

OBSERVATION Post

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER

DECEMBER 10, 2010 SERVING THE TWENTYNINE PALMS COMMUNITY SINCE 1957 VOL. 53 ISSUE 49

VIPs open new child development facility

CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos; his wife, Bonnie, and Mae Ford, the branch head of Combat Center's Children Youth and Teen Services, marked the completion of the Combat Center's new Child Development Center, Dec. 6, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

"One of the things about the desert is that there are not many alternatives outside the gate, so this provides parents with the quality care they need, and they can do their service without worrying about the care of their children," Ford said.

The new facility, which was completed in only two months, will help whittle down the waiting list for childcare, which currently stands around 170 children, said Ford. The opening will increase the capacity of childcare by 142 children, a change that she said, has been due at the Combat Center for a long time.

"What we were experiencing was that Marines had to actually seek out childcare," Ford said. "We had some



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Bonnie Amos, wife of the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos, speaks at the Combat Center's Child Development Center ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 6. The facility, which took just nine weeks to construct, is expected to increase capacity and the quality of life for service members and families aboard the Combat Center.

Marines taking their children back to relatives so that they could come out and feel confident in performing their

duties without worrying about their children."

Bonnie Amos recalled the once-stalled hope for the

facility during an address she made before cutting the ribbon and officially opening the facility.

"This issue about childcare here at Twentynine Palms was brought to [former Commandant of the

Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway's wife] Annette Conway's attention about 15 months ago," she said.

About four months later, the Amos, heard that those "efforts had fallen on deaf ears."

"It's the first time my husband said it was ok that I threw a super temper tantrum," Bonnie joked.

The attention of top Marine leadership paved the way for the project's speedy construction.

"The Marine Corps wanted it done overnight," said James Bell, president of Icon Construction Inc., immediately admitting "overnight" to be a bit of an exaggeration. "But they wanted it done in 90 days; we did it in 63."

The project had a number of unique challenges other than a shortened construction time allotment, Bell said.

When designing buildings concerning children's safety, more of the little things should be considered, he said. For instance, doors in the facility have finger guards to protect children's hands from getting caught, and

See CDC, A6

'First Team' comes home



DIANE DURDEN

Sergeant Michael LeValley, a cook with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, is greeted by his wife, Lance Cpl. Natisha LeValley, their 6-month-old daughter, Isha, and the family dog, Muncha. LeValley returned Monday to the Combat Center after a six-month-long deployment to the Asian-Pacific Region with the 31st MEU.



DIANE DURDEN

Trent Kennedy, 7, along with his brothers Bryce, 9, and Nolan, 4, skipped school Monday in order to pick up their dad, Sgt. Richard Kennedy, a squad leader with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Kennedy's wife, Jenny, joined the boys in welcoming Kennedy home after a six-month-long deployment to the Asian-Pacific Region.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Greg Fell, the spokesman for Newark, jokes with a Marine during the Combat Center's bi-annual Technology Exposition hosted by G-6 at the Officers' Club Pub Tuesday.

Combat Center holds Tech Expo

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Vendors showcased the newest technologies, from printers to video telephones, at the Combat Center's bi-annual Technology Exposition hosted by G-6 at the Officers' Club Pub, Tuesday.

Kelly Shields, the event manager, said she tried to keep the vendors at the expo relevant to the needs of the Combat Center.

"We like to think of it as an overall IT focus, and what we do is meet with the leadership a week before and they request technologies," Shields said. "Any type of missions the commands are working with, we like to match those technologies."

Participants were excited and grateful for the vendors to come out and show their

wares to the Combat Center.

"It's really great they came here and put on this show for us," said Lt. Col. Bruise Nyholm, the Training and Education Center of Excellence operations offi-

cer. "Taking time out of their schedules, and at the same time, opening our eyes to what is available."

Shields assessed the four-

See EXPO, A7



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

A vendor talks with patrons about his products during the Combat Center's bi-annual Technology Exposition hosted by G-6 at the Officers' Club Pub Tuesday.



Simulating for survival ~ See A3



EMV hosts CMC ~ See A4



Show time ~ See A5



Yuletime cheer ~ See B1



Visit the official MCAGCC facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>



Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent and Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos visit Range 210 Monday.

To see more photos, visit the Combat Center Facebook page.

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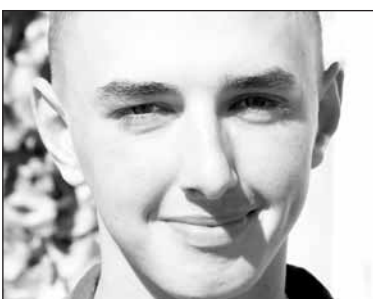
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Centerspeak

What is your favorite family holiday tradition?

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



PVT. ERIC PARKER

MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"We watch Polar Express every Christmas by the fire."



LANCE CPL. SHIRLEY WOODS

COMPANY A, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

"Decorating the Christmas tree with family."



LANCE CPL. JAVEEN HOWZE

COMPANY A, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

"Everyone in my family comes over with their recipes, and we cook together."



LANCE CPL. RACHEL YUAN

MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"We watch the claymation Christmas movies all day on Christmas."

Hot Topics

NEW LANGUAGE PROGRAM OFFERED

Marine Corps Community Services Libraries are now offering Mango Languages software as an alternative to Rosetta Stone. MCCA library patrons may register for a free Mango Language account by visiting their base library. The languages offered include Arabic (Levantine), French, German, Brazilian Portuguese, Tagalog, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, Korean, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese. There are also four languages taught with an English-as-a-second-language foundation: ESL Japanese, ESL Spanish, ESL Arabic and ESL Korean.

GOLF DEMO AT DESERT WINDS

Come down to the Desert Winds Golf course tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to demo golf equipment and be fit for clubs. A PGA Golf Professional will be available for instruction and the following vendors will be onsite: Adams Golf, Taylor Made, Ping and Nike Golf. There will also be raffle prizes and free hot dogs. Call 830-6132 for more information.

FREE "CHOSIN" SCREENINGS

There will be two free screenings of "Chosin," a documentary film about the battle at North Korea's Chosin Reservoir, at Sunset Cinema Dec. 13 at 1 and 4 p.m. In addition, there will be a Q&A after the 1 p.m. movie with first-time director Brian Iglesias, a combat decorated Marine and Iraq War vet. For more information, call 830-7269.

Marine Corps History

Dec. 10, 1995

Twenty-two Marines from Marine Corps Security Force Company, Naples, Italy, were among the first American troops to arrive in Bosnia. They provided the security for Allied Forces Southern Europe headquartered at Sarajevo.



Eagle Eyes

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7. Deploying assets

830-3937

"Since when do I have to BANG on your dog hatch 3 times to go for a walk?"



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SUDOKU #2018

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QUIZZ-N-ART

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

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ACROSS

1. Duke it out
6. Duke it out, in practice
10. Grab with a toothpick
14. Warbucks's ward
15. Air freshener
16. In ___ land (spacey)
17. Elementary piano tune
19. Pic you can click
20. Mix of old oaters
21. Won ___ soup
22. Bloodletter's supply
24. Pie-eyed
26. New Hampshire college town
27. Macho dude
29. Mall booths
33. ___ Valley, CA
36. Burnoose wearer
38. A semitone above C
39. Resting on
40. "Separate Tables" star David
42. "Doctor Zhivago" heroine
43. Change, chemically
45. "___ Misbehavin'"
46. Springsteen's "___ Fire"
47. Metroliner company, once
49. Things
51. Buggy people?
53. Curtain folds
57. Stylish to the max
60. ___-mo replay
61. Lindstrom or Zadora
62. Hit the horn
63. Be less than frank
66. In olden days
67. Literary pen name
68. Inventor Howe
69. Become frayed
70. Caterpillar construction
71. Call together, as troops

DOWN

1. Object of Sergeant Friday's quest
2. ___ water (imperiled)
3. Subterranean dwarf
4. ___-hop
5. Final taker
6. Drive to nowhere in particular
7. Snapshot, for short
8. Spot for a spat
9. Look for again
10. Fictional, but realistic
11. RPM dial
12. Succulent plant
13. Disallows
18. Goodson's TV production partner
23. Geraint's lady
25. Authoritarian
26. Rascally
28. La Scala solo
30. Fling to the mat
31. Corn syrup brand
32. Getz or Kenton
33. Poet Teasdale
34. Tabloids twosome
35. Medieval defense
37. Hell- (determined)
41. Set of unspecified magnitude, in math
44. Bring under control
48. Destiny
50. ___ child (hippie)
52. Metro entrance
54. Earth Day month
55. Word before wave or basin
56. Fresh-mouthed
57. Vittles
58. Fine-tune
59. Andean of old
60. "Beat it!"
64. Diarist Anais
65. Suffix with pay or plug

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Samantha Giordano
Hometown: Twentynine Palms, Calif.
Job title: Communications Specialist
Unit: G-5
Duties: "I design and produce printed literature for external distribution."
What is your favorite part of your job?: "The design, being creative and producing information that will affect people."
Significant achievements: Degree in journalism, coin from commanding general and producing literature not only on the Combat Center, but also in town.
Hobbies: Shopping, swing dancing and reading
Years of service: Two and a half years.
Service on the Combat Center: Two and a half years.

OBSERVATION POST

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Marines from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, train in the Combat Convoy Simulator Wednesday at the Battle Simulation Center on Camp Wilson.

Battle simulations keep Marines in fight

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL.
SARAH ANDERSON**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Recently, two Marines were driving down Two Mile Road when the driver lost control of the car on the soft, sandy shoulder of the road. The

vehicle flipped three times before landing.

When the car came to a stop, the reactions of these two Marines, who, by the way, were myself and my husband, Sam, were completely opposite.

Sam immediately assessed the situation, checked to see if

I was injured and proceeded to find a way to get us both out as quickly as possible.

I, on the other hand, was confused, couldn't move, had trouble processing what had just happened.

The difference between us was not our age, time in grade or service or vast differences in our experience as drivers. Where we differed was in our knowledge and training within the Corps.

I work in one of the Corps' many critical, but non-deployable, support roles. Sam is an infantryman, slated to deploy in a few months, and has spent countless hours training to handle chaotic situations.

I asked my husband why he remained so calm during the immediate aftermath of the crash, he replied, "I've been through rollovers before in battle simulations."

Helping Marines survive situations like these are one of the reasons installation leaders opened the Combat Center's Battle Simulation Center at Camp Wilson. The center offers four different types of simulations: the Combat Convoy Simulator (CCS); Operator Driver Simulator (ODS); Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle Egress Trainer (MET); and the Deployable Virtual Training Environment (DVTE).

The multiple battle simulations the center possesses are not only important for infantry units to master, but also for the supporting units that do not anticipate a deployment any time soon, said Gunnery Sgt. Hector Viramontes, an instructor at the Battle Simulation Center. The center is also something that hasn't been seeing its fair share of use, he said.

"We are all Marines," he said. "What happens if you all of a sudden deploy or get transferred to a deployable unit? You have to start at level one, because you did not keep up with your training."

This is the closest Marines can get in training for real-life situations and combat scenarios, said Douglas Peercy, a combat tactics instructor at the Battle Simulation Center and a retired gunnery sergeant. "We can recreate scenarios and situations of real-life combat to see how the Marines would react."

The CCS and ODS create virtual reality scenarios and combat situations to test and teach vehicle drivers and convoy personnel how to react to obstacles and enemy attacks. The CCS goes more in-depth with the involvement of weapons and multiple vehicles working together to accomplish a mission.

The HEAT and MET

are rollover simulators that test Marines' abilities to work together and react properly if their vehicle flips multiple times.

At the DVTS, Marines sit at computers and virtually work together as they interact with Afghan people to learn their languages and culture in a virtual world.

The center has the latest and greatest technology available in the Marine Corps, Viramontes said. "But this service will go away if it is doesn't get used."

Viramontes said the center has plenty of openings available and he encouraged every unit to contact him to schedule simulation training or learn more about the center by calling 830-4192.

SJA CORNER

Off-limits businesses: Procedures and implications

CAPTAIN DAVID SEGRAVES

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Some businesses may prey upon unsuspecting military members. Other businesses may operate establishments that threaten the welfare of their clientele in general. To help protect our service members from these types of businesses, the Commanding General can put these establishments "off-limits," making it a punishable offense for military members to conduct business with or enter the premises of these businesses.

Per Combat Center Order 1620.1B, the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board makes recommendations to the Commanding General on which establishments should be off-limits. The AFDCB begins the process upon receiving "substantive information" about a business that "presents conditions that adversely affect [service members'] health, safety, welfare, morale, or morals." Examples of off-limits establishments are unsafe bars, unscrupulous financial services businesses, automotive dealerships that sell defective vehicles or do not honor their truth in lending disclosures and realty companies that systematically refuse to return security deposits. The command inspector general presides over the board which meets quarterly.

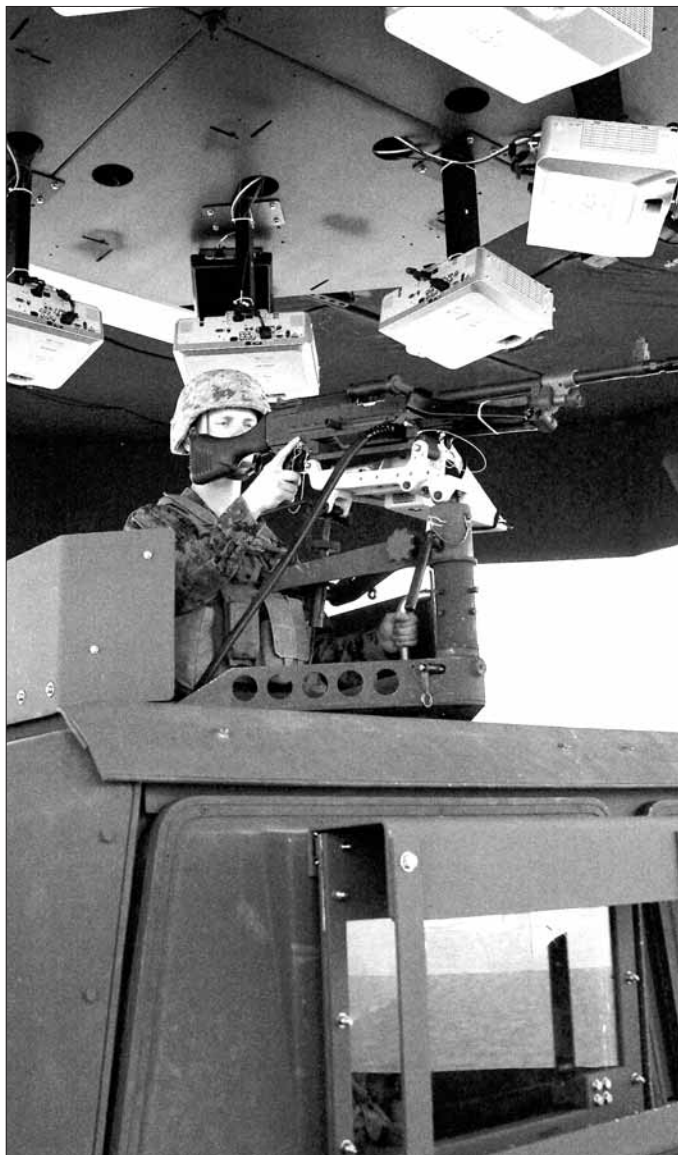
Servicemembers who identify businesses that meet the above criteria should report the business's actions to the Inspector General's office. Upon receiving reports of detrimental conditions, the board will make a decision whether to investigate the business. After receiving a report that substantiates the initial claim, the AFDCB sends a letter of notification to the owner/operator of the business, warning them of the inappropriate conditions. If businesses fail to correct the problem, the AFDCB sends a letter inviting the owners to attend a meeting and show why their business should not be put off-limits. At that meeting, owners can present evidence in mitigation and extenuation, and they may question anyone who speaks against the business. If the AFDCB determines the problems remain uncorrected, the president forwards a recommendation to the commanding general to designate the business as off-limits.

Once the commanding general designates a business as off-limits, the Public Affairs Office distributes the list of off-limits establishments. Individual command adjutants maintain lists of these establishments and post them on their bulletin boards. Any servicemember who patronizes an off-limits establishments risks disciplinary action under the UCMJ.

When choosing businesses to frequent, consult your battalion bulletin board to ensure you avoid off-limits establishments. Furthermore, to further safeguard yourself, review an establishment's Better Business Bureau profile online to see any complaints filed against a business. Finally, if you experience a condition that is dangerous or adversely affects your health, safety, welfare, morale or morals, report the situation to ensure other service members do not fall prey to the same condition. You can make reports by calling 830-4872.



Marines from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, train in the Combat Convoy Simulator Wednesday at the Battle Simulation Center on Camp Wilson.



Marines from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, train in the Combat Convoy Simulator Wednesday at the Battle Simulation Center on Camp Wilson.

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EMV, Afghan role players welcome commandant

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL.
SARAH ANDERSON**

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The new Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James F. Amos, and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent made the Combat Center their first stop on a tour of West Coast bases and installations since Amos took command of the force Oct. 22.

Amos and Kent, accompanied by their wives, visited Marines and sailors working and training aboard the Combat Center Sunday and Monday to listen to their ideas and concerns and to discuss their vision for the future of the Corps.

The commandant and the sergeant major dropped in on the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, from Camp Lejeune, N. C., during their Enhanced Mojave Viper training on Range 210 Monday.

"It is probably more important for me than it is for them," said Amos. "I know a lot of the leadership out here, but most of the youngsters have joined the Marine Corps in the last few years. I think it's important for me to come out and watch them train. It's critical that the Marines see their leaders out in front."

Amos viewed a portion of EMV, the installation's premier combined arms pre-deployment training exercise, which incorporates air, ground and combat logistics elements and

Afghan role players to provide realistic training for units deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and other overseas operational contingencies.

The Marines were in the defense during their training as they witnessed the commandant's helicopter land in front of them. The commandant, sergeant major and their wives met and talked with the Marines.

To the surprise of several Marines who met him, the commandant was much more relatable than expected.

"You never think they are just people like we are, Marines like we are," said Lance Cpl. Skyler Ellis, an assaultman with 3rd Bn., 2nd Marines.

"I wanted to come out and let them know this is what the Commandant of the Marine Corps looks like, and I am a human being," Amos said. "The Marine Corps is our life, and we love these young men and Marines."

The Marines were learning how to interact with Afghan populations. Role players acting as Afghan village elders and Marines convened for a scenario to discuss issues. The commandant and sergeant major were let in on the training. They shared a traditional Afghan meal in a room set up like an Afghan home. Marines socialized with their high-ranking visitors, asking questions and receiving advice as they dined.

Upon leaving the range, the commandant said he was proud of



Commandant of the Marine Corps General James F. Amos visits with Marines from 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, training on Range 210 Monday.

what the Combat Center is doing in support of the war effort.

The commandant also credited installation personnel for their environmental practices.

"There is no better steward than the Marine Corps," Amos said, knowing the environmental concerns in the region. "I see a great future for the Marine Corps here."



Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, meets with Marines from 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, during his visit to Range 210 Monday.



Bonnie Amos, wife of the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos, plays with an explosive ordnance disposal dog named Cee during a visit with Marines from 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, from Camp Lejeune, N.C., training on Range 210 Monday.

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'Divas' and MCAS Miramar team up for show

LANCE CPL.
LISA M. TOURTELOT

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – About 10 Marines, grinning from ear-to-ear, enjoyed a private concert while Katy Perry rehearsed on stage.

Volunteering to assist the 2010 VH1 Divas Salute the Troops concert security had its benefits: volunteers got a free private show from the "Divas" as they rehearsed.

Katy Perry, Keri Hilson, Nicki Minaj, Sugarland, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals, Heart and Kathy Griffin spent the evening entertaining the troops at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 3.

During the course of just a few weeks, a production team from VH1 transformed a hangar at the air station into a towering soundstage, complete with a rotating platform with interchangeable set pieces.

Days before the concert taping, VH1 and Marine Corps Community Services recruited volunteers to help set up the concert site and provide security. Corporal Tyler Formby, a rifle coach at the air stations Carlos Hathcock Range, stood among the starstruck and cheering volunteers watching Katy Perry perfect her routine.

"I've been here since yes-



CPL. ZACH MAJORS

Katy Perry closes the 2010 VH1 Divas Salute the Troops concert with a performance at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 3. Approximately 27,000 people attended the concert hosted by Kathy Griffin, which featured Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj, Sugarland, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals and a special appearance by Heart.

terday," Formby said. "We set up all the fences and all the stands. I got to hang out backstage last night," he added with a sideways grin.

VH1 and MCCS delegated VIP seating to the Marines and sailors of Wounded Warrior Battalion West, as well as their friends

and families.

Corporal Michael Pride was one of the first wounded warriors to arrive at the hangar.

"Being a wounded warrior...I always like when anyone is supportive in any way they can, like showing their talents," the Kansas City, Mo., native said.

After the start of the show, the wounded warriors enjoyed not only the best view of the concert, but also had a special visit from Snooki of "The Jersey Shore." The pint-sized reali-

ty star fought her way through throngs of eager fans to sign autographs, take pictures and chat with the wounded warriors.

Uniformed military members from every branch of service enjoyed stage-side viewing of the concert. About 27,000 people attended the show.

"I've been to concerts before, but never anything like this," said Airman Joel Bueers, a cyber security specialist with the 95th Communication Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The low-

est ranking member of his squadron, Bueers explained that his command encouraged him to enjoy the unique opportunity for service members in the California area.

The show ended with fireworks and salutes from the "Divas." The hangar will return to normal as quickly as VH1 transformed it, but the memory of bright lights and crooning pop stars will remain.

For a schedule of repeat airings of the show, visit <http://www.vh1.com>.



CPL. ZACH MAJORS

A joint-force color guard opens the 2010 VH1 Divas Salute the Troops concert at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 3. Approximately 27,000 people attended the concert hosted by Kathy Griffin, which featured Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj, Sugarland, Grace Potter and the Nocturnals and a special appearance by Heart.

COPPER HILL HOMES For the Holidays



Model: Monument Plan C

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Commandant, SMMC meet with Marines to discuss Corps' future

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Marines and sailors around the Combat Center gathered throughout the day in churches and meeting rooms for a visit with the Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Monday.

"It's good to see them out here," Sgt. Freddy Esquivel, a tank commander with Company C, 1st Tank Battalion. "He only had been [commandant] for a few weeks, so [this is a good opportunity] just to see his face and to know what is ahead of us for the United States Marine Corps."

General James F. Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, took the microphone first and talked about the war in Afghanistan.

"We've got every reason to be optimistic," Amos said, pointing out successes not only in Afghanistan, but also in Iraq. He mentioned cities that were once areas of heavy fighting, and now "you can walk down the streets without flak and wearing a soft cover."

To lighten the deployment load on Marines, the Corps recently expanded in number by 27,000. Despite the recent increase, Amos said he wants to reduce the number of Marines and recalibrate our equipment so that the Corps can stay flexible and still be able to handle whatever comes in the future.

He then talked about those who believe the Corps is just a second "land army."

"I do not apologize for being the nation's second 'land army,'" Amos exclaimed. "We



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, speaks with Marines and sailors of 1st Tank Battalion, 3rd Combat Engineering Battalion, and 11th Marine Regiment, about the future of the Marine Corps and what they can expect from him at the Combat Center's Protestant Chapel Monday.

are the nation's expeditionary force as well. If the president ever asks me to send a force somewhere, I will never say 'I can't do that.' I will say 'Yes sir,' then start working on putting the force together with what I have."

He said he is absolutely confident that his Marines can handle anything thrown their way because of the Marine Corps tradition "fighting today's crisis with today's forces, today."

Amos added the Marines do so well because of their uniqueness as a group.

"Being in a sea of green cammies every day can make us forget how unique we are," Amos said. "But less than one tenth of one percent of Americans can earn the right to wear this uniform."

After the Commandant finished speaking, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent stepped up and talked about the legacy of the Corps and

what it is leaving behind. He said during the last Marine Corps Ball in November, he visited retired Sgt. Maj. Henry H. Black, the 7th Sergeant

Major of the Marine Corps. While at Black's house, they talked about war stories, where the Marine Corps has been and where it is going. Black had said that all the veterans are proud of today's Marines and that they are keeping up with the traditions of the Marine Corps. He added they could even be better than Marines of the past, Kent said.

Kent added it is because of the Corps' successes that other military branches seek to recruit Marines to their own services, citing an Army recruiting poster with the words "Sometimes the best soldier for the job is a Marine," written across it.

Amos closed each meeting by taking questions and saying "thanks" to the Marines and sailors for all the hard work and sacrifices they make keep the Marine Corps strong.

what it is leaving behind.

He said during the last Marine Corps Ball in November, he visited retired Sgt. Maj. Henry H. Black, the 7th Sergeant



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

General James F. Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, speaks with Marines and sailors of 7th Marine Regiment, about current conditions in Afghanistan and answers their questions at the Combat Center's Catholic Chapel Monday.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos shakes hands of James Bell, the president of Icon Construction, whose company helped build the new Child Development Center in just nine weeks, at the ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 6. The facility is expected to increase capacity and shorten the time parents must wait to enroll their children for childcare aboard the Combat Center.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos walks with his wife Bonnie, while touring the newly opened Child Development Center Dec. 6 after a ribbon cutting ceremony. The facility, which took just nine weeks to construct, is expected to increase capacity and improve the quality of life for service members and families.

CDC, from A1


water heater temperatures are set to max out at 110 degrees to guard against accidental scalding.

The 15,000-square-foot facility also includes six age-specific classrooms, three age-specific play areas, a full service kitchen, a laundry facility and spaces for administration and personnel training. Seismic engineering ensures the building is just that much

more safe in the event of an earthquake.

"[There was] a lot of effort on lots of people's plates," concluded Bonnie, speaking to the collective group of people from the Public Works Section, Marine Corps Community Services, G-6, the Fire Department, Resident Officer and Icon Construction Inc., who were responsible for the project's success. "Thank you."

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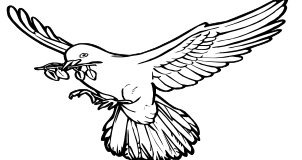


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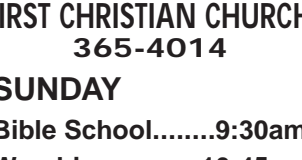
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Nov. 6

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Nov. 10

CONNAR ALAN MCQUISTAN
Born to Cpl. Jonathan and Nicole McQuistan
Nov. 2

LONDON TROY DAVES
Born to Cpl. Troy and Genna Daves
Nov. 17

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Oct. 31

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Nov. 16

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Nov. 1

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Nov. 1

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Nov. 8

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The limitations for ads are: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for noncom-

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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.

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EXPO, from A1

hour-long event's progress at the halfway mark.

"Reception is really good," she said. "Fantastic feedback. We had a lot of leadership stay for about an hour, which is crazy because time is limited for the leadership."

The vendors were also glad to have the opportunity to come on the Combat Center.

"One of the advantages of the expo is that you get to get

in front of different people," said Bryan Vogt, a product support representative with Hawthorne Lift Systems. "We are looking for opportunities where we can help you with our company and maybe we can make things a little better and easier for you."

The next G-6 sponsored technology expo is scheduled for Nov. 15, 2011.

"Hopefully we can have more vendors next year," Nyholm said. "There are a lot of great products."



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From Huey to Osprey, Marine squadron starts from scratch

CPL. STEVEN H. POSY
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. - Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 561 became the first MV-22 Osprey squadron on the West Coast to begin from scratch during a squadron activation ceremony held here Dec. 2.

A crowd of Marines and spectators gathered at the ceremony as Lt. Col. Warren J. Curry, the VMM-561 commanding officer, took control of the new squadron.

"These Marines are making history today and are a part something special," said Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Conant, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general. "They are part of a great legacy."

The ceremony commenced with a performance by the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marching Band, followed by words from Curry.

"We started from scratch, and 18 months later we stand up ready to deploy," said Curry. "Today starts the day to become a cohesive and disciplined unit ready to serve our Corps."

VMM-561 represented the legacy of the squadron by parking a vintage UH-34 "Sea Horse" helicopter, along with an Osprey, behind a formation of Marines on the flight line.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 561 flew the UH-34 during the Vietnam era.

Now the MV-22, with its tilt-rotor platform, currently serves the Marine Corps in combat operations in Afghanistan. The Osprey represents a new era of aviation and the future of the medium-lift airframe.

From flying Marines in the early 60s to conducting operations in Operations Iraqi and Enduring freedom, VMM-561 carries its history into the 21st century.



CPL. STEVEN H. POSY

Marines from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 561 salute their newly-appointed commanding officer during the squadron activation ceremony at the flightline at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 2. VMM-561 is the third Osprey squadron aboard the air station.



CPL. STEVEN H. POSY

Lieutenant Col. Warren J. Curry, the commanding officer of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 561, salutes the national ensign during the squadron activation ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Dec. 2.

ADVERTISEMENT

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM

by Lou Gerhardt



I have been receiving many thoughtful and helpful emails, cards, letters, and telephone calls in recent days from a growing number of you who read this column.

Not only did Pat Eubanks send her highly complimentary message recently but among a large number of others I heard from Cynda Sullivan, Burke LeSage, Nancy Kearney, Claudia Byran, Mike Lipsitz, Jananne Turner, Paul Boyd, Rev. Bob Firl, and Muffin Hill. The other day Elsie Nicholas wrote, "Just wanted you to know I tried Sassy Nails in Yucca Valley and they lived up to everything you said. I really enjoy your column." Another person, a Landers resident, telephoned me to say how much he appreciated my column about Tom Huls and the great people of Big-O Tires in Yucca Valley. He told me that a hi-desert clean team received tremendous assistance from Big-O Tires who took all the tires and rims they collected off their hands at time and expense to their business. Actually, Tom, John, and the crew were simply grateful to be of assistance.

My mother taught my brother, my sister and me that it is never wrong to express appreciation, gratitude, or just a plain "thank you."

Mark Twain commented years ago that he could live with great personal satisfaction for three weeks after receiving just one sincere compliment.

You and I should give the gift that can't be bought. Look hard for frequent occasions to pay sincere compliments to your family, friends, business associates and the clerks who wait on you.

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B1

MCCS Festival welcomes holiday season

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LANCE CPL.
ANDREW D. THORBURN**
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Christmas carols filled the air as Combat Center families enjoyed the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field, Saturday.

The festival held many activities for the children including arts and crafts, balloon animals, face painting, live choir, passing out gifts and photos with Santa.

"The kids are having a good time," said Adrian Allanson, girlfriend of Staff Sgt. Lance Ritter, an instructor with the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School.

"They can do whatever they want and have fun."

The most popular activities were photos with Santa, with at least a 30-minute wait to see him, and the toy line, with five lines of people waiting to receive a free toy for their child.

According to MCCS, more than

See **HOLIDAY, B4**



[From left] Santino Anzevino, 4, Maria Anzevino, 8 weeks, and Christiano Anzevino, 6, pose for a photo with Santa during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.



Noah Redtfeldt, age 7 months, son of Sgt. Joshua Redtfeldt with MWSS-374, eagerly looks at a Marine after seeing the "Toy Story" toy in front of him during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.



The Sun City Shadow Hills Community Singers perform their 70s version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.

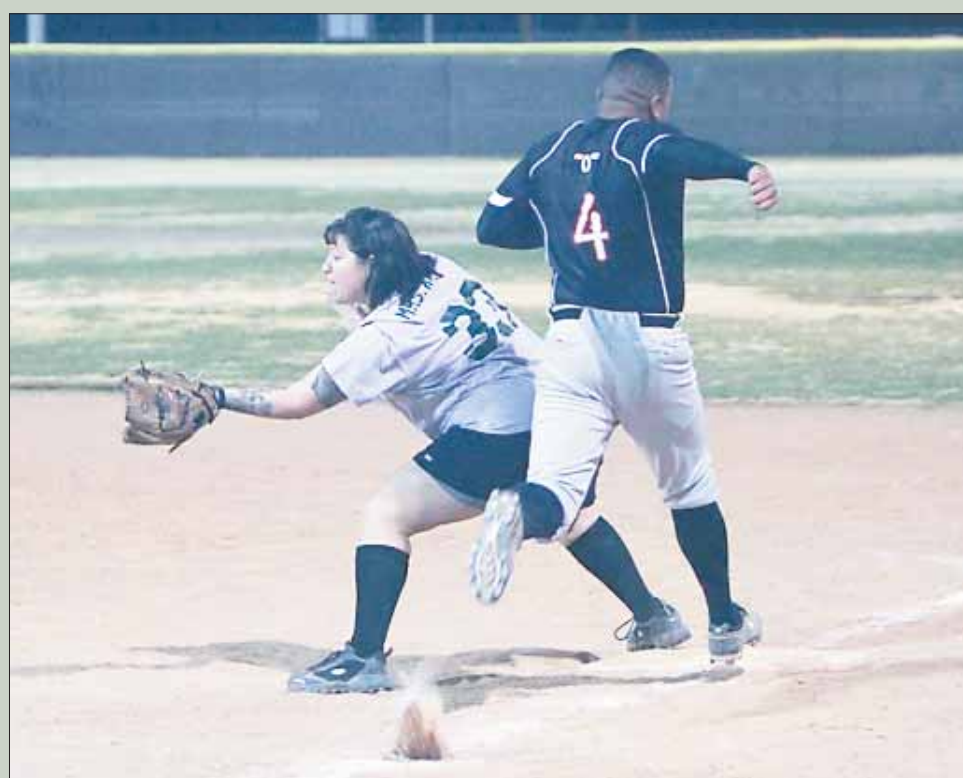


Amy Young, 4 years old, daughter of Staff Sgt. Daniel Young, MWSS-374, receives a balloon version of Elmo during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.

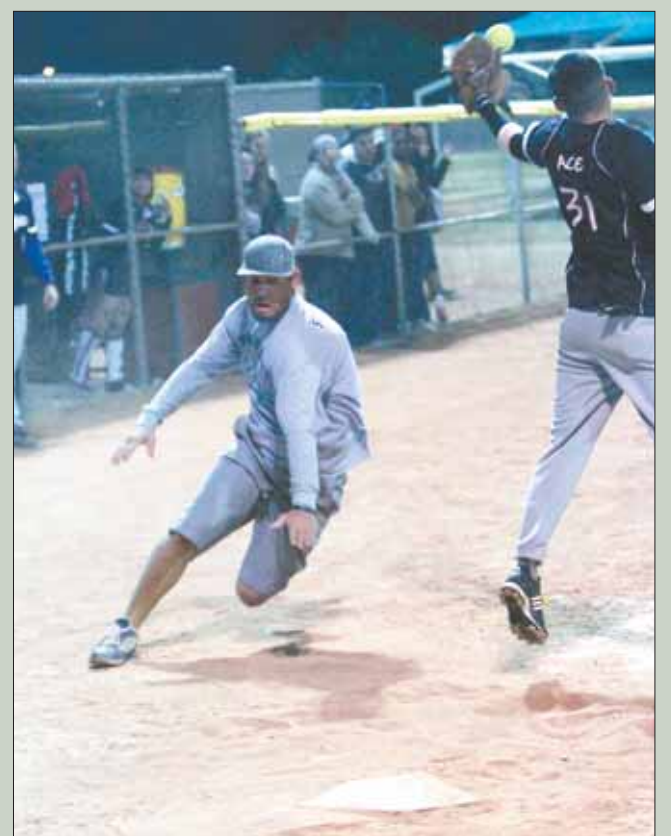
HQBN takes 2010 CG's Cup

Headquarters Battalion has once again claimed the Commanding General's Cup as theirs for 2010. Congratulations to all, and particularly to those Marines and civilians who participated on the teams and in the events that made the battalion overall champions once again. That makes four years in a row and five of the last six years. To those who were not victorious, basketball season is about to begin for 2011, the first step in winning the cup in 2011. Keep an eye out on the Combat Center's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/combat-center> for the formal presentation of the trophy in the near future.

Co-Ed softball season finale



Oscar Secaida, the first baseman for the Misfits White, reaches first base Tuesday during their game with the Drama Killers. The Misfits lost with a score of 20 to 9. See more photos on page B3



Ray Wren [grey], a player with the Drama Killers, dives to home plate after hitting an in-the-park homerun Tuesday during their game against the Misfits White at the Combat Center's Felix Field. The Drama Killers won 20 to 9.



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
Sundays: Football coverage, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Mondays: Monday Night Football, 5:30 to 8 p.m.
Wednesdays: DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 10 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Mondays: Monday Night Football with free chili dogs, 5:30 to 8 p.m.
Wednesdays: Buffalo Wings. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: Dinner, full menu, 4:30 to 9 p.m., Social hour 5:30 p.m., DJ, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Mondays: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Monday-Friday: All Hands Lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Dinner, full menu, 4:30 to 9 p.m., Karaoke, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center's Officers' Club

Mondays: Steak night, 5 p.m.
Monday-Friday: Lunch served, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Taco Thursdays: 5 to 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up

Merle Jagger

Description: The popular rock band performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 10

The Shadow Mountain Band followed by Sara Petite

Description: The country singer/songwriter performs
When: 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 for the Shadow Mountain Band. Then 8 p.m. for Sara Petite
Where: 53688 Pioneer Road, Pioneer town
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

The First Christmas

Description: A child learns about the Christmas spirit
When: 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 11 and 12 with a matinee performance at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>.

The Hi-Desert Chorus present the Holiday Concert

Description: Presenting the "Sounds of the Season"
When: 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 11 and 12
Where: Yucca Valley Senior Center
57090 Twentynine Palms Highway behind the library.

Lower Desert

Lewis Black

Description: The edgy comedian performs stand up
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 8
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Patti Labelle

Description: The pop legend performs her hits
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Jan. 14
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

Golden Boy Boxing

Description: De la Hoya's Golden Boy promotions bouts
When: 8 p.m., Friday, Jan. 14
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Bonnie Raitt

Description: The R&B legend performs her hits
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 22
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, Dec. 10

6 p.m. – Secretariat, Rated PG
9 p.m. – The Social Network, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Case 39, Rated R

Saturday, Dec. 11

11 a.m. – Free Matinee, Christmas Story, Rated PG
2 p.m. – Red, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. – Life As We Know It, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Sneak Preview, Rated R
Midnight – Paranormal Activity 2, Rated R

Sunday, Dec. 12

2 p.m. – Secretariat, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Hereafter, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Conviction, Rated R

Monday, Dec. 13

7 p.m. – The Social Network, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, Dec. 14

7 p.m. – Case 39, Rated R

Wednesday, Dec. 15

7 p.m. – Life As We Know It, Rated PG-13

Thursday, Dec. 16

7 p.m. – Secretariat, Rated PG

Inspiring '127 Hours' based on true hiker's ordeal

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"127 Hours"

Rated R

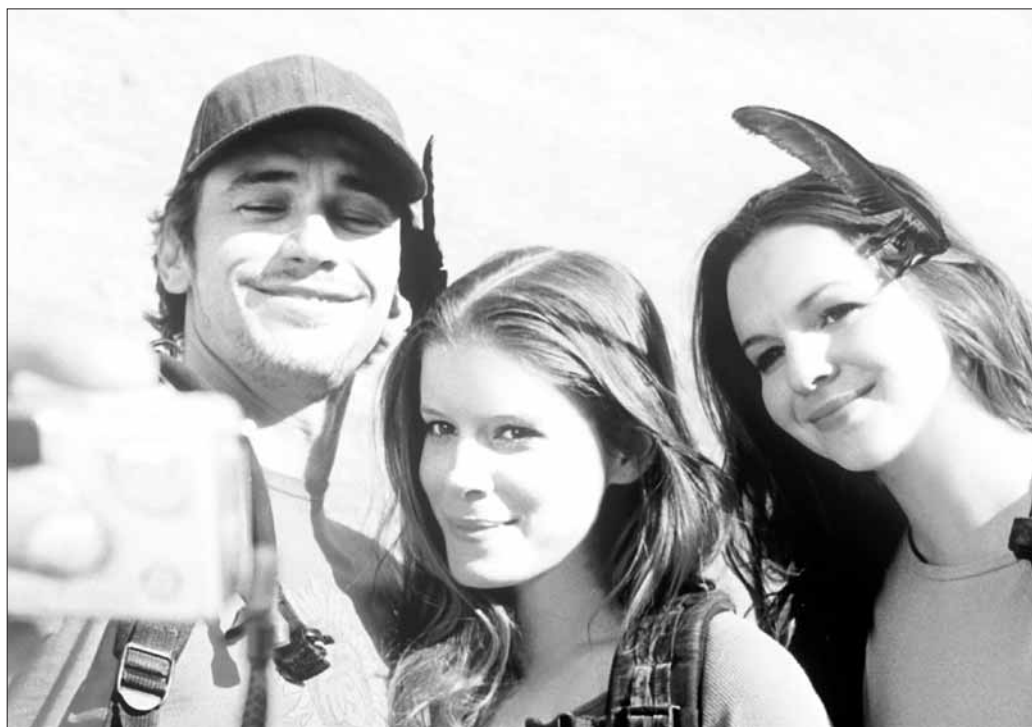
Because it's based a true story, and also because buzz about it has been so intense, most people will know before they buy a ticket to "127 Hours" that it's likely going to make them squirm.

And anyone who doesn't know should probably be warned, since some viewers have reportedly fainted when the camera focuses for several unblinking minutes on the nearly unthinkable act for which the eventual triumphant outcome of the story depends.

The movie depicts the ordeal of Aron Ralston, an outdoor enthusiast who in 2003 fell into a deep canyon crevice while hiking alone in Utah. Pinned to the wall by a dislodged boulder for five days with no prospect of rescue, he sawed off his right forearm with a pocketknife in order to escape.

But "127 Hours" is much more than simply a cinematic endurance test to see if you can stomach what you know is coming when it finally arrives. It's an inspiring tale of one young man's incredible perseverance, resourcefulness and will to survive. It's a powerful, perhaps even Oscar-worthy acting performance by James Franco, who plays Ralston. And it's another stylistic triumph for director Danny Boyle, the British director who swept audiences away last year with the emotionally soaring, ultimately exhilarating "Slumdog Millionaire."

Boyle uses a bag of edgy, arty cinematic tricks to expand the narrative beyond the dire, claustrophobic circumstance in which Ralston



COURTESY PHOTO

James Franco gives a possible Oscar winning performance as loner Aron Ralston, who suffers a 127-hour-long ordeal while hiking alone in Utah. Franco spends most of the movie alone, but takes a few minutes to flirt with a pair of female hikers.

finds himself by the end of the movie's first half hour. He fleshes out his main character, and the situation, with flashbacks, hallucinations, premonitions and delirious dreams that flash through Ralston's mind throughout the nightmare.

In the lead-up to the fall into the crevice, we learn that Aron is a happy-go-lucky loner and an athletic risk-taker. He's so anxious to get where he's going that he carries only briefly with the two flirtatious female hikers he encounters early in his off-the-road trek.

We also watch him bolt off for his adventure without his cell phone, his heavy-duty Swiss army knife, or that extra bottle of Gatorade, all of which he'll come to regret. He didn't return his sister's answering-machine message, or his mother's, before he left home, and he didn't tell his coworker – or anyone else – where he was headed.

And that drip-drip-drip-ping kitchen faucet, seen in the opening split-screen montage as he scurries around preparing to leave, becomes an omen of the precious hydration he'll be needing – desperately – later.

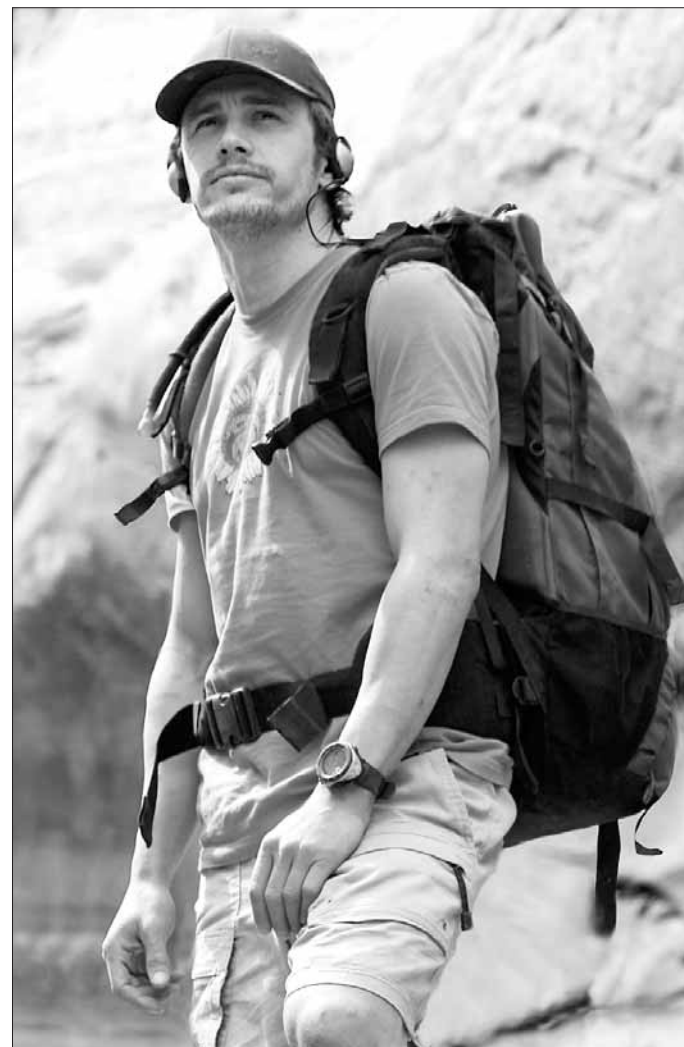
"127 Hours" is in limited release, which means it might not be showing at your local multiplex. But it's well worth the effort to seek out, even if it means driving a few extra miles.

For a movie about a man falling into a canyon crack, there's much to think about here, not the least of which is how far any one of us would go, under similar circumstances, to survive. Could we do what Ralston did? Could we joke about

the irony of buying a cheap utility tool, because it came with a free, equally cheap, flashlight? Could we realize, as Aron does, that any situation is the result of decisions you make, the due course of things you do and things you neglect?

In the movie's epilogue, we meet the real Ralston and learn that even with a prosthetic right hand and forearm, he continues to ski, hike, mountaineer and bike. But now, we're told, he always leaves a note behind, telling someone where he's going and how long he expects to be gone.

After watching "127 Hours," you'll agree that's a terrific – maybe even life-saving – idea.



COURTESY PHOTO

James Franco portrays Aron Ralston, a hiker who suffers a terrible ordeal after falling into a canyon crevice.

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15 MCAGCC-Palm Springs Friday

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5:00	5:25	5:30	5:40	5:45	6:00	6:10	7:00

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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Combat Center Sports



CPL. M. C. NERL

Michael Simmons, batting for the Misfits White during their game against the Drama Killers Tuesday, watches one of his hits sail away at the Combat Center's Felix Field. The Misfits lost 20 to 9.



CPL. M. C. NERL

Josh Goodman, a player with the Drama Killers, rounds first base Tuesday night during their game against the Misfits White and the last game of the Combat Center's Co-Ed softball league. The Drama Killers defeated the Misfits 20 to 9.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Penelope Etimani
Unit: Camp Wilson Dining Facility
Hometown: Samoan Islands
Recognition: The best hitter for the Misfits White all season.
What is your favorite aspect of the sport? "Playing first and third bases, and trying to kill the ball every time for a homerun."
Advice for aspiring athletes: "When the game gets real serious, don't beat yourself up over the last play, keep moving forward and keep your head up."

Co-ed Softball final league standings

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
Drama Killers	11	0
Outkast	10	1
Heavy Hitters	8	3
Sticks and Chicks	7	4
Red Rockets	6	5
Team Beiber	6	5
Misfits White	5	6
K's Buy	5	6
Diamond Steelers	4	7
Scared Hitless	2	9
Shenanigans	2	9
Misfits Red	0	11



CPL. M. C. NERL

Ray Wren, the pitcher for the Drama Killers, slings the ball to the plate Tuesday during their game against the Misfits White at the Combat Center's Felix Field. The Drama Killers won 20 to 9.

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HOLIDAY, from B1

2,000 toys were handed out that day.

The children were ecstatic, showing off their face paintings of holiday icons like Christmas trees, reindeer and snowmen.

Along with Christmas music played by a disc jockey, a group of singers who traveled two hours to sing at the event.

The Sun City Shadow Hills Community Singers sang many traditional Christmas songs and even put their own twists on classics like "The Twelve Days of Christmas," much to the enjoyment of the families.

"Our hearts are filled with love and honor for what you guys and girls do," said Karen Adamik, the group's director. "So we wanted to be here, no matter how small, to say thank you."

The singers were encouraged by the amount of holiday spirit at the event.

"It was wonderful," Adamik said. "People sitting around on blankets, cheering, kids dancing and singing. It was the warmest welcome we have gotten in years."



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Four-year-old Tray Taylor, gets a Christmas tree painted on his face during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Santa holds a child for a photo while the line for photos winds all the way to the parking lot during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Six-year-old Riley Webb receives a balloon sword during the annual Marine Corps Community Services Holiday Festival at Felix Field Saturday.

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