

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

AUGUST 13, 2010

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LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank fires its cannon during the platoon's first gunnery qualification Tuesday at Combat Center range 500.

Tank Platoon completes first gunnery

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines with the 1st platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, qualified with their M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks during the platoon's first gunnery qualification exercise at Combat Center range 500 from Monday to today.

"It's the equivalent of the rifle range for tanks," said 2nd Lt. Mathew

Baldwin, the first platoon commander, Co. D, 1st Tanks. "We spend the week running the tanks around getting used to them, and then on the last day we qual."

The platoon was formed in May and consists of many new Marines and tank crews who are still learning to work together, said Sgt. Kip Huhman, a tank commander in the platoon.

The gunnery qualification course of fire puts the

tank crews in different scenarios in both offensive and defensive positions. In the defensive position, the tanks are strategically hidden behind berms, while Marines look through the scopes on top of the vehicle to identify their targets.

"If you are in a defensive position you are less exposed to the enemy," Baldwin said. "It's the same with the infantry. If people start shooting at them they

hit the deck. They look for cover and concealment. It makes us look smaller but that means if you are going to fire you have to go up on the berm, fire, then move back down."

When practicing offensive scenarios, the tanks head down a road as if on patrol or advancing on enemy positions. The Marines also train for tank-to-tank combat.

The large size of the range also adds to the difficulty for the tankers.

"There is so much area for us to shoot, so as a tanker it makes it hard for us to shoot gunnery because there are so many different [target] options for [evaluators] to put up," Baldwin said. "You can't predict, or know, 'OK, it's going to be a tank and it's going to be here.'"

Unlike the rifle range where Marines focus on hitting static and slow-moving

See TANK, A7

Mess halls oust Styrofoam

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines aboard the Combat Center may notice something different about their "devil doggie bag" the next time they get their chow to go, as both Littleton and Phelps Mess Halls have discontinued the use of Styrofoam as part of the Combat Center's 'Go Green' initiative, which was implemented last year.

"All chow halls aboard the installation have traded Styrofoam containers for a more environmentally friendly and biodegradable product - paper," said Maj. William M. Rowley, the deputy director of the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs department.

The switch to biodegradable products is part of the installation's commitment to being good stewards of the environment, Rowley said.

"Taking into consideration the fact that more than 50,000 portions are served each week between all three chow halls, practices aboard the installation are constantly being evaluated to look for ways of increasing the procurement of environmentally friendly products, goods, and services from sustainable sources in the same way that tactics and training are constantly modified and fine-tuned across the Marine Corps," said the Verdi, Nev., native.

Styrofoam is a cheap and convenient type of plastic, called polystyrene, which is trademarked by the Dow Chemical Company. Styrofoam containers are half the price of paper and generally a popular choice for food service packaging. Unfortunately, polystyrene food service packaging is usually not recycled.

"Styrofoam is made from hazardous chemicals that can harm

See STYROFOAM, A5

Company K penetrates Northern Green Zone in Sangin

CPL. NED JOHNSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

SANGIN, Afghanistan - Many military strategists have said the Northern Green Zone in Sangin could not be penetrated, but time and again, Marines have proven their worth and accomplished the impossible.

In recent years, Marines have triumphed in such cities as Fallujah and Ramadi. The Marines with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 2, took on a challenge to advance farther into the Green Zone than any Marine unit before them and did so.

The ground gained did not come without struggle.

"The enemy is tough and smart," said Capt. Ryan Cohen, commanding officer of Company K, 3rd Bn., 7th Marines.

"The enemy knows the terrain, a terrain where you can't see more than five feet in front of you because of cornfields and tree lines."

Cohen said the Marines proved time and again that they could defeat the enemy

on his turf and on his terms, but not without a cost.

"Nine Marines from Company K were seriously injured during the push," Cohen said.

The green zone, a Taliban stronghold, is laced with improvised explosive devices, Cohen added.

"There were three improvised explosive device belts we had to cross in order to gain access to the area," said Cohen, a 31-year-old native of Pompano Beach, Fla.

In addition to the dangerous mines, Cohen said the Taliban also had hundreds of insurgents in the northern area of the Green Zone stretching to Kajaki. During the push into the Green Zone, Marines were frequently engaged by these aggressive fighters.

"For about eight days, we were in sporadic firefights two to three times a day," said Lance Cpl. Derek Hopkins, a mortar man with Company K, 3rd Bn., 7th Marines.

These attacks included mortars, rocket propelled grenades, and machine-gun fire, but the warriors of

Company K pressed on.

"My Marines have fought during the day and fortified their positions at night," Cohen said. "They are tired beyond exhaustion, but they continue to provide superior firepower and destroy the enemy."

The Marines then pushed to the Helmand River, something no unit had ever successfully accomplished.

Though the ground was conquered, the fight was not over. Now, Marines are fighting to hold the ground they attained during the push.

"We go on patrols each day to maintain the security of the ground we have taken," said Hopkins.

The Marines continue to fortify and defend the positions they have overtaken and have created a safe supply route.

"One of the most important things we did when we took this ground was clear an area for supply lines to come in," Cohen said. "Not only did we take hard-earned ground, we have secured and maintained a route to supply and communicate with the Marines."



CPL. NED JOHNSON

Lance Cpls. Derek Hopkins and Darryl Charles, and Cpl. Nathan Dobie, mortarmen with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 2, fire a 60 mm mortar from a concealed position in support of a firefight, July 23. The mortarmen fired multiple high-explosive rounds into a compound where insurgents were engaging Marines.

Cohen said this line of supply allows the Marines to maintain their positions until the mission is complete. Even with recent success, the

Marines of Company K still push through the day and maintain a watchful eye during the night.

"This mission is ongoing

and we will continue to fight," Cohen said. "But we must also build trust with

See SANGIN, A5



Helo foundation ~ See A3



Green energy ~ See A4



Welcome to the jungle ~ See A7



Pigskin prep ~ See B1

Managing your TRICARE coverage with other health insurance

SHARI LOPATIN

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

OHI: If you don't know what that means, and you have a private health insurer, you could end up with a claims mess.

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The rules for using OHI with TRICARE differ, depending on if you're an active duty service member, or a family member. Either way, the moment you begin a health plan using OHI, you need to inform TriWest Healthcare Alliance, your regional TRICARE contractor that administers the TRICARE health benefit throughout 21 western states. TriWest needs to know if you have OHI to coordinate your benefits more smoothly.

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TRICARE will always be your primary health plan. You may have OHI with TRICARE, but all active duty service members are required to enroll into TRICARE Prime. Since TRICARE is your main plan, you must follow its rules. It may also be a good idea to read the fine print of any civilian health plan you register for, as many civilian policies exclude members of the active Armed Forces.

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Additionally, you must follow all the rules of your OHI plan, including requirements for referrals and authorizations.

Submitting Claims with OHI as a Family Member

Your doctor's office will most likely submit your claims for you. If you have OHI, those claims will go to the company that supplies that health coverage first. Once the claim has been processed, you and your doctor will receive a statement - called an "explanation of benefits" - showing the amount paid on the claim.

After you receive that statement, you or your provider can send the claim to TRICARE, for secondary processing. You or your doctor should attach the "explanation of benefits" statement to the claim. If you are submitting your own claims, follow the steps on TriWest's Claims Portal to properly submit them. This portal will also tell you where to mail your claims: <http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary/claims.aspx>.

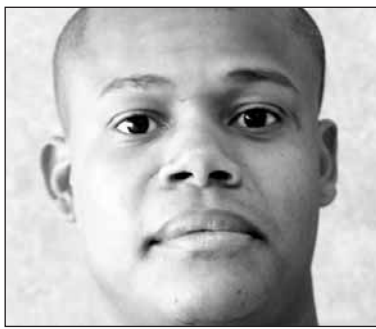
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Centerspeak

Who is your pick to win Super Bowl XLV?

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



LANCE CPL. JOSUE CHARLES
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

"The Bengals because they have T.O., he's the best receiver in the league."



1ST LT. PATRICK MCCAHILL
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 2ND RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION

"I'd say the Indianapolis Colts. They're the best team in the league."



PFC. GERARDO GARCIA
MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"The Chargers. They're my favorite team, plus they're very good."



LANCE CPL. JOSE FLORES
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Cowboys. I'm just a Cowboys fan."

Hot Topics

HOUSING SURVEY

The Commanding General is asking for all hands participation in a housing survey released by Headquarters Marine Corps. The survey is to ensure adequate housing on and off base for all Combat Center Marines and sailors, married or single, and to predict a need for Basic Allowance for Housing rate increase. The survey is extended until August 20. Go to <https://survey.rdniehaus.com> to take the survey. Username: Twentynine. Password: 2010.

FEDERAL IMPACT AID

Every year your child receives a Federal Survey Card that requests information regarding their federal connection. It is imperative 100 percent of parents complete the survey. To receive the Basic Support Payment. The school district must have at least 400 of their students or three percent of their enrollment federally connected. To receive the supplemental funding from DoD, the district must have 20 percent of their students population federally connected.

MCFTB SPOUSE APPRECIATION ESSAY CONTEST

Marine Corps Family Team Building is calling for Combat Center Marines and sailors to tell why they appreciate their spouse with a Military Spouse Appreciation Essay contest. The essay must be 500 words or less and submitted before Aug. 20. Participants must include their name, rank, unit, spouse's name, mailing and e-mail addresses, and a phone number. One essay will be chosen from each of four categories: officer, staff noncommissioned officer, NCO, and private to lance corporal. For more information or to submit an essay, e-mail Martinez at monica.m.martinez@usmc.mil or call MCFTB 830-3110.

Marine Corps History

August 13, 1918

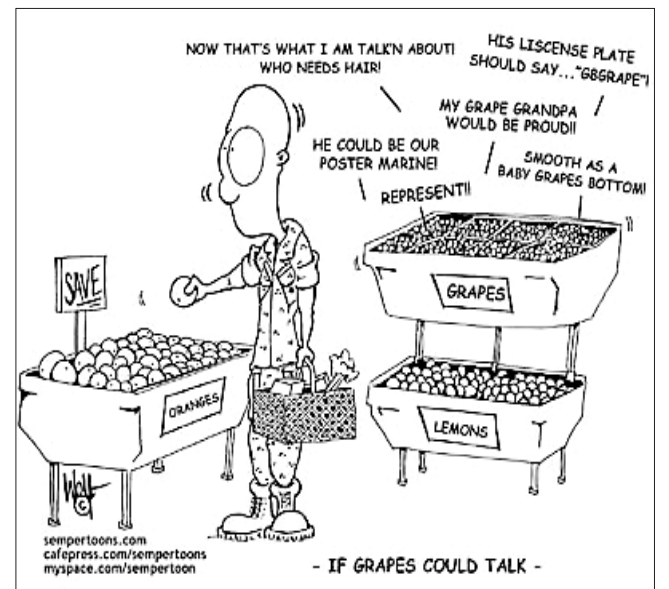
The first woman Marine, Opha Mae Johnson, enlisted when the country was embroiled in World War I.



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

830-3937



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

SUDOKU #1899

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

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DOUBLE DEALING

[Puzzle solutions on A9]

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67					68						69			
70					71						72			

ACROSS

1. Hefty volumes
6. Stops up
10. Clock sound
14. "___ we a pair?"
15. SMU football rival
16. '50s deejay Freed
17. Home of the first pro baseball team
19. Seized auto
20. Stats for Holyfield
21. Soft shoe, for short
22. Getting bombed
24. It's made from "the best stuff on earth"
26. Cajun veggie
27. Affirmative vote
28. Bit of fire and brimstone, maybe
32. Crab morsel
35. ___ Pea
39. Tangential remark
40. Instrument in Marx Brothers movies
41. Battleship broadside
43. Pierce's portrayer
44. Shi'ite's faith
46. Watkins __, NY
47. Superpower until 1991
48. Meteors, en masse
50. Upper-left PC key
52. Argued, as a case
54. "Pencils down!"
58. Cribnote preparer
61. Lupino of film
62. Arafat's org.
63. Sentry's imperative
64. Beach Boys classic
67. ___ the Red
68. Sheriff Taylor's son
69. Musical chord
70. Chips partner
71. Etta of old comics
72. Trig ratios

DOWN

1. Poster fasteners
2. Celestial hunter
3. Top-2 percent group
4. Bottom-of-letter abbr.
5. Ren's pal
6. Conical-cap wearer
7. ___ snail's pace
8. Copycat's words
9. Ex-heavy weight champ Leon or Michael
10. Seafood go-with
11. It comes in sticks
12. Mob kingpin
13. Stomach woe
18. As much
23. Acreage
25. "Way down yonder" location, in a children's song
29. Wire measures
30. Tout's figures
31. In proximity
32. Xenophon's X's
33. Punishment unit
34. Woody's kid
36. "___ the Dog" (DeNiro film)
37. Plumbing joint
38. Plumb of "The Brady Bunch"
42. Lake northeast of Syracuse
45. Disappear a la Frosty
49. Nike rival
51. Know-how
53. A tieback ties it back
54. Yak's home
55. Site of a 1936-39 civil war
56. Forearm bones
57. Cold cream name
58. White-hat wearer
59. Mata ___
60. Connecticut Ivy Leaguers
65. Slower, in mus.
66. Jackie's second

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Lance Cpl. Zach Wickline
Hometown: Reidsville, N.C.
Job title: Radar Repairman
Job duties: Repair radar equipment
What do you like most about your job?: "The people are great and it makes the work environment comfortable."
Significant achievements: He has won two company boards, and has been on two battalion boards, winning one of them. He was also on the All-Marine Wrestling team last year.
Hobbies: Sports, working out, working on cars
Time of service: Two years three months
Time aboard the Combat Center: Two years



OBSERVATION POST

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LANCE CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Marines from the 3rd Combat Engineering Battalion and Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 work to settle the 12 inches of new concrete Aug. 9. The concrete slabs are being made for future training in airfield damage repairs.

MWSS-374 and 3rd CEB provide 'solid' future for training ops

LANCE CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Laying concrete may seem like cut and dry work, but for the Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 and 3rd Combat Engineering Battalion, it's an opportunity to continue their professional education stemming from the school house and to set up more opportunities for training.

The Marines went through a brief two weeks prior explaining the exercise and individual roles,

said Staff Sgt. Jason Streets, the acting officer in charge and noncommissioned officer in charge of Engineer Company MWSS-374. "We gave them classes and later broke them up into three teams; concrete, form and finishing teams."

Three full squads consisting of Marines from MWSS-374 and 3rd CEB were assigned a specific job for the project.

"Most of these Marines haven't poured concrete, so the objective is trying to make sure the project is done correctly and proficiently,"

Streets said. There were hiccups but we're improving with each pour, the Hopedale, Ohio, native added.

This project is the biggest most of these Marines have worked on.

The Marines are constructing two 96 by 96 foot helicopter landing pads at Aircraft Landing Zone Sand Hill for multiple purposes, said Gunnery Sgt. Richard B. Arvey, the operations chief of Engineer Company MWSS-374. "One thing this helps us in is pouring concrete," the Salisbury Md., native said. "It helps

us stay sharp."

"The Engineer Company's work ethic is unlike any other in MWSS-374 because they put in 110 percent effort in what they do," Arvey said. "The Marines have impressed me so much."

"They're learning, building well and working hard," said Streets. Their hard work starts at five in the morning and ends around three in the afternoon. "We'll be done ahead of schedule; we just have to focus for the other big pours we've got going on."

Along with the process of building, the

See POUR, A9



LANCE CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Corporal Gregory J. Layne smooths out the freshly poured concrete Aug. 9. This process isn't done until the entire surface is even.

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LIBERTY CALL
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Combat Center Chaplains keep Marines in the fight

PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Those who serve their country and their God have come to be known by some as "Men of Faith" and "Defenders of the Holy." But these men are better known by Marines, sailors and family members as Navy chaplains.

Chaplains carry two symbols on their collars. One is a symbol of religion and the other is rank, representing their responsibilities in the United States military.

"We are here to ensure the Marines and sailors have their first amendment right — freedom of religion," said Navy Lt. David Nelson, the chaplain for Headquarters Battalion.

Chaplains are a whole different breed of officer, Nelson said. Typical military officers deal with their units and unit responsibilities, but chaplains deal directly with Marines, sailors and their spiritual needs.

Nelson, a native of Piedmont, S.C., said he spends a lot of time out of the office interacting with members of his unit.

Chaplains are there for the Marines and sailors as a support element, as well as a spiritual counselor element.

"Sometimes there are no words to say, but the best thing to do is be with them," said Lt. Cmdr. Chris Hester, the chaplain with the protestant chapel. "Just being there with my guys and giving them a shoulder to cry on makes a difference."

Chaplains care for everybody, even those who don't have religious beliefs or are strong atheists, said Nelson. "We will still counsel you if you desire, without the worry of judgment," he said.

Chaplains deploy with troops but do not carry weapons, Hester said.

When a chaplain goes to the battlefield, their job is to not fight the Marines' physical enemies in Afghanistan, but fight their spiritual enemy, Hester said. "The [chaplains] have to go out and fight the spiritual part of warfare," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Earl Eggers, the religious program specialist for Headquarters Battalion. "Many Marines come back broken; it's their job to patch them back up."

When it comes to spiritual needs, a chaplain can not be everywhere at once. The chaplains have religious program specialists who not only act as their security element but as their eyes, ears, and assistants. "My job is not to go out there and counsel but to be there for the Marines and make sure they get the counseling that they need," Eggers said.

Eggers said serving as a religious program specialist has helped develop his spirituality and ethics. "It puts us in a spot where you serve righteous men — not self-righteous but selfless," Eggers said, who is originally from Philadelphia. "My life has grown stronger by working with and serving with men who have good tendencies and go out and do good things, not just Godly things but humanly good nature."

One of the best things about being a counselor and mentor to the troops is seeing how God works in the lives of the Marines and sailors, Nelson said.

"Sometimes you just stand in awe and think 'Wow look what God did and I just happened to be out here,'" Nelson said. "It's a neat thing that God had a plan to put you in a place and use you."

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Marines test green energy tech with Combat Center heat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marine Corps and Navy leaders are evaluating commercial energy technologies at Camp Wilson here, as part of the Experimental Forward Operating Base initiative Monday through today.

The ExFOB is a multi-phase experiment seeking and evaluating energy efficient methods to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and logistic needs which burden combat units in the near and long-term, according to Marine Corps officials.

Today, Marine companies have more equipment and use more fuel than entire battalions did 10 years ago. They have also increased the use of energy consuming equipment such as radios and Information Technology by 300 percent, increased the number of tactical and logistical vehicles used by 200 percent, and with a 40 percent increase in vehicle weight, fuel mileage has decreased by 30 percent. Fourteen technologies are currently being tested at the ExFOB.

After all the data is collected and taken into account, the Marine Corps will decide how to continue with the project, said John Bower, the director of the Western Area Research Technology Evaluation Center.

Several of the technologies have also been field tested by Marines during Enhanced Mojave Viper, a month-long pre-deployment training exercise for Marines slated to deploy overseas in support of Operation

Enduring Freedom, said the Portland, Ore., native.

"India Company, [3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment], tested out some of the equipment during their Mojave Viper and they gave great, positive feedback," he said. "They carried out the extended service evaluation, and may be taking it with them to Afghanistan."

Gunnery Sgt. Jason Parrish, a utilities chief from Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., said the new technologies will pay off for the Marine Corps quickly.

"All the different systems are a big improvement from what I've seen," Parrish said. "I noticed all the Marines really liked the Powershade especially."

"I personally think the small and ultra lightweight water purification cooling systems were awesome," he said. "They had some small issues with it, but I think we should pursue it because we'll be able to adapt to and improve their systems."

Master Gunnery Sgt. Rowan Dickson, the utilities occupational field sponsor stationed at Headquarters Marine Corps, said the technology being presented by the 11 vendors will improve the lives of Marines in the field drastically.

"We're looking for energy efficient heating and cooling of living spaces," said the Brooklyn, N.Y., native. "We're also identifying what will decrease energy usage and also cool water."

Marine Corps officials will continue to collect and evaluate data. Only the most effective and efficient equipment will ultimately make it to the front lines.



Fourteen different kinds of green energy systems are being evaluated at the Combat Center's Camp Wilson. Some of the new systems are slated to deploy with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment this coming fall.



The Marine Corps is evaluating the latest commercial green energy technology during an experimental forward operating base exercise at the Combat Center's Camp Wilson this week from Monday to today. The test is part of a Corps-wide push to be more energy efficient.



Wind power is one of the 14 different types of green energy technologies the Marine Corps is testing during and Experimental Forward Operating Base exercise at Camp Wilson from Monday to today. The most effective and efficient technology may one day become part of the Marines' arsenal.

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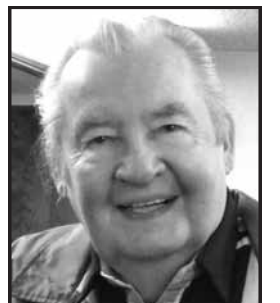
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TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM by Lou Gerhardt



The wedding of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky by a Jewish chaplain at Yale and a Methodist minister, July 31, reminds us all that ecumenicity in the United States is for real. The fact is that 37 percent of all weddings in this country are inter-faith marriages. This is a wholesome development.

When Grace, my wife of almost 40 years, died in 1994 our dear friend Rabbi Bernard Cohen officiated at her memorial services along with a Roman Catholic priest and a Protestant minister. When Patty and I were married in 1995 the same rabbi, priest, and minister officiated.

I believe there is nothing more significant in positive cultural development than people of different philosophies respecting and loving one another.

It is my sincere belief that someday the spirit of ecumenism will dominate the world and "nation will not rise against nation and men will not make war any more."

It almost goes without the need of comment that you and I must be ferocious fighters against prejudice in any form, however subtle.

Marcel Proust wrote, "The universe is true for all of us and different for each of us."

Perhaps that is the way it should be.

An ancient Hebrew prayer puts it very well:

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, From the laziness that is content with half-truths, From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, Oh, God of truth, deliver us."

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CPL. NED JOHNSON

Petty Officer 3rd Class David Slate, a corpsman with Company K, and fellow Marines work on an injured Marine while concealed in brush and trees, July 22. The injured Marine stepped on an improvised explosive device. Though the blast rendered the Marine unable to continue the fight, his life was saved by the fast reaction of those around him.

SANGIN, from A1

the locals."

Counterinsurgency operations are the heart of every mission in Afghanistan, and Company K understands the importance of building relationships with Afghans.

"The key to the mission in the Green Zone is convincing the locals that we are here to help them," Cohen said. "It is absolutely the most important thing in Afghanistan."

One of the biggest ways

to influence the locals is the Afghan National Army.

"The ANA soldiers are partnered with the Marines and fight up front with the Marines," Cohen said. "They are the true factor in the equation for success."

"The ANA will take ownership of this area, increase in size, and eventually bring law to the Green Zone," Cohen added.

Marines continue to patrol the area alongside Afghan soldiers and complete other

missions without complaint.

"The Marines of Kilo Company have displayed the most powerful form of courage under fire," Cohen said. "I could not describe to someone how amazing these men are."

Marines of Company K have earned their nickname of "Devil Dog" and will continue to make history, Cohen said. "The non-commissioned officers in this company have written history in stone."

D'Carlo's offers Italian cuisine



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

The Combat Center held a ribbon cutting ceremony for D'Carlo's Italian Cafe Friday. D'Carlo's offers an extensive menu featuring veal, chicken, seafood, and brick oven pizza. The cafe provides Combat Center personnel and families a new dining option open Sunday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to midnight. Customers can call in advance and order meals to go. They also do catering for special events. For more information on D'Carlo's, visit the Marine Corps Community Services website at <http://www.mccs29palms.com> or D'Carlo's website at <http://www.dcarlositalian-cafe.com> or call 830-7904.

STYROFOAM, from A1

the environment, and it'll sit in a landfill for centuries," said Cpl. Jamie L. Proulx, a compliance inspector with Phelps Mess Hall.

Polystyrene protective packaging, is the primary form of polystyrene collected for recycling, added, Proulx a native of East Tawas, Mich. Non-food service packaging is not contaminated with food and other wastes and therefore is more cost-effective to recycle.

Presently, food service packaging, both polystyrene and paper, is not recycled because it is not yet economically viable, Proulx said.

Unlike Styrofoam, paper products are disposed of easily in a garbage can, which is collected and taken to the local landfill where it will decompose in a few years. Styrofoam, on the other hand, will remain in a landfill for centuries because it does not decompose.

"This takes up valuable and limited landfill space," Rowley said. "In fact, Styrofoam takes up more landfill space than paper. It is also a nuisance when it is found as litter and

can be a hazard to indigenous wildlife like the desert tortoise."

Rowley said avoiding health concerns which are associated with polystyrene material is another benefit associated with doing away with Styrofoam.

"There are many concerns related to the chemicals used in the making of Styrofoam which can affect some individuals," Rowley said. "Styrene is a chemical used to make Styrofoam containers and is classified as a possible human carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. This and other toxicants found in Styrofoam could potentially make its way into a Marine's chow."

Though the Marines at Food Services were the first to do away with Styrofoam, they are not alone when it comes to applying sustainable environmental practices. Employees at General Services Administration have also stopped stocking Styrofoam as the installation continues to move toward environmental efficiency.

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.

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Afghan soldiers, Marines repair canals in Sangin

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPL. NED JOHNSON**
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

SANGIN, Afghanistan – As Marines of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 2, continue to stabilize Sangin through regular patrols and frequent interaction with the public, a few Marines and Afghan soldiers lent a hand to help local villagers repair a few canals, July 30.

Marines with Company K along with Afghan National Army soldiers and local Afghan villagers, coordinated a project to rebuild two canals in Sangin.

“There were approximately 30 local nationals, 30 Marines, and 20 ANA soldiers,” said Company K’s 1st Sgt. Michael Woods.

“We had our engineers on site, along with all their equipment,” Woods continued. “Coupled with the muscle of the Marines, ANA, and the local population, we were able to put shovels in the ground and make the water flow again.”

The canals were not the only things that were built during the day.

“They helped us build the bridges that get us into

their neighborhoods,” said Woods, a 36-year-old native of Kansas City, Mo. “And they allowed us to build a road that cuts through their fields.”

The day-long community event impacted more than dirt and water.

“We wanted to show the locals that the coalition forces are here to do good,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Aaron Belcher, the senior line-corpsmen with Company K, 3rd Bn., 7th Marines. “We showed them that we will help them put in a hard day’s work.”

Marines dug wearing Kevlar helmets and flak jackets, but the locals, wearing no protective armor, had much more to risk.

“This was the locals’ way of showing the Taliban that they are willing to help us and that they are interested in change,” Woods said. “The fact that they had the courage to help Marines and ANA build a road that leads deep into enemy territory is historic.”

The ANA soldiers were able to help Marines communicate with the local villagers. They helped, not only by interpreting words from Marines and locals



Marines with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, shovel mud and obstacles out of a canal, July 30. Marines, Afghan soldiers, and locals all helped repair two canals in the area.

but by reinforcing their own messages that the Marines and ANA are here to improve Sangin and rid it of insurgency.

“The Afghan Army is able to speak the language of the people and tell them that there is a better future,”

Woods said. “They are true patriots and are very optimistic about Marines and ANA making a lasting improvement in this area.”

The Afghan soldiers, however, are not the only ones who believe in this change.

“The Marines and sailors of Kilo Company do things for the right reasons,” Woods said. “They understand that their actions can affect the mission in Afghanistan.”

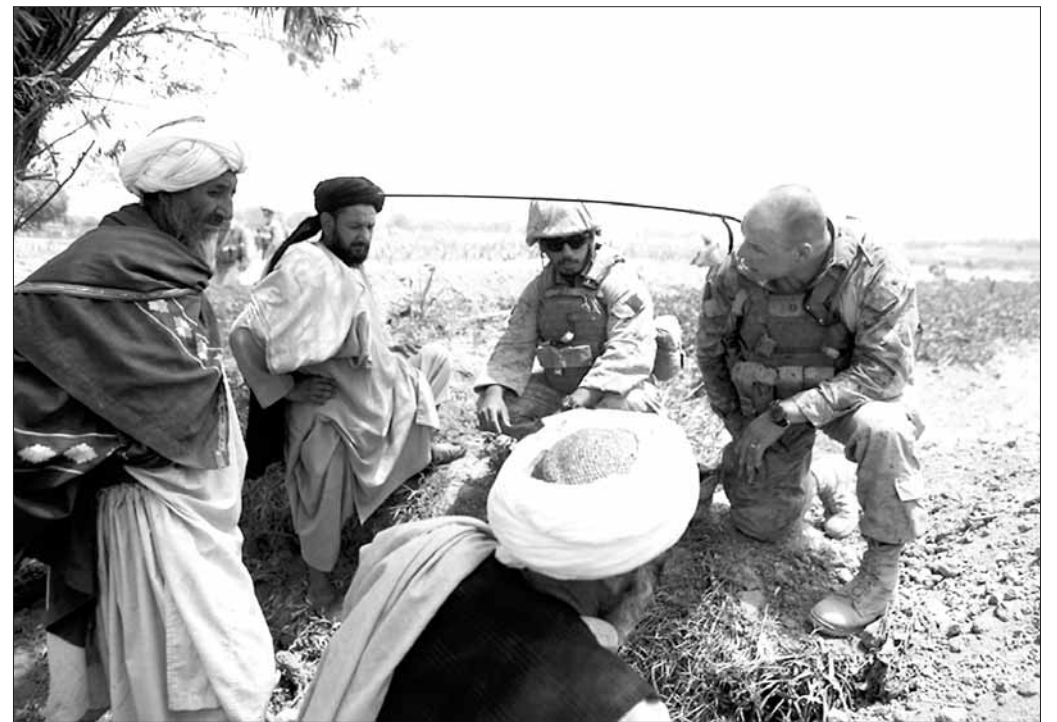
At the end of the day, the two canals were finished,

bridges were built, and water flowed again. The locals seemed happy with the work and Marines knew they had accomplished something for the future.

“I was proud to be a part of something so inspiring,” Woods said.



First Sgt. Michael Woods, company first sergeant, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and a local Afghan shovel dirt July 30. Woods, a 36-year-old native of Kansas City, Mo., and fellow Marines helped locals rebuild two canals in the area.



Lieutenant Col. Clay Tipton, battalion commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, talks to local Afghans about repairing two canals. Tipton and his Marines helped the villagers repair two canals, damaged during the last two weeks of fighting in the area.

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LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Tankers with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, wait to take part in their first scenario Tuesday during the platoon's first gunnery qualification exercise at Combat Center range 500.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Tanks line up for a long range engagement of enemy tanks during 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion's first gunnery qualification Tuesday at Combat Center range 500.

TANK, from A1

targets during gunnery, the crew is evaluated on how long it takes to find, engage and neutralize targets.

The Marines are tested during both day and night operations.

"Every table we do has a certain number of night engagements," Baldwin said. "The biggest problem is you can't see your targets unless they are in your sights."

Drivers also have a harder time at night because they have a narrower view of the road, he added.

During the gunnery, tank crews have found problems with the tanks both big and small.

"The tanks break just sit-

ting there," Huhman said. "Without taking them out and exercising them, you usually don't find a lot of problems."

The crews work on fixing problems during their down time or around it. They call it "fighting the tanks." If a problem impairs the tankers' ability to operate too much, the crew "jumps tanks." When they jump tanks they use another crew's tank for their qualification

After completing their qualifications, 1st Platoon will join 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion in Enhanced Mojave Viper, a month-long combined arms exercise, while the rest of the company prepares for their gunnery at the end of the month.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, M1A1 Main Battle Tank fires its main cannon during the platoon's first gunnery qualification exercise at Combat Center range 500 Tuesday.

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Marines learn jungle warfare, prepare for 31st MEU deployment

LANCE CPL. TYLER C. VERNAZA
31ST MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT

CAMP HANSEN, Okinawa, Japan – Marines and sailors with Combined Anti-Armor Team 1, Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, learned how to patrol and operate in a jungle environment, Aug. 3.

This training was conducted in preparation for the 31st MEU's fall patrol.

"One of the things we will provide the MEU with is our ability to conduct surface tactical recovery air personnel missions," said Gunnery Sgt. John Schmuck, platoon sergeant with CAAT-1. "Basically we are sent in to retrieve personnel and equipment behind enemy lines when air support isn't available," said Schmuck.

"Since CAAT is a mounted infantry unit, there are limitations to where we can go," said Lance Cpl. Louis Wood, an anti-tank missile-man with CAAT-1. "Okinawa's jungles are too dense for our trucks so it's good that we learn how to operate without them."

The Marines hiked to a training area carrying rifles, load bearing vests and assault packs with the necessary gear to stay in the field for two days.

Throughout the day, the platoon commander and platoon sergeant acted as instructors – conducting classes and open discussions on jungle warfare operations and tactics.

Second Lt. Brett Howard, infantry officer and platoon commander for CAAT-1, gave his Marines their first class of the day on scouting, patrolling, and establishing an objective rally point.

Howard also talked about selecting different terrain to better serve the objective of the mission, and posting security based on where the enemy is most likely to patrol.

Schmuck led classes on the classification of ambushes, observation and listening



LANCE CPL. TYLER C. VERNAZA

Lance Cpl. Vernon Graham, vehicle commander with Combined Anti-Armored Team 1, briefs a plan of approach before conducting a foot patrol, Aug. 3. The training prepares Marines for an upcoming deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

posts and the importance of hand and arm signals.

"In a jungle environment the enemy can be behind anything so it's important that movements are quiet and minimal," said Schmuck. "Using hand and arm signals allows the Marines to communicate with each other without compromising their position."

"It's cool to get the opportunity to learn the roots of warfare and fighting on the ground in an environment like this," said Wood.



LANCE CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

Marines from the 3rd Combat Engineering Battalion keep the concrete moving Aug. 9. The more the concrete stands the faster it hardens, said Gunnery Sgt. Richard B. Arvey, operations chief for Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

POUR, from A1

workers will continue to use this area for future training operations.

"We're making these pads for airfield damage repair training," said Sergeant Ricardo Miller, a squad leader from company B, 3rd CEB. The Marines during Enhanced Mojave Viper get assessed by their performance in fixing a damaged piece of helicopter pad, the Louisville, Ky., native said.

"It's a requirement for EMV, but we won't get to participate in that; we just support EMV," Streets said. "We're creating simulated

craters while pouring the concrete. Our biggest simulated crater is a 48 by 48 foot square."

This airfield damage repair puts the workers in a situation they might come across overseas. It will teach them to repair different types of damages which can come with working on an airfield.

The current project's estimated completion is Aug. 27, but their goal is Aug. 20, for the continuation of training in support of EMV. MWSS-374 and 3rd CEB expect to finish early as a result of the work they've put in and the relevant training they've received.

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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.

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LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Sergeant Nicholas C. Cascarilla, the legal section noncommissioned officer for Company A, Headquarters Battalion, salutes Maj. Gen. Anthony Jackson, the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations West, after receiving a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and NCO sword during a ceremony Wednesday at Lance Cpl. Torrey Gray field. Cascarilla is the MCI West NCO of the Quarter.

NCO of the quarter receives NAM

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

After years of hard work and dedication Sgt. Nicholas C. Cascarilla, the legal section non-commissioned officer for Company A, Headquarters Battalion, received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for being the Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter for Marine Corps Installations West.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Sergeant Nicholas C. Cascarilla was named the noncommissioned officer of the quarter for Marine Corps Installations West. He was awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and an NCO sword during a ceremony Wednesday at Lance Cpl. Torrey Gray field.

The Lansing, Mich., native received the award during a ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey Gray Parade Field from Maj. Gen. Anthony Jackson, the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations West. He was also meritoriously promoted to sergeant Aug. 2.

Jackson said it is Marines like Cascarilla that are the future of the Marine Corps and stressed that anyone in the formation could one day become sergeants major or major generals.

After Jackson's speech, Marines gathered around Cascarilla.

He thanked the Marines for attending and credited his achievement to the support he received from them to get him where he is today.

Looking back at what led up to the award and becoming NCO of the quarter, he believes the training he received aboard the Combat Center helped him prepare the most.

"My time here on base allowed me to go through the Combat Water Survival course," Cascarilla said. "I think it helped me prepare for [a role as a leader]. I think that it grew my skills as an NCO."

Besides the training he received, his attitude helped him achieve his accomplishments, and it is the attitude he wants to impart on his Marines.

"Never shy away from any opportunity you might have," he stressed. "You never know when an opportunity is going to arise. You never know if you will be able to succeed if you don't throw yourself out there."

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B1

MCCES looks to repeat as pigskin champs

CPL. R. LOGAN KYLE

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Mustangs are looking to continue their reign after beating the Headquarters Battalion Bulldawgs 24-6 in last year's Commanding General's Intramural Football League championship game. The season games kick off with a Jamboree at Felix Field Sept. 9 at 6 p.m., and the regular season opens Sept. 15.

During the Jamboree, each of the league's five teams will have a chance to play one quarter against one another, giving players the chance to juke any pre-season jitters.

Leading up to the championship game loss, the Bulldawgs had won the title three years in a row and plan to regain their dominance in the league this season.

But both the Bulldawgs

See FOOTBALL, B3



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Football season is getting closer as the players for the MCCES football team practice on Del Valle Field Monday. The team won the championship last year, which earned them a chance to travel to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to face the School of Infantry in a pre-season game at Camp Pendleton Saturday.

National park offers fun, adventure just off base



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Service members stationed aboard the Combat Center have one of the nation's most scenic locations at their doorstep. Joshua Tree National Park, located on California Highway 62, is accessible all year.

LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. – Some Marines and sailors stationed aboard the Combat Center think they're in the middle of nowhere and there are few places for entertainment. Joshua Tree National Park however, is one of many unique and beautiful locations in the hi-desert area for the adventurous to spend a day exploring.

The world-famous park contains not only several watering holes, but also is the meeting point of two of the country's most scenic deserts, the Colorado Desert and the Mojave Desert, said Cynthia Blades, a park ranger and native of Fresno, Calif.

The park is a favorite for locals, but is known world-wide, Blades said. "The park is split at 3,000 feet, between the lower Colorado Desert and the higher, cooler Mojave Desert.

"The Mojave is the home of the Joshua Tree," she said. "In addition to the famous trees and

other vegetation in both deserts, there is a lot of wildlife abounding near the five oases, which dot the park in several areas."

The park holds multiple ranger-led programs, which take place primarily on the weekends during the cooler seasons of the year.

"We offer Keys Ranch tours, evening campground talks, discovery walks, star parties and many other activities under the supervision of park rangers so guests can get the most out of their experience," she said.

Although there is a surprising amount of wildlife in the desert park, visitors are encouraged to not feed them, because wildlife is meant to stay wild, she added.

Blades said information is available for the safety of visitors during their visit to the park.

"It is recommended that everyone who comes here, especially during the summer months, has water to drink," she said. "Each person in a group is going to need about a gallon of water per day. If

See PARK, B4

Combat Center child athlete sprints toward national award

PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of children throughout the United States and Canada hoped to qualify for the Hershey Track and Field North American Final Meet in Hershey, Pa., but only a few hundred made it.



CRYSTAL CASTANEDA

Eight year old Isaiah Garcia, a child from the Combat Center, stands proudly with his 7th place medal from Hershey Track and Field North American Final Meet in Hershey, Pa., Aug. 7.

Eight-year-old Isaiah Garcia, a child from the Combat Center, not only qualified for nationals but also ran in the nine and 10 year old age group in the national competition Saturday. He placed 7th in the 200 meter dash.

As Isaiah stood on the platform at the competition ready to receive his medal, he saw his mother, Crystal Castaneda, in the crowd cheering him on. He saw his new friends and hundreds of his competitors watching him receive his medal.

The amazing part of Isaiah's story is that he only started running track two to three months before the competition, said Castaneda.

When Castaneda first took him to participate in track, she realized he had natural ability. "When Isaiah first started out, I realized he was fast, that's when I started thinking 'This is Isaiah's sport,'" Crystal said. "He got faster throughout the season."

Isaiah's first step to get to the Hershey Track and Field North American Final Meet was to qualify locally. After blowing out the competition Isaiah went to regionals, where he competed against children from California, Nevada, Utah, and Hawaii, said Joe Rosselli, the youth and community recreation manager.

Isaiah won regionals in the 200 meter

See AWARD, B3

Fight Club 29 knocks out competition for second place



LANCE CPL. WILLIAM J. JACKSON

[left to right] Ian Kast (Gold medalist), Bill Harrington (Silver medalist) and Eric "King Kong" Kotynski (Gold medalist). The fighters from Fight Club 29 competed in a team competition July 31, at the Grapplers Experience: Gi and Nogi tournament in Long Beach, Calif. A total of eight fighters competed and seven earned medals. The Marines train up to three times a day during the week. Their intense regimen includes training in the morning with their units, doing Brazilian Jujitsu or conditioning at the pool in the afternoon and team practice at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School Dojo. Fight Club 29's next tournament will be held Aug. 21, in San Diego. For more photos visit their Facebook page, Fight Club 29.



Liberty Call

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Fridays: Social food, 5 to 7 p.m.; Salsa dancing, 7 to 8 p.m.; Ladies' night, 8 to 10 p.m.; DJ Vlad, 8 to 11 p.m.
Saturdays: Variety Night with DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m.
Wednesdays: Karaoke with DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 10 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Mondays: Free chicken nuggets/nachos, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Buffalo wings, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: DJ, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Monday-Friday: All Hands Lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mondays: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Wednesdays: Karaoke, 5 to 7 p.m.
Thursdays: Latin Dance Lessons, 6 to 8 p.m.

Combat Center's Officers' Club

Friday, Good Luck Ice Cream Social, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., August 13
Monday-Friday: Lunch served, 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

Biker Larry and the Black Rope

Description: Country rock 'n' roll
When: 7:30 p.m., Friday, August 13

Late Show with Jefferitti's Nile with Allah Las

When: 7:30 p.m., Friday, August 13

Spindrift and the Morlocks

When: 9 p.m., Saturday, August 14

Where: Pappy and Harriet's
53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

The Town of Yucca Valley Music Festival Marine Corps Band

Description: Patriotic music
When: 7 p.m., Saturday, August 14
Where: Yucca Valley Community Center ball field
Dumosa Avenue north of Twentynine Palms Highway.
For more information call 369-7211 or visit <http://www.yucca-valley.org>.

Sunday Brunch Music with Michael Callan

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

Lower Desert

Billy Idol with Steve Stevens

Description: Hard rock legend brings his famous sneer
When: 9 p.m., Friday, August 20
Where: Agua Caliente,
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information, call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Huey Lewis and the News

Description: The San Francisco rock band performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, August 27
Where: Agua Caliente,
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information, call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Meatloaf

Description: The classic rock 'n' roller performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 4
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Don Henley

Description: The classic rock legend performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 17
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, August 13

6 p.m. – Grown Ups, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Knight and Day, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Jonah Hex, Rated PG-13

Saturday, August 14

11 a.m. – Free Matinee, Fly Me to the Moon, Rated G
2 p.m. – Toy Story 3, Rated G
6 p.m. – The Last Airbender, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Twilight Saga: Eclipse, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Grown Ups, Rated PG-13

Sunday, August 15

2 p.m. – Despicable Me, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Jonah Hex, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Predators, Rated R

Monday, August 16

7 p.m. – The Last Airbender, Rated PG

Tuesday, August 17

7 p.m. – Twilight Saga: Eclipse, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, August 18

7 p.m. – Knight and Day, Rated PG-13

Thursday, August 19

7 p.m. – Jonah Hex, Rated PG-13

Carrell serves up hilarity in 'Dinner For Schmucks'

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Dinner for Schmucks"

Rated PG-13

Paul Rudd and Steve Carrell star in "Dinner For Schmucks," a comedy about a group of businessmen who get their kicks by inviting flamboyant oddballs to a lavish meal.

The oddballs – the "schmucks" – aren't supposed to find out the elaborate joke is on them.

The premise sounds kind of mean-spirited for a comedy, and it is. But the movie makes it clear who the real schmucks are – and it's not the nerdy ventriloquist, the world's hairiest man or the woman who communicates with dead



COURTESY PHOTO

Paul Rudd's character, Tim, is a nice-guy investment broker who suddenly finds himself in a situation where he must bring oddball Barry, played by Steve Carrell, to a lavish dinner.

animals, including the lobster on her dinner plate.

Rudd's character, Tim, is a nice-guy investment broker

who suddenly finds himself "bumped up" at his firm, thanks to an idea that his boss feels can reel in an uber-wealthy European client. As part of Tim's induction into the big-boy club, he's invited to participate in the next dinner. All he has to do is find a "special" guest to bring.

Tim's not keen on the idea, but he goes along as the price of advancing in his job.

Enter Barry (Carrell), a nerdy IRS taxidermist whose hobby is crafting intricate, themed dioramas featuring dead mice. A chance encounter brings Barry and Tim together, beginning a chain reaction of comedic complications that lead to the movie's finale, a symphony of explosively silly calamity around a banquet table.

Rudd and Carrell have a fine-tuned chemistry, as demonstrated in their 2005 comedy collaboration "The 40 Year Old Virgin." As the straight man, Rudd gives his partner plenty of room for a whirlwind of unpredictable, all-out buffoonery. Tim never knows what Barry is going to do next, and neither do we. Carrell makes him a kaleidoscope of loveable off-centeredness, a loser whose big, trusting heart eventually reveals him as a winner.

Director Jay Roach, whose previous credits include the Austin Powers movies and "Meet The Parents" and its sequel, "Meet The Fockers," knows what's funny, and he packs "Schmucks" with several hilarious supporting players, including Zack Galifianakis

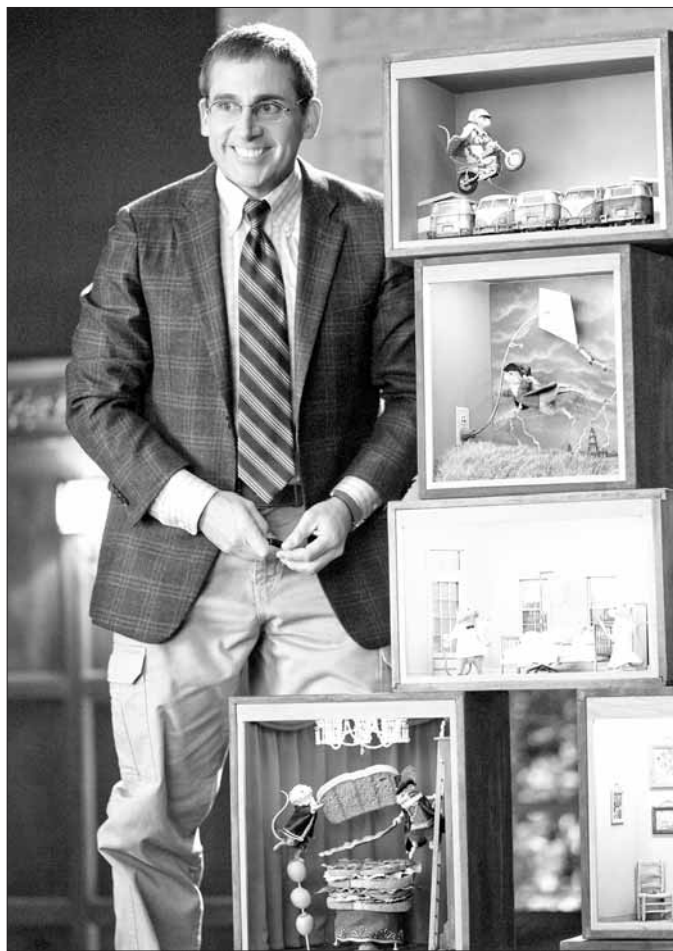
as Barry's mock-turtleneck-wearing IRS boss, whose sideline is mind control, and newcomer Jemaine Clement as a narcissistic pop artist who puts the self in self-portrait. But Roach also knows how to build the movie's message – that it's OK to be an oddball – without slathering on the sweetness. It's a delicate balancing act, and he makes it work.

Some of the jokes push the PG-13 rating close to its limit. Most grownups won't find it offensive, but little ears might not be ready for one of the running gags involving Barry's cluelessness about a particular part of the female anatomy.

Carrell, the star of TV's "The Office," is the rare comedic actor who can find, and effectively convey, the hilarity as well as the humanity of the characters he routinely plays. In this case, he taps into the aching sadness at Barry's core, the reason he's poured his taxidermy talent into the delicate, detailed dioramas that reflect his own shattered dreams.

And the dioramas are mini-masterpieces integral to the movie, featured in its opening (beautifully, tenderly, touchingly scored to The Beatles' "The Fool On The Hill") and eventually becoming the centerpiece of its finale. They're even used as a postscript, both before and after the credits, to tell you what eventually happens to all the characters.

"Dinner For Schmucks" is the summer's first breakout grownup comedy that even comes close to being worth its popcorn. Pull up a chair and dig in.



COURTESY PHOTO

Barry, played by Steve Carrell, a nerdy taxidermist whose hobby is crafting intricate dioramas featuring dead mice.



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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

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Charlie St. Cloud (PG13) Everyday: 1:30, 6:30	Dinner For Schmucks (PG13) Everyday: 4:00, 9:00	

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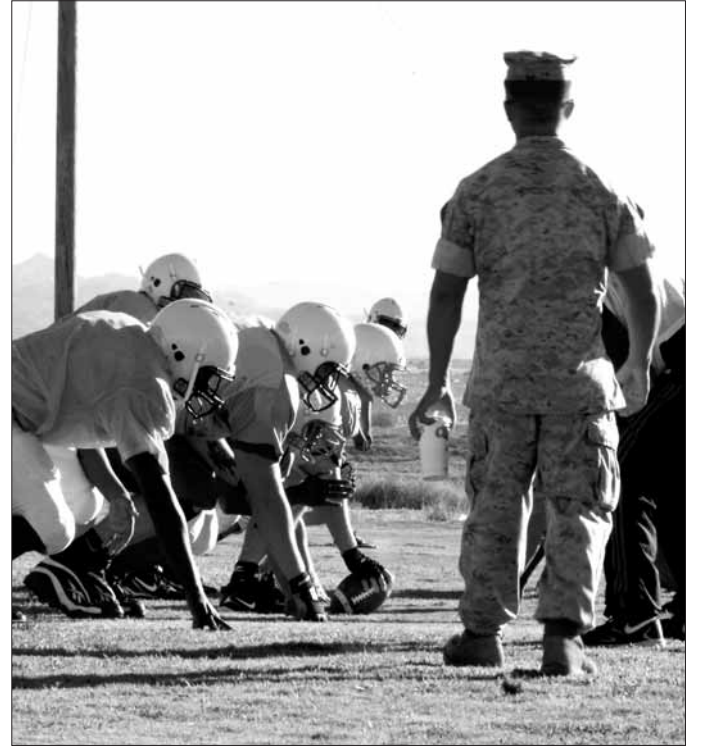
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Combat Center Sports



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Last year's champions, MCCES, prepare for the season in a hard-nosed practice at Del Valle field Monday.



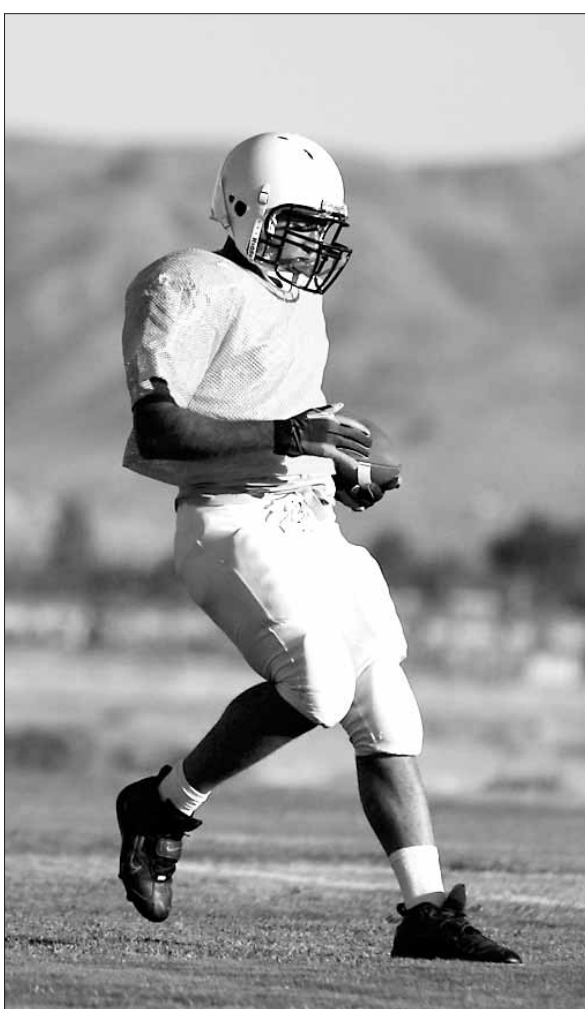
PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Tu Tran, the coach for the MCCES football team, trains his team in the fundamentals at Del Valle field Monday.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Ian Kast
Hometown: Bliss, Idaho
Unit: Combat Logistics Battalion 7
Job title: Religious Program Specialists
Recognition: One hundred ninety five pound weight class Gold Medal winner in recent Grapplers Experience tournament.
Favorite aspect of sport: "The competition."
Advice for aspiring athletes: "Keep faith in yourself, never stop trying and always train hard."



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

A Marine from the MCCES team runs up the field during a practice at the Del Valle field Monday.



PFC. SARAH ANDERSON

Players on the CLB-7 football team go full blast during a practice at Del Valle field Monday.

FOOTBALL, from B1

and Mustangs will have to fight through three other teams also in search of a title if they want to hold a rematch for the crown, bragging rights and a Best of the West berth.

To keep up with standings throughout the season, see page B-3 of the Observation Post each week, beginning Sept. 24. For photos of each game visit <http://facebook.com> and search "the Combat Center at Twentynine Palms."

AWARD, from B1

race and was one of the top three to qualify for the Hershey Track and Field North American Final Meet. "We are very proud of him," Rosselli said. "He is the first child to go to nationals from Twentynine Palms in eight years. You can't measure his excitement level."

The family was absolutely thrilled when they found out the news. "We were shocked, I couldn't believe it," Castaneda said.

Isaiah was very surprised too. After the competition, he was nothing short of excited and animated. "I feel so proud," he said. "I met a lot of friends, had a good time with my mom, and had a lot of fun."

The natural athlete ran in the 200 meter race in 30.02 seconds. He finished 7th in the event against children who were one to two years older than him.

Through all the attention and congratulations this little man received for his accomplishment, something was still missing.

Isaiah's father, Staff Sgt. Mario Castaneda, a Marine with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, who is currently deployed overseas, gave excited shouts when he heard the news of his son's incredible achievement during an international call from Pennsylvania to Afghanistan.

Isaiah's father told him over the phone how proud he was, Castaneda said. "He is super proud, and he said that Isaiah is a champion in his eyes."

His dad will return home in a few months, and Isaiah is



CRYSTAL CASTANEDA

Isaiah Garcia [far right] stands on the platform awaiting his medal during the Hershey Track and Field North American Final Meet Aug. 7 in Hershey, Pa.

waiting to show his dad what he has accomplished since he's been gone, Castaneda said.

This is the second national competition Isaiah has placed in this year, the first being an Armed Services Young Men's

Christian Association art competition.

Isaiah said he is starting football soon and plans to continue to do his best in track and every sport he participates in.

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