

"When I met Adams I knew something was special about him," said Lance Cpl. Khristophe Loh, a motor transportation operator with CLB-7. "His merits overshadowed any faults." Loh said he also remembers Adams as someone who always volunteered, worked hard and played even harder.

After the eulogies, 1st Sgt. Michael Miller, the battalion sergeant major, called the Marines and sailors to attention for the ceremonial roll call and a 21-gun salute performed by an honor guard outside the chapel doors.

At the conclusion of the service, the Marines and sailors paid their final respects to Adams by joining his family in a moment of silence.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 7 pay their respects to Lance Cpl. Brian Adams, a motor vehicle operator for CLB-7, during his memorial service at the Combat Center's Protestant Chapel Dec. 4. Adams was killed in a car accident Nov. 26. During the service, friends and fellow Marines spoke about Adams' impact upon their lives.

2/7 welcomes new sergeant major bids farewell to Brookshire

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, welcomed their new battalion sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Eric W. Rummel, and bid farewell to Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire during a post and relief ceremony Dec. 4 at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.

Members of the 1st Marine Division Associa-

tion were also present to show their support for Rummel, and say goodbye to Brookshire.

During his time with 2nd Bn., 7th Marines, Brookshire, a Waynesville, N.C., native, participated in the battalion's historic deployment to Afghanistan in April 2008. Their deployment marked the first time a battalion-sized Marine unit deployed to the country since the escalation of the War on Terror

in 2003.

"For eight months [in Afghanistan] we fought with courage, we fought with valor and we fought with bravery," Brookshire said to the battalion during the ceremony. "You are the ones who made Afghanistan a better place. This [battalion] will be the highlight of my career—all of you are my heroes."

The battalion's commanding officer, Lt. Col.

John Reed, also played a role in the ceremony, and praised both sergeants major, saying how much he enjoyed working with them.

Reed said Afghanistan made him want Brookshire to stay with 2nd Bn., 7th Marines, "but when I heard he was going to a higher command, I asked one question: Can I have Sgt. Maj. Rummel stand beside me?"

"I'm happy because I'm getting everything I want," he said jokingly to the battalion.

Rummel, who was promoted to sergeant major hours before the ceremony, was serving as the first sergeant for Co. F, 2nd Bn., 7th Marines.

"I look forward to serving as the battalion sergeant major," said Rummel, a Oakley, Kansas native. "That is my mission—to be this battalion's sergeant major and work for you."

Reed said having Rummel take charge as the sergeant major will give 2nd Bn., 7th Marines a head start since Rummel is already familiar with and has a good working relationship with the battalion's chain of command.



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Sgt. Maj. Matthew Brookshire, the offgoing battalion sergeant major for 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, relinquishes the sword to Lt. Col. John Reed, the commanding officer of 2nd Bn., 7th Marines, during a post and relief ceremony Dec. 4 at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.

Percentage of Benefits



SOURCE: HTTP://WWW.GIBILL.VA.GOV

Post 9/11 GI Bill bolsters assistance for education

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines who decide to trade in their uniform for a hard hat or business suit can get money to help pay for college or trade school as part of the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

The Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after Sept. 11, 2001, according to the bill's Web site, <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. To receive full benefits, a veteran must have completed 36 months of active duty service and received an

honorable discharge. Individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days are also eligible for full benefits.

"There are people using GI benefits now more than ever," said Jeff Fourier, the Combat Center's education services officer. "[Veterans Affairs] hired more than 700 employees at their regional servicing centers just to process new applications."

One reason behind the number of veterans using the GI Bill is the ability to transfer benefits to family members, but it comes with a cost, Fourier said.

"In order to pass on GI Bill benefits, an active duty Marine or military member must have completed at least six years of service while obligating to serve an additional four years," said the Newport, Ore., native.

Approved training under the bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, and vocational or technical training. All training programs must be offered by an institution of higher learning and approved for GI Bill benefits.

The bill pays tuition based on the highest in-

See GI BILL, A5



A day of infamy ~ See A3



Globe treading~ See A4



Toys on the run ~ See A8



Winter 'wondersand' ~ See B1

Semper Moto

Make it your own

JOHN FLEMING

Many motorcyclists are into modifying their bikes, removing stock components and replacing them with custom parts. It's almost a given that sport bike riders will install a fender eliminator. And Harley riders are on a constant quest for the latest safety chrome, all in the name of personalizing their rides.

Customization can present problems if a rider doesn't pay attention to the legal requirements for motorcycles. For example, removing the rear fender assembly on a sport bike usually affects other components. The tail lights, for instance, or the license plate light must all be retained or replaced if the motorcycle is going to remain legal.

Flush mount turn signals are cool, but they are worthless if they can't be seen in broad daylight. License plates must be easily seen from behind. And every motorcycle ridden on base must have two rear view mirrors.

If you're going to start messing with the suspension, bear in mind that whatever you do will affect the handling. An extended swing arm, for example, will increase a motorcycle's turning radius. Those tall ape-hanger handlebars are also going to affect a rider's control. The most popular after-market accessories are pipes. The appearance and the sound are both important. But they better not be too loud, or you're going to get nailed for excessive noise.

Customizing your bike is one of the pleasures of motorcycling. Just remember to keep it legal, and functional, and you'll be good to go.

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: Can we enroll our students into school before arriving at Twentynine Palms?

Answer: Currently, the procedure at the schools is to enroll once you arrive here physically. Where you live will dictate which school your children will attend. The district requires an address for the enrollment application. However, if you are going to be living in "base housing", the district will accept a letter from housing stating that you are on the list so your child can attend the school which the housing area is partnered with. We can always send you the paperwork prior to moving, so you have all the necessary documents beforehand, but will have to wait until you are physically here to do the actual enrollment.

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: Maria Jonas
Job: Barista
Job duties: Preparing coffee for patrons
Like most about the job: "All the people I meet because there are so many different types of people around."
Significant achievements: Winning a leadership award in high school and graduating high school
Hobbies: Snowboarding, surfing, hiking and cooking
Military affiliation: Married to a Marine
Time at the Combat Center: One year



Hot Topics

HI DESERT PONY LEAGUE

Signups for the Hi Desert Pony League for baseball and softball are set to begin Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms. Additional signups will occur Dec. 19, Jan. 9, 16 and 23, and Feb. 6 and 13 at the same time and location. Call 424-6329 or 910-787-2175 for more information.

MMEA, MONITORS VISIT

Headquarters Marine Corps Marine Manpower Enlisted Assignments will be aboard the Combat Center Jan. 5-6 to afford enlisted Marines the opportunity to have direct personal communication with their respective occupational field monitors for potential future assignments. Opportunities for first-term 2010 and career 2010 Marines to receive on-the-spot assignments and reenlistment authority will also be provided by the MMEA visit. See your unit Career Planner for times and location. For more information call 830-6171.

H1N1 VACCINE STILL AVAILABLE AT HOSPITAL

The Naval Hospital is now providing H1N1 vaccination to all who are 6 months to 49 years old who are dependents or work on base. Individuals over 49 years old with chronic health conditions can also receive an inactive vaccine. Contract workers can receive the vaccination at the commissary later this month. For more information call 830-2626 or 830-2002.

CHRIST CHAPEL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The Combat Center's Protestant Chapel will be hosting a nativity scene performance about the history of Christmas and the birth of Christ Dec. 13 at the chapel from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. For more information call 830-6464.

Centerspeak

How will the new GI Bill help benefit the troops?

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



LANCE CPL. FERNANDO SOARES
 HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY,
 3RD COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION

"It will help Marines who are spending a lot of money trying to send their wife or kid through school."



1ST LT. MIKE MAHONEY
 ENGINEER SUPPORT COMPANY, 3RD
 COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION

"Being able to transfer it to your child or spouse."



STAFF SGT. ROBERT MIRANDA
 COMPANY A, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

"It will help give them motivation to seek an education in the military and after they get out."

SUDOKU #1655

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2009 HOMETOWN CONTENT

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ACROSS

- Scarecrow innards
- "What ___ is new?"
- Harper Valley org.
- Gladiator's milieu
- Peter O'Toole's role in "Troy"
- Booze in a 46-Down
- Soft French cheese
- Ill temper
- Yardstick: Abbr.
- Karate class needs
- Wise remarks
- "Peanuts" expletive
- Lighten up
- March 17 musicians
- Sewn-on design, perhaps
- Highly capable
- Suffix with home or bed
- Young ___ (toddlers)
- "Quo Vadis" emperor
- Performer on stilts, eg.
- Comfy footwear

DOWN

- Urban renewal targets
- "Sir" or "Dame"
- Speaks like John Melendez once did
- Lurch from side to side
- Think tank nugget
- Place for a stud
- Joe of the '50s Three Stooges
- Melt ingredient
- Ziegfeld's nickname
- Boxer played by Will Smith
- Short-lived Leslie Nielsen cop spoof
- Item in a dugout rack
- Mario's video game brother
- Perfume by burning
- Tavern order
- Non-PC suffix
- More bizarre

DOWN

- Depletes, as strength
- Harness race pace
- Tear apart
- Hobby farm denizen
- Operator of Sam's Club
- "___ Tu" (1974 hit)
- Rye or Scotch: Abbr.
- Large piece of cookware
- Ireland's hue
- Salesman's estimate
- Ankara native
- "Rag Mop" brothers
- Low-ranking GIs
- Wolfs down
- "___ see it ..."
- Seized auto
- Glaziers' units
- What "i.e." stands for
- Company car, eg.
- Bits in a smasher

- Seats for the flock
- "I give up!"
- Krupp Works city
- Sling mud at, say
- Split on the double
- Wetlands land
- Church topper
- Hot sauce
- QBs' stats
- Traffic lane marker
- ___ Baines Johnson
- Cake with a kick
- Flier to Ben-Gurion
- Buster Brown's pooch
- Back financially
- Do high-tech surgery on
- Wroclaw's river
- Inebriated
- Math proof letters

OBSERVATION POST

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Pearl Harbor survivors commemorate 68th anniversary of tragic attack



CPL. MARK FAYLOGA

Sterling R. Cale, treasurer, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association Unit 1, salutes his fallen comrades in the rear of the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Marine Corps remembers the 2,117 Marines, sailors, soldiers and civilians killed Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese navy attacked the Naval base at Pearl Harbor.

LANCE CPL. DANIEL BOOTHE

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON

OCEANSIDE, Calif. – A handful of Pearl Harbor survivors honored the nearly 2,400 Americans killed in the 1941 Japanese attacks and commemorated the 68th anniversary in an Oceanside, Calif., ceremony, Dec 7.

Survivors, widows and veterans alike threw flower petals into the Pacific in remembrance of the fallen during the Pearl Harbor Survivor Association's annual ceremony held on the Oceanside Harbor Fishing Pier for the 12th consecutive year.

"I was sleeping in the barracks when bullets began to fly in, ripping up

the floor and tearing the wall to pieces," said 88-year-old Adolph Kuhn, who was a 20-year-old Navy aviation chief at the time. "We all thought it was our own guys being careless at first, but after a few minutes everything changed. I ran outside moments later and that's when two sailors drove up to me in a Model A Ford yelling, 'Get in Mac, we're at war.'"

At 7:53 a.m., Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese Capt. Mitsuo Fuchida, head of first assault, issued the attack signal with the code, "Tora, Tora, Tora," according to Headquarters Marine Corps' History Division. Minutes later, the first Japanese planes released their bombs on Pearl Harbor.

"It was early in the morning and I was on my way back from chow when gunfire fell all around me," recalled 94-year-old William E. Greenhouse, then 26-year-old Marine Pfc. Greenhouse, truck and tractor driver, Headquarters Squadron, Marine Air Control Ground 2. "They had attacked right after a payday while we were all out and about."

At 9 a.m., the second wave of planes hit the Hawaiian harbor, continuing the barrage after the first assault leaves to resupply, according to Headquarters Marine Corps' History Division.

"The first Japanese wave lasted about 45 minutes before they went back to reload giving us a chance to fire back,"

according to Greenhouse. "I remember a bunch of us running to our supply depot for ammunition."

As a result of gallantry during combat, 16 Medals of Honor, 51 Navy Crosses and 53 Silver Stars were awarded to the American service members who distinguished themselves at Pearl Harbor, according to a World War II fact site, <http://worldwar2history.info/pearl-harbor/>. Eighteen of the 96 ships in the harbor were either sunk or seriously damaged, and almost 400 aircraft had been destroyed by the Japanese assault.

A day which will live in infamy; 68 years later

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

It's been 68 years since the Japanese Imperial Forces attacked Naval vessels and airfields on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, leaving more than 2,400 Americans dead and 1,282 wounded, launching the U.S. into World War II – and it's important for all Americans to remember that day and those who continue to fight for freedom today.

By the end of the attack, four Navy battleships, three cruisers and three destroyers had been; eight more ships laid smoldering in the harbor.

Then-president Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of the early Sunday morning attack as "a day which will live in infamy," – and it has.

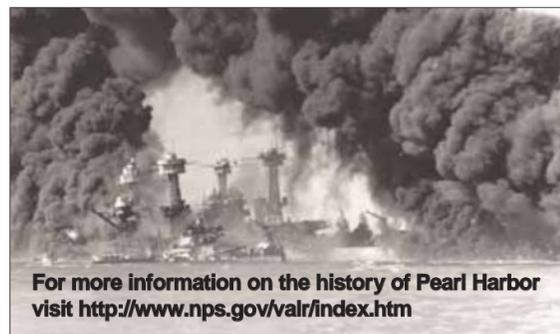
The smoke and fires of Pearl Harbor awoke a sleeping giant – the American military. In response to the attacks, America initiated a relentless island-hopping campaign led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Adm. Chester Nimitz, which ultimately led to the unconditional surrender of the Japanese.

As news spread of the attack, recruiting offices quickly filled with patriots willing to stand up and defend their country, redefining the pride and dedication Americans have for Old Glory. It's that same sense of pride and duty which keeps Americans strong and ready to continue the fight today as wars wage on in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It's been said, "to know where you're going, you have to know where you've been," and for America to maintain its distinction in the world, the statement couldn't be truer.

Each year, Americans gather in memory of the lives lost at Pearl Harbor, and some even compare it to the 9/11 tragedy of this decade.

As the years pass, the number of survivors of the attack continues to dwindle. According to the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association's Web site, <http://www.pearlharborsurvivorsonline.org>, there are only about 4,800 Pearl Harbor survivors alive today. Everyone should take time each year to reflect on one of the most definitive moments in American history, and never forget to take the time to thank a veteran.



For more information on the history of Pearl Harbor visit <http://www.nps.gov/valr/index.htm>



LANCE CPL. DANIEL BOOTHE

A handful of Pearl Harbor survivors honored the nearly 2,400 Americans killed in the Japanese attacks and commemorated the 68th anniversary in an Oceanside ceremony, Dec 7.



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Delta Co. tankers train with Kuwaiti commandos

1ST LT. ROGER HOLLENBECK
11th MEU

BUBIYAN ISLAND, Kuwait - At the government of Kuwait's invitation,

Marines and sailors of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit recently conducted a successful training exercise with a platoon from the Kuwaiti military's 25th Commando Brigade on the

uninhabited island of Bubiyan.

"We enjoyed training with the professionals from the 25th Commando and were impressed by their performance with small

craft and overall enthusiasm for the exercise," said Lt Col. Robert Rice, the 11th MEU's operations officer. "It was a great opportunity for us to build relationships with our

regional partners and solidify our commitments to security in the region."

The exercise cultivated the already close relationship the two militaries enjoyed, and included an

amphibious landing as well as follow-on training. Kuwaiti commandos trained with MEU reconnaissance Marines in small boat operations and advanced infantry skills while other MEU personnel practiced ship-to-shore landing and setting up company-sized training sites.

"Bubiyan Island provided an ideal venue to practice our ability to move from ship to shore," Rice said. "The position of the ships allowed us to practice a true over the horizon amphibious assault."

The Marines and sailors came ashore from the amphibious transport dock ship USS Cleveland, and amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore, which departed San Diego, Calif. Sept. 18 for a deployment to the Western Pacific and Middle East. Members of 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, were attached to the MEU in support of the Battalion Landing Team's training exercises while they are deployed, and assisted with the recent operations conducted on Bubiyan Island.



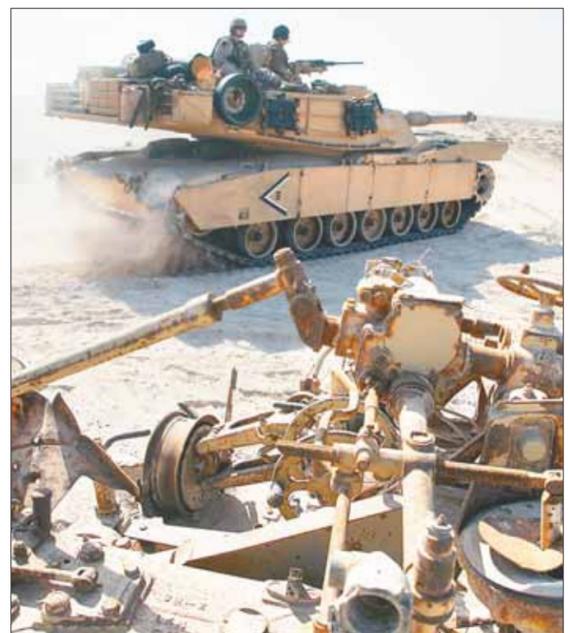
GUNNERY SGT. SCOTT DUNN

Tankers serving with Battalion Landing Team 2/4, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's ground combat element, prepare M1A1 Abrams to operate on an uninhabited island Nov. 21 near Kuwait. Ground and logistics combat elements of the 11th MEU landed Nov. 20 from the amphibious transport dock ship Cleveland and the amphibious dock landing ship Rushmore. The tank detachment is from 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division.



GUNNERY SGT. SCOTT DUNN

Navy Lt. Ryan Bareng, the Battalion Landing Team 2/4 chaplain, helps tankers from the ground combat element's tank detachment inspect tracks on an M1A1 Abrams on an uninhabited island near Kuwait Nov. 21. Ground and logistics combat elements of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit landed Nov. 20 from the amphibious transport dock ship Cleveland and the amphibious dock landing ship Rushmore.



GUNNERY SGT. SCOTT DUNN

Tanks from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit's ground combat element arrive on this uninhabited island Nov. 20 to practice an amphibious landing. A Navy and Marine Corps team practiced the landing here from ships in the Persian Gulf and the MEU's reconnaissance Marines trained with Kuwaiti commandos.

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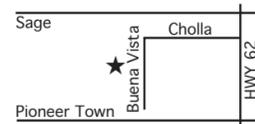
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<p>FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST SUN. SERVICE & SUN. SCHOOL... 10 AM WEDNESDAY MEETING... 7 PM READING ROOM Tues.-Thurs. 12-3 PM Sat. 9-Noon (Except Holidays) 56039 Santa Fe Trail • 365-4185 Corner Apache Trail, Yucca Valley</p>	<p>Skyview Chapel Church of God Worship Service 10:30 A.M. & 6:30 P.M. Wed. Bible Study 6:30 P.M. 7475 Sunny Vista Rd., Joshua Tree Pastor Abe Casiano Church (760) 366-9119</p>	<p><i>This Week's Spotlight Church</i></p> <p>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 760-367-0080</p>	<p>29 PALMS CHURCH OF CHRIST 72309 Laree Ave. (1 block up from KFC) Sunday Bible Study 10:00AM Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM Sunday Evening Worship 5:00PM Wednesday Bible Study 6:00PM 367-9400</p>	<p>St. Martin-In-The-Fields EPISCOPAL CHURCH Sunday School 10:00 am • Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Sunday Bible Study 9:00 am We're Here for Everyone Phone (760) 367-7133 72348 Laree Road (2 blocks up from KFC), 29 Palms www.stmartinchurch29.org</p>
<p>St. Joseph of Arimathea Episcopal Church God Loves You As If You Were His Only Child. Holy Eucharist 10:00 A.M. Onaga at Church St., Y.V. 365-7133</p>	<p>New Beginning Community Church Pastor Lynn Gary Thompson Christ Centered Church Sunday School - 9:30 am Adult & Youth Worship Service - 10:30 am Music & Fun - 6:00 pm 55922 29 Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley 760-910-5261</p>		<p>DESERT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Call for free van ride Sunday 10:00 A.M. - Worship Sunday School ages 4-10 yrs Visitors Welcome Sunday Concert Series • Call for info 29 Palms • 5688 Sunrise Drive • 361-0086</p>	<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 365-4014 SUNDAY Bible School.....9:30am Worship.....10:45am</p>
<p>OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH 6631 Utah Trail, 29 Palms Service Times Sunday 9:00 am Nursery provided at 9:00am 367-7812 www.oasiscommunitychurch.com</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Desert Hills Presbyterian Church 56750 Mountain View Trail Yucca Valley • 365-6331 1st Service 9:20 AM w/Sunday School 2nd Service 11:10 AM w/Adult Bible Study Bible Studies, Choir A Friendly and Loving Congregation!</p>	<p>United Methodist Church of Twentynine Palms 6250 Mesquite Springs Road Phone: 367-7338 Sunday School: 8:00 a.m. - Worship: 9:00 a.m. (Child Care Provided) Reverend Lynn Reece "open hearts, open minds, open doors"</p>	<p>Truth Tabernacle Apostolic Church 73493 29 Palms Hwy., 29 Palms, Ca 367-4185</p> <p>Pastor Titus R. Burns Sunday Service: 10:00 AM Wednesday Night Bible Study: 7:00 PM</p> <p>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."</p>
<p>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 760-367-0080</p>	<p>First Baptist Church of 29 Palms Children Available Sunday Services Sunday School 9:15 am. Morning Worship 10:30 am. 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 6414 Split Rock Ave., 29 Palms, CA 760-367-7561</p>			

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F·O·C·U·S provides deployment stress training to families

FOCUS PROJECT

The growing awareness of the significant challenges of operational deployments on military child and family well-being prompted an initiative funded by the Department of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

To address concerns related to combat operational stress and combat-related physical injuries, the Families Overcome under Stress Project provides state-of-the-art family resiliency training to military children and families.

FOCUS uses resiliency

training techniques to highlight areas of strength in the family and promote growth to help address current challenges. The training is provided in two formats: Individual Family Resiliency Training and Family Resiliency Training Skill Building Groups.

Individual Family Resiliency Training is a multi-session program which uses a structured narrative approach to facilitate engagement and understanding across the family. In sessions with parents, children and the whole family, family members are taught skills to improve emotional regulation, goal

setting, communication, problem solving, and how to manage combat and deployment stress.

Sharing these experiences in a supportive environment serves to enhance family communication and cohesion, and allows family members to create a plan to achieve family goals.

Similar skills are taught in FOCUS Skill Building Groups. These groups create an opportunity for parents and children to share common experiences, receive education around families and operational deployments, and learn valuable

FOCUS resiliency skills in a group setting.

FOCUS was developed by the University of California – Los Angeles Child and Family Trauma Service at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior in coordination with the UCLA Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, which leads National Child Traumatic Stress Network, established by Congress in 2000.

For more information about FOCUS, call 830-3818 or log on to <http://www.focusproject.org>

FOCUS program goals

ASSIST children and parents in developing a customized tool box of coping skills to increase resiliency and maximize strengths.

PROVIDE developmentally-appropriate education to parents and children about the effects of combat operational stress on the family.

HELP family members address deployment stress and reminders to minimize their interference with parenting and family life.

ENHANCE family communication and support by developing a shared family narrative about the deployment experiences.

PROVIDE community-level consultation and group skill building designed to support family resiliency.

FOCUS and families

Parent sessions

- Discuss areas of family strength
- Create timeline narratives of deployment experiences
- Identify family goals and activities to support them
- Learn tools to increase communication and family resiliency

Child sessions

- Build understanding of deployment cycle and common effects on families
- Create timemap narrative of deployment experiences based on developmental level
- Identify child activities to support family goals
- Learn communication and emotional regulation tools

Family sessions

- Create a shared family narrative
- Increase understanding and communication
- Build a family toolbox using enhanced coping skills

FOCUS Project skills-based workshop schedule for military parents

“Keeping Your Family on Target”

Dec. 14
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

“Problem Solving is a SNAP”

Jan. 11
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Jan. 21
6 to 7:30 p.m.

“Stress Busters”

Feb. 8
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Feb. 17
6 to 7:30 p.m.

All workshops will be held at the Village Center training room 25.

Childcare will be provided with 48 hours advance notice.

For more information call 830-3818 or visit <http://www.focusproject.org>.

GI BILL, from A1

state tuition charged by an educational institution in that state. In addition to tuition, the bill grants a housing allowance and annual book stipend.

“Here at the Education Office, we’re available to sit down with Marines, sailors and their family members to speak with them about using their GI Bill benefits and find out what’s best for them,” Fourier said.

For more information about the Post 9/11 GI Bill, visit the Web site or call the Education Office at 830-6881.

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PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Military working dog handlers from the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office pose with Jon Hemp and Ron Carlton, two founders of the Feed the Dawgs organization and Air Force Vietnam veteran dog handlers, at the Home Depot in San Bernardino, Calif., Dec. 4.

Feed the Dawgs lends helping paw to Combat Center

PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. – The Home Depot and the Feed the Dawgs organization demonstrated their support for the military working dog handlers of the Combat Center's Provost Marshal's Office by donating a barbecue grill to the unit Dec. 4.

Feed the Dawgs is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 by Vietnam Veterans in the dog handler, or K-9, community who provide barbecue grills to K-9 units aboard military installations across America.

When Feed the Dawgs came to the Combat Center Nov. 7, they noticed the dog

handlers aboard the installation did not have a grill at their kennel, said Jon Hemp, an Air Force Vietnam veteran, and one of the organization's founders.

"K-9 units are such a tight-knit community," Hemp said. "We thought they needed a grill for their kennel, so we went to the Home Depot and explained the situation, and here we are."

When Vietnam Veterans came home, they never received any thanks, said Ray Carlton, an Air Force K-9 Vietnam veteran who co-founded Feed the Dawgs. Everyone in the organization wants to ensure the present generation of veterans understands their military service is appreciated.

"We try to make sure these kids come home to an 'Oorah,' not what we came home to in [Vietnam]," Carlton said.

"K9 handlers share a bond that goes beyond explanation, said Staff Sgt Joe Evans, PMO's kennel master at the Combat Center. "It bridges services and spans generations. This event is proof of this."

Since 2008, Feed the Dawgs has held 14 barbecues for military working dog handlers and their families from all the armed services.

"The members of Feed the Dawgs, the Vietnam K-9 Handlers Veterans Association and all of the K-9 handlers that came before us are the giants on whose shoulders we stand," Evans said.

Carlton said they plan to continue this effort as long as possible.

"Where there's a need, we try to fill it – that's the bottom line," he said.



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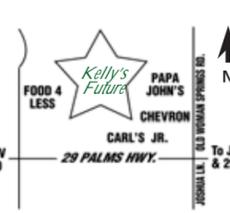
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<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Beautyrest</p> <p>WORLD CLASS LATEX PLUS</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$1328</p> <p>Queen set</p> <p>Twin set.....\$1148</p> <p>Full set.....\$1238</p> <p>CA King set.....\$1538</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Beautyrest</p> <p>WORLD CLASS MEMORY FOAM LATEX FIRM SUPER PILLOW TOP</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$1598</p> <p>Queen set</p> <p>Twin set.....\$1348</p> <p>Full set.....\$1428</p> <p>CA King set.....\$1878</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Beautyrest</p> <p>WORLD CLASS NXG PULSH OR FIRM</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">\$1948</p> <p>Queen set</p> <p>Full set.....\$1828</p> <p>CA King set.....\$2258</p>

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Census Bureau recruitment opportunity available

The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting seasonal employees for the 2010 census.

Salaries begin at \$16 per hour and the job will offer flexible hours. This opportunity is open to eligible base patrons only.

The Combat Center's Career Resource Office will be hosting a Census Takers workshop Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Education Office. The supervisors' examination will be held Thursday at 10 a.m. in the same location.

There are only 24 seats available for each event and reservations are required. Standbys will be allowed to participate if there are any no-show reservations. For more information or to make a reservation, call 830-7225.

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Humor for heroes; celebs entertain troops

SHARI LOPATIN

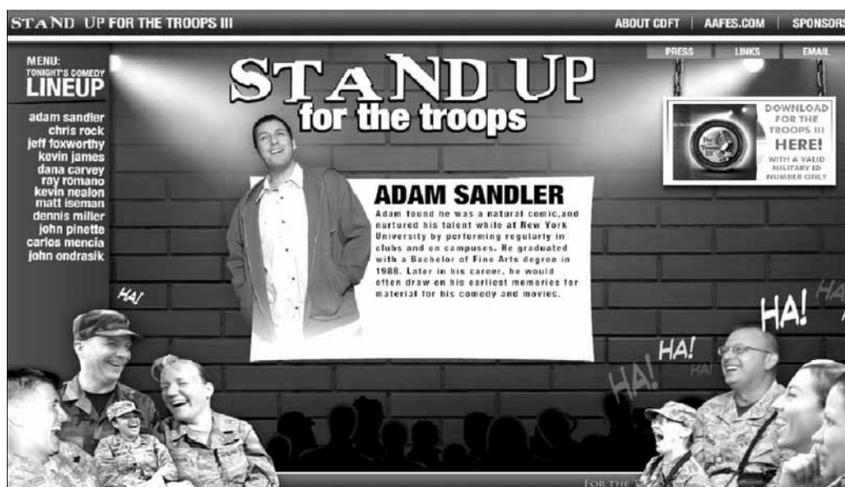
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

A funny thing happened on the way to the front.

A famous rock star recruited top comedians to donate their best for a free comedy CD especially for those in uniform and their families, "Stand Up for the Troops."

You can't laugh this off – Chris Rock dogging on big pieces of chicken for dads and Adam Sandler's musical escapades of Sloppy Joes during "Lunch Lady Land."

It's here for you, for free, as thanks for your service. Led by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter John Ondrasik, from the band "Five for Fighting," this year's CD for the troops also includes comedy acts from Ray Romano, Jeff Foxworthy, Dana Carvey,



COURTESY ILLUSTRATION

Dennis Miller and more.

You just need your valid military ID to download the tracks for free at <http://www.cdforthetroops.com> or <http://www.AAFES.com>, the Web site for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

Ondrasik included his

song, "Brothers in Arms,"

from the award-winning documentary "Brothers at War." TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Sony and the AAFES all partnered with Ondrasik to bring this gift to service members, veterans and their families.

In addition to the free downloads, 200,000 CDs will arrive at military bases, Armed Services YMCAs, United Services Organization centers, Fisher Houses and other locations throughout the U.S. and overseas.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

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

Trader Ad Forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417. Ads may also be submitted through e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil

1994 KAWASAKI KLR DUAL SPORT BIKE. \$2,000. 910-9071. 11/6/09

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1987 FORD F250 TRUCK. Extra cab, diesel, four speed with overdrive. Set up for goose-neck or fifth wheel. \$2,850 OBO. Call 447-0499. 10/2/09

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 classi-

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LARGE COLLECTION OF FOOTBALL CARDS. For sale in sets, individual cards or the whole collection. Call Stephen. 567-7921. 12/11/09

TWO TOBONO PAINTS, A MARE AND A GELDING. Trying to sell or lease for \$225 per month per horse. Sell price is \$3,500 for mare, \$5,000 for gelding. OBO. Call Tim. Home 365-0831. Cell 883-0293. 12/4/09

fied 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.

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TREADMILL WITH T.V. \$1000, weight bench w/ weights \$300, exercise bike \$ 175. Call 910-9052. 10/23/09

WANTED-PISTOL. 45 Caliber, military. 367-6030. 10/2/09

PURE SILVER MARINE CORPS COIN SET. 35 years old. Asking only \$1,000. Marine Corps challenge coins, different prices. Olympic coins. Large oak entertainment center \$100. Must sell. 367-6030. 10/2/09

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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.



TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt

"Christmas Spoken Here" was written on the sign above the entrance to a gift shop I visited in Ketchikan, Alaska many years ago.

I was reminded of that love-filled gift shop when Patty and I had lunch last Thursday at Rattlesnake Jake's in Morongo Valley. What a delightful experience it was! Rosa, our waitress, was wonderful, the food was superior, and the air was filled with the sounds of Christmas. In fact, a large group of ladies from the Fraternal Order of Eagles were there enjoying good food, true fellowship, and having a Christmas gift exchange.

Now this locally owned family restaurant has announced a special event for this Sunday, December 13, 11:00 AM – 2:00 AM. It is called "Brunch with Santa" and you and your entire family will love it! Santa will be present and has gifts for all the children. The menu for both adults and children has been especially planned and will be prepared by Chef George Albert, assisted by his son Pat and other members of his large, loving family. George is a Master Chef who is nationally known for his work in planning menus for two nationwide restaurant chains and for high profile restaurants in Las Vegas.

Mr. and Mrs. George Albert have seven children, 14 grandchildren and a large extended family living for the most part in Morongo Valley and Yucca Valley. They have owned and operated this well appreciated family restaurant for only four months but it is already a good place to go for a clean atmosphere, good food at a decent price, and service by men and women who truly desire to serve their guests with thoughtfulness and love.

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Toys for Tots receives truckload of toys from MCCES



Marines from the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School hustle to the Commanding General's building to drop off toys they had purchased for the Toys for Tots run Dec. 4.

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The formation of 1,626 Marines seemed to go on forever as they poured out of the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School during the Toys for Tots Run Dec. 4.

Nearly every Marine carried toys ranging from balls, action figures and board games— one Marine even rode a bicycle. The toys were collected for the Toys for Tots program, which provides less-fortunate families with the means to give their children Christmas gifts.

As the Marines ran to the Commanding General's building, the commanding officer for MCCES, Col. David J. Terando, passed the first toy to the Combat Center's commanding general, Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy.

Toys for Tots volunteers waiting in their dress blue uniforms guided the MCCES Marines to a group of trucks where they deposited their donations. As the formation passed, the toys were handed off to the volunteers and placed in the vehicles.

"We tried to set up guidelines so the Marines wouldn't purchase the same exact toys," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Anthony Russell, the operations chief for MCCES, who helped set up the event. Russell split the Marines up alphabetically, and had them purchase toys for different age groups.

"The run was mandatory, but buying a toy was optional for the Marines," he said. "It was amazing how many Marines had gone out and bought toys."

Lance Cpl. Kenneth Keiser, a MCCES Marine who participated in the event, said he bought a gift because he has a 10-month-old baby, and he didn't want to imagine a Christmas where his child was without a gift.

"This event was helpful in many ways—yes it was good for [physical training], but it was mostly about the families and giving to those in need," said the Gresham, Ore., native. "I'm glad I was able to help other kids just like my own."

The toys were delivered to 4th Tank Battalion to be sorted and distributed to area children.

For more information on donating or receiving toys call 830-0968.

Did you know?

If you are active duty, retired military or a family member you can place a FREE ad in our Combat Center Trader Ads See page A7 for details and limitations

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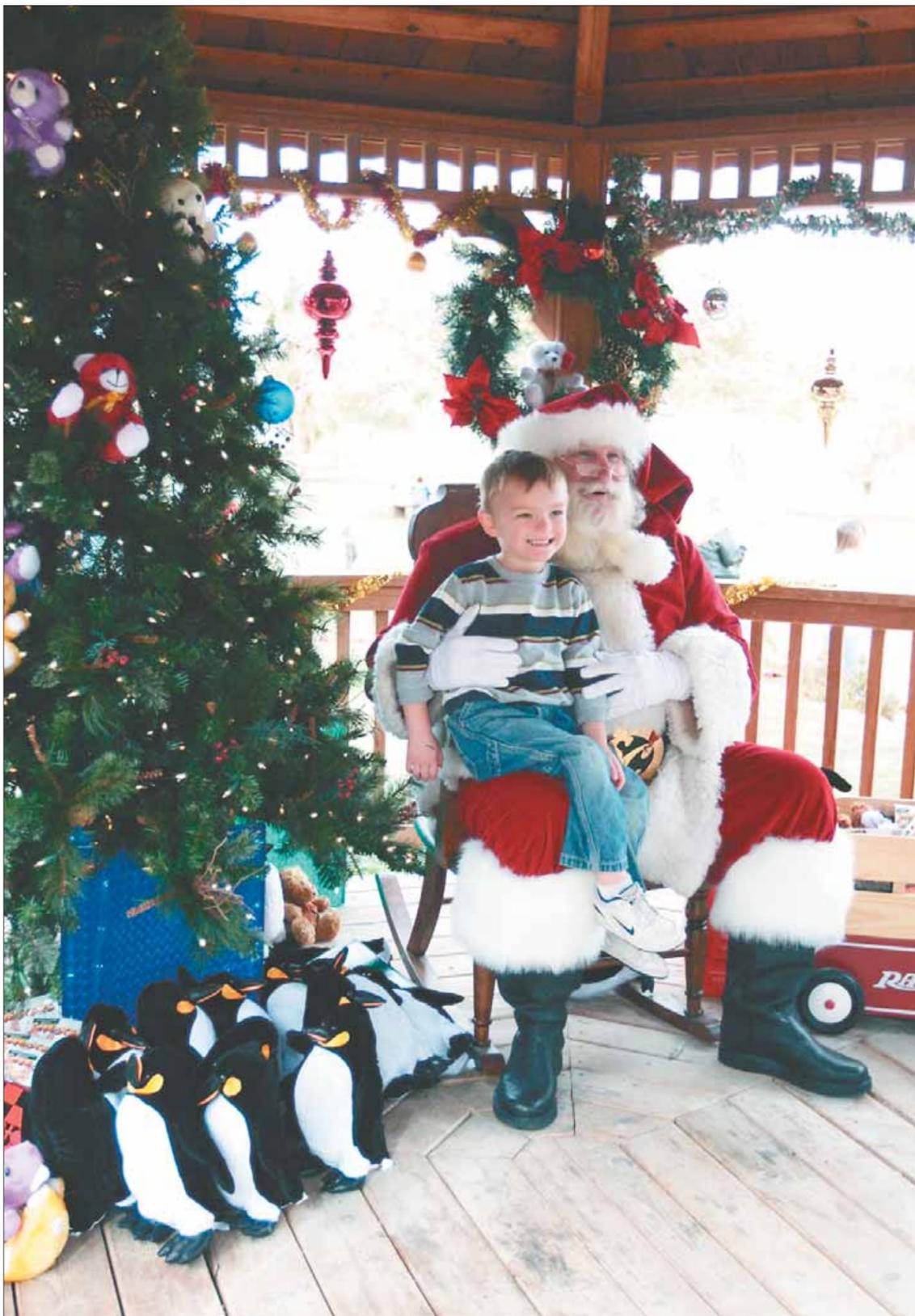
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B1

MCCS gives to Combat Center families



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Kaiden Johnson, 4, smiles for the camera after telling Santa what he wants for Christmas during the sixth annual Winter Festival at the Desert Winds Golf Course Saturday. After the children took their photo with Santa, they each received a present from under the tree.

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Children's happy faces were abundant at the Desert Winds Golf Course Saturday during the sixth annual Marine Corps Community Services Winter Festival.

More than 3,000 Combat Center family members attended the event, backing up traffic all the way down to Del Valle Road. The number of attendees is significantly higher than the past few years, said Kelley Coe, the special events program manager for the Marine Corps Community Services.

This event really helps jun-

ior enlisted service members with families give their children the type of Christmas they deserve, said Lance Cpl. Andrew Holbert, an amphibious assault vehicle crewman with Company D, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion.

To accommodate the large number of attendees, MCCS provided several shuttles to ferry patrons back and forth from the event.

The main attraction at the event was Santa Claus, who was available to hear the children's Christmas wishes and give out free gifts.

Jiffy the clown was present

See MCCS, B1



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Rudolph and Frosty made an appearance at the sixth annual Winter Festival at the Desert Winds Golf Course Saturday. The Ginger Bread Man was also there to entertain the children.

FTP, Drama Killers roll through championship tournament



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Dan Mintz, an infielder for K's Buy, crushes a ball against FTP during the Combat Center's Coed Softball League Championship playoffs at Felix Field here Wednesday. K's Buy fought hard but came up short after FTP rallied in the final inning, to win 15-14, sending them to the championship game against the Drama Killers.

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Drama Killers and FTP came out on top during the Combat Center's Coed Softball League

Championship playoffs at Felix Field Wednesday. The two teams clashed again in the final championship game last night, however, the results were not available at press time.

The Drama Killers advanced to the championship by rolling over Outkast 14-3.

"We were just really excited to

See SOFTBALL, B3

Corps bids farewell to 26-year veteran



CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN

Gunners from across the Corps paused for a photo after Gunner John D. Whiting's retirement ceremony at the Combat Center Dec. 4. Whiting (front left), who served more than 26 years in the Corps, received a Meritorious Service Medal, presented by the retiring officer Lt. Col. Chris Nash who served as Whiting's platoon commander more than two decades ago. Instead of presenting flowers to his wife and daughters, Whiting made a donation to the Wounded Warrior Regiment in honor of Master Sgt. Brian McNulty who died during their second deployment to Iraq in 2007. In his remarks to the audience Whiting expressed pride and gratitude for the Marines he'd served with and showered his wife and daughters with endearments and accolades for their strength, support and accomplishments throughout his career.



Local Events

Holiday concert, "Sounds of the Season"
 Description: The choir performs holiday music
 When: 2:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday
 Where: The Senior Center
 Yucca Valley Community Center Complex
 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
 For more information call 369-7212

Afro Cuban Jazz with Ritmo Loco
 Description: The very popular Latin jazz quintet
 When: 7:30 p.m., Friday
 Where: Pappy and Harriet's
 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
 For more information call 365-5956 or visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.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.
 Where: Theatre 29
 73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
 For more information call 361-4151 or visit
<http://www.theatre29.com>

Sunday Brunch Music with Michael Callan
 Description: Acoustic old school blues
 When: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Where: The 29 Palms Inn
 73950 Inn Avenue, Twentynine Palms
 For more information call 367-3505 or visit
<http://www.29palmsinn.com>.

Music: Chris Walters
 Description: Acoustic old school blues with special 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>.

Steve Lester's Songwriting, Poetry, & Rhythm Club
 Description: Open mic night where musicians and artists get together
 When: 7 to 10 p.m., Wednesdays
 Where: Rattlesnake Jake's
 51572 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley
 For more information call 363-6513 or visit
<http://www.rattlesnakejakes.net>.

Lower Desert

Boxing: Chad Dawson vs Glen Johnson
 Description: Dawson puts his record on the line
 When: 6:30 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: Lionel Richie
 Description: The rhythm and blues superstar performs
 When: 8 p.m., Jan. 15
 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
 84-245 Indio Springs Pkwy., Indio
 For more info call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Ventriloquist: Jeff Dunham
 Description: The puppet master brings all his characters
 When: 8 p.m., Jan. 9
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
 For more info call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, Dec. 11
 6 p.m. – Astro Boy, Rated PG
 9 p.m. – Cirque Du Freak, Rated PG-13
 Midnight – Law Abiding Citizen, Rated R

Saturday, Dec. 12
 11 a.m. Polar Express, Rated G
 2 p.m. – Where the Wild Things Are, Rated PG
 6 p.m. – Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Rated PG
 9 p.m. – Amelia, Rated PG
 Midnight – The Box, Rated PG-13

Sunday, Dec. 13
 2 p.m. – Disney's A Christmas Carol, Rated PG
 6 p.m. – The Fourth Kind, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – The Men Who Stare at Goats, Rated R

Monday, Dec. 14
 7 p.m. – Paranormal Activity, Rated R

Tuesday, Dec. 15
 7 p.m. – Law Abiding Citizen, Rated R

Wednesday, Dec. 16
 7 p.m. – Where the Wild Things Are, Rated PG

Thursday, Dec. 17
 7 p.m. – Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Rated PG

So you think you're having a bad day?



COURTESY PHOTO

Jackson Curtis, played by John Cusack, is a divorced dad running late to pick up his kids when all hell breaks loose in the form of a tried-and-true Hollywood disaster movie.

NEIL POND
 AMERICAN PROFILE

SPOILER ALERT!

2012
 Rated PG-13

It's a good thing you're not Jackson Curtis (John Cusack), a divorced dad running late to pick up his kids, resentful that his ex-wife's new husband seems to have it all, and trying to outrun an apocalyptic meltdown of city-swallowing earthquakes, mountain-swamping tsunamis and earth-scorching fireballs.

In a tried-and-true Hollywood disaster-movie formula, "2012" presents a handful of central characters then throws them together to see who will survive. Can Jackson, his ex- and his kids keep one frantic step ahead of the calamity? What will it take for the world to finally listen to the earnest young government climatologist? Will the little pampered

Russian poochie live to help repopulate the canine world? Director Roland Emmerich has set 'em up and knocked 'em down before, most notably in "Independence Day," "The Day After Tomorrow" and "Godzilla." By all indications, he's a guy who built sand castles as a kid just to smash them. His gleeful appetite for destruction knows no bounds in "2012," which uses computer-generated animation to create maximum chaos. The White House is wiped away by not just a tidal wave, but a tidal wave bearing a massive aircraft carrier. Los Angeles collapses and slides into the sea. Las Vegas crumbles. Rome is crushed underneath its toppling architectural marvels of St. Peter's Square. India disappears. China becomes a new polar icecap.

"2012" throws everything into the blender and sets the

control to puree. Characters babble about solar flares microwaving the Earth's core, ancient prophecies stamped with the Earth's expiration date and an international governmental cartel to cherry-pick the planet's best and brightest (and wealthiest) to ride the storm out in gigantic, iron-clad boats. Danny Glover plays the U.S. president who decides to go down with the ship of state, and Woody Harrelson is a crackpot apocalypso DJ who gets off the movie's funniest line as the gargantuan fireball rolling his way catches him, literally, with his pants down. But despite the star power and the spectacle, "2012" is a mess. While some of the special effects are impressive, other scenes look like they were filmed with leftover props from a middle-school play. The dialogue is hopelessly cheesy. The situations into which the characters are placed are increasingly ridiculous, sometimes laughably preposterous. Who knew you could escape from a crashing airplane...in a sports car?

It all comes down to more than two and a half hours of heaving and cleaving and crashing and crunching. The state of California, yells Curtis at one point, "is going down!" After this overlong, overcooked, overstuffed Thanksgiving turkey, Cusack should consider his next movie carefully or his acting career might be headed the same direction.



COURTESY PHOTO

Woody Harrelson provides comic relief as a crackpot apocalypso DJ who utters the movie's funniest line.



COURTESY PHOTO

"2012" is an apocalyptic meltdown of city-swallowing earthquakes, mountain-swamping tsunamis and earth-scorching fireballs.

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Twilight: New Moon (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	COMING SOON Dec. 18 - Avatar Dec. 23 - Alvin & the Chipmunks Dec. 25 - Sherlock Holmes	• ADULTS \$8.00 • SENIORS \$6.00 • CHILDREN \$6.00 www.cinema6theatre.com

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CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Gilbert Chavez, the pitcher and head coach for FTP, rounds third base and sprints for home plate during the Combat Center's Coed Softball League Championship play-offs at Felix Field Wednesday.

SOFTBALL, from B1

play for the championship," said Deborah Sullivan, the head coach of the Drama Killers. "We have a bunch of guys and girls who just know how to play ball, and that's what we plan on doing against whoever we play.

"The main thing I want the guys and girls to do is hit the ball, play hard and most of all have fun," she added.

FTP had to fight a little harder to earn their spot in the title game.

FTP played red-hot K's Buy to determine who would face the Drama Killers in the championship. The game went back and forth, and by the bottom of the seventh and final inning, the score was close with K's Buy on top 14-11.

FTP tied the game early in the inning, but quickly ran down to their last out with a runner on first base - then FTP shortstop Josh Goodman came to the plate.

After watching the first pitch, Goodman choked up on his bat and was ready. Not even the near-freezing cold shook his concentration and determination. He sent the next pitch screaming into right-center field to drive in the run that put FTP over the top 15-14.

"It felt pretty good," Goodman said about the game-winning hit. "It's cold and it's late, but we were ready - and we'll be ready for the championship."

Gilbert Chavez, the pitcher and head coach for FTP, said the team received some help and key players late in the season.

"It's an awesome feeling," Chavez said about playing for the championship. "We've had a lot of inconsistencies throughout the year, but tonight we played really well. We've not had our girls with us for a few games this year and that caused us to forfeit some games, but we acquired some ladies late and they've been rockstars for us."



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Ray Wren, pitcher for the Drama Killers, puts some spin on the ball in a semifinals game against the Outkast during the Combat Center's Coed Softball League Championship playoffs at Felix Field Wednesday.

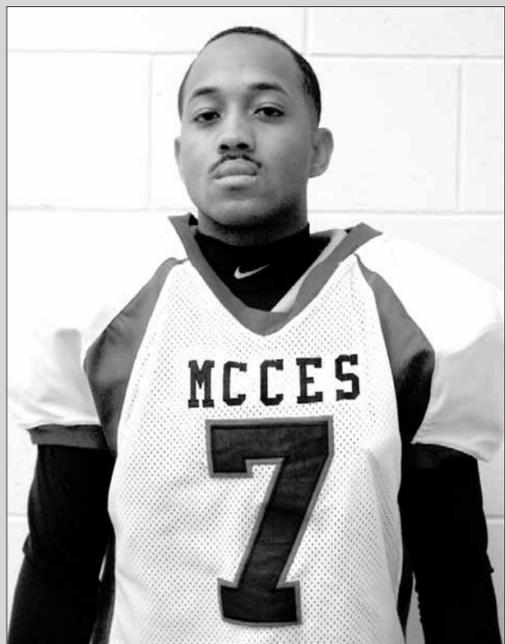
Chavez also said his team will stick to their current game plan against the Drama Killers.

Cindy Villescias, the head coach of K's Buy, said she was proud of her team for the way they played Wednesday.

"We really played some good ball late in the season," she said. "Tonight we played better than we have all year, and we almost made it."

The results of the championship game will be published in the Sports and Leisure section of this newspaper Dec. 18.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Michael Dixon
Unit: Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School

Hometown: Baton Rouge, La.

Job Title: Student

Recognition: Most Valuable Player during the Commanding General Intramural Championship football game

Sports goals: "Being the best I can be."

Favorite aspect of the sport: "The competitions, because it gets your adrenaline running and makes you play better."

Advice for aspiring athletes: "No matter what, keep moving forward."

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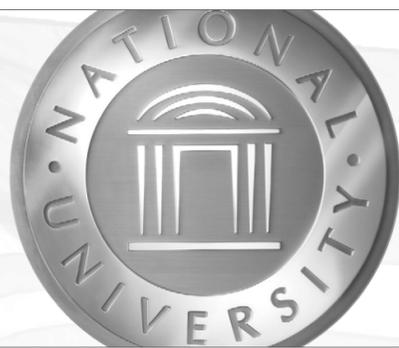
CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Players with K's Buy and Heavy Hitters slap hands after a quarterfinals game during the Combat Center's Coed Softball League Championship playoffs at Felix Field Wednesday. K's Buy rolled over the Heavy Hitters 16-2 but lost a heartbreaker against FTP, ending their season.

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MCCS, from B1

to entertain families by making balloon animals for the children.

Face painting, and arts and crafts booths, complete with crayons, colored pencils, markers, coloring books, crowns and paper swords, were set up to entertain the children throughout the day.

The Combat Center Band performed to set the holiday mood for the event's patrons. The California BBQ

Association provided refreshments for the festival including, hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, chips, hot chocolate, cider and coffee.

JSerra High School, a private Christian school in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., attended to help MCCS, something they have done each year since the first event.

"All the toys were donated from the JSerra High School students," Coe said. The students also helped out by organizing the toys by age

and gender and passing them out to the children.

"The school has done this so many times the students ask the teachers if they will be donating toys again this year," she said.

Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and the Gingerbread Man roamed the golf course to entertain the children.

Coe said because of the success of this year's event, MCCS plans to hold the event again next year.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

(From left to right) Lance Cpl. John Starks, Sgt. Steve Santiago, Cpls. Andrew Gerlach and Gabriel Gonzalez, and Sgt. Eduardo Espinosa, all members of the Combat Center Band, play seasonal music for families during the sixth annual Winter Festival at the Desert Winds Golf Course Saturday. More than 3,000 people showed up for the festival.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A festively-dressed Marine Corps Community Services employee paints a child's face at the sixth annual Winter Festival at the Desert Winds Golf Course Saturday.

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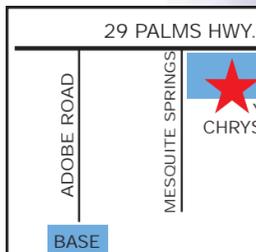
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