

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

JUNE 11, 2010

SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957

VOL. 53 ISSUE 23



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Sergeant Derrick C. Johnson [right], a squad leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, prepares to head across a field as a CH-53 Sea Stallion lifts off behind him. Battalion Landing Team, 1st Bn., 7th Marines, was the spearhead for exercise Dawn Blitz.

'First Team' trains for every clime, place

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

ABOARD THE USS BONHOMME RICHARD – Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, along with others from the Combat Center, boarded the amphibious assault ships USS Germantown and Bonhomme Richard to participate in Dawn Blitz May 31 to June 4.

The large-scale, amphibious assault exercise gave "First Team" an opportunity to practice their skills in preparation for their upcoming deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit next month, said Lt. Col. Todd P. Simmons, the unit's commanding officer, and a native of Watervliet, N.Y.

The real value of this training is that is will help his personnel become strong seafaring Marines, Simmons said.

BLT 1/7 brought more than 700 Marines and some major firepower to Dawn Blitz, which added to the artillery and air support from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and the Navy ships. This included a platoon of light armored vehicles, artillery from Battery M, 3rd Bn., 11th Marines, and amphibious assault vehicles from Company D, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion.

Simmons said while his Marines are capable of taking on any challenge, they face a long road in mastering their new role.

"The vast majority of us have never been on ship before," Simmons said. Most of the Marines have multiple tours to Iraq under their belts, but don't know the basics of living at sea.

Rather than viewing this as a weakness, Simmons said the battalion saw its lack of sea service experience as an opportunity to train. They went through the Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course and the Airfield Seizure exercise, and spent a long time training for their MEU mission outside the Combat Center.

The new deployment training has also helped deepen the resolve and motivation of First Team, Simmons said. He wasn't sure how many of them were going to respond to their new role. Fortunately, the vast majority of them responded positively.

"Many of the Marines have said 'This isn't Iraq, it's a cool mission, and it's what I extended for,'" he said. "They'll live this life to see it's a good one."

Some Iraq and Afghanistan veterans said they are

See BLITZ, A6

Survey assesses housing needs, ends today

COMPILED BY OBSERVATION POST STAFF

A survey from Headquarters Marine Corps is offering Combat Center service members a chance to voice their opinions about housing options on base and off within the military, and share their views on shortcomings within the system.

The Housing Market Analysis and Military Personnel Survey for the

Combat Center is to ensure all military personnel stationed here receive the highest quality housing.

Data collected will be used to determine housing needs of the Combat Center's military members. The data will also capture Combat Center housing needs, preferences and housing-related costs military members encounter off base.

To play a part in future housing development and options, go to

<https://survey.rdniehaus.com>. Type in "twenty-nine" for the username and "2010" for the password. The username is not case sensitive.

Hard copies of the survey are also available at the Combat Center's Housing Office.

Answers must be received by close of business today.

For more information, contact Ken Tinquist at 830-1702 or kenneth.tinquist@usmc.mil.

Band opens Memorial Day weekend to standing ovation

CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Sergeant Steven Santiago, trumpet player [left], and Lance Cpl. John Starks, a saxophone player with the Combat Center Band's Jazz Combo, perform for a lively audience in Reedsport, Ore., May 30.

REEDSPORT, Ore. – All was quiet in the small, coastal town of Reedsport Ore., until the Combat Center Band arrived under an honorary police escort to give the residents a patriotic soundtrack to celebrate the Memorial Day weekend.

The band, now on its eighth annual trip to the quiet town, made their presence known with a widely-anticipated concert at the Reedsport High School Pacific Auditorium May 30, marking the first of many performances taking place during the following days.

"It means so much to our community given the percentage of vets in the area," said Joe Mirvis, the events planner with the Reedsport/Winchester Bay Chamber of Commerce. "We look forward to this year-round, and we feel very privileged to have them here."

The gratitude of residents was apparent, but not just in kind remarks. Contributions from the city's Chamber of Commerce, and local shops and businesses sponsor the band's yearly trip, which helps to dramatically reduce the band's financial costs each year.

Twenty-one members, about half of the Combat Center Band, performed various military and jazz tunes for the packed auditorium.

"It's harder to perform [with half the band], because the blend is different and the balance is different, but we pulled it off," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen Giove, the Combat Center Band conductor. The experi-

See BAND, A10

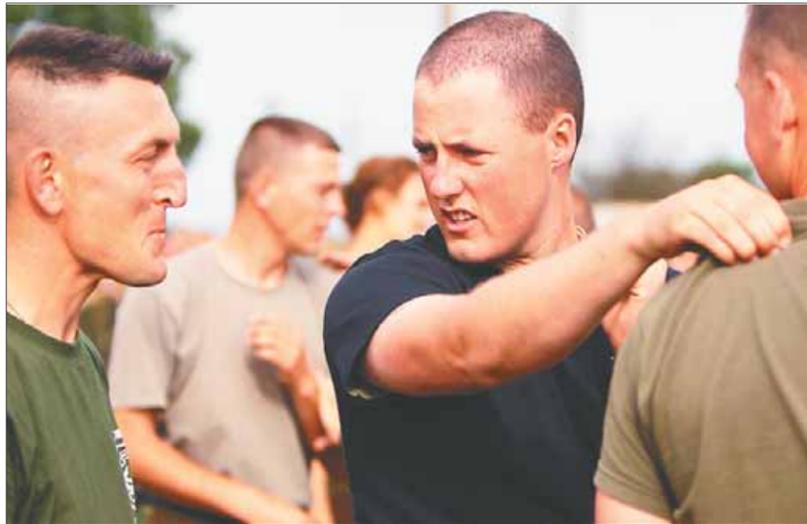
Macedonian forces begin training alongside U.S. Marines

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
BLACK SEA ROTATIONAL FORCE

BABADAG TRAINING AREA, Romania – Macedonian soldiers kicked off two weeks of training alongside U.S. Marines at Romania's Babadag Training Area May 31.

This is the second of four peacekeeping operations courses for partner nations scheduled to be supported by the Marines and sailors of Black Sea Rotational Force 2010, the first Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force to deploy to the Balkan, Caucasus and Black Sea regions. The Marines wrapped up their initial training phase with Romania,

See TRAINING, A9



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Sergeant Shane Cell [right], a squad leader with scout platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Tank Battalion, demonstrates muscular gouging to Pvt. Alexander Leievski, a Macedonian Army soldier with Scorpion Co., 1st Bn., 1st Brigade, during a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training exercise at Babadag Training Area, Romania, June 1.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

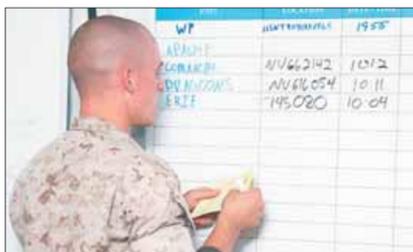
Marines with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, crowd the hallways of the USS Bonhomme Richard after staging practice June 3 during exercise Dawn Blitz. The exercise was meant as a display of the nation's amphibious assault capabilities and to help prepare the Marines for their deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit next month.



'Band' together ~ See A3



Spirited beginnings ~ See A4



Menacing exercise ~ See A5



A'ford'ing fun ~ See B1



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page by searching "The Combat Center at Twentynine Palms" at <http://www.facebook.com>

See more articles on the Combat Center Band and Dawn Blitz exclusively online at facebook and <http://www.marines.mil>.

How to beat prostate cancer

SHARI LOPATIN AND DIANE MAYER
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Besides skin cancer, prostate is the most common form of cancer in men, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2009, the National Cancer Institute estimated that nearly 200,000 men were newly diagnosed with prostate cancer. That's more than 500 men every day. This Father's Day, on June 20, show the men in your life how much they mean to you. Encourage them to speak with their doctor about prostate testing.

One of the more common tests used to screen for prostate cancer is the prostate specific antigen test, or PSA test. According to the CDC, PSA is a substance made by the prostate. Men with prostate cancer, or other conditions related to the prostate, usually have higher levels of PSA in their blood.

A PSA test is a simple blood test to check a man's PSA levels.

TRICARE covers prostate screening tests for men who are:

- Older than 50
- Older than 40 and had a vasectomy
- Ages 40-49 with a family history of prostate cancer.

Exercise and prostate cancer prevention

Men who are the most physically active have a decreased risk for prostate cancer, as was indicated by 16 studies conducted between 1976 and 2002 and reported by "Sports Medicine" in 2004. Additionally, the studies found exercise is beneficial for men who were undergoing treatment for prostate cancer.

So the bottom line? It never hurts to exercise!

For more information on prostate cancer screenings, check out TriWest's PSA information by visiting <http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary/benefits.aspx> and typing in the search tool "PSA." You can also visit the CDC's comprehensive guide to prostate cancer screening at <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/pdf/prosguide.pdf>.

Centerspeak

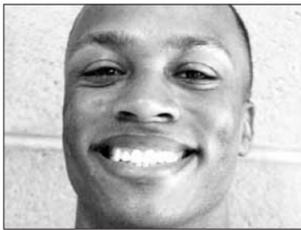
What is your favorite vacation spot?

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



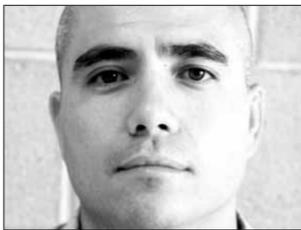
STAFF SGT. KEVIN RICHARDS
HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Jamaica, because I am a native there. It is where I was born and raised."



CPL. DUJUAN BATISTE
HEADQUARTERS BATTERY, 3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Australia, because the atmosphere out there is beautiful. It is a great place to go to relax."



1ST LT. JACK HARDING
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, because it is beautiful, it's in another country, and it is on the water so you can take a boat to other places."

Hot Topics

RIDE FOR THE RED

A poker run is scheduled for June 19. Registration and sign-ins are from 8 to 10 a.m. at Hutchins Motor Sports in Yucca Valley. Rider fee is \$25 and includes a barbeque lunch, a raffle ticket and unique ride pin. Additional lunches at \$5. For more information, call 365-5501 or visit <http://www.morongo-basin-redcross.org>

VET CLINIC SERVICES LIMITED

Full veterinary services for privately-owned animals will not be available until August. Limited relief veterinary services will be available for privately-owned animals July 7-9. Pet owners are advised to seek care for their animals from a local veterinarian in the surrounding communities. Call 830-6896 for more information.

SCION BATTLE OF THE BUILDS

Scion, in conjunction with MWR and MCCS, is offering a car design contest for all active duty, reserve and National Guard personnel. The top designers from each base will be given money to build their dream cars and fly to Vegas for the final contest in November. Teams must have five to eight people. Registration deadline is today. Go to <http://www.battleofthebuilds.com> for more details.

SIX FLAGS MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY & PICNIC

Six Flags Magic Mountain is hosting a Military Appreciation Day and Picnic July 3. Ticket price is \$29.75 and includes a fully-catered all-you-can-eat buffet style meal. For tickets, visit the MCCS ITT office at the exchange or call 830-6163 ext. 252.

Marine Corps History

June 10, 1898

First Marine Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Robert W. Huntington, landed on the eastern side of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



Eagle Eyes

Report any suspicious activity immediately which may be a sign of terrorism, including:

1. Surveillance
2. Suspicious questioning
3. Tests of security
4. Acquiring supplies
5. Suspicious persons
6. Trial runs
7. Deploying assets

830-3937

"Remind me again... We did buy the FOAMY LETTERS for HIM to play with... Right?"



BATH TIME WITH DADDY

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

SUDOKU #1837

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

CAN YOU DIG IT?

[Puzzle solutions on A10]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
13					14				15						
16					17				18						
19							20		21						
					22		23		24						
25	26	27	28	29			30	31							
32						33				34	35	36	37		
38							39				40				
41											43				
				44	45						46				
47	48	49					50	51							
52							53		54		55	56	57	58	59
60							61		62						
63							64					65			
66							67					68			

ACROSS

1. Like a pool table, ideally
6. Low on the Mohs scale
10. Leo's movie studio
13. Low-budget prefix
14. Double Stuff cookie brand
15. Philippine tribesman
16. James Bond foe of 1964
18. Pastry prettifier
19. No-cal fat substitute
20. Squirrels away
22. Prospector's find
24. Slow on the ___ (dense)
25. ___-on-Hudson, NY
30. Tasty fungus
32. Red Square tomb cohort
33. Copout of Howard and Howard
34. Old name on US

DOWN

1. Toy block brand
2. Tree-hugger's subj.
3. Meadow mouse
4. Wraps up
5. A nine iron has lots of it
6. Fish locator
7. Web address ender
8. Broker's charges
9. Waterboarding, some claim
10. Coffee shop order
11. Rosetta Stone language
12. Code inventor
15. Christmas flora
17. Mineral abundant in spinach
21. Mighty Joe Young, for one
23. Renowned
25. Skelton's Kadiddle hopper
26. Spiff up
27. Cross to bear
28. Game that's usually drawn
29. "A Chorus Line" hit
31. Common cameo stone
33. Casino card game
35. Fries, often
36. "Your ___ is showing!"
37. "Our Gang" affirmative
40. Auto loan letters
42. Vine supporter
45. Shepherd's ___
46. Staff symbol
47. Like corn tassels
48. Shop class tool
49. Sitcom with a noted coming-out
51. Pastoral poem
53. Fill with freight
55. Home improvement pro Bob
56. Look ___ (visit briefly)
57. Opposed to, in dialect
58. Infamous "fiddler"
59. Long basket, in basketball lingo
62. ___ one-eighty

School Liaison Information

Question: We are working on scheduling extra activities for after school, but how much is too much?

Answer: Here are a few tips for scheduling activities:

- Don't over schedule. Look closely at the family's schedule, school/homework requirements and other time commitments to make sure there's enough time for extra activities. Some experts say children should not have more than six to nine hours of scheduled activities per week, so keep track.
- Give your child time to get used to a new activity. Make a rule once your child starts a new activity, he or she has to stick with it for a certain amount of time (maybe six weeks, as an example). This gives your child a chance to decide if he or she really likes the activity or not and encourages a sense of responsibility, optimism and commitment.
- Remember the purpose of the extra activities. Activities should build your child's confidence while building their world view and opportunities. If an activity is not accomplishing this for your child, maybe it is time to switch to another one.

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

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Barbara Ricker
Hometown: Moorhead, Minn.
Unit: G-3, Operations and Training Directorate
Job title: Administrative officer
Job duties: Handles all administrative actions internally and externally for G-3 and other entities. Coordinates and staffs all video teleconferences at the Combat Center's emergency operation center.
What do you like most about your job? "I love being able to go into the training areas with Explosive

Ordnance Disposal, blowing things up and getting into the range to shoot."
Significant achievements: "I'm proud of being able to facilitate the Marines in VTCs with the Operational Forces in Afghanistan."
Hobbies: "Working out, cardio, weights and yoga. Watching movies and spending time with my friends all over the world, and I love facebook."
Time at Combat Center: "I've been here since 2004."

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III

Public Affairs Officer - Jennie E. Haskamp Press Chief/Editor - Sgt. Heather Golden
Public Affairs Chief - Gunnery Sgt. Sergio Jimenez Layout, Design - Leslie Shaw

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Large sound marches through small town

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

REEDSPORT, Ore. – The small, coastal town of Reedsport Ore., home to roughly 4,000 people, teemed with patriotism May 31 as residents lined the streets awaiting the city's renowned Memorial Day parade. Shops were closed and grills were lit as the sound of the Combat Center Band resonated down Fir Avenue.

"Half the band is here," stated Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen Giove in a pep talk to the band just before starting off on the parade route. "Remember—small size, large sound," an instruction the 21 members of the Twentynine Palms-based band held true to during their march.

The band made two complete laps around the city's central block, accompanied by members of local fire and police departments and floats from local businesses and clubs before starting the Memorial Day ceremony outside the downtown courthouse.

"There's a Norman Rockwell character to our celebration here, in all the best ways," said Keith Tymchuk, the mayor of Reedsport, during his opening remarks at the ceremony. "This is the most American day of the year. We celebrate the sacrifices of the veterans here, and those who are not here, and what they have been able to make for us."

The band provided music during the ceremony, which



Sergeant Jose Grajeda, acts as drum major for the Combat Center Band as they march down Fir Avenue in Reedsport, Ore., May 31 during the Memorial Day parade.

hundreds attended, to include veterans from World War II to current members of all five military branches.

Although a somber event, a few hearty laughs were had by the crowd thanks to Giove who is known by the residents of Reedsport for his jovial remarks between songs.

During the performance, Giove enticed an unsuspecting C.C. Barber, 2009's Miss Oregon, to the front of the band and casually passed off his conducting baton to the pageant winner to conduct the next song, "Washington Post."

An agreeable band performed the song under the unorthodox conducting techniques and later unani-

mously agreed Barber was welcome to conduct the band during future events.

After the ceremony, Cpl. Andrew Bush, a guitar player with the Combat Center Band, reflected on his experience playing for the quiet town of Reedsport.

"The Reedsport crowd is one of the best we perform for," he said. "They are the most enthusiastic. They are there two hours before the parade even starts, and when we play the Marines' Hymn, they all stand up. Even though a lot of them aren't Marines, it isn't their song, but they still stand up because it's our song. That was really something."



Corporal Britton Haynes, a piccolo player in the Combat Center Band, performs a solo during a Memorial Day ceremony in downtown Reedsport, Ore., May 31.



Corporal Jaime Giles, a percussionist with the Combat Center Band, and 20 other band Marines march in the Memorial Day parade in downtown Reedsport, Ore., May 31.




Voyage to Book Island

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CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Macedonian Army soldiers with Scorpion Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, strike pads during a competitive Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training exercise at Babadag Training Area, Romania, June 2. The Macedonians are currently training with the Marines and sailors of scout platoon, Headquarters and Service Co., 1st Tank Bn., as the second of four peacekeeping operations of Black Sea Rotational Force 2010.

Macedonians' competitive spirit boosts training at Babadag



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE
BLACK SEA ROTATIONAL FORCE

BABADAG TRAINING AREA, Romania – Marines are known to be competitive by nature. Whether it's pull-ups or rifle scores, competition helps keep Marines among the world's most elite fighting organizations. But here at Babadag Training Area, Romania, the Marines aren't the only ones who possess that competitive spirit.

Macedonian Army soldiers with Scorpion Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, are currently training with the Marines and sailors of scout platoon, Headquarters and Service Co., 1st Tank Bn., and the Macedonian soldiers' competitive drive was made obvious during a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program physical training session June 2.

The session was designed to test the soldiers' knowledge of the MCMAP skills they have honed throughout the week, how well they work together at the fire-team level and how quickly they could move as a team.

During the session, each platoon split into teams and navigated the course against the other, which included a "bull-in-the-ring" station, a circle where each team tried to push the other out to gain a slight advantage during the race.

Lance Cpl. Jesse Watson, an assaultman with Headquarters and Service Co., 1st Tank Bn., said the motivation and competitive spirit between the Macedonian platoons is having an effect on the training evolution.

"They're just as competitive as we are," said Watson, a Louisville, Ky., native. "Each of the four platoons is always talking about how they're the best. It's really helping us out as instructors, because the more intense they are and the more engaged they are in the training, the more

See SPIRIT, A6

Proper planning prevents PCS, EAS headaches

PFC. SARAH ANDERSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Proper preparation can make the difference between a smooth or stressful permanent change of station or end of active service date. Understanding the steps and things to be aware of before the big date arrives is vital for a successful transition to civilian life or the next duty station.

When it comes to administration, timing is essential to proper planning, said Lance Cpl. Justin B. Salas, the Orders noncommissioned officer in charge at the Combat Center's Installation Personnel Administration Center.

The administrative steps to take before leaving are very simple, Salas said.

"Marines have to have a data sheet. They can get it from the S-1 or from [IPAC]. It is just a data sheet, you take it and drive, it's not as stressful."

A data sheet is a form of personal information to let the Marine Corps know where a Marine is staying after their EAS date.

When it comes to transferring overseas, there is much more paperwork, so Marines need to make sure they give themselves enough time to fill it out. This could include filing for passports for themselves and their families, Salas said.

"As soon as you find out your Web orders, come in and see us," he said.

Salas said the Marines working in IPAC are always willing to talk to anyone with questions, and will lead them step-by-step through the PCS or EAS process.

"We don't take appointments," he explained. "You can call and walk in. Come in see us, we can tell you your options that day, we can get you out of here smoothly and efficiently, so there's no room for error."

The most important this

in this process is to ask questions, Salas added.

Another person Marines need to see during any transition is the career planner.

"When it comes to EAS, we have to do what is called the career planners' EAS interview and an officers' interview," said Master Sgt. Edward Whitaker, the installation career planner. "We have to do interviews six to nine months prior to EAS."

Also, Marines leaving the Corps must attend separation classes as early as a year in advance of their EAS date.

"You need a plan. What are you going to do when you get out?" said Whitaker.

Having a job lined up, a housing plan and an automobile is key to having a successful transition into civilian life, he added.

For Marines transferring to a new duty station, the career planner ensures they have enough time left on contract to fulfill obligated service time. Many times this means a Marine has to extend or reenlist, Whitaker explained.

When it comes to a Marine's actual move, the Traffic Management Office is the place to go. Relocating Marines have a choice whether to use a personally procured move, also called a do-it-yourself move, or a government move, said Kern Garr, the personal property supervisor for the Combat Center's Traffic Management Office.

"If they are doing a government move, the carrier requires seven to 10 days notice," she said. "If they're doing a [PPM], they have to have the application done before performing the [PPM]."

Marines should look into the cost of a government move versus a PPM to see which is more costly, Garr said.

The PPM is not always the best option for the mover, especially now that the commercial trucks are more expensive

and government moves costs less, she said.

A Marine needs to call and schedule an appointment to set up their move, said John Montoya, the acting transportation officer of TMO.

TMO now has a program where non-first term Marines can apply for a move online.

"The program is Web based. For non-first term movers, you can go to the Web site at home, e-mail the application to TMO, the TMO reviews it and forwards it to a carrier," Montoya said.

To fill out an application, go online to <http://move.mil>.

When preparing for a move, Marines need to plan for enough time for a move to be successful.

"This being the busy season, it's harder to accommodate what our costumers want us to get their carrier to do," Garr said.

Marines wanting to do a PPM and apply for an advance need to allow for even more time. The Combat Center's TMO doesn't have a finance center, "so the advance needs to come from [Camp] Pendleton, and they require at least 10-20 days," Garr added.

As far as TMO is concerned, there is very little difference between a PCS move and an EAS move, Garr said.

"PCS, you're entitled to go to your next duty station, unless you want to pay the difference. EAS, you are entitled to go to your home of record unless you want to go somewhere else and pay the difference."

To schedule an appointment for a move or find out more information about TMO, call 830-6129.

To schedule an appointment with the career planner, call 830-6171.

To find out more about the administrative steps which need to be completed before a PCS or EAS date, call IPAC at 830-6119.

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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>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 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>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) 367-7135 72348 Larrea Road (2 blocks up from KFC), 29 Palms www.stmartinchurch29.org</p>	
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'Wolf Pack' Marines conduct command post exercise

CPL. NICHOLAS M. DUNN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A combat operations center is a vital asset to units wherever and whenever they train or deploy by allowing the digital collection, processing, and dissemination of tactical data.

During Command Post Exercise Menacing Name on June 4, roughly 50 Marines from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were immersed in a COC environment at their light armored vehicle ramp through an exercise that challenged the Marines to work with the new information technology used in a forward-deployed, battalion-level COC during several combat operations scenarios, said Staff Sgt. Charles Creer, 3rd LAR's assistant operations chief.

"What we're really trying to accomplish here is brilliance in the basics by conducting a suite of command and control procedures and maneuvers while practicing the basic flow of a COC," said Creer, a native of Salem, Utah. "We've got a lot of new Marines – a lot of new faces – and many of them are using the majority of the systems for the first time."

CPX Menacing Name, which sardonically derives its handle from the way military exercises and operations are often named, was assisted by instructors from the Battle Simulation Center and Marine Air-Ground Task Force Integrated Systems Training Center, known as MISTC.

The first half of Menacing

Name mainly consisted of monitoring the operational forces, which were controlled by 3rd LAR Marines through a combat simulator at MISTC, as they moved into their battle positions, Creer said. This provided COC personnel with the opportunity to practice using the equipment, communicating effectively and familiarizing themselves with basic COC operations.

"This is the first time we've held a CPX this robust as a battalion using outside entities," he said. "These systems have been around for a while, but we're getting full immersion so we can get everyone familiar with COC operations."

Creer said although the COC is meant to provide seamless communication and enhanced situational awareness, setting up and operating one is not without its complications.

"Comm is always an issue," he said. "We had to overcome a lot of adversity using the [Digital Switch Unit]."

Sgt. Earl Jay, 3rd LAR's data noncommissioned officer, said DSU enables COC personnel to communicate using a Voice over Internet Protocol intercom system. However, the setup and maintenance of the DSU can be complex and time consuming.

Another issue was making sure the equipment was properly maintained during the exercise. The complex relied on two generators to maintain power and climate control, which is vital to preserving electrical equipment.

"The air needs to be cool

enough so the extreme heat doesn't fry our gear," said Lance Cpl. Travis Tilseth, an LAV crewman and Apple Valley, Minn., native who served as the COC's watch noncommissioned officer. "The good news is, as long as the generators are fueled and maintained, they won't quit. In Iraq, we kept one of these running the entire seven months we were there. We never had to shut it down."

On top of the initial obstacles, the COC Marines encountered a new set of operational challenges during the second half of the exercise. Shortly after midday, one of the LAV platoons encountered a simulated improvised explosive device chain. The situation was resolved quickly, but roughly a half-hour later, more bad news filtered in.

"Attention in the COC," said 1st Lt. Austin Murnane,

the battalion's assistant operations officer, who served as the watch commander for Menacing Name. "A friendly aircraft just went down."

As LAV platoons moved in to secure the notional crash site, reports of enemy small arms fire began to trickle in. Additionally, there were two friendly casualties at the crash who needed to be evacuated and given immediate medical attention. Fortunately, the

battalion was able to accomplish their mission without suffering any additional simulated casualties. By 2 p.m., CPX Menacing Name ended and was considered a successful operation.

"I think the Marines learned a lot here," said Capt. Oscar E. Rodriguez, Jr., 3rd LAR's operations officer. "We're beginning to develop

See 3RD LAR, A9



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Marines from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion monitor computers and radios in the combat operations center at the battalion's light armored vehicle ramp June 4 as part of Command Post Exercise Menacing Name, a COC familiarization training sequence.



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Lance Cpl. Randall Harness, a communications repairman with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, helps Lance Cpl. Adam Smith, a blue force tracker in 3rd LAR's combat operations center, troubleshoot BFT equipment during Command Post Exercise Menacing Name, a COC training exercise, at the battalion's light armored vehicle ramp June 4.

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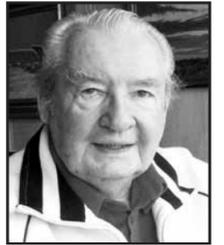
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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



Two of the best words to use when describing a tough minded optimist are debonair and sanguine. That's right. We are calm within, self-assured, confident, and absolutely certain that whatever occurs will ultimately result in something positive and good. This attitude requires a knowledge and acceptance of one's self and a sense of "belonging" to that which is eternal.

I know such a man. His name is Konrad Prager, proprietor of Indian Cove Market. Konrad begins EVERY day with a quiet time in which he reads his Bible and has private meditation and prayer. He then takes that wonderful spirit of inner peace and contentment into his busy work-day activities. (He and his wife Pauline and son Robert also own Village Mart and Deli in downtown Morongo Valley. This, of course, is a challenging situation and it keeps them mighty busy.)

I travel by Indian Cove Market on Highway 62 just east of the radio tower everyday and I know everyone working in that superb deli. And Konrad's loving spirit permeates the place and is evident in every employee. I am thinking of Julie Brunette and her fabulous banana bread, Kelly Cash who always has a smile and makes great sandwiches, my friend of many years Sherry McKay (her pastrami sandwiches are about as good as they get), beautiful Amy, and now the new young lady Charla Buus.

What a crew! I love them all. And believe me it is a great place because Konrad's beautiful spirit is reflected in everything said and done in that "oasis on the highway" seven days a week.

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BLITZ, from A1

looking forward to seeing more than what they describe as a sand-choked desert.

"It's going to be nice getting out of Twentynine Palms for a while," said Lance Cpl. Daniel Cobb, Company C, 1st Bn., 7th

Marines, and a native of Lafayette, Ga. "I joined the Marine Corps to see the world. [It] sounds like we're going to be doing

plenty of that when we go over there."

Other Marines expressed excitement mixed with cautious optimism.

"I think the MEU is going to be pretty cool," said Pfc. Chris Storm, a rifleman with Co. C, who is from Cambridge, Minn. "I

don't know how much I'm going to like ship life, but for the experience I'm going to have, it's going to be worth it."



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

An amphibious assault vehicle with Company D, 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, charges forward during Dawn Blitz June 4. Dawn Blitz incorporated nearly all elements of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, leading the way.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Four CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters circle the USS Bonhomme Richard June 3 before exercise Dawn Blitz. The exercise demonstrated the nation's ability to go ashore and seize and hold enemy ground.



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SPIRIT, from A4

we can accomplish over these two weeks."

Macedonian Army Sgt. Slagan Cvetanovski, a soldier

with Scorpion Co., said making every event a competition has made their unit more efficient and disciplined.

"Competing is always fun," Cvetanovski said. "It makes

you push yourself harder to try and beat the other guy. No one likes to lose."

The Marines are working in the Black Sea, Balkan and Caucasus regions to promote regional stability, and build enduring partnerships and the capabilities of partner nations' military forces. The Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force currently deployed to Romania is Marine Corps Forces Europe's commitment to a rotating presence of Marines in Eastern Europe to meet U.S. European Command's theater security objectives.

The Macedonians' training evolution is the second of four slated peacekeeping operations courses during Black Sea Rotational Force deployment. Macedonian forces will train with the U.S. Marines and sailors through June 11.



CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

Sergeant Slagan Cvetanovski, a Macedonian Army soldier with Scorpion Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, carries Staff Sgt. Dalebor Jovanovski, also with Scorpion Co., during a competitive Marine Corps Martial Arts Program training exercise at Babadag Training Area, Romania, June 2.



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Special Consumer Healthcare Council meeting set for June

PRESS RELEASE

ROBERT E. BUSH NAVAL HOSPITAL

The Consumer Health Care Council will meet June 15 at 3 p.m. in Classroom 4 at the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital. This special meeting is held to provide health care consumers with an effective means of presenting their views concerning the operation of the health care delivery system.

The input gathered from this meeting is very important to the hospital as some decisions for patient services are based on that input.

The meeting is also held to provide the hospital leadership with an opportunity to communicate face to face with the hospital's customers.

Aside from open discussion questions, this meeting's agenda includes:

New items:

- Physician deployment and transfers impacting patient appointments for the summer
- New emergency physician contract
- TRICARE enrollment updates for Impact of Non-Emergent Care elsewhere

- Updating your DEERS
- 30-minute drive time waivers
- Colorectal Cancer Screening Program
- Summer safety tips

Ongoing items:

- No-show rates and appointment cancellation process
 - Call Center access and appointment availability
 - Pharmacy success in reducing waiting times
 - Medical Home/Home Port in Primary Care
- Everyone is invited – active duty, family members and military retirees. Your opinion is important.

Combat Center Religious Services

Sunday

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel Roman Catholic Services

- 8:45 a.m. - Confessions+
- 9 a.m. - Rosary
- 9:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass*
- 9:30 a.m. - Children's Liturgy of the Word
- 4 p.m. - Choir Practice
- 4:15 p.m. - Confessions+
- 4:30 p.m. - Rosary
- 5 p.m. - Catholic Mass

Christ Chapel

- 8:30 a.m. - Lay-led independent Baptist breakfast in the West Wing

Non-denominational:

Calvary Chapel-AGC

- 9 a.m. - Contemporary Worship*
- 9 a.m. - Children's Church
- 10:30 a.m. - Sunday School, building 1551*

Interdenominational:

Good Shepherd

- 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School, building 1551*
- 10:30 a.m. - Traditional Worship*
- 10:45 a.m. - Children's Church

Lay-led Gospel Service

- 12:15 p.m. - Worship

Youth Group

- 6 p.m. - Jr. and Sr. High School Youth

Weekday Events

Immaculate Heart of Mary

- Monday - Friday, 11:45 a.m. - Catholic Mass

Christ Chapel

- Monday - Friday, noon - Daily Prayer

Tuesday

Christ Chapel

- 9 a.m. - Christian Women's Fellowship* (September through May)
- 6:30 p.m. - "EKKLESIA" Assemblies of God Fellowship

Immaculate Heart of Mary

- 3:30-5:30 p.m. - Military Council of Catholic Women

Wednesday

Christ Chapel

- Noon - Communion

Immaculate Heart of Mary

- First Wednesday, 6 p.m. - Baptism preparation class

- First Wednesday, 7 p.m. - Knights of Columbus

Thursday

Christ Chapel

- 6 p.m. - Praise Band Rehearsal

Immaculate Heart of Mary

- 9 a.m. - Adult Class

- 6 p.m. - Children RCIA

- 6:30 p.m. - RCIA (September-April)

- 7 p.m. - Gr. 7 and Confirmation

Friday

Christ Chapel

- 5 p.m. - Gospel Rehearsal

Immaculate Heart of Mary

- First Friday each month, 12:15 p.m., 4:30 p.m. - Exposition/Adoration Most Blessed Sacrament

Legend

* Indicates child care is provided

+ Appointments can be made for confessions by calling 830-6456/6482

Muslim prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 87.

Jewish prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 93.

For more information call 830-5430.

Scholarships for Military Children Program announces 2010 winner

PRESS RELEASE

DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. – "The winner of a \$1,500 scholarship is Christine C. Caldejon from Yucca Valley," announced Cyndy J. Fults, store director at the Combat Center commissary, June 1. The scholarships are part of the Scholarships for Military Children Program, funded by manufacturers and suppliers which provide products and services for commissaries around the globe.

"We're excited to report that the scholarship program continues to be a success in helping military families defray the cost of education," said Defense Commissary Agency director and chief executive officer Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. "We're proud to be associated with a program that has awarded 4,132 scholarships totaling more than \$6.4 million since its inception in 2001."

Scholarship Managers, a professional scholarship

firm, selects the winners based on academic merit, participation in extracurricular and volunteer activities, and the quality of their essays. Recipients are notified by letter. The full list of scholarship recipients and sponsoring business partners can be found online at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>.

Nearly every one of the Defense Commissary Agency's stores announces a local winner. Many commissaries announce multiple winners.

The Scholarships for Military Children program is administered by Fisher House Foundation, a non-profit organization responsible for building comfort homes near military medical centers. The foundation

bears all costs of the program so every dollar donated goes for scholarships. The general public can donate to the program through the military scholar Web site.

Editor's Note:

Recipients announced at <http://www.militaryscholar.org> are preliminary and are contingent upon determination of military dependency status by the scholarship evaluation firm. Students to whom this may apply have already been contacted. If it is determined that a student is ineligible to receive a scholarship, or there is a change in a recipient's educational status (for example, if the student decides not to attend college), a new recipient will be named.



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U.S., Romanian training goes airborne

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. CHRISTOPHER FLURRY

BLACK SEA ROTATIONAL FORCE

CAMPPIA TURZII, Romania – U.S. Marines and soldiers currently deployed to Eastern Europe for Black Sea Rotational Force 2010 conducted parachute training with Romanian airborne forces, June 2-3 and June 8-9.

During the training, a pair of Marine Corps KC-130T

Hercules aircraft dropped about 75 Romanian paratroopers from heights ranging from 1,250 feet above ground level to nearly 10,000 feet mean sea level, while U.S. Army jumpmasters offered their expertise for the execution of the event.

“It’s fun working with Romanians,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Ben Lipton, an Army Special Operations Command static-line jumpmaster from U.S. Army Europe. “There is a language barrier, but we have a common nomenclature. All paratroopers train similarly, they just accomplish it in different ways.”

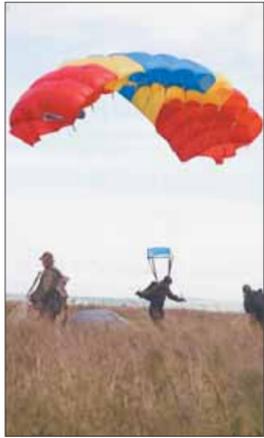
The Romanian forces conducted both static-line and military free fall jumps. In a static-line jump, a troop’s parachute is automatically deployed as he exits the aircraft, where as in a military free fall jump, the paratrooper must deploy his own parachute.

“It’s always nice to jump from a C-130,” said Romanian Capt. Claudio Rotaru, a Romanian paratrooper who participated in the training. “I have a very good opinion of training with the U.S.”

The aircraft, one each from Marine Aerial Refueler



Romanian static-line paratroopers enter a KC-130T Hercules Aircraft from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452, on the flight line of Campia Turzii, Romania, June 3. A pair of KC-130 Hercules aircraft, from VMGR-452, out of Newburgh, N.Y., and VMGR-234, out of Fort Worth, Texas, are currently deployed as the air combat element of the Black Sea Rotational Force Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force.



A Romanian paratrooper makes a soft landing on the grassy fields of Campia Turzii, June 2.

Transport Squadron 234, out of Fort Worth, Texas; and VMGR-452 out of Newburgh, N.Y., are currently deployed to Romania as the air combat element of the Black Sea Rotational Force Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Both 4th Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons are deployed to Romania with a compliment of reserve and active duty Marines.

“The air crew have been very motivated and extremely flexible,” said Lipton, who explained the training event was his first time working with Marine aviators. “I’d be excited to work with Marines again.”

For the Marines of VMGR-234 and VMGR-452, training with Romanian forces in Romanian air space also created a unique experience.

“There’s some give and take, but both sides were able

to do that equally to get the job done,” said U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mario Helpey, a native of

Phoenix and a tactical systems operator with VMGR-452, of working with the Romanian land and air forces. “The

Romanians’ ‘can do’ and ‘get the job done’ attitudes match up quite well with Marine Corps philosophies.”



Gunnery Sgt. Robert Hopkins, a KC-130T loadmaster with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234, assists the Hercules flightcrew to position their aircraft on the flight line at Campia Turzii, Romania, June 2. Hopkins, a native of Providence, R.I., is one of a group of Marines from VMGR-234 and VMGR-452, currently deployed to Eastern Europe as the air combat element of the Black Sea Rotational Force Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

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Marines of 5th, 6th regiments return to France

SGT. ROCCO DEFILIPPIS
MARINE FORCES EUROPE

BELLEAU, France – In the summer of 1918, two regiments of Marines arrived in the Picardy region of north-central France as part of the American Expeditionary Force. With combat experience limited to ship-born detachments and small land engagements, the Marines of the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments would soon find themselves making history in the wheat fields and forests around a small village called Belleau.

For the first time in the 93 years since one of the Corps' most iconic battles, the Marines of 5th and 6th returned their battle colors to the hallowed grounds at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial to pay tribute to the men who fought and died in the battle which stopped the last major German offensive of World War I.

In observance of the ceremony, Gen. James T. Conway, commandant of the Marine Corps; Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, sergeant major of the Marine Corps; Charles H. Rivkin, the U.S. ambassador to France; French dignitaries and representatives from the Ministry of Defense, and the U.S. Marine Corps Battle Colors Detachment joined Marines from the 5th and 6th Regiment; the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company out of Rota, Spain; Marine Corps Forces Europe

and Africa and thousands of French citizens to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate price in defense of liberty.

During his remarks, Conway paid tribute to the Marines who earned the famous nickname "Devil Dog," spoke to the common bonds shared between the French and Americans, and highlighted how the Marines' sacrifice at Belleau Wood was, in part, a small repayment to the French for their unwavering support to the Americans during the War for Independence.

In addition to the ceremony, the Marines who attended were also given the chance to tour the battlefield, learn the history, and walk in the footsteps of their predecessors.

"As a member of [2nd Battalion, 5th Marines], this experience has been amazing," said Sgt. Thomas Stafford, a platoon sergeant with Weapons Company, 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, from Estcada, Ore. "As we learned during the tour, this is the birthplace of most of our infantry training and tactics, not to mention the legacy that the Marines made here. So, it's pretty awesome to be here."

Known for its bloody wheat fields where on June 6,

1918, the Corps sustained more casualties in one day than it had in its previous 143 years of existence, the battlefield tour had a profound impact on the participants.

"It's an inspiring moment, looking across those fields and walking through the wheat," said Gunnery Sgt. Jeremy Marks, supply officer for 1st and 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines and a Caldwell, Texas native. "All Marines hear the story and know about Belleau Wood, but for the Marines here today; they will be able to go back and share with their Marines at the regiment and it will give it that extra bit of significance."

Although the Marines took heavy losses on the 6th, in the remaining 20 days of the battle, the Marines not only proved that they were a determined and ferocious fighting force, but birthed the "Devil Dog" legacy that has inspired generation after generation of Marines.

"The Marines today carry with them that same warrior's spirit as the Marines who took this wood 93 years ago," said Sgt. Maj. Kent. "It's only right to pay tribute to those who have gone before us and gave us the proud legacy to live up to. It's something we

take very seriously as Marines, and it's something that we are doing now and will continue to do in the future."

The Memorial Day service concluded with an informal gathering at the famous Bulldog Fountain, an important pilgrimage site located on a small estate in the village of Belleau, where Marines, family members, and French citizens gathered to celebrate and continue the Franco-American friendship that has endured throughout the history of the United States.

"Today, as we do each year, we come to this place to remember where it all happened," said Lt. Gen. Walter E. Gaskin, deputy chairman for the military committee at NATO headquarters and Savannah, Ga. native. "This event symbolizes not only our respect and appreciation for the warriors who died here, but also gives us a chance to remember the common bonds we share as nations and our devotion to the defense of liberty."

More than 1,800 Marines from the 5th and 6th Regiment and several U.S. soldiers were killed during the Battle for

See RETURN, A10

TRAINING, from A1

May 28, and have training with additional Romanian forces, as well as Ukrainian and Bulgarian forces, slated over the coming weeks.

First Lt. Marc Tucker, the commander for scout platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Tank Battalion, said he is excited to continue to work with different partner nations and help build their operational capabilities with U.S. and Coalition forces. Scout platoon serves as part of the ground combat element for the Security Cooperation MAGTF currently deployed to Eastern Europe.

"Each experience is going to be unique," said Tucker, a native of Silver Spring, Md. "They all bring different experiences, different skill sets, and we look forward to the exchange."

Since arriving at BTA, the Marines and Macedonian soldiers have covered the fundamentals of peacekeeping, rules of engagement, fundamentals of combat marksmanship, night vision training and an introduction to the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

Macedonian troops said they believe the skills and techniques they are fine-tuning will help them on their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

"We will deploy to Afghanistan in July for six months, and I think this training will help us while we are there," said Sgt. Sait Saiti, a Macedonian soldier with Scorpion Co., 1st Bn., 1st Brigade. "I've been in the military for nearly five years, and this is my first experience outside Macedonia."

The Marines are working in the Black Sea, Balkan and Caucasus regions to promote regional stability, build enduring partnerships and build the capabilities of partner nations' military forces. The Security Cooperation MAGTF is Marine Corps Forces Europe's commitment to a rotating presence of Marines in Eastern Europe to meet U.S. European Command's theater security objectives.

"This is going to be really interesting, and I hope we will be able to use this training in other areas of the world in the future," Saiti said.



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3RD LAR, from A5

our techniques and enhance our proficiency by utilizing these new systems.

"This is our first time setting up and operating an exercise like this," added the native of Laredo, Texas. "We anticipated some comm difficulty, as well as other challenges, but this was a good opportunity to identify our friction points. Overall it was a good first step, and it's definitely something we'll continue to build on."

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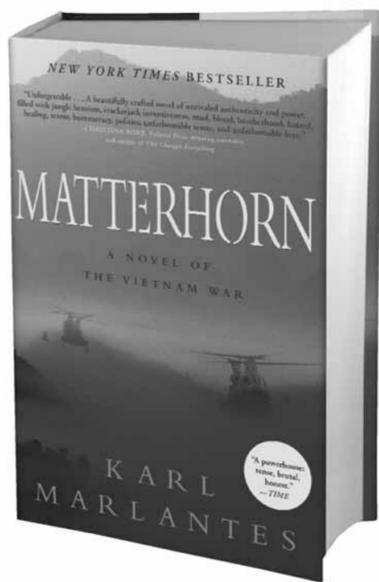
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Trader Ad forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417. Ads may also be submitted through e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil address.

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.

RETURN, from A9

Belleau Wood. In addition to their heroic feats at Belleau Wood, the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments went on to fight in

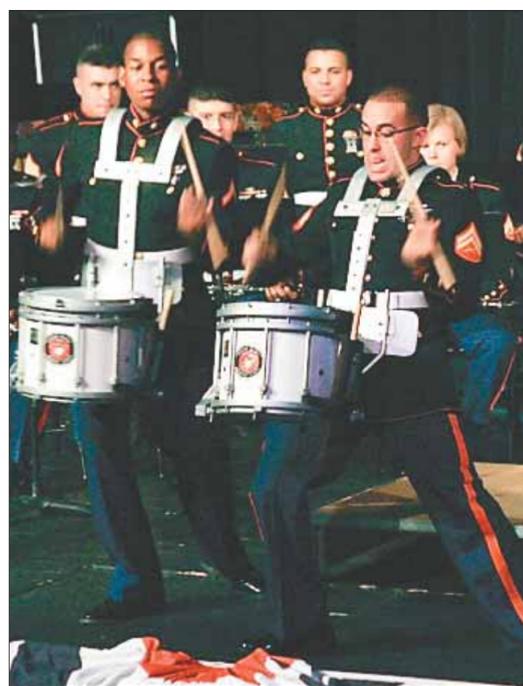
other battles such as Aisne, Saint-Mihiel, the Meuse-Argonne offensive, Soissons, and Blanc Mont. For their gallantry in combat, the French government awarded the regi-

ments the fourragère, a unit award given to units who distinguishing themselves more than once in combat. The Marines of 5th and 6th proudly wear the award today.



SGT. ROCCO DEFILIPPIS

A Marine walks through the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery following a Memorial Day service commemorating the 93rd anniversary of the Battle of Belleau Wood.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Percussionists with the Combat Center Band perform for a lively audience in Reedsport, Ore., May 30.

BAND, from A1

ence was even more challenging for the band, as they had one rehearsal to prepare, he added.

"The concert went very well. It was well received by the audience. The Marines played magnificently. They enjoyed it, and when the band enjoys it the audience enjoys it."

The highlight of the performance was, when Sgt. James Holt stopped playing his saxophone mid-song to answer a cell phone call.

Giove was caught off guard and looked on in shock, as the musician stepped to the microphone to broadcast his call throughout the auditorium. "You're looking for who? Chief Warrant Officer Giove? Sir, the phone's for you."

Giove's wife, Erin, was calling to wish him a happy anniversary after 14 years of marriage. Moments later she emerged from backstage to greet her unsuspecting husband.

"It was an incredible surprise when Sgt. Holt stood up in the middle of the song," Giove said. "I thought, 'What in the world is he doing?'" So when he stood up, I started to get upset. But then when I saw the phone, I thought 'my wife is calling.' I had no idea she was backstage," he added with a laugh. "She got me."

The band's two hour performance was punctuated by the resounding applause and standing ovation that followed.

"I thought it was a fabulous performance. I've never had the privilege to see anything like this before," said C.C. Barber, Miss Oregon of 2009, who attended the concert. "The anniversary surprise brought tears to my eyes. That was really great."

"Although there were a lot of moving parts, it came together pretty well, the crowd loved it. The crowd loves us, and we love them," said Cpl. Aaron W. Brown, a French horn player for the Combat Center Band.

The audience, filled with veterans from as far back as World War II, smiled as they shook hands with members of the band and exchanged experiences after the show.

"This really was most enjoyable. It made the day and the holiday," said World War II and Korean War veteran Nick J. Ostreyko, a retired Marine major who was decked out in his Dress Blue uniform for the event.

A woman in the crowd interrupted with laughter, "You know what's most amazing? It still fits!" she said as she touched the 92-year-old Ostreyko's uniform. He chuckled at the remark.

The Combat Center Band's performance brought back fond memories of old friends, experiences from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and service stories of long ago to the veteran, he said.

"I miss it, I really do miss it. They can recall me anytime they want."

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B1

ASYMCA holds Soapbox Derby for families

PFC. SARAH ANDERSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif.—Cheering parents filled the streets as they watched children fly down the road in their homemade cars during the Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby race in Twentynine Palms June 4.

The goal of the race was to bring families closer together, foster community involvement, and just have a great time, said Anita Neu-Fultz, the executive director of ASYMCA.

The children received a soapbox package from the ASYMCA and were able to build a car with their families however they wanted, said

Kelly Roybal, an events coordinator for ASYMCA. "It's a way to show each individual's creativity," she added.

"It's a family event, because they build the cars together," Neu-Fultz said. "[The children] shared their imagination, creativity, [and] their skills."

"That's what makes it fun, the

kids feed off their parents, the kids see the parents are having a good time, and they're having a good time," said Sgt. Maj. Harrison Tanksley, the Combat Center's sergeant major, who attended the soapbox derby event on behalf of the installation.

The Wounded Warrior Project also attended the event and partici-

pated by building two race cars. One of the cars was for Cedrick Freitas-Delgadillo, whose father, Staff Sgt. Jorge Delgadillo, is deployed to Afghanistan.

"We are helping out a fellow Marine," said Lance Cpl. Leroy Lewis, a member of the Wounded

See **DERBY, B4**



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Racer Patrick Brigman prepares to start his race with his father, Tim Smaker, ready behind him to give him a starting push at the Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby on Cactus Road in Twentynine Palms June 4. The race consisted of children ranging from ages 5 to 14 with four different age brackets.

Soapbox Derby winners

Stock Ages 5-8
1st place – James Grotberg, car #2132
2nd place – Juan Carlos, car #2125
3rd place – Preston Brigman, car #2115

Super Stock Ages 5-8
1st place – Jefferson Pickard, car #2109
2nd place – Carson Estrada, car #2080
3rd place – Jameson Hay, car #2056

Stock Ages 9-14
1st place – Jesse Valdez, car #2125
2nd place – Jack Akers-Brownlee, car #2120
3rd place – Alexandria Pickard, car #2108

Super Stock Ages 9-14
1st place – Nena Jimenez, car #2066

Mayors Choice Award – Leroy Lewis Jr., car #2141
General's Choice Award– James Hooten, car #2149
ASYMCA Choice– Rachel Beahm, car #2134

Operation Drive One revs Combat Center's engines

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN
PRESS CHIEF/EDITOR

The deep, rumbling rev of Ford Mustangs and the quiet, vibrating purr of Ford Fiestas heralded the start of Ford's Operation Drive One event, held in the Main Exchange's parking lot June 4.

The event is one of several scheduled at various Department of Defense installations across the nation. Each person who registered at any of the events has a chance to win a private Toby Keith concert for their installation, one of two 2011 Ford Mustangs and one of eight trips to the Ford Championship NASCAR race weekend in November.

"The military has always

been a big supporter of Ford [with individual vehicle sales], and we want to recognize that and give back to and honor the Armed Services," said Curt Jaksen, from Team Detroit, which handles Ford's advertising. "We want to give armed services personnel a little escape and fun for the day."

Among the attractions Combat Center service members, local military retirees and their families enjoyed was a chance to test drive 2011 Ford Mustangs and Fiestas on a precision driving course and meet former wrestling champion and actor Bill Goldberg.

"I am so proud and excited to join Ford in support of Operation Drive One and

recognize the men and women of the armed forces who serve our country every day," Goldberg said in a Ford press release about the event. "If we can provide a break for our troops and their families while raising money for a great cause, there's nothing I'd rather be doing over the coming months."

The timed precision driving course featured two Ford Mustangs and two Ford Fiestas. Each Combat Center driver was paired with a professional driver who went along for the ride, offering tips to really unleash the vehicles' true capabilities.

"As we like to say in the business, drive it like you

See **FORD, B4**



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

A professional driver demonstrates a "burn out" using a Ford Mustang decked out for drag racing during the Ford: Operation Drive One event June 4. Event goers also had a chance to test drive a Ford Mustang or Ford Fiesta on a precision driving course set up across the street from the Main Exchange and meet former wrestling champion Bill Goldberg.

MCCES, HQBN teams face off



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Brian Griswold, the goalkeeper for the HQBN team, clears the ball out of the goal box during a Commanding General's intramural soccer league game against the MCCES team at Felix Field Wednesday. The game ended with a 3-0 MCCES victory.

See more photos on page B3



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Fridays: Salsa dancing, 7 to 8 p.m., ladies' night, 8 to 10 p.m. and DJ Vlad, 8 to 11 p.m.
Saturdays: Variety Night with DJ Bones 8 to 11 p.m.
Wednesdays: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 10 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Mondays: Free chicken nuggets/nachos, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Free, Italian sausage with peppers, onions and green salad.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: DJ at 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
All Hands Lunch, Monday-Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mondays: Steak Night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesdays: Karaoke, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center's Officers' Club

Lunch served Monday-Friday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Mondays: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.

For complete calendars, visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com>.

Local Events

Miguel Garcia and The Varitones

Description: Self described as a Baja-Western band
When: 8 p.m., Friday, June 11

The Sadies with Tim Easton

Description: An alternative country/rock band
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 12
Where: Pappy and Harriet's
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Mosaic, with Bobby Moses Nichols, Anthony Patler, Les Falconer, Bobby Furgo and Al Martin

Description: Blues and funk music
When: 6 to 10 p.m., every Tuesday
Where: Napoleons
6393 Sunset Road, Joshua Tree
For more information call 902-9366.

Movies in the Park "Monsters vs Aliens"

Description: Free movies shown at Luckie Park
When: Nightfall, approx. 8 p.m. Thursday, June 10
Where: Luckie Park at the corner of Two Mile Road and Utah Trail, next to the racquet ball courts.
For more information call the Recreation Department at 367-7562.

In the Rest Room at Rosenblooms

Description: A poignant contemporary comedy
When: 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. on Sundays through June 20.
Location: Groves Cabin Theatre
8768 Desert Willow Trail, Morongo Valley
For more information call 365-4523.

Lower Desert

Donna Summer

Description: The disco star performs her hits
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 19
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

The comedy of Howie Mandel

Description: Television show host and comedian performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 26
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Julio Iglesias

Description: The latin pop legend performs his hits.
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 26
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Bad Company

Description: The rock 'n' roll stars perform their hits
When: 8 p.m., Friday, July 16
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, June 11

6 p.m. – Date Night, PG-13
9 p.m. – Back Up Plan, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Death at a Funeral, Rated R

Saturday, June 12

11 a.m. – Free Matinee, Shrek the Third, Rated PG
2 p.m. – Furry Vengeance, Rated PG
6 p.m. – The Losers, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Kick *ss, Rated R
Midnight – Nightmare on Elm Street, Rated R

Sunday, June 13

2 p.m. – Just Wright, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Iron Man 2, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Back Up Plan, Rated PG-13

Monday, June 14

6 p.m. – Death at a Funeral, Rated R

Tuesday, June 15

7 p.m. – The Losers, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, June 16

7 p.m. – Date Night, Rated PG-13

Thursday, June 17

7 p.m. – Kick *ss, R

'Just Wright' puts romantic-comedy spin on basketball

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Just Wright"

Rated PG

Basketball is the name of the game in "Just Wright," but the real story here is the romantic play on the sidelines.

Rapper-turned-actress Queen Latifah plays Leslie Wright, an unlucky-in-love physical therapist and die-hard hoops fan passionately flying the colors of her beloved New Jersey Nets. Leslie's childhood friend Morgan is a basketball fan, too, but only as a means to an end: snagging a studly player for a husband.

In a chance encounter with Scott McKnight, a fictitious Nets superstar played by another rapper-turned-actor, Common, Leslie ends up getting an invite to his big birthday bash. Somehow Morgan wrangles herself into the deal, and the moment



COURTESY PHOTO

Die-hard Nets fan Leslie Wright, played by Queen Latifah, competes with her childhood friend for fictitious Nets superstar player Scott McKnight, played by Common.

McKnight catches sight of Leslie's drop-dead-gorgeous girlfriend, he's smitten.

The audience knows that Scott should, instead, be attracted to Leslie. She may not be as sexy and on-the-prowl as Morgan, but she's

smart, she loves basketball, and – like McKnight – she has a thing for jazz. And most importantly, she's not a gold digger.

Who'll score the winning basket in the final quarter of this game of love?

This is basically a Cinderella story with a basketball shoe instead of a glass slipper. Setting the romance in the realm of contemporary athletics gives it a modern spin, one that's enhanced by appearances by several actual NBA players and ESPN personalities.

Though the plot revolves around a sport, it's not a "sports movie." It's a chick-flick romantic comedy with a sassy urban flavor and a low-key storyline that doesn't rely on gross-out humor, saucy sex jokes, wacky chases, wild stunts or way-out predicaments. As such, it's a surprising change of pace from what typically passes for "romantic comedy" these days.

Latifah, whose acting resume continues to expand with solid performances, brings an easygoing, natural vibe to Leslie, even though she plays her as much nicer than you'd expect her to be in situations that would make most other women seethe. And she's presented as refreshingly confident, happy and secure in her plus-size body, something Hollywood rarely depicts.

Common is a believable

star on the basketball court, where he convincingly mixes it up with real-deal NBA stars, including Dwight Howard from the Orlando Magic and the Boston Celtics' Rajon Rondo.

But the story has an overall flat feel, with no emotional highs or lows, and so many of its scenes and set-ups seem unlikely – like Leslie getting invited to McKnight's home after a brief fan-meets-star encounter at a gas pump, or her being hired to become the hoopster's live-in rehab trainer when he injures his knee before the All-Star Game.

You never really detect the spark between Leslie and Scott, although the whole movie is built on the heat it supposedly generates, and you wonder why in the world the basketball star doesn't see through the superficial Morgan. The wrap-it-up ending is supposed to make you leave the theater walking on sunshine, but instead leaves you feeling like you've been led into a puddle of over-sweetened Hollywood goo.

It may be "just right" for audiences who want a contemporary, feel-good fairy tale with a sports twist and uplifting messages about family, being true to yourself and following your heart. But most moviegoers likely will find "Just Wright" somewhat lacking in zing, pleasant enough but unexceptional. In other words, "just so-so."



COURTESY PHOTO

Leslie Wright is not a gold digger like her friend. She and Scott McKnight truly have a lot in common.

Cinema 6		Showtimes Effective 6/11/10 - 6/17/10
The A Team (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	The Karate Kid (PG) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 9:00	
Splice (R) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	Shrek (PG) Everyday: 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00	
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COURTESY PHOTO

Latifah brings in another solid performance.

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Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page by searching "The Combat Center at Twentynine Palms" on facebook

Combat Center Sports



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Mario Delmoral, a player for the HQBN team, throws the ball in to a teammate during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game against MCCES at Felix Field Wednesday. This was the HQBN team's third official game of the season.



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Brian Griswold, the goalkeeper for the HQBN team, slides to save the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game against MCCES at Felix Field Wednesday. The game ended in a 3-0 MCCES victory.



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Zach Cox, the goalkeeper for the MCCES team, drop-kicks the ball to a teammate during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game against HQBN at Felix Field Wednesday. Cox saved every goal throughout the game.

Intramural soccer standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
MCCES	3	0
CLB-7	3	0
1st Tanks	2	2
HQBN	1	2
MWSS-374	1	2
NHTP	0	4

Athlete of the Week

Name: Rene Renteria
Hometown: San Fernando, Calif.
Unit: Company C, Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School
Job title: Radar repairman
Recognition: Player for the MCCES team, and the Twentynine Palms base team
Favorite aspect of the sport: "It's fun, and it builds camaraderie."
Advice for aspiring athletes: "Work hard. Practice makes perfect."

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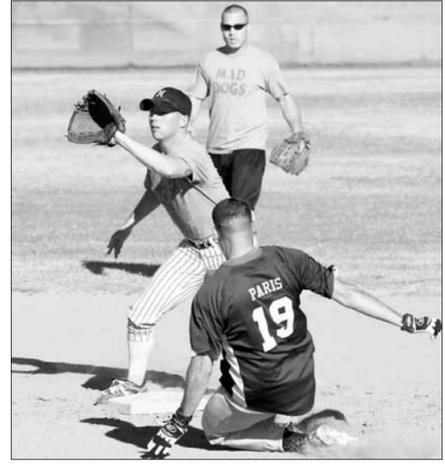
CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Brian Scamman, a left center fielder with the PMO team, swings at incoming pitch from MWSS 2 pitcher Brian Brammer during the Commanding General's Intramural Softball League game Wednesday at Felix Field. PMO beat MWSS 2 26-18 in the high-scoring game, which only lasted four innings.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

MWSS 2 pitcher Brian Brammer throws a low pitch during a game against PMO Wednesday at Felix Field.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

The second basemen for MWSS 2 prepares to catch and tag out runner Dean Paris with the PMO team during a game Wednesday at Felix Field.

MARINE CORPS CIVILIAN POLICE

TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA

The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms is currently hiring civilian police officers. Positions available include Patrol Officer, Military Working Dog Handler, Patrol Supervisor, Field Training Officer, Watch Commander, and many others.

Police Officer Salary: \$34,881 - \$56,174

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 •Must successfully complete pre-employment screening and USMC Police Academy

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 Veterans, Prior Service, Current Federal and Appointment Eligibles may apply at: <https://chart.donhr.navy.mil>

Intramural softball standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
3/11	12	1
MCCES Red	11	2
ESD	11	2
Tanks	11	3
PMO	10	3
MWSS 1	10	4
ATG	9	5
MCCES C Co.	7	5
AAV	7	7
CLB-7	7	7
3rd LAR	6	6
IPAC	6	7
Mojave Viper	5	10
MCCES White	5	10
MCTOG	4	7
MCCES Maint	3	10
Hospital	3	11
MWSS 2	2	13
CMA	1	11
Dental	1	12

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DERBY, from B1

Warrior's Project. "We are all grateful to assist."

Stacey Delgadillo, Cedrick's mother, said she is very grateful for the help and was ecstatic for the race.

Above all the fun and excitement, Tanksley brought to everyone's attention the meaning of the event.

"This isn't about the parents this afternoon. This is about the kids and their sportsmanship," he said.

Not only is this meant as a fun event, the children have



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Isaiah Cruz, a racer in the Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby, flies down the hill in his soapbox derby car on Cactus Road in Twentynine Palms June 4.

also taken this as a learning experience.

"For children, it was the first time they ever picked up a hammer or a drill; for some children, it's the first time they have had a chance to build a car in a safe environment," Neu-Fultz said.

The families said they enjoyed spending time together and preparing for the race.

"We had it out last night, putting the final touches," said Cpl. Tim Smaker, the father of racer Preston Brigman. "We were all out in the driveway painting, it was a good time. It's nice to get out there and show him some new stuff."

Preston's mother, Samantha Smaker said she was excited for the race and appreciated the time her husband and son spent together.

"He just came back from deployment, so it was a perfect dad and son kind of thing to do," Smaker said.

It is important for Marines from the Combat Center to intermingle with the Twentynine Palms community, Tanksley said, smiling.

"It's a beautiful hot afternoon for a race. As the sergeant major of the base, if I had the opportunity to have a racer myself, I would have entered one."

To find out more about the race and upcoming ASYMCA events, call 830-7481.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCS

Former wrestling champion and actor Bill Goldberg plays along as a Combat Center Marine demonstrates a headlock during the Ford: Operation Drive One event in the Main Exchange parking lot June 4. Event goes also had the chance to test drive one of two Ford Mustangs or Ford Fiestas on a precision course and enter for a chance to win a private Toby Keith concert for the installation, among other prizes.

FORD, from B1

stole it," Jaksen said.

The test drives also helping raise money for the National Military Family Association. For each test drive completed, Ford will donate \$20, up to \$10,000.

The day also appealed to Marines' competitive sides with several physical challenges, including a two-minute pull-up challenge and the Ford F150 truck push. Set up next to each station was a board with the top score from a previously-visited station - in this case, an Army base.

Ford employees dared passersby to beat the Army's top scorers, heckling those without the will to step up and prove once and for all which service is stronger. By the end of the day, both events proclaimed Marines the best.

"I'm a competitive person. Us being Marines, beating anybody is a good feeling," said Sgt. Albert Garcia, a scout squad leader with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, who claimed top score for the pull-up challenge. "We close width and destroy the enemy in everything."

Garcia was also one-fourth of the team which claimed top time in the Ford

F150 truck push.

At the end of the day, car enthusiasts and curious passersby all left with a good feeling, having helped raise money for a worthy cause and having had some fun along the way.

"The event was great," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Brophy, the training staff non-commissioned officer in charge for Marine Wing Support Squadron 374. "It was a good set up and some great cars."

"It was a great event to draw Marines out here," Garcia agreed. "We got to check out new vehicles, check out what Ford has to offer in years coming. I saw Marines out there having fun."

For more information about or on the Ford: Operation Drive One tour or to register to win one of the many prizes, visit <http://www.fordoperationdriveone.com>. The contest is open to all current and former members of the military.

Editor's note: Neither the occurrence of this event on a DoD installation or inclusion of this article in the Observation Post imply sponsorship of the Ford Motor Company by any facet of the DoD. The opinions reflected in the article are the views of the individuals expressing them.

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