

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

JANUARY 29, 2010

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 53 ISSUE 4

Last Marine operational command departs Iraq

CPL. MEG MURRAY
MULTI NATIONAL FORCE - WEST

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq — Over the past six years, thousands of Marines deployed to Al Anbar Province, Iraq, the largest and once most volatile province in the country.

On Saturday, Maj. Gen. R.T. Tryon, the commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), transferred authority for Al Anbar from United States Force — West to United States Division — Center, filled by the Army's 1st Armored Division. In a significant milestone in the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq, one of the four division-level units is departing without replacement and Marine Corps deployments to Iraq come to an end. U.S. military responsibility for Al Anbar passed to Baghdad-based USD-C, commanded by Army Maj. Gen. Terry A. Wolff.

In an unparalleled example of the successful partnerships Marines have shared with the Iraqi people over the past several years, a large gathering of Iraqi soldiers, police, sheiks and government officials joined U.S. service members for the transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Ramadi.

to say that we have witnessed historic events this year in Iraq, and today's ceremony is certainly an example of continued positive change as we transition and consolidate U.S. forces under the flag of United States Division - Center," Tryon said. "There have been many significant security gains in Anbar over the last couple of years, and many of the people responsible for these gains are here in the audience today. We praise you for your courage and determination."

Though the ceremony focused on the fruitfulness of the Marines' mission in Iraq, Tryon stressed their success would not have been possible without the efforts of the Iraqi people.

"These gains have not been accomplished over the course of the last several years because of what U.S. forces have done alone, nor have they been accomplished because of what the security forces from Iraq have done; rather, these achievements are a result of what we have done together, in partnership with one another and with the leadership of the Iraqi civil sector," Tryon explained. "Much has been done to advance the goals of stability and prosperity, yet there is still

See IRAQ, A6



CPL. MEG MURRAY

Maj. Gen. R.T. Tryon (right), the commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), and Sgt. Maj. Kip Carpenter, the II MEF (Fwd) sergeant major, case the colors during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Saturday. U.S. military responsibility for Al Anbar province passed to Baghdad-based United States Division - Center, commanded by Army Maj. Gen. Terry A. Wolff.

Corps amplifies tattoo policy

SGT. MICHAEL T. KNIGHT

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Although body art has increasingly gained social acceptance in America, the Marine Corps has remained constant in upholding the highest standards amongst its members. In the tradition of maintaining the utmost in military professionalism, the Corps is continuing to amplify its tattoo policy.

Marine Administrative Message 029/10 is the current official Marine Corps tattoo policy, which seeks to balance the personal desires of Marines with their inherent responsibilities to set the example and present a sharp military appearance.

"I understand many tattoos are in good taste and many represent pride for our corps or remembrance of fallen comrades; however, I believe tattoos of an excessive nature do not represent our traditional values," stated Gen. James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, in All Marine Message 014/07. "Marines must understand that acquiring excessive tattoos may adversely affect both their retention and assignment to special duty."

The policy's overall intent is to ensure Marines can be assigned whenever and wherever they are needed by maintaining a professional demeanor and the high standards expected of the Corps.

Tattoos continue to be a subject to review under certain circumstances, such as for promotion or assignment, to determine if any are prejudicial to good order, discipline or are of a nature that may bring discredit upon the Marine Corps.

The first section of the policy states, prior to enlistment into the Marine Corps, applicants with more than four tattoos will be administratively reviewed. Tattoos cannot express nudity, racism or an association with conduct or substances

See TATOO, A7



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Lance Cpl. Naylan Grady, a rifleman with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, observes enemy role player activity during a Combat Hunter Course observation exercise at Combat Center Range 200 Jan. 22.

First Team on the hunt

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A Marine, clad in camouflage utilities and bearing a full combat load, discovers a set of shoeprints leading away from the remnants of a destroyed military vehicle. Slowly contemplating his next move, he tracks the patterns

to a nearby village where he watches and observes its inhabitants. After gathering intelligence, he and his comrades launch an assault with clear knowledge of who the enemy is, eliminating any chance of escape. He is a warrior. He is a hunter.

After dozens of hours in the classroom, Marines

with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, completed the third phase of the Combat Hunter Course during practical application exercises in observation at Combat Center Range 200 Jan. 22.

Combat Hunter is the

See HUNT, A4

Combat Center launches Facebook page

We've established a Facebook page to provide information and news about the Combat Center. Check us out at the Combat Center at Twentynine Palms.

Your opinions and feedback are welcome so long as they are presented in an objective and respectful way that allows for a continued information relationship.

While this site provides an open forum, it is intended to maintain respect for those who participate. We do not, under any circumstance, allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions, nor do we allow comments which are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.

In accordance with Marine Corps guid-

ance, we do not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, we do not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.

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Lastly, the appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the Combat Center, the Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.



Despite the recent wave of conflicting information, the Combat Center's main gate is not closed for the Adobe Road construction project. There will be construction south of the gate on Adobe and motorists should expect intermittent delays during normal working hours.



More mechs, techs ~ See A3



One, two punch! ~ See A5



'An Oasis of Florals' ~ See B1



Dodge podge ~ See B1

Tax Tips

A new option for your federal tax refund: Savings bonds

IRS TAX TIP 2010 #11

If you are receiving a federal tax refund from the Internal Revenue Service, you can choose to use that money to purchase U.S. savings bonds.

Here are the top six things you'll need to know about using your federal refund to purchase savings bonds.

1. You may use a portion of your refund to purchase up to \$5,000 in U.S. Series I Savings Bonds.
2. The total amount of saving bonds purchased must be a multiple of \$50. Additional money over the specified amount must be deposited into another financial account – like a checking or savings account.
3. The bonds will be issued in your name. For married taxpayers filing a joint return, the bonds will be issued in the names of both spouses.
4. You will receive the U.S. savings bonds in the mail.
5. You normally select this option by filing Form 8888, Direct Deposit of Refund to More Than One Account.
6. Form 8888 has instructions on how to select this option and how to specify the amount of your refund you want to use to purchase savings bonds.

For more information about the U.S. Savings Bonds refund option, visit IRS.gov.

What you need to know about the Government Retiree Credit

IRS TAX TIP 2010 #20

Certain government retirees who receive a government pension or annuity payment in 2009 may be eligible for the Government Retiree Credit. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides this one-time credit of \$250 for certain federal and state pensioners.

Here are seven things the IRS wants you to know about the Government Retiree Credit:

1. You can take this credit if you receive a pension or annuity payment in 2009 for service performed for the U.S. Government or any U.S. state or local government and the service was not covered by social security.
2. Recipients of the Making Work Pay Credit will have that credit reduced by any Government Retiree Credit they receive.
3. The credit is \$250 for individuals and \$500 if married filing jointly and both you and your spouse receive a qualifying pension or annuity.
4. You must have a valid social security number to claim the credit. If married filing jointly, both spouses must have a valid social security number to each claim the \$250 credit.
5. You cannot take the credit if you received a \$250 economic recovery payment in 2009.
6. This is a refundable credit, which means it may give you a refund even if you had no tax withheld from your pension.
7. To claim the credit, you must complete Schedule M, Making Work Pay and Government Retiree Credits, and attach it to your Form 1040A or 1040.

Centerspeak

What do you think of the Pro Bowl being played before the Super Bowl?

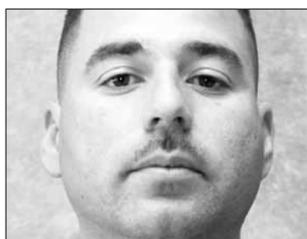
Opinions expressed in Centerspeak are not necessarily those of the OBSERVATION POST, the Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.



CPL. CODY KINGREY

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 3RD LIGHT ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION

“Bad, they can't have players who are going to the Super bowl because of the possibility of injury.”



STAFF SGT. ORLANDO SAAVEDRA

SERGEANTS COURSE, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

“Players in the Super Bowl are dropping out and that is taking away from the game.”



PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS KYLE STEEN

BATTALION AID STATION, 3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“It is stupid because it will take away viewers from both games.”

Hot Topics

COMBAT CENTER TAX OFFICE

Free and accurate tax filing is now available through the installation tax office in building 1651 on 7th Street. Tax center personnel are now available to answer any tax-related questions. The tax office is currently open for walk-in customers from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Appointments will be available starting Feb. 16 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, questions, or to schedule appointments, call 830-4829.

OFFICERS' SPOUSES CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

The Officers' Spouses Club now has scholarships available for the 2010-2011 academic year. If you are a military family member applying to an accredited two or four-year institution for undergraduate study or vocational certificate, you may be eligible. All application materials must be postmarked by March 1. For more information or to receive an application, e-mail oscscholarship@gmail.com or call 910-9576.

HI DESERT PONY LEAGUE

Hi Desert Pony League for baseball and softball are currently underway at Luckie Park in Twentynine Palms. Additional signups will occur Feb. 6 and 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Luckie Park. Call 424-6329 or 910-787-2175, or log on to <http://29hdpl.clubspaces.com> for more information.

COMMISSARY SIDEWALK SALES

The Combat Center's commissary will be hosting a series of sidewalk sales on Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday and Monday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The sales will feature a number of items, including P&G Paper products, Coca-Cola and Pepsi products, Tide and Gain laundry detergent, Lysol, Del Monte fruits and much more. For more information, call 830-7572.

Marine Corps History

Jan. 29, 1991

The first major Marine ground action in Operation Desert Storm begins.



Eagle Eyes

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4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

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SUDOKU #1705

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

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School Liaison Information

Question: Can you provide online resources for college bound students?

Answer: This early-college Web site features articles and resources to increase awareness of college options for elementary and middle school students. Visit <http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollege/early/edlit-tcehome.html>.

There are also e-knowledge, free college prep and testing materials for military students. <http://www.eknowledge.com/military>.

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



Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Pfc. Tracy Stanley
Hometown: McAllen, Texas
Job title: Ammunition technician
Unit: Logistics Shop, Tactical Training Exercise Control Group
Job duties: Ordering ammunition for training units, and tracking and logging expenditure reports.
What do you like most about your job? "The people I work with."
Hobbies: "Listening to music, watching movies and hanging out with friends."
Military service: 13 months
Time aboard the Combat Center: Seven months



PASS THE PASTA!

[puzzle Solutions on A6]

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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56					57			58	59				60	61
62			63		64					65				
66					67					68				
69					70					71				

ACROSS

1. Sainly glows
6. May honorees
10. ___ down (frisks)
14. Geneva's river
15. Cast-of-thousands
16. Oodles
17. "It ___ been something I ate!"
18. iPod selection
19. Like reds or whites, say
20. Rifle ejection
23. Card player's cry
24. Baja buck
25. It's golden, in a saying
27. Boxing champ dethroned by Braddock
29. Kit ___ (candy brand)
32. Cleveland hoopster, for short
33. Key near space bar
34. Trident prongs
36. Duck that's not a duck
40. Features of bare-shoulder dresses
43. Clean kind of energy
44. ___ voce (quietly)
45. ___ time (course slot)
46. Phantom portrayer
48. Museum-funding org
49. Mystery author John Dickson ___
50. Transylvania's land
54. Expected outcome
56. NYSE debut
57. Vigorous effort, while cleaning
62. Calf-length dress
64. Bit of birdbath gunk
65. December song
66. The Emerald Isle, to poets
67. Social goof ball
68. The Beatles' "Any Time ___"
69. Editor's "leave it"
70. Smelter loads
71. Have a feeling

DOWN

1. Word before race or buildup
2. "No way, José!"
3. Potpourri bit
4. Half a rack
5. Circus horn-blowers
6. Prefix with tarsal or physical
7. Big work
8. Revealing skirts
9. Like many postcard photos
10. Handle clumsily
11. Set straight
12. Common mixer
13. "Funny Girl" composer Julie
21. TV reporter Roberts
22. "It'd be my pleasure"
26. "Did you ___?"
27. Low man in the choir
28. Brand for Fido
30. Sugar bowl raiders
31. Grand ___ (Wyoming peak)
34. Sovereign's seat
35. Webmaster's creation
37. Twin-hulled boat
38. Letters near "0" on a phone
39. River of Flanders
41. Big bash
42. Berle sidekick Arnold ___
47. Alyssa of "Who's the Boss?"
49. Put together
50. LeAnn of country
51. Dizzying designs
52. Nerve, in slang
53. More talented
55. Black and white predators
58. Big brute
59. Rolls of bills
60. G's, in a C major scale
61. "Legally Blonde" role
63. Negative stat for a QB

OBSERVATION POST

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CLB-7 receives new Marines, activates Material Readiness Company



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Maj. Douglas Burkman, the company commander of Material Readiness Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, unravels the new guidon after the company was activated as part of CLB-7 Tuesday at their headquarters building.

CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combat Logistics Battalion 7 welcomed a new company into their battalion during an activation ceremony at their headquarters build-

ing here, Tuesday.

Material Readiness Company is home to approximately 150 Marines who will provide intermediate maintenance support to tenant units training and stationed aboard the Combat Center.

"We are kind of like an

extension of the Maintenance Battalion from [Marine Corps Base] Camp Pendleton, [Calif.]," said Maj. Douglas Burkman, the new commander of Material Readiness Co. "Now that we are able to provide [Combat Center units] with intermediate maintenance on heavy equipment, our tenant units don't have to go to Camp Pendleton to get them fixed."

Cpl. Devon White, a calibrations technician with Material Readiness Co., said he feels the new company will help the Combat Center by providing units with more mechanics and technicians.

CLB-7 staffed the compa-

ny with Marines from within the battalion instead of pulling in new leathernecks from schools or other logistics battalions. This will help give the company a head start since everyone knows and has worked with each other.

"The changes we undertook will restore the clarity and focus of the mission," said Lt. Col. Craig Barnett, the battalion commander.

"With our new company we will be able to provide a clearer structure and support in the rear element. Our mission is not gone or changed—we just put it more into focus and promise to provide better support."

National award presented to local Red Cross volunteer



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

American Red Cross volunteer Melissa Kappus was awarded the Volunteer Caseworker of the Quarter Award from the National Red Cross Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Kappus was given the award because she worked the most emergency message cases and has the most accurate case work in the nation. "I was excited and surprised I won the award because I was just doing my job," Kappus said. Jason Marshal, the station manager for the American Red Cross aboard the Combat Center, said "I see her working on about 10 emergency messages a day." The Combat Center's Red Cross has won national awards three out of the last four quarters, the volunteer staff said.



CPL. MONICA C. ERICKSON

Lance Cpl. Justin Gansworth, an artillery mechanic with Material Readiness Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, salutes during the national anthem at the company's activation ceremony Tuesday at their headquarters building.

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



In the early part of last November I introduced you to a tough minded optimist who I admire very much as a man, a husband and father, a concerned citizen, and an outstanding professional in his chosen field. I am writing about Eli Marshall, owner of Marshall Networking of Twentynine Palms.

Some of you will remember that Eli donated 500 turkeys during a food give away at Thanksgiving. When I asked him why he was making such a large individual contribution he answered without hesitation, "Last year I gave 250 turkeys and now that many more people are hurting I decided to donate 500 turkeys."

Eli is my kind of tough minded optimist. He understands the seriousness of the situation but he believes that if we all work together with a generous spirit and a positive attitude we can alleviate a bad situation.

Eli is a computer brain. He knows all about them. He also knows all about computer networking, phone systems, graphic design and other pragmatic matters. Eli recently became the only Apple Certified Support Basin wide.

On the other hand, Eli is a family man with deep love and concern for all people everywhere, especially right here in the High Desert.

Eli is the president of the board of his local Youth Club and a leader in one of Southern California's finest non-profits, Dare 2 Care.

Eli is the kind of person who makes it a joy to live in the High Desert.

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HUNT, from A1

creation of a mindset through enhanced observation, combat patrolling and combat tracking in order to produce a more ethically minded, tactically cunning and lethal Marine, according to the course's Web site, <http://www.marines.mil/unit/>

tecom/soieast/aitb/Pages/CombatHunters.aspx.

The course was established in August 2007, and is continuing to establish itself among several Marine Corps installations.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Morris, an instructor with Mobile Training Co., School of Infantry-West at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., said the

Marines' observation training was the most important part of the evolution.

"All the elements of Combat Hunter go together," said Morris, a native of Monument, Colo. "But being able to understand what you're looking for and keeping an open mind to see things in ways you normally wouldn't is the foundation of this course."

Morris and the rest of the instructors travel throughout the world to teach Marines how to be combat hunters.

The Marines' objective was to observe role players and identify high value targets, individuals who intend to cause harm to the local populous or coalition forces, in the range's Military Operations on Urban Terrain town. Cpl. Caleb Williams, a team leader with Weapons Co., said the course helped his unit work well as a team.

"The biggest thing I'll take away from this training is always being situationally aware, remembering to look for abnormalities out in the base line, being a hunter and being proactive instead of reactive to situations," said Williams, a native of Huntington, Texas.

The observation training exercise was cut from two days to only about four hours of practical application time due to a series of storms which

struck the area last week, but Morris said it had little effect on the mission.

"Inclement weather is not uncommon for us," Morris said. "Since we are a mobile unit, we train Marines in several different climates so we're able to adjust to it quickly."

Capt. Lewis Langella, an instructor with Mobile Training Co., SOI-West, said Weapons Co. performed enthusiastically throughout the training.

"They're one of the best units we've seen," said Langella, a native of Branford, Conn. "They're really into the training, and have a real hunger to learn and deploy abroad to get the job done."

Langella also said the Marines need to continue to work on their observation skills.

In some training scenarios, role players distracted the observers with an attention-grabbing situation while other role players would set up more booby traps or pop off sniper rounds.

Williams referred to the distraction as the 'Kansas City Shuffle.'

"We didn't always see everything that was going on in the town," he said. "But that's why we train - to minimize and eliminate those mistakes."

To see a video of the training, visit http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=video/video_show.php&id=77951.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, observed Combat Center range 200 during a Combat Hunter training exercise Jan. 22. Combat Hunter is a relatively new program which teaches Marines and sailors to be more situationally aware in combat environments.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, make their way to the ridges behind Combat Center Range 200 during the observation portion of the Combat Hunter Course here Jan. 22.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Lance Cpl. Josh Gayheart, a mortarman with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, observes enemy role player activity during a Combat Hunter Course observation exercise at Combat Center Range 200 Jan. 22.



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1st Bn., 2nd Marines, battles weather during Clear, Hold, Build exercise

PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marines and sailors of Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment battled downpours and high winds Jan. 20 to take the enemy by force during the Clear, Hold, Build portion of their Enhanced Mojave Viper predeployment training at Combat Center Range 210.

The warriors, stationed aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., loaded onto Amphibious Assault Vehicles from Co. D, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion after stormy weather conditions grounded the CH-53E Super Stallions supporting their assault.

After unloading the AAVs and setting up a support position using elements of Weapons Company, Co. C rushed into the town which dominates the range.



PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Lance Cpl. Javarre Chaser, a rifleman with Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, takes cover on the roof of a building at Combat Center Range 210 during Co. C's attack on the 'insurgent-held town' Jan 20.

Each building in the town gave the Marines different challenges, including simulated enemy targets and weapons caches.

With the range swarming with Marines and sailors, each person knew their mission and worked with precision to clear the area of insurgent resistance.

"We all knew what we were doing," said Lance Cpl. Randy Howenstern, a rifleman with Co. C and native of New Brunswick, Texas. "We did three dry runs, and the cool part of these ranges is seeing how, amidst the chaos, every Marine has their part.

"I looked around during the range, and I could see how if my squad didn't clear the next building, it would hurt the next squad. It helps us see the strategy and keeps us pushing toward our target – you don't want to let your fellow Marine down," he said.

After taking control of the town, the company dug in and set up a defensive perimeter around the town, preparing to defend against an imminent

counter-offensive from the insurgents.

As the sun set over Range 210, the skies opened up, forcing training to a halt.

"We were scheduled to maintain defense overnight and interact with role players attempting to return to the town in the morning, but the rain flooded the roads and training had to be put on hold," said 1st Sgt. Daniel E. Mangrum, the company first sergeant for Co. C, 1st Bn., 2nd Marines.

While the weather may have temporarily put a damper on training for Co. C, they were able to complete valuable training at Range 210. After their predeployment training in early February, they will return to Camp Lejeune to finish preparing for their upcoming deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The nose knows; K-9s sniff out hidden threats

PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Since the invention of the landmine, militaries all over the world have been looking for ways to detect hidden threats.

In modern counter-insurgency warfare, one of the enemy's most devastating tactics is the emplacement and detonation of hidden improvised explosive devices.

The Marines of 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, have a new trick up their sleeve, or more appropriately, on their leashes, with 14 IED Detection Dogs. The specially trained canines are slated to deploy to Afghanistan with the battalion for the first time later this year.

The IED Detection Dog Program is more effective than other means of detecting IEDs because the dog is controlled by whistles and hand signals, so it can be let off its leash to sniff out potential explosives up to 500 meters away, and are controlled by whistles and hand signals, said Lance Cpl. George Patterson, a rifleman and dog handler with 1st Bn., 2nd Marines. This allows the battalion's Marines and sailors to remain far away from potential danger.

The dog handlers are all infantrymen, adding another unique perspective to the program.

"The dogs fit seamlessly into an infantry squad," said Cpl. Jeremy Grindle, a dog handler with the battalion. "All the handlers are grunts, so when we're on patrols, we can control our dogs from a distance and work right into the squad. That's the best part of it all, it's not our job as handlers to find IEDs; it's the dogs'. We're still here to be grunts."

During the battalion's Enhanced Mojave Viper predeployment training, the battalion put the dogs and their handlers to the test.

"Three weeks in and our dogs haven't missed a single explosive scent," said Patterson, whose Black Lab is named Pete. "It really builds our confidence in them. All we have to do is make sure they're downwind of potential threats, and they do the rest."



PVT. MICHAEL T. GAMS

Marines with Company C, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, take cover behind a pile of concrete as the company storms Combat Center Range 210 Jan. 20.

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CPL. MEG MURRAY

Army Maj. Gen. Terry A. Wolff (left), the commanding general of 1st Armored Division, and Army Sgt. Maj. William M. Johnson, the 1st Armored Div. command sergeant major, salute as the colors are marched onto the stage during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Saturday.



CPL. MEG MURRAY

United States service members and Iraqi Security Forces personnel salute as the Iraqi and American national anthems are played during a transfer of authority ceremony aboard Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Saturday. U.S. military responsibility for Al Anbar province passed from United States Force - West, commanded by Maj. Gen. R.T. Tryon, to Baghdad-based United States Division - Center, commanded by Army Maj. Gen. Terry A. Wolff. The departure of USF-W marks the end of six years of operational Marine Corps command in the Al Anbar province.

IRAQ, from A1

much to do. There continues to be a lingering element bent on creating havoc and preventing the good people of Anbar from enjoying the fruits of a normal, peaceful life."

Wolff and his soldiers from the 1st Armored Division will continue to partner with Iraqis and work to steadily build upon the progress Marines have made over the last several years in Anbar.

"Today marks the final chapter of the [Marine Expeditionary Force's] participation in Iraq and Al Anbar. For many of us who have served with you on multiple tours across Iraq, we will never forget your sacrifices and all that you have given on our behalf," said Wolff. "We look forward to partnering with [the Iraqis], and we thank you for all you have done to make us feel welcome. As we move forward, we understand the importance of this year in Iraq and the USD-C team is dedicated to that mission and the tasks ahead."

Marines and Iraqis alike have sweated and sacrificed in the name of freedom and peace for the past six years. The significance of the strong cross-cultural bonds built here will not soon be forgotten.

"As the Marines complete their mission in Anbar, we are grateful for the new beginning in an ancient land and for the many strong friendships we have forged," said Tryon. "From all the Marines who have served in this historic effort, we wish the people of Anbar and Iraq peace and prosperity."

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4	8	3	9	7	1	5	2	6
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COURTESY PHOTO

Troops to Roughnecks students are trained on different safety policies throughout an oil rig during a T2R practical application training course.

Troops 2 Roughnecks comes to Combat Center

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Education Office hosted a new class Tuesday at the Village Center for service members looking to transition into careers in the oil industry. Troops 2 Roughnecks, a course under the Troop Transition Program and Inovatech College of Business and Technology, provides training and job-search support to military personnel separating from the armed forces, said Jeff Fourier, the Combat Center's education services officer. To qualify, service members must be honorably discharged or be disabled veterans. After completing the course, graduates receive an International Association of Drilling Contractors Safety Rig Pass and Well Control Accreditation certifications. "This is a great resource for Marines heading out of

the Corps and looking for a job," Fourier said. The five-week course is broken up into three eight-day modules focusing on history, safety, geology, drilling, well servicing, petroleum economics, field application and many other aspects of working in the oil industry, Fourier said. At the end of the course the students receive credentials they can use for the job applications. The course also helps the Marines apply for jobs with oil companies. There are opportunities in the industry to earn more than \$65,000 within the first year, according to T2R's Web site, <http://www.troops2roughnecks.com>. According to the Web site, the program offers training in a variety of oil industry job fields, and service members can potentially accept job offers prior to their End of Active Service date. "Even if you're not plan-

ning to use your credential right now, you always have the experience to fall back on, which is great, especially during this tough economic time," said Cpl. J. Stephens, a Marine who graduated T2R in a testimonial on the program's Web site. The Web site also contained a testimonial from a Marine who went through the program and now works for Transocean, the world's largest offshore drilling company. "[It is] hard to beat the money and benefits for only working half a year," said John Clayton O'Connor, a T2R graduate formerly assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "I've also found a school that's willing to work with my schedule to earn my degree as well." For more information on T2R and the upcoming Feb. 5 class, contact the Education Office at 830-6881, or go to the T2R Web site.

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If you're moving to a new duty station, your TRICARE benefits are portable, whether you trek across town or across the country. Below is a to-do list before and when you arrive at your new home:

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or TRICARE contractor for an authorization. 3. The time to transfer your TRICARE Prime enrollment is after you arrive at your new duty station. Sponsors can sign into TRICARE's beneficiary web enrollment site at <http://www.triwest.com/bwe> to transfer their Prime enrollment and their family's enrollment to the new duty location. They can also change their address in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. It is recommended you transfer your TRICARE Prime enrollment within 30 days of arriving at your new duty station. Retirees who move to a new Prime area will also need to transfer their Prime enrollment. Those who pay an enrollment fee should con-

tact their new regional contractor to set up automatic payments. Regional contractor information is available at <http://www.tricare.mil>. TriWest Healthcare Alliance, which administers TRICARE in California and 20 other western states, offers many self-service options at <http://www.triwest.com> so you can manage your health care online. You can register on [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) to help manage your other TRICARE benefits and sign up for QuickAlerts—TriWest's automated authorization and referral status notification system. Registered users on [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) can also Go Green with paperless explanation of benefit statements. For more information, visit <http://www.triwest.com/gogreen>.

Combat Center Trader Ads

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>AUTOMOTIVE</p> <p>VIPER TRUCK. V-10, 6 speed, white with blue stripes, commemorative edition, 24,000 miles, warranty. \$31,500. 408-9088. 1/29/10</p> <p>1999 TRANS AM. 30th anniversary, convertible, white with blue, 60,000 miles. \$13,500 OBO. 408-9088. 1/29/10</p> <p>2006 GSX-R 600. For sale, blue and black. \$5,000. OBO. 925-784-4474. 1/22/10</p> <p>1957 NASH EXECUTIVE MODEL PROJECT CAR. Registered, complete engine, \$650 OBO. 5 Rims. Size 15, 6 lug, off-road heavy duty. \$180, OBO. Call Jose 361-3509. 1/15/10</p> | <p>1999 DODGE RAM 1500 SLT. Extended cab, 4x4, runs good, needs some work. \$4,250. Call. 406-1044. 1/15/10</p> <p>2009 HONDA SHADOW FOR SALE. Great condition, low miles, never dropped. \$5,500. Call Logan for details. 423-504-6926. 1/8/10</p> <p>2005 YAMAHA 650 SILVERADO CLASSIC. 9,200 miles. Excellent condition. \$3,600 OBO. Contact Glen at 238-8850 for more information. 12/18/09</p> <p>2005 DODGE RAM VIPER TRUCK. Commemorative edition, 505 HP, 6-speed, white and blue. \$31,500. 408-9088. 12/4/09</p> | <p>MISC.</p> <p>WIRE HAIRD DACHESHUN. Female, 1 year old, spayed. \$100. Chihuahua, male, 1 1/2 year old, neutered. \$40. All shots. Good temperament. 364-1133 or 774-0586. 1/22/10</p> <p>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. 12/11/09</p> <p>FOOTBALL CARDS. Sets, individuals or whole collection. 567-7921. 12/11/09</p> |
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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 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 830-6213.

TATOO, from A1

prohibited by the Marine Corps drug policy and the uniform code of military justice. The MARADMIN also provides additional clarification to some existing regulations. It explains standards while wearing the

physical training uniform and clearly states tattoos are prohibited on the hands, fingers, wrists and in the mouth. All standards also apply to tattoos only visible by ultra-violet light. Clarification is also given to officers and enlisted personnel aspiring to become officers. Enlisted Marines

grandfathered for sleeve tattoos have no restrictions for reenlistment or promotion, but are not eligible to apply for any enlisted-to-officer programs. The policy gives specific authorized measurements

and exact definitions of sleeve, band and excessive tattoos. Any Marine whose tattoos are not within the standards of the current policy must be grandfathered by June 1. "We serve proudly in

every region of the world, in peace and in combat, fulfilling our role of America's ambassadors and defenders of freedom," said Conway. "The eyes of America and the world continually focus upon us

and they expect that the Marine Corps will maintain the highest professional standards at all times. For detailed information on the current tattoo policy, see MARADMINs 000/10 and 029/10.

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<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</p> <p>Call for free van ride Sunday 10:00 A.M. - Worship Sunday School ages 4-10 yrs Visitors Welcome</p> <p>Sunday Concert Series • Call for info 29 Palms • 5688 Sunrise Drive • 361-0086</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.stmartinschurch29.org</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>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)</p> <p>Reverend Lynn Reece "open hearts, open minds, open doors"</p>	<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 365-4014 SUNDAY Bible School.....9:30am Worship.....10:45am</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 Childcare Available Sunday Services Sunday School 9:15 am. Morning Worship 10:30 am. Evening Service 6:00 pm. Wednesday Services Prayer/Bible Study 6:30 pm. Young Married Couples Ministry 6:30 pm. www.fbc29.org 6414 Split Rock Ave., 29 Palms, CA 760-367-7561</p>	<p><i>"The will of God will never take you where the grace of God will not protect you."</i></p>	<p>Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church The corner of Utah Trail and National Park Dr. Sat. Mass 4:30 pm Sun. Mass 8:00 am • 10:30 am Call for all other Mass info 760-367-3343</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>Map: Sage, Buena Vista, Cholla, Pioneer Town, HWY 62</p>

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Tax breaks for Haiti donations

PRESS RELEASE

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

WASHINGTON — People who give to charities providing earthquake relief in Haiti can claim these donations on the tax return they are completing this season.

Taxpayers who itemize deductions on their 2009 return qualify for this special tax relief provision. Only cash contributions made to these charities after Jan. 11 and before March 1 are eligible. This includes contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card. Taxpayers have the option of deducting these contributions on either their

2009 or 2010 returns.

"Americans have opened their hearts to help those affected by the Haiti earthquake," said IRS commissioner Doug Shulman. "This new law provides an immediate tax benefit for the many taxpayers who have made generous donations."

Taxpayers can benefit from their donations, almost immediately, by filing their 2009 returns early, filing electronically and choosing direct deposit. Refunds take as few as 10 days and can be directly deposited into a savings, checking or brokerage account, or used to purchase Series I savings bonds.

To receive a tax benefit,

taxpayers must itemize their deductions on Schedule A. Those who claim the standard deduction, including all short-form filers, are not eligible.

Taxpayers should be sure their contributions go to qualified charities. Most organizations eligible to receive tax-deductible donations are listed online on <http://www.irs.gov>. Some organizations may be qualified even though not listed on the Web site.

The IRS reminds donors contributions to foreign organizations are not always deductible. IRS Publication 526 provides information about charitable contributions.

New PINs required for myPay

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The Defense Finance and Accounting Service implemented the myPay system in March 2000. myPay delivers pay information and lets you process pay-related transactions timely, safely and securely. The Web-based system protects against identity theft and is faster and more secure than regular mail by allowing members to access electronic W2s, leave and earnings statements, and other financial information. myPay matches industry standards for the highest level of encryption and security to protect myPay users.

If you do not have a PIN for accessing myPay, you can obtain one by clicking on the New PIN button on the <https://mypay.dfas.mil> to receive a temporary PIN. If you have any questions concerning myPay, please call our toll free number 1-888-332-7411. If the information posted to your W2 is incor-

rect, please contact your servicing pay office or your customer service representative for assistance.

As of Dec. 14, all myPay users are required to establish a new customized login ID and strong password in order to give the user more protection and increase the security of personal information. When logging into myPay the first time following implementation of these security enhancements, you will be allowed to use your existing login ID and PIN, and then will be prompted to change your login credentials.

Questions regarding this myPay change may be directed to the Centralized Customer Support Unit the toll free number from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Hours of operation for resetting myPay PINs in the Customer Service section of the Installation Personnel Administration Center are Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.



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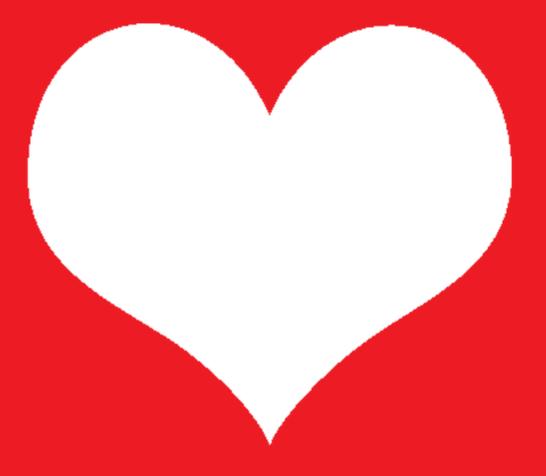
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B1

Combat Center opens Nectar Garden for indigenous butterflies

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the grand opening of the new Nectar Garden near the Wildlife Water Reserve here Tuesday.

The purpose of the garden is to house flowering plants rich with nectar and pollen so local insect and bird species will have a steady food supply in an area normally unable to support them, said Steve Selser, a natural resources specialist with NREA.

Selser, who designed the garden, said he began working on the project after hearing a plea for local Native American tribes to help the indigenous butterfly population.

The first step was to design the layout of the garden and to build a retaining wall.

Cpl. Travis Griffin, an assistant on the project, said it was more fun than hard to build the retaining wall.

Once the retaining wall was put in place, Edward Folts, a Boy Scout with Troop 77 in Twentynine Palms, gathered a few of the

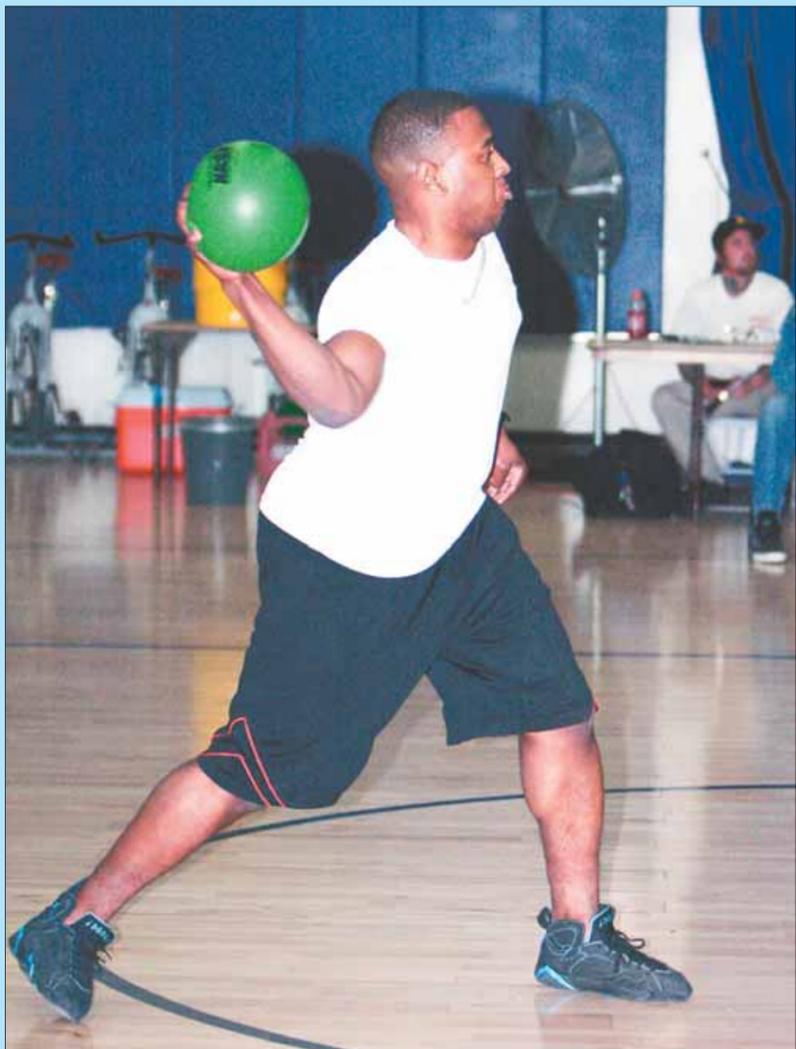
See GARDEN, B4



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

(from left to right) Steve Selser, a natural resources specialist with the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, Selser's assistant, Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy, the commanding general of the Combat Center, and Edward Folts, the lead Boy Scout volunteer, cut the ribbon to open the Nectar Garden to the public Tuesday near the Combat Center's Wildlife Water Reserve. The Nectar Garden provides a place for butterflies, humming birds and other pollinating insects to feed in an area which is otherwise not able to support them.

Dodge this!



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Ryan Gran, a player with Red Dot, launches a dodgeball to try to knock out a player from the Scrubbs during a Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League match at the East Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday night.

See page B3 for full story and standings

Class gives Marines relationship know-how

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

No one likes falling in love only to wind up getting hurt in the long run. A class aboard the Combat Center is teaching Marines and sailors skills to improve their chances of finding a perfect match through the Marine Corps Family Team Building Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge program.

PICK can help Marines and sailors identify the good and bad signs of relationships and help them become better partners, said Adriana Fernandez, a LifeSkills trainer with MCFTB and course instructor.

"It can also allow the students to gain insight to themselves so they can work to improve their relationship skills," said the Joshua Tree, Calif., native.

The two-day program, which is held for four hours each day, is based on more than a decade of psychological research and was founded on the premise that there are five forces which build feelings of romantic relationship: know, trust, rely, commit and touch.

Fernandez uses several tools during each class to help drive home the

basic rules for maintaining and strengthening existing bonds.

Students in the class, are encouraged to know their partner's FACES; their family background, attitudes and actions of the conscience, compatibility potential, examples of other relationship patterns, and the strength of their relationship skills.

Sgt. Francisco Rodriguez, a participant of the course, said he took a lot away from the class.

"It really makes you think about other important things in a relationship besides physical attraction and initial compatibility," said the Chicago native.

Rodriguez also said leaders can take advice from the class back to their junior Marines, so they don't become statistics.

"There are always going to be junior Marines who rush into marriage, and most of the time they don't have the tools they need for it to succeed," he said.

Fernandez agreed. "Divorce rates in the military are alarming," she said. "And there's a big push for Marines to learn how to achieve marital satisfaction.

"The happier Marines are at home with their family, the more focused and

productive they are at work," she added.

Fernandez said the course is still relatively new aboard the installation, and she encourages more units to schedule their Marines for the program.

"This past summer we piloted the class with the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School," Fernandez said. "The program is still in its infancy. We're still trying to get more units to participate in the class, but I think we have a hit here."

The Combat Center is currently the only Marine Corps installation which hosts the program.

PICK is held monthly at the Village Center, and units can call to schedule classes at any time.

Lance Cpl. Hosanna McDonald, a participant of the course, said the program helped her identify some of her personal flaws.

"Comparing this class to my previous relationships, I figured out I'm the one who's lacking the skills to make a relationship work," said McDonald, a Casper, Wyo., native. "But now I know how to fix the areas I'm lacking in."

For more information about the program, contact Fernandez at 830-3115.



Local Events

Stormin' Norman and the Thunder

Description: Country/western music from Nashville
When: 7:30 p.m., Friday
Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information call 365-5956 or visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Theater: 'Blithe Spirit'

Description: A Noel Coward comedy
When: 6 p.m., Friday and Saturday
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For information call 361-4151 or visit
<http://www.theatre29.com>.

Deep Six performs at Rattlesnake Jake's

Description: Classic rock 'n' roll
When: 10 p.m., Friday
Where: Rattlesnake Jake's
51572 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley
For more information call 363-6513 or visit
<http://www.rattlesnakejakes.net>.

Rick Bains, Boyscout Jamboree, Spindriff and special guests!

Description: '60s influenced rock 'n' roll
When: 8 p.m., Saturday
Where: Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information call 365-5956 or visit
<http://www.pappyandharriets.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>.

Lower Desert

An Evening of Classic Lily Tomlin

Description: The comedic film star performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday
Where: McCallum Theatre
73000 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert
For more info call 340-ARTS or visit
<http://www.mccallumtheatre.com>.

Comedy: Martin Lawrence

Description: The comedic actor performs standup
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 12
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more info call 800-827-2946 or visit
<http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Music: John Fogerty

Description: The classic rock legend performs his hits
When: 9 p.m., Friday, Feb. 12
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more info call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Music: Johnny Mathis

Description: Pop legend performs his hits
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 13
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more info call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Comedy: Larry the Cable Guy

Description: Blue Collar Comedy legend performs standup
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 20
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more info call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Music: Cheap Trick

Description: The power pop band performs
When: TBA, Friday, Feb. 26
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more info call 888-999-1995 or visit
<http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Sunset Cinema

The Sunset Cinema is getting an upgrade

The theater will be closed from Jan. 8 through Feb. 12 for a lighting project which will enhance your movie experience. We apologize for any inconvenience. The Lifelong Learning Library has movies for check out new releases, classic titles and everything in between. Call 830-6685 for more details or stop by building 1524 to check them out.

Adams shines in otherwise boggy 'Leap Year'

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Leap Year"

Rated PG

When a matrimonially-impatient New York woman wants to light a fire under her reluctant-to-pop-the-question boyfriend, she pursues him to Ireland, where a leap year tradition puts the proposal ball in her court.

According to Irish lore, women are allowed to propose marriage to men once every four years as February's extra day rolls around.

But, as you might expect, her road to romance takes an unexpected detour.

Amy Adams plays Anna, a successful Manhattan decorator with a high-dollar lifestyle and a workaholic cardiologist boyfriend (Adam Scott) who doesn't quite share her itch to hitch. When her noncommittal doc drops the ball on a perfect opp to pop the question — then ducks out to Dublin for a medical conference — Anna heeds the old-school advice of her Irish dad (John Lithgow). She rolls the dice on a fabled Emerald Isle custom and hops a trans-Atlantic flight to surprise him on Feb. 29.

Should we read anything



COURTESY PHOTO

Anna, played by Amy Adams, is a matrimonially-impatient New York woman who follows her marriage shy boyfriend to Ireland. Her road to romance takes an unexpected detour in the form of a scruffy young Irish rogue named Declan played by Matthew Goode.

into Anna's bumpy airplane ride? Oh, yes!

Diverted to Wales due to stormy weather, she must somehow make her way to Dublin. A chartered boat, beset by the storm, dumps her ashore in a quaint little village called Dingle. That's how she encounters a scruffy young Irish rogue, Declan (Matthew Goode), who agrees to drive her the rest of the way.

Declan and Anna get off

to a chilly start, but you won't be surprised as they begin to warm up to each other. In fact, you won't be surprised by much of anything in this wee, weak and wisp-thin romantic comedy, which uses just about every tired convention and shopworn cliché in the rom-com playbook.

The on-location photography is, however, quite splendid, with vistas of Ireland's natural splendor filling the screen. But why doesn't late February on the British Isles look colder? No one so much as shivers, even when drenched by a downpour. And what kind of vegetable garden, anywhere in the North Atlantic, produces bountiful carrots and leafy lettuce just a couple of weeks after Valentine's Day?

And why in the world

would a modern-day, successful and savvy woman, like Anna, fall for such a crock of Lucky Charms malarkey? You never believe for a minute that a real female, under her circumstances, would entertain even the itty-bittiest inkling of interest in such a silly shamrock scheme. This IS the 21st century, right?

The bright spot in this boggy botched mess is Amy Adams, a fine and always interesting actress who sparkles and shines here despite the stilted storyline, preposterous improbabilities and an artificially sweetened storybook ending. The feisty, quippy sparks between her character and Goode's are the only things that keep this movie from sinking like a 100-pound blarney stone.

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15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday

Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WalMart	MCAGCC
7:00	7:10	7:15	7:50	8:30

15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*

Base Post Exchange	Building 1664	Subway	29 Palms Community Center	29 Palms Staters	Joshua Tree Park Blvd.	Stater Bros WalMart	Palm Springs Airport
10:00	10:25	10:30	10:40	10:45	11:00	11:10	11:45
4:00	4:25	4:30	*4:40	*4:45	*5:00	*5:10	*5:45

15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Saturday/Sunday*

Palm Springs Airport	Indian Canyon & Andreas (Casino)	Indian Canyon & Tacheva (Hospital)	Stater Bros WalMart	MCAGCC
12:00	12:10	12:15	12:50	1:35
*6:00	*6:10	*6:15	*6:50	*7:35

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

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COURTESY PHOTO

Declan and Anna get off to a chilly start, but you won't be surprised as they begin to warm up to each other.

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Balls fly as dodgeball league begins at East Gym

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The kick off of the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League at the Combat Centers East Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday night is giving Marines, sailors and civilians another way to unwind after a hard day's work.

The teams will compete in two matches each week for the next eight weeks. The team with the most wins will be crowned champions.

If two teams finish with the same record, it will go down to who won

when they played each other, said Randy Husted, the sports coordinator for the Marine Corps Community Services Sports Department. If the teams played one another and both won one match, then a championship game is held.

Each league game lasts four minutes, and games are played in sets. The first team to win three games in the set will win the match.

Although the dodgeball players are motivated, they sometimes have a hard time finding time to practice.

"We formed the team by looking around the office, thinking it is a great

way for us to bond together and have fun at the same time," said Victor Palacios, a player for Cranial Crashers. "When we are on lunch we practice with who we have available."

After the games, spirits were high on both the winning and losing sides.

"We always play to have fun and tonight we were missing most of our players," said Malina Shippen, the coach for Bad Karma. "You can expect for us to show up sometime in wigs or superhero costumes just to have more fun."

For more information on the Dodgeball League, contact the Sports Department at 830-4092.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Members of team Bad Karma hurls balls at their opponents during a Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League match at the East Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday night. The matches ended with a Hospital victory, but not without a fight from Bad Karma.

Intramural dodgeball standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
Hospital	2	0
Jive Turkeys	2	0
Cranial Crashers	2	0
Red Dot	1	1
Scrubbs	1	1
Worst	1	1
Sitting Ducks	1	1
Bad Karma	0	2
Plaza Sesamo	0	2
Main Exchange	0	2

Athlete of the Week



Name: James Wickline
Hometown: Reidsville, N.C.
Unit: Company C, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School
Job title: Radar repairman
Recognition: Qualified for All-Marine Wrestling tryouts
Favorite aspect of the sport: "It is a one on one battle and you prove that you are the better athlete."
Advice for aspiring players: "Always strive to be better than you are."

DeCA scholarship deadline draws near

TAMMY L. MOODY
DECA MARKETING AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

FORT LEE, Va. – The Feb. 17 deadline for students to apply for the 2010 Scholarships for Military Children Program is approaching fast. All students interested and eligible to apply are encouraged to gather their materials and submit their applications as soon as possible.

Applicants must write an essay on the following topic: "You can travel back in time, however, you cannot change events. What point in history would you visit and why?"

The Scholarships for Military Children Program was created 10 years ago to recognize the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community.

Applications are available in commissaries worldwide and online through a link at <http://www.commissaries.com> and directly at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. Applications must be turned in to a commissary by close of business Feb. 17. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

Those eligible to apply for a scholarship are

dependent, unmarried children younger than 21 (23 if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university) of active-duty, Reserve, National Guard or retired military members; and survivors of service members who died while on active duty, or survivors of individuals who died while receiving military retired pay.

Eligibility is determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are enrolled in DEERS and have a current ID card.

An applicant must be planning to attend, or already be attending, an accredited college or university full time in the fall of 2010, or be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

The scholarships program is administered by

Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to service members and their families. Scholarship Managers, a national, nonprofit scholarship management services organization, manages and awards the scholarships. Commissary vendors, manufacturers, brokers, suppliers and the general public donate money to the program, and every dollar donated goes directly to funding the scholarships.

Since its inception in 2001, the program has awarded \$7.3 million in scholarships to almost 5,000 children of service members.

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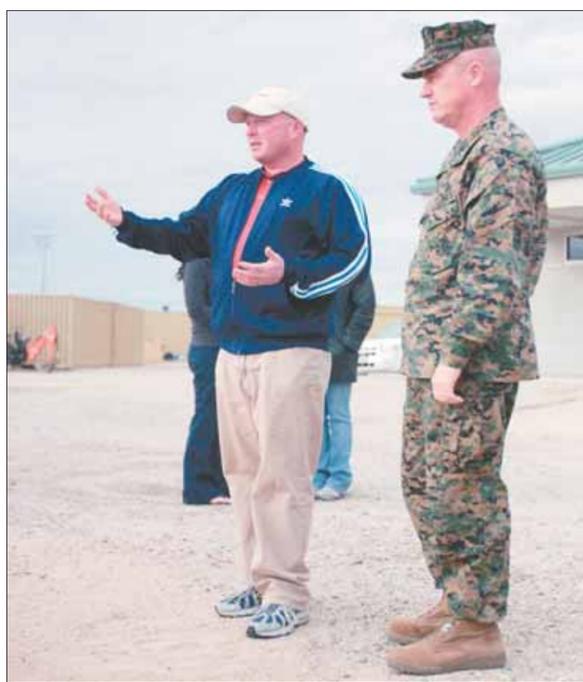
GARDEN, from B1

other scouts together on a weekend, filled in the retaining walls, and planted the flowers and cacti.

"We planned for it to get better and better over time," Selser said. "We are also planning to add a couple of benches for people to sit down and enjoy the garden and animals."

During the ribbon cutting ceremony, Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy, the Combat Center's commanding general, commended the volunteers for their service and thanked them for their hard work.

"It is not always the big projects that make the difference. It is the little things that really matter," Clardy said.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Steve Selser, a natural resources specialist for the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division, shares the details of the Nectar Garden with Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy, the commanding general of the Combat Center.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Visitors at the Combat Center's Wildlife Water Reserve admire the new Nectar Garden Tuesday after a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to officially open the garden to the public.

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