

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

March 18, 2011

Since 1957

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Marines train to counter IED threats



CPL. M. C. NERL

Private First Class Thomas Jenkins, a rifleman with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, sweeps for improvised explosive devices Monday at the Combat Center's Range 800. "The Darkside," as the unit is known, is preparing to deploy to Afghanistan later this year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Improved explosive devices are some of the perils Marines face while deployed to combat zones.

Facilities like the Combat Center's Range 800 train Marines in the essentials of

counter-IED warfare.

"The lifecycle of [Tactics, Techniques and Procedures] is very short," said Capt. Douglas Orr, the branch head for Explosive Obstacles and Hazards Branch, Marine Corps

See RANGE, A5



CPL. M. C. NERL

Lance Cpl. Zachary Kohl, a role player supporting Marines training at Combat Center Range 800, makes a call to a fake improvised explosive device. Role players and a multitude of resources are used to help support Marines train in counter-IED warfare.

Tax season deadline fast approaching

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For those who haven't filed taxes yet, this is a great time to beat the April rush as Tax Center staff have seen little to no wait times at their facility, said Capt. David Segraves, the Base Tax Center's officer in charge. The Tax Center preparers hold multiple IRS certifications and are capable of handling complex tax returns, including those for first-time homebuyers, itemizers and those with rental homes. Every return

is quality-reviewed and e-filed that same day.

The preparers have processed returns for all 50 states so far this season, and have chalked up more than 2,000 happy customers. This totals to saving the Combat Center community more than half a million dollars' worth of preparation fees.

Those concerned about owning money can prepare returns now and send in their checks with the paper returns, as long as the package is post marked by April 18. Walk-ins are welcome, and individual appointments and unit scheduling are available by calling 830-4829 (4TAX).



LANCER CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Volunteers work to build a house being donated to Dylan Gray, a Marine veteran amputee, after a wall raising ceremony March 11 in Wellington, Nev.

Locals build Marine home

LANCER CPL.
SARAH ANDERSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Many gathered in the small community of Wellington, Nev., on Feb. 11, to welcome a new neighbor and help build him and his family a home.

Sgt. Dylan Gray, a former Marine with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, is a double amputee, working now as a contractor in range maintenance aboard the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif.

On Feb. 16, 2007, Gray was driving the fourth of five humvees in a convoy when an anti-tank mine detonated under his vehicle while serving in Iraq.

"I woke up in a hospital in Germany a day and a half later. I didn't remember the accident," Gray said.

Gray endured six weeks of surgery at the National Navy Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., after losing both his legs in the incident

Homes For Our Troops is working in conjunction with the Builders Association of Northern Nevada to build the home and make it wheelchair accessible.

Homes For Our Troops is a nonprofit organization which focuses on wounded veterans. The organization raises money and builds new homes for the veterans and their families.

"We are strongly committed to helping those who have selflessly given to our country and have returned home with serious disabilities and injuries since September 11, 2001," cited in the Homes For Our Troops mission statement.

The community of Wellington held a ceremony to welcome the Marine and his family, while Marines from MWTC came out to support a friend, including the commanding officer Col. Phillip Chandler.

"I know exactly where Dylan was working in Iraq," Chandler said. "This has a special significance to me.



LANCER CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Dylan Gray, a Marine veteran amputee, sits with his son and daughter in Wellington, Nev., during a wall raising ceremony for his home March 11. Gray's home is being built by the Homes For Our Troops organization.

Sergeant Dylan Gray is the definition of the word [hero]. That same definition

See HOUSE, A8

HQBN Marines learn to think like insurgents

DIANE DURDEN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Generations of Marines have been taught the philosophy "know your enemy" from Sun Tzu's book, "The Art of War."

Marines from the Consolidated Material Support Center, Headquarters Battalion, were able to put that philosophy to work using the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer, a set of training modules that encourages Marines to think like insurgents.

The MCIT, whose target audience is privates through sergeants and first and second lieutenants, teaches warriors to recognize emplaced Improvised Explosive Devices under a variety of attack scenarios. The self-paced, interactive training includes lessons in identifying the basic components of an IED, the function of each component and the most common triggering systems.

The trainer consists of four modified 40-foot-long storage facilities located at the corner of Ninth and Griffin Streets.

Throughout the training, Marines are provided with narrative vignettes from notional insurgent bomb makers and U.S. soldiers.

Then they are introduced to the various types of IEDs and their components, with examples displayed in the open. Some components are hidden to help the Marines learn the most typical hiding places, and to think outside the box when searching.

The modules are designed to be as realistic as possible. The second module resembles an Afghan bomb maker's residence. The smell of sulfur and the textured walls add to the realism.

"The interactive style helps with the learning process," said Sgt. Christian Martinez, a warehouse non-commissioned officer with Headquarters Battalion. Martinez, who was deployed during 2005 and 2006, said even after his experiences, the training still provided new examples and information.

Each module focuses on a different

See HQBN, A7



DIANE DURDEN

Lance Cpl. Robert Garcia and Lance Cpl. Adonis Aviles, both supply administration clerks with Consolidated Material Support Center, Headquarters Battalion, work with Lance Pylant, lead trainer for the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer, to establish the scenario's IED parameters for the final module of the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer March 11. Garcia and Aviles are assigned as insurgents in an interactive exercise where an insurgent ambush team faces off against a mounted patrol.



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



Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment train with Advisor Training Group. Visit the MCAGCC Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter> to see more photos.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own Flickr photo and video streams. Find them at <http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>.



Hey Combat Center fans – Spread the word! The Combat Center has its own YouTube channel. Find it at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>.

Thank your TRICARE doctor for Doctors' Day

SHARI LOPATIN
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Just as you and your family stepped up and chose to serve our country, more than 180,000 doctors in the West Region have stepped up to become TRICARE providers – to serve you.

They made the choice, and now is your opportunity to thank them. With National Doctors' Day around the corner on March 30, you can "shout-out" on Facebook to a special TRICARE doctor who's made an impact in your life.

Just log onto the Facebook page of TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the company that administers TRICARE in 21 western states, and share what makes your doctor so special.

Find the Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/triwest>, and click on the "Love Your Doc" tab on the left.

Centerspeak

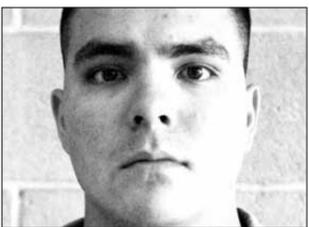
What is your favorite springtime activity?

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



NAVY SEAMAN BRODY GAVIN
ROBERT E. BUSH NAVAL HOSPITAL

"Football, because I love football and have been watching it since I was a kid."



LANCE CPL. RAYMOND GUTIERREZ
COMPANY I, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Swimming, because it gets you out of the heat, and you get to have a little fun."



GUNNERY SGT. LAWRENCE BOSTIC
COMPANY K, 3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Hiking, because I live in Hawaii, and there are a lot of good falls to hike to there."



CPL. TAYLOR SMITH
COMPANY L, 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINE REGIMENT

"My favorite spring activity is baseball because it takes me back to before I was in the Marines Corps and loving my life."

Hot Topics

POP CULTURE TRIVIA NIGHT

The Lifelong Learning Library is hosting a pop culture trivia competition from 6 to 7:30 p.m. March 24. Snacks and prizes will be included. For more information, call 830-6875.

RED CROSS DENTAL PROGRAM

The next session of the American Red Cross Dental Assistant Training Program at the Combat Center's dental facility will begin in April. The program includes about 700 hours of classroom and clinical experience. Classes are Mondays-Fridays, from 6:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants must be at least 18 years old, be a military-sponsored identification card holder and be current on immunizations. Applications are available at the American Red Cross office in the Village Center. Deadline for applications is March 28 by 4 p.m. to the American Red Cross Office. For questions, call 830-6685.

HEALTH FAIR

An active duty and base employee health fair will be held April 7-8 at the base theater. It will be presented in two-hour segments each day from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The fair will offer hearing conservation, men's health, women's health, tobacco cessation, sexual health/STD prevention, behavioral health, Internet addiction, self esteem and sexual assault prevention. For more information call Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole Gacayan at 830-2002, or Petty Officer 2nd Class George Herrera at 830-2621.

Marine Corps History

March 17, 1967

The first woman Marine to report to Vietnam for duty, Master Sgt. Barbara J. Dulinsky, began her 18-hour flight to Bien Hoa, 30 miles north of Saigon. Dulinsky and most of the women Marines who followed provided administrative support to Marines assigned as far north as the DMZ.



Eagle Eyes

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

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

830-3937

SemperToons SAFETY Presents: "DON'T BE A BOATING KNUCKLE HEAD"

SEMPERTOONS.COM

"Ahhh... Drinking and Boating HUH??"

While the anchors away don't DRINK AND PLAY - Your family and Corps depend on you -

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

SUDOKU #2117

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				3					1
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

SAN FRANCISCO TREAT

[Puzzle solutions on A6]

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69							70						71		

ACROSS

1. Burn to a crisp
5. Less candid
10. Three-card monte, e.g.
14. Dynamic start?
15. New Hampshire college town
16. Not a whit
17. Quickly sketched
19. Oodles
20. Studied carefully, as a "joint"
21. "Circular files"
23. "Dynasty" conniver
25. Carnival oddball
26. "The Postman Always Rings ___"
29. Prior to, in dialect
33. Historic times
37. Gabor of "Green Acres"
38. Big name in bleach
39. Serving of white lightning

DOWN

40. Auxiliary proposition
42. Look longingly at
43. Happen to
45. Forever and a day, seemingly
46. Tie-___ (designs, hippie-style)
47. Nominee list
48. Quitter's throw-in
50. Holiday preceders
52. Explorer Vasco ___
57. Lacking confidence
62. Uta of the screen
63. On the briny
64. Wok owner's task
66. Moore of "G.I. Joe"
67. Cosmetician
68. Threat ender, often
69. Burn the surface of
70. Needing caulking
71. Caboose

DOWN

1. Co-conspirator of Brutus
2. Of the blood
3. Respond to reveille
4. Top-of-the-line timepiece
5. Wild blue yonder
6. Jab, for most boxers
7. Wine bottle datum
8. Place behind bars
9. Della or Pee Wee
10. After-school munchies
11. Sweet drink
12. Author unknown: Abbr.
13. Polo Grounds team of 1962-63
18. Polish up, as copy
22. Make sound
24. "Phat!"
27. "___ been had!"
28. Bit part for a big name
30. Bacchanalian blast
31. Superman, to Reeve or Reeves

32. Alimony receivers
33. Recedes
34. Film holder
35. Italian auto, briefly
36. Place for a rural family's outing
38. Swatted with as witch
41. Use a Toro
44. Jeans maker Strauss
48. Feared fly
49. Cowardly Lion portrayer
51. Classic Ford flop
53. More joyous
54. Light on one's feet
55. Bright group
56. Rile up
57. Most Little League coaches
58. "Gotcha"
59. Disaster-relief org
60. Naldi of old films
61. Boer's migration
65. Palin parodist Tina

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III

Public Affairs Officer - Capt. Nick Mannweiler
Public Affairs Chief - Gunnery Sgt. Sergio Jimenez

Press Chief/Editor - Sgt. Heather Golden
Layout, Design - Leslie Shaw

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Name: Lance Cpl. Magdalena Baird
Hometown: Tychy, Poland
Unit: Installation Personnel Administration Center
Job title: Administrative clerk
Job duties: Typing orders
What do you like most about your job?: "Helping Marines and working with customers."
Significant achievements: "Meritorious mast, typing hundreds of Marines' orders."
Hobbies: Horseback riding, traveling and reading books.
Time of service: One and a half years.
Time at Combat Center: One year.

Combat Center Spotlight

Marine mentors complete ATG FINEX

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines are taught to lead from the front and set the example. Now Marines are learning how to teach these important leadership concepts to Afghanistan security forces personnel during pre-deployment training at the Combined Arms Military Operations in Urban Terrain complex at Range 220, here, March 13-16.

Marines and sailors from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, took part in the final evaluation exercise provided by the Combat Center's Advisor Training Group, whose mission is to train Marine Corps Transition Teams to advise, mentor, and train foreign military, police, and border units in operational techniques and procedures to combat terrorism and counter an insurgency, according to their mission statement.

"They are there to advise their [Afghan security forces] counterpart to do their job better, to train them in areas where they lack the skills," said Maj. Randall Horner, training officer with ATG. "You try to work yourself out of a job, because you don't want Marines to do logistics for Afghans. You want Afghans doing it for Afghans. We want to make it so if you take away the Marines from the Afghans' unit, then the Afghan unit is set up for success and can survive and operate as a unit."

The Marines learned how to teach their counterparts how to plan security and assess community needs such



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, and role players acting as local army and police forces listen to a mission brief during the final week of an Advisor Training Group course Monday.

as medical care, food or water, said Col. William Gillespie, the director of ATG. Throughout the week, the Marines tested their newly honed skills through a variety of scenarios they are likely to face during deployment.

On Monday, the Marines and role players acting as Afghan security forces mentally rehearsed their coordinated plan during a mission briefing, then stepped off for an important meeting with local village elders.

During the meeting with the village elders, an angry mob of role player villagers caused a small scene by yelling

their concerns in an attempt to be heard by the elders. The security forces worked to keep it from getting out of hand while the Marines stood back and watched. After observing their partners' actions, the Marines provided their observations and advice so future operations could go even smoother.

"They are not in charge of the police or the army, their job is to work themselves out of a job," Horner said. "Instead of taking over the security, the Marines are saying 'Hey, this is what you are supposed to be doing', or 'This is where the checkpoint should be.'"

Although transitioning from a "take-charge" to an advisor role is not easy, Marines played their parts well, and with the use of translators, they handled various scenarios effectively and offered good recommendations to their security forces counterparts, Horner said.

"Without exception, all the team leaders said that interacting with the role players was the most important part of their training," Gillespie said. It is very difficult to replicate and understand the complexity of talking with, acting and teaching people who speak a different language. It is through this process with the role players, which gives the Marines insight as to how to work with them more effectively, he said.

Veterans of previous deployments expressed the importance of the training and a constant worry one has working as an advisor to local nationals while deployed.

"[We're] obviously getting a lot out of it, and [it is] setting us up for success when we go over there," said Lance Cpl. Travis Surls, a rifleman with 1/3. "We did it all during



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Afghan National Army role players search civilian role players during an exercise at Combat Center Range 220 March 14.

deployment last year, so it is normal to me. It does make it iffy, because you don't know if the translator is telling you everything. You just have to go

with it, because you can't accuse him of something he might not have done."

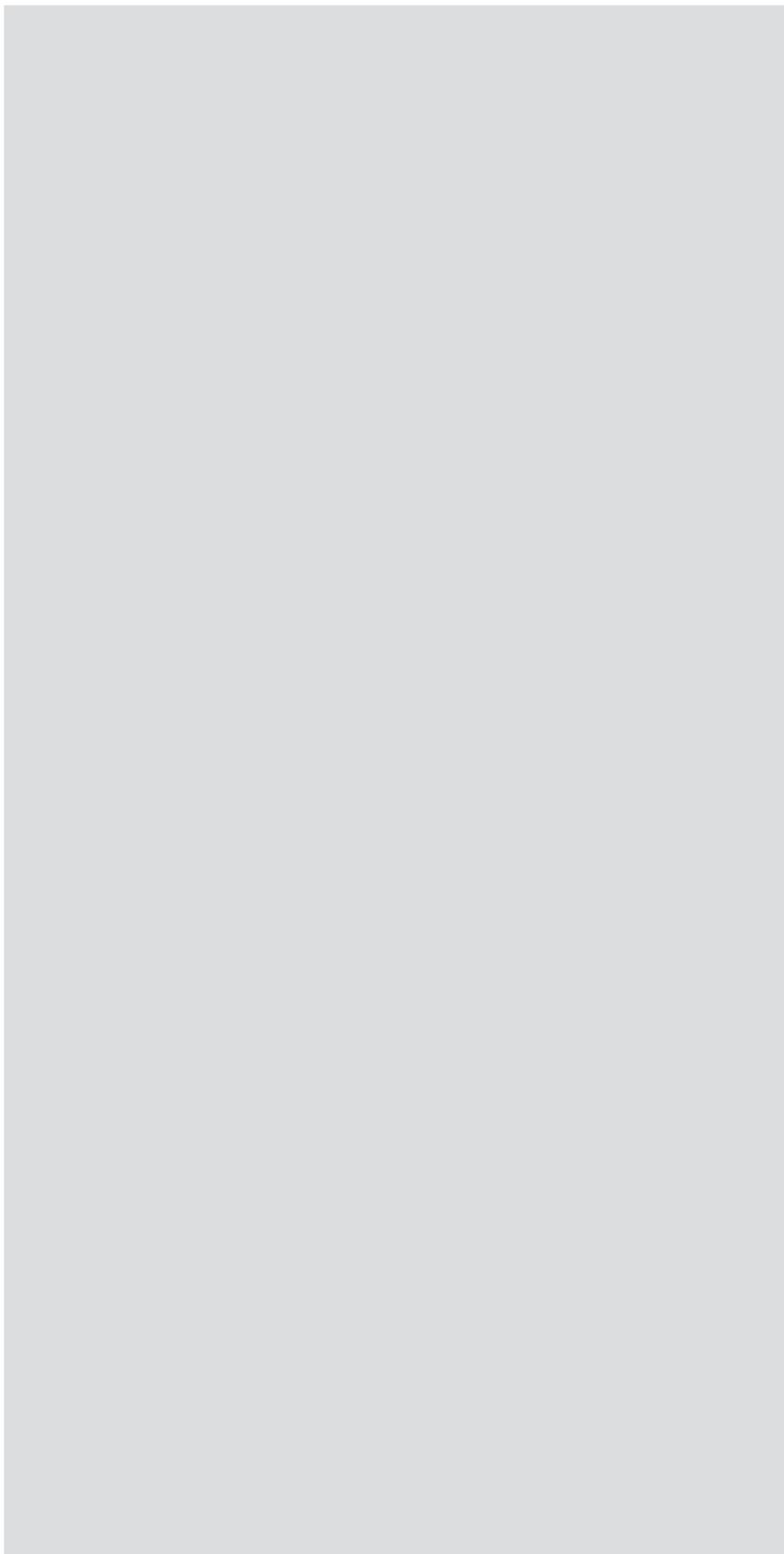
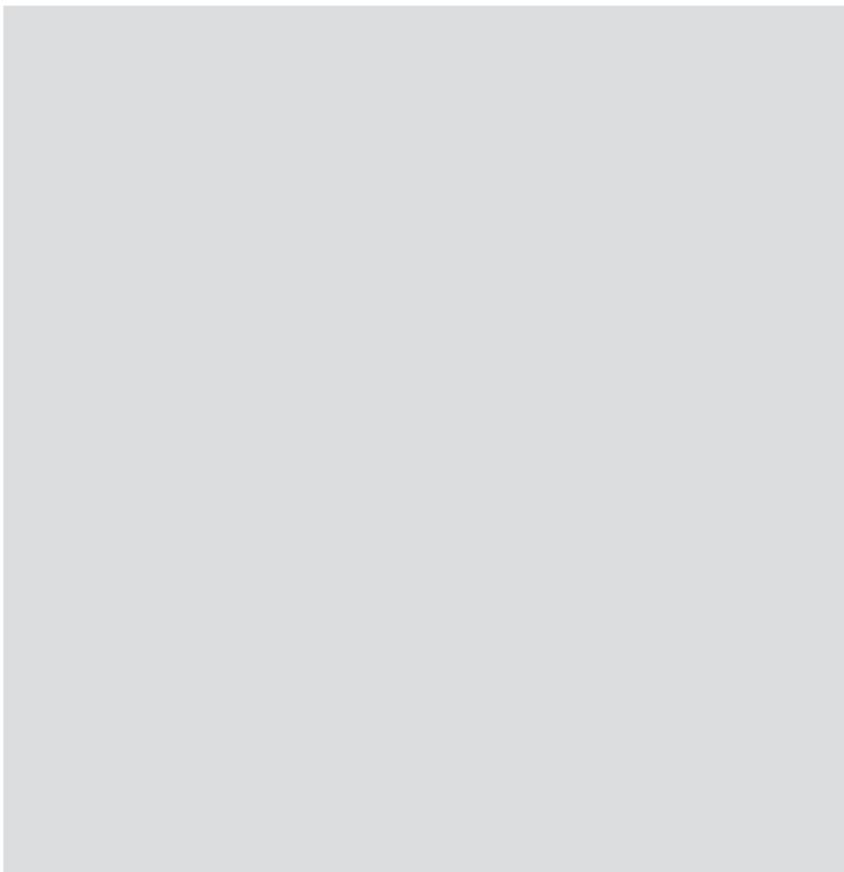
As the 1/3 Marines prepare to deploy to Afghanistan later

this year, ATG trainers and future mentor/trainers know the unit has received the best training possible to accomplish their mission.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines, with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, and role players of the local army and police force talk with village elders about their problems and concerns during the final week of an Advisor Training Group course Monday.



Delaram 1 opens, ANA increases autonomy

1ST LT. TIMOTHY IRISH

8TH MARINE REGIMENT

HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Forward Operating Base Delaram 1 officially opened as an exclusively Afghan National Army owned and operated base March 14.

The 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps headquarters commanding officer, General Abdul Wasea, cut the ribbon to open the base for operations.

Two Kandaks, or ANA battalions, will soon live at and operate from the base. The 6th Kandak, 2nd Bridgade, 215th Corps, graduates next week from training in Kabul and will take up residence. 1st Kandak will also operate from the base.

During the ceremony Wasea was confident 2011 would bring increased combat effectiveness for his forces.

“We had 28,000 combat activities with U.S. Marines last year,” Wasea said. “With coalition forces, we will expand our abilities.”

Completing FOB Delaram 1 meets the unit’s needs in expanding their abilities in both training and combat operations. It also provides a strategic location. The town of Delaram is in the middle of four major roads and highways, including



1ST LT. TIMOTHY IRISH

The Delaram Acting District Governor Noorallah cuts the ribbon on a new Afghan National Army base, March 14. Delaram 1 is the new home for units from the 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps, Afghan National Army. The base can house more than 1,000 troops and contains a barracks, dining facility, communication facility and other buildings. Surrounding the acting district governor are officers from brigade and corps headquarters, the district chief of police and Col. Eric Smith, commander of Regimental Combat Team 8.

Highway 1, which circles all of Afghanistan. Its location will allow the 2nd Brigade and its Kandaks to mobilize quickly for operations in every cardinal direction.

The new base contains 16 buildings that will allow the ANA to be more self-sufficient from coalition forces and closer to the local populace. After the ceremony, Col. Eric M. Smith, commanding officer of Regimental Combat Team 8, toured the base with ANA counterparts from the brigade and corps headquarters and Col. Anthony

Funkhouser, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commander, whose unit built the base.

“These buildings were built by Afghans for Afghans,” commented Funkhouser while shaking hands with Wasea on the tour.

Lt. Col. Daniel Wagner, the officer-in-charge for the detachment from 4th Civil Affairs Group, observed that 50 percent of the workforce that constructed the base was comprised of Afghan citizens. He saw more than a collection of

military buildings in the work that was done. To him, the chance to train Afghans in a vocation, employ them and unite them with their military is an opportunity to be exploited.

With a communications facility, barracks, a dining facility and maintenance bays, the base can hold more than 1,000 troops. The ceremony marked the completion of phase one construction.

At 11:17 a.m., the flag of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was raised for the first time.

SJA CORNER

Base Legal has many faces

CAPT. DAVID SEGRAVES

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICER

Many Marines faced with various issues have been told “go to legal.” Following this advice Marines, find their way to the Legal Assistance Office, which often is not the right location.

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate provides many services to the Marines and Commands on base. Proper direction of requests can help ensure the quickest responses to requests.

Military Justice provides commands and individuals a place to address violations of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. Anyone subject to the UCMJ with knowledge of a crime may prefer charges against the alleged offender. However, the best course of action is to report crimes to the Provost Marshal’s Office. Military Justice also can provide commands and small unit leaders with advice on pursuing suspected violations of the UCMJ, including advice on searches and seizures. Finally, they can advise officers acting as Summary Courts Martial Officers or as Investigating Officers for command investigations. Military Justice can be contacted at 830-6782.

Defense provides client services to service members facing administrative or judicial actions. Defense provides non-judicial punishment and other “walk-in” counselings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 p.m. They are also available for all suspects of crimes who are read their Article 31(b) rights. Finally, defense provides assistance to those receiving administrative action, such as administrative separation, negative service record book entries or matters that may need to go before the Board for Correction of Naval Records. Defense can be contacted at 830-5271.

Legal Assistance provides client services for most other individual matters. Common topics include family law (such as divorce, dependent support and child support), landlord-tenant law, consumer law (such as debt collectors, lemon law and contracts) and deployment-related matters (such as powers of attorney, wills and service member Civil Relief Act claims). The Legal Assistance Office can be reached at 830-6111.

Legal Administration provides assistance on Command Investigations. They provide an invaluable resource for commands and Investigating Officers. As subject matter experts on administrative separations, they advise commands on AdSeps, facilitating the conducting of AdSeps, including providing the recorder, or prosecutor. As subject matter experts in command investigations and administrative separations, they can properly advise investigating officers on conducting investigations and commands on endorsements for those same investigations. Legal Administration can be contacted at 830-5249.

Installation Law and Review is in the same department as Legal Administration, but provides different functions. Installation law provides ethics opinions on conduct such as proper involvement with charitable organizations. Review ensures proper completion and filing of court rulings and administrative actions including the Base Magistrate hearings, Officer Traffic Tickets and Base Debarment actions. Installation and Review can be contacted at 830-5253.

While Marines and Command representatives will eventually find the right office if they show up at the Legal Assistance Office, proper routing of requests can help the OSJA respond more efficiently to the needs of service members and their commands.

Combat Center hosts ServMart grand opening

COMPILED BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The grand opening of the new USMC ServMart, building 1102, is scheduled for Thursday.

Following the ceremony will be the inaugural Customer Appreciation Day. Refreshments will be served, and the new GEM solar-powered electric utility vehicle will be on display.

More than 30 vendors will be displaying their products and are available for questions. This event is for all active

duty and federal employees.

The new ServMart will offer more than 300,000 office products, cleaning supplies, tools, hardware products and equipment solutions. Items not stocked in the issue point are normally available within two working days.

Customer service personnel are on-hand daily to solve each supply support problem and adjust the inventory and catalog to meet the changing demands of each office and shop. Customers can also access USMC ServMart Online for direct delivery to any location.

The ServMart enterprise provides patrons a greater selection, competitive costs, easy compliance with regulations and improved service to meet their mission requirements. Policy is currently published in MARADMIN 602/09, and will be published in MCO 4400.176.

The staff encourages ServMart customers to come help them celebrate the transformation by attending the ceremony, walking through the facility, enjoying the vendor displays and refreshments, asking questions and making recommendations for improvement.

RANGE, from A1

Engineer Center, located at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. "We don't teach them specific TTPs, because they're always changing, and that would provide a false sense of security and maybe even set Marines up for failure."

"Here, we teach them the fundamentals," said the Ridgefield, Conn., native. "We teach them the basics, and look into what region the unit is slated to deploy to and examine what is specifically happening there."

This week, the personnel of the range, from the Marine Corps Engineering Center, in conjunction with support from the installation's Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, as well as 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, trained approximately 700 Marines to counter the IED threat, said Mike Fay, the site lead instructor at the range, who is from San

Francisco.

Fay said Marines training at the range this past week were not only given the expected, high level of training, but were also exposed to some of the newest technology for the first time.

The Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization came here to show Marines one of the Corps' newest pieces of gear, the Counter Bomber, a device equipped to detect person-borne explosives on targets up to 100 yards away and farther, Fay added.

Lance Cpl. James Farrar, an assaultman with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, said knowledge is power when dealing with an intelligent enemy.

"You can tell the training here is constantly kept up-to-date, and meant to stay proactive," said the Boston native.



CPL. M. C. NERL

Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, sweep for improvised explosive devices in a courtyard at Combat Center Range 800, Monday. The warriors from the "Cutting Edge," as the unit is known, were some of the nearly 700 Marines trained this week at the complex.



CPL. M. C. NERL

Lance Cpl. Zachary Kohl, a role player supporting Marines training at Combat Center Range 800, crouches down behind a van Tuesday at the range, waiting to trigger a fake improvised explosive device. Role players and a multitude of other tools are used to help support Marines training in counter-IED warfare at the range.



CPL. M. C. NERL

Marines from Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, patrol through Combat Center Range 800 looking for improvised explosive devices, Monday. Marines from the "Darkside" were some of the nearly 700 Marines trained this week.

Senior enlisted get fired up for camaraderie

Some of the installation's senior enlisted leadership left the daily grind behind them and gathered for an afternoon of pistol firing, barbecuing and camaraderie March 4. "It's a good time out of the office with peers we don't see on a daily basis," said 1st Sgt. Hector Ortiz, the first sergeant for Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment. Ortiz' thoughts were echoed by another 3/11 Marine, 1st Sgt. Celestino Casias, the first sergeant for Battery L, 3/11. "We're supposed to lead from the front, and that's what we're doing," Casias said. "If we're out here doing things like this, then maybe our Marines will [get together and] do something like this, too." (PHOTOS BY SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN)



Several members of the Combat Center's senior enlisted leadership paste up their shot groups after firing a round at the installation's pistol range March 4.



First Sgt. Brian O'Toole, the first sergeant for Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, checks out the shot group on his target at the Combat Center's pistol range March 4.



First Sgt. Nelson Hidalgo, the first sergeant for Company B, Headquarters Battalion, sights in alongside fellow senior enlisted Marines at the Combat Center's pistol range March 4.



Corporal Patrick Kranzler, a coach for the Marksmanship Training Unit, mans the grill while senior enlisted Marines enjoy an afternoon of pistol firing and camaraderie at the Combat Center's pistol range March 4.

USMC green to LAPD blue

The Los Angeles Police Department is looking for more candidates to join their force, and is hiring active, reserve and retired military members.

Take the LAPD written test every third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. at the Combat Center's Christ Chapel,

building 1541.

The more honorably-served years you have in the Armed Services, the higher your starting pay will be.

For more information, check out <http://www.joinlapd.com> or call 866-444-LAPD (5273).

Off-limits establishments

The Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board indentified the following establishment as adversely affecting the health, safety, welfare and morals of service members and placed it off-limits to all Armed Forces personnel and their family members until further notice:

- The Village Pub, 266 S. Palm Canyon Drive, in Palms Springs.

The off-limits designation constitutes a lawful general order, and violation by U.S. military personnel is punishable under Article 92 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

C	H	A	R	S	L	Y	E	R	S	C	A	M
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SUDOKU

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

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

HQBN, from A1

element of an IED, including identifying components, searching residences for hidden components and placement of IEDs by the insurgent. The common thread linking all modules is the necessity to think like an insurgent.

At the completion of each module, Marines are quizzed on their knowledge of the information presented, and their recognition and reaction skills.

Using the information presented in earlier modules, Marines participate in a "final exam" in the fourth and final module.

Marines are assigned various roles within an insurgent ambush team. The team sets up the scenario, chooses which type of IED to use, and the placement and detonation points.

At the opposite end of the trainer, a mounted patrol, also played by Marines, runs through the scenario set up by the "insurgent" team, honing their convoy security skills.

Each team is awarded and deducted points for execution of the scenario. A debrief is provided by MCIT technicians.

"It provides effective training in a short period of time, allowing leaders to schedule additional training in between larger training evolutions," said Jimmy Cortez, MCIT trainer, who is eager for Marines to conduct the training. "We're here to train Marines."

The MCIT is in the process of being added to the Combat Center range schedule. Until then, units wanting to conduct training can schedule time directly with MCIT personnel. To schedule training, contact Cortez at 623-210-2294.



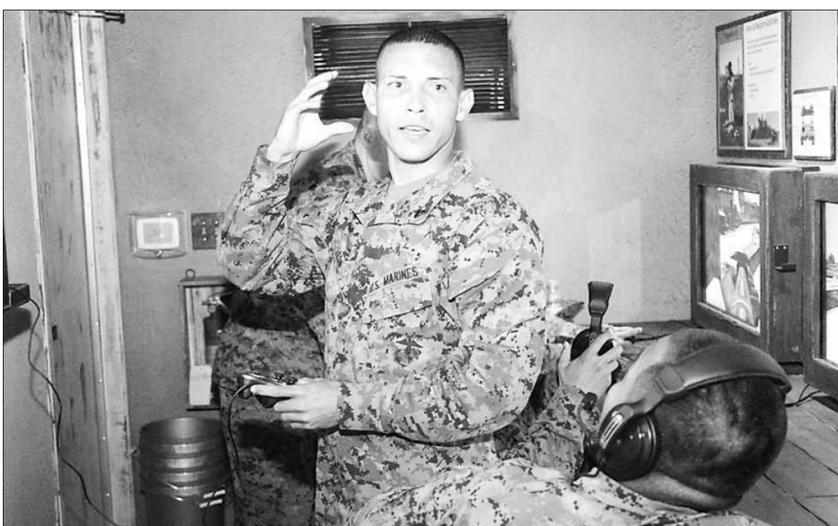
DIANE DURDEN

Marines with Consolidated Material Support Center, Headquarters Battalion, watch a video about improvised explosive device components and how they are hidden within an insurgent's residence during training conducted in the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer March 11.



DIANE DURDEN

One of the training modules within the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer resembles the inside of an Afghan bomb maker's residence. Interactive displays include a workbench, a bomb "cooking" station and component hiding places.



DIANE DURDEN

Corporal David LeonCartagena, a supply warehouseman with Consolidated Material Support Center, Headquarters Battalion, provides instructions to his team in the minutes before entering the final module of the Mobile Counter-IED Interactive Trainer during training March 11. LeonCartagena was assigned as the lead insurgent in an interactive exercise, where an insurgent ambush team faces off against a mounted patrol.

**LOOKING
for local
entertainment?**

See page B2
for our
LIBERTY CALL
section

ADVERTISEMENT

Naval Hospital offers diabetes class

The Combat Center's Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital will be offering a Diabetes Self Management Education Program class to their beneficiaries.

The class will be held April 13, in classroom 4 at the hospital. Laboratory draws for Hemoglobin A1C and Fasting Lipids will begin at 7:30 a.m., with

instruction starting at 8 a.m.

Topics covered will include:

- Introduction to Diabetes
- Prevention of Chronic Complications
- Medications
- Hypo/Hyperglycemia and Sick Day Management

- The use of the Glucometer and Pattern Management

Please bring your Glucometer. With respect to the instructors and those attending this program, attendance of children is not encouraged.

For more information please call Navy Lt. Arnold Fajayan at 830-2175.

Combat Center Trader Ads

AUTOMOTIVE

CLASSIC 1957 CHEVY PICK-UP. 350 engine, 3 speed automatic, \$6,900 OBO. 361-3509.

C5 CORVETTE FRONT BRA. \$50. 413-4015.

2007 SUZUKI BOULEVARD. Black and chrome, 1600 CC, \$3,000 in extras included. Asking price \$13,500. 401-3739.

2002 CR250. FMF pipe and silencer, paddle tire, eline starter, runs very strong. \$2,600 OBO. 910-3979.

2000 NISSAN XTERRA. 4x4, auto, PDL, PW, roof rack, tow pkg., newer timing belt, 31" BFG's, 132K miles, \$5,000. Call 957-5630.

2008 TOYOTA YARIS. \$10,000 OBO. Approx- imately 46K miles. Good condition. Consistent maintenance. Call 622-4562.

MISC.

OAK BOOKCASE BUNK BED WITH STORAGE UNIT \$100. 369-4239.

REDWOOD BURL COFFEE TABLE. Beautiful. \$325/offer. 413-4015.

BICYCLE, BABY ITEMS: Schwinn Stingray bicycle, solid wood baby crib, baby walker, stroller, wooden horse and more. All in excellent condition. Call 217-3310.

DIAMONDBACK MOUNTAIN BIKE. Like new. \$100. 413-4015.

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

Trader Ad forms are available at the Public Affairs Office and may be filled out during normal working hours at Bldg. 1417. Ads may also be submitted through

e-mail, but will only be accepted from those with an @usmc.mil address. If you are active duty, retired military or a family member and do not have an @usmc.mil address you can go to the PAO page of the base Web site at: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/dirs/pao/> and

complete a request to publish an ad.

The limitations for ads are: 15-word limit, limit of two ads per household and the Trader may be used only for noncommercial classified ads containing items of personal property offered by and for individuals authorized to use this service. Such

ads must represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

Ads for housing rentals will not be considered for the Combat Center Trader.

To have a "House For Sale" ad run in the Observation Post, applicants must provide

Permanent Change of Station orders and have the ad approved by Base Housing. This ensures the Combat Center Trader is not used for commercial real estate endeavors.

Ads are run on a first-come, first-serve, space available basis. If you have questions please call 830-6213.



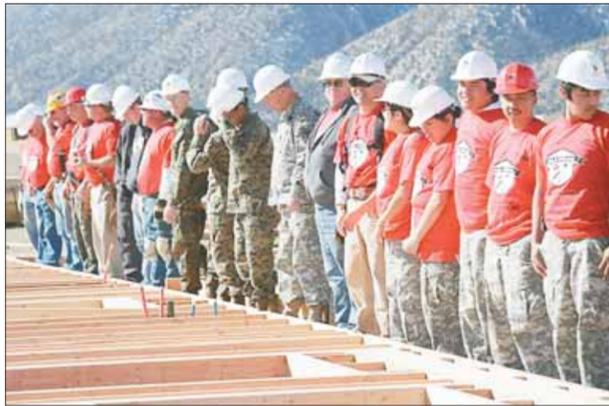
LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Dylan Gray hammers the first nail in the recently raised wall of his soon-to-be home during a wall raising ceremony in Wellington, Nev., March 11.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Procter R. Hug High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets donate the \$3,200 they raised for the construction of Dylan Gray's house during a wall raising ceremony in Wellington, Nev., March 11.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Volunteers line up along a pre-constructed wall of the house and prepare to raise it during a wall raising ceremony in Wellington, Nev., March 11.

HOUSE, from A1

applies to everyone standing here today. Those noble qualities take time, money and effort to come out here to do something for this hero, that qualifies [them] as heroes as well."

The Procter R. Hug High School Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets also came to the event, bringing with them the \$3,200 they raised for the project at a silent auction and talent show fundraiser.

The community of Marines and civilians all came together to get the project started.

"I feel like it's the right thing to do," said Lance Cpl.

Dante Anderson, a volunteer worker for the event. "The fact that he's a Marine got me out here. I'd do anything for my brothers and sisters."

The four bedroom, two bathroom house has wider halls and doorways for easy wheelchair accessible a roll-in shower.

"It's a surreal moment for us right now," Gray said. "It's pretty amazing. There are people here that don't even know me, and they are spending their time here to build us a house."

The project is slated to be completed in two months.

For more information about Homes For Our Troops, visit <http://www.homesforourtroops.org>



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Residents of Wellington, Nev., made a cake to welcome Dylan Gray and his family to the community and to celebrate the building of his home during a wall raising ceremony March 11.



Lt. Dan performance highlights DSTRESS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Combat Center's Sunset Cinema was filled with Marines, sailors and friends, Saturday pumped up to hear a performance by Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.

Gary Sinise, known for his role as the salty amputee veteran shrimper, Lt. Dan, in the movie "Forrest Gump," and his role in the weekly show "CSI: Miami," has been coming to the Combat Center with his band for seven years, working closely with the USO.

"I'm part of a team, and we do what we can," Sinise said. "I want to show them we don't forget what they do for us."

The night also focused on the DSTRESS program, encouraging Marines to reach out and talk to someone about personal battles.

"We are doing everything we can to keep our defenders strong," Sinise said. "I know how important it is to keep



Gary Sinise entertains the crowd after a song during his concert featuring the Lt. Dan Band Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.

See LT. DAN, B4



Gary Sinise [right], and a member of the Lt. Dan Band rock out on their guitars Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.



Two vocalists with the Lt. Dan Band belt it out during a concert Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.



Gary Sinise, a member of the Lt. Dan Band makes his way into the crowd as he plays a song during a concert Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.

Beatdowns crowned champions of dodgeball league

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combat Center athletes gathered for the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League Finals at the East Gym and Fitness Center March 10.

With names like "Midnight Meat Train" and "Sukka Dukkas," the dodgeball league has brought out the child in every participant this season.

"We're just out here have fun," said Robert Cayton, a player for The Beatdowns

and league Co-MVP. "It's great to be in the finals."

The six teams to make it to the finals squared off during a double elimination tournament for the championship title. The teams dodged, ducked, dived, dipped, and dodged their way through the two month regular season to finally meet for the championship.

In keeping with the spirit of the game all the teams were there to have fun. They were also there with their eyes on the gold but the teams were there to win as well.

"It's something that we have a great time doing, but we also want to win the tournament," said Elijah Gonzales, coach and player for Shark'n.

Playing dodgeball brought back memories of fonder times for players like Andrew Avitt, a star player for the Thunder Canons, who took third place overall. "Yeah, dodgeball is one of those things that was just really fun to do back in elementary school," he said.

The tournament featured fierce competition from all

the teams involved. A majority of the matches went to their maximum number of games before a winner was determined. Many of those games were decided in sudden death.

Hours of competitive dodgeballing found two teams, Shark'n and The Beatdowns emerged in the finals.

"We're glad we made it this far," Gonzales said upon making it to the finals. "We have to beat them twice if we want to win."

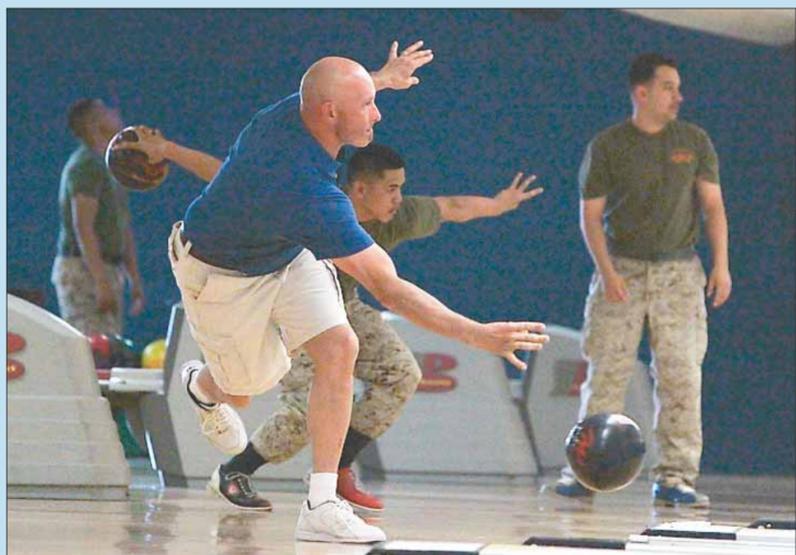
The Beatdowns made their way through the tournament undefeated, and that gave them the advantage heading into the finals. In order to emerge as victors,



Members of the Beatdowns charge the line at the start of a dodgeball game during the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League Championships at the East Gym and Fitness Center March 10.

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Intramural bowling strikes the Combat Center



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

More than 10 teams showed to Sandy Hill Lanes Bowling Center to kick off the start of the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League. Randy Duff, a sports specialist with the Sports Department, said it looks to be another great year with the returning talent and new players aboard the Combat Center. The games will be held every Wednesday at the Bowling Center from 3 to 5:30 p.m. For more information on the league, contact the Sports Department at 830-4092.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Andrew S. Avitt, a player for team Thunder Canons, hurls the ball at the opposing team during the Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League Championships at the East Gym and Fitness Center March 10. Thunder Canons placed third overall for the season.

See MATCHES, B3



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

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social food, 5 to 7 p.m. Monday: Chicken nuggets and nachos Wednesdays: Italian sausage with peppers & onions, green salad, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday: Social food, 5 to 7 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. Saturday: Texas Hold 'em, 2 p.m. Mondays: Steak night and full dinner menu Monday-Friday: All-Hands lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays: Full dinner menu, 4:30 to 9 p.m., Karaoke, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

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:

The Far West

Description: The country/folk band performs When: 9 p.m., Friday, March 18

The Psychedelic Cowboys

Description: The country psychedelic band performs When: 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 19 Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

The Ghostlight Trio

Description: The honky tonk roadhouse trio performs When: 9 p.m., Friday, March 18

Train Wreck

Description: The popular rock band performs When: 9 p.m., Saturday, March 19 Where: Willie Boys Saloon and Dance Hall, 50048 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley, 363-3343. or visit <http://www.willieboys.com>

Theatre 29 presents "Pinocchio"

Description: Adapted from the novel by Carlo Collodi When: 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday through April 9. Where: Theatre 29, 73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>

Live Music with Phil Rosenberg

Description: Adapted When: 6 to 9 p.m., Friday March 18 Where: The 29 Palms Inn 73950 Inn Avenue, Twentynine Palms For more information call 367-3505.

Lower Desert

Melissa Etheridge

Description: The pop/country legend performs When: 8 p.m., Saturday, March 18 Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino 84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Kenny Rogers

Description: The country legend performs his hits When: 9 p.m., Saturday, March 26 Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort 46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

Foreigner

Description: The famous rock band performs When: 9 p.m. Friday, April 15 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Stevie Nicks

Description: The famous rock star performs When: 8 p.m., Friday, May 13 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, March 18

6 p.m. – Country Strong, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Rite, Rated PG-13
Midnight – The Mechanic, Rated R

Saturday, March 19

11 a.m. – Free Matinee, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Rated PG-13
2 p.m. – The Roommate, Rated PG-13
6 p.m. – Just Go With It, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Sanctum, Rated R
Midnight – No String Attached, Rated R

Sunday, March 20

2 p.m. – Justin Bieber: Never Say Never, Rated G
6 p.m. – Just Go With It, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Eagle, Rated PG-13

Monday, March 21

7 p.m. – The Mechanic, Rated R

Tuesday, March 22

7 p.m. – Country Strong, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, March 23

7 p.m. – No Strings Attached, Rated R

Thursday, March 24

7 p.m. – The Rite, Rated PG-13

Comic misadventure, self-discovery

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Cedar Rapids"

Rated R

Starring Ed Helms, John C. Reilly and Anne Heche

Ed Helms, who steals plenty of scenes as desk jockey Andy Bernard on TV's "The Office," continues his breakout from the small screen in "Cedar Rapids," a comedic tale about a naive insurance agent at a sales convention.

To call his character, Tim Lippe, "dorky" is an understatement. Tim's never been on an airplane and thinks the modestly-sized Iowa burg from which the movie gets its title, is a bustling metropolis akin to the Big Apple.

Representing the small local Midwestern agency for which he's worked all his adult life, Lippe is sent to Cedar Rapids with clear instructions: bring back the annual award for exemplary insurance service to continue his company's winning streak.

The misadventure begins even before he meets his two roommates, mild-mannered workaholic Ron, played by Isiah Whitlock Jr., and potty-mouthed party animal Dean, played by John C. Reilly. And everyone except Tim seems to know Joan, portrayed by Anne Heche, a flirty married mother of two who's obviously let down her hair at the convention before.

"What happens in Cedar Rapids stays in Cedar Rapids," she tells him.

The R rating is justified. This is not a movie for chil-



COURTESY PHOTO

Everyone except Tim seems to know Joan, portrayed by Anne Heche, a flirty married mother of two who's obviously let down her hair at the convention before.

dren. Dean constantly spews colorful vulgarities and hilariously obscene one-liners, and the characters carouse, couple and cavort in irresponsible and sometimes illegal ways. But there's a restraint to the raunch that keeps it below the threshold of movies like last year's "The Hangover" and "Hot Tub Time Machine," both hit comedies about away-from-home shenanigans gone bawdily awry.

Please don't stay away from "Cedar Rapids" because you think it's another guys-on-the-prowl yukfest. It's smarter, sweeter and more sentimental than that.

The entire plot revolves around Lippe's inexperience in virtually all worldly things, and the comedic clash that occurs when he's confronted with people and situations that push him far out of his wholesome, sheltered comfort zone. But the movie

never makes fun of Tim. Quite the contrary, he provides the emotional grounding that anchors everything, ultimately, to a sense of honor, honesty and integrity.

This wide-eyed innocent learns some valuable lessons about how the world really turns. And we learn enough about him, and the other characters, to see them as real people, with real lives, real insecurities and real needs, rather than simply comedic clichés.

And the plot, while providing a steady stream of grown-up laughs, moves along without a single gun-

shot, car chase or explosion. It's easy to see why the movie was one of the favorites at last year's Sundance Film Festival, which typically avoids the noisy bombast and bustle of the mainstream for quieter, quirkier fare.

So take a trip to "Cedar Rapids," even if you have to seek out its limited-release run beyond your closest multiplex – outside your own "comfort zone." Just be sure to stay for the credits. The "after" scenes of Tim, Ron, Dean and Joan will send you home with one last round of chuckles, and a lingering smile.



COURTESY PHOTO

To call Ed Helm's character, Tim Lippe, "dorky" is an understatement. Tim's never been on an airplane and thinks the modestly-sized Cedar Rapids is a metropolis.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: The Paintball Park at Twentynine Palms



Welcome to the second installment of "Desert Detours," a series that will follow correspondent Cpl. M.C. Nerl around on his explorations of the high desert, the basin and the valley. The "out-of-five" palm tree rating scale offers at a glance how worthwhile the writer considers a place to be. Locales will be judged on their levels of accessibility, atmosphere, fun and cost. Keep an eye out every week for new shenanigans and hot tips on cool things to do.

CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

What's that? You said there's nothing to do on base?

Couldn't be farther from the truth. Paintball appeals to just about every Marine, whether you're a comm student fresh from boot camp, wearing an Ed Hardy T-shirt with your dog tags, and sporting a "high and tight," or a salt dog from 7th Marines, still trying to scrub the last bit of grime off your most recent deployment to the "sand box."

But seriously, with a friendly staff, good prices and a constant crowd of people excited to play, there is no shortage of fun at The Paintball Park at Twentynine Palms.

They are available for open play Fridays to Sundays. Getting a reservation for weekdays is as easy as a phone call to the park staff.

At first glance, you wouldn't think the park is anything serious. It may even appear to the untrained eye to be one of the installation's training ranges.

Once on the grounds of

the park, however, it is a whole different deal.

The paint-riddled buildings present you with something that just reeks of a good time. You don't have to worry about breaking anything, and any urge to fire off a few rounds for no reason won't be looked down on.

Best part – It's all outdoors, making it easy to slip around, get behind enemy lines and cause some havoc. On that note, gents, wear a cup, because those little shacks can lead to a shot in the cookies very quickly.

Playing paintball here carries with it a few fees, but they're miniscule compared to similar establishments in the area and not really even worth mentioning, let alone worth slowing down a good time for.

For those serious about the sport, bringing your own paintball gun is of course possible. Rental weapons are also available for a fee.

For anyone showing up self-equipped, the fee ranges from \$10 for a half day to \$15 for an entire day. The rental package that includes a paint-

ball gun, costs \$30 for a half day, and \$40 for a full day. There are small fees for air and paintballs.

There is no alcohol, probably due to the fact that every safe-minded person ever tends to frown upon mixing alcohol and weapons, even non-lethal ones. The port-o-johns are clean on the inside (don't let all the busted paintballs on the door fool you), and heck, bring the kids. They need to learn what pain is anyway.

Overall, the park earned four and a half out of five palm trees.

The park itself is located behind the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital barracks, and Outdoor Adventures. They are accessible online at <http://www.thepaintball-park.com>, or by phone at 866-985-4932.

Editor's Note: "Desert Dwelling" is a weekly series exploring opportunities for Marines and sailors from a firsthand perspective. All material included therein is the opinion of the writer and does not imply an endorsement by the U.S. Marine Corps or the Department of Defense.



CPL. M. C. NERL

The Combat Center's paintball park attracts Marines, such as these three motivators. Fridays to Sundays for open play. However the park can be reserved for private groups during the week and is available for open play Fridays to Sundays.



CPL. M. C. NERL

Andrew Beltramo, a paintball enthusiast aboard the Combat Center, takes cover behind a paint-riddled cart at the installation's paintball park Saturday. The park has paintball guns available for rent for less than \$50.



CPL. M. C. NERL

James Burkett, a patron of the Combat Center's paintball park, takes aim at an opponent Saturday while he and other Marines enjoyed some time at the park, which is located behind Outdoor Adventures on base.

Athletes of the Week

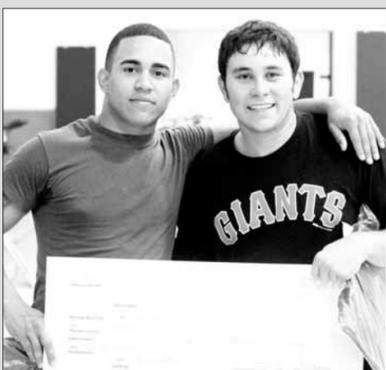
Names: Robert Cayton and Chris Gumataotao

Units: Cayton is with Company C, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School. Gumataotao is with Marine Corps Community Services.

Recognition: Commanding General's Intramural Dodgeball League finals Co-Most Valuable Players for the Beatdowns.

Favorite aspect of the sport: It's just really fun, the pair said.

Advice for aspiring players: Dodge, duck, dip dive and dodge. That all there is to it, they said.



MATCHES, from B1

Shark'n would have to defeat the Beatdowns in two matches. The Beatdowns needed that advantage. The Beatdowns lost their first match three games to one.

The championship and a year's worth of bragging rights came down to the final. The two teams battled it out until both teams were tied at two games each. Both teams fought hard during the fifth and final game, but neither team held the advantage as the clock ran out. The teams went to sudden death.

In overtime, each team is represented with two players, and the first team to eliminate an opponent wins. The Beatdowns took their time to attack and succeeded in knocking out a Shark'n player, laying claim to the tile of dodgeball

kings for the season.

"It's great to win," said Chris Gumataotao, Beatdowns player and one

of the two tournament Most Valuable Players. "We're out here to have fun, and our team had a great time."

Volleyball season spikes players' interests, spirits



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Steven Santana, a player with the Misfits, gives the ball an extra bump to reach over the net during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League pre-season game at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday.

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Volleyball players showed up to the West Gym and Fitness Center in waves as they took to the court for the pre-season games of the Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League Tuesday.

This year, the Sports Department was pleased to see a record number of teams signed up for the league.

"This year we have 9 teams, the most teams our program has had in the past 10 years," said Randy Husted, a sports specialist with the MCCS Sports Department.

The players warmed up for their games, excitedly anticipating the sound of the starting whistle.

"I love volleyball, because I have played it for many years, and it is just my passion," said Kristen Walters, a player with the Misfits.

Other teams were gathered not only for their love of the game, but of the benefits of playing a team sport.

"[I play] just to get my guys together for camaraderie and team unity," said Paul Ena, a player for Tanks. "I just wanted to motivate

them to something besides go home by themselves, and to participate in the organized sports."

The pre-season games gave team coaches an opportunity to pay close attention to the strengths and weaknesses of their teams.

"[I am looking at] everything, this is the first time playing organ-

ized volleyball in the tournament," Ena said. "I told them to just have fun and we'll see how we feel about the first game, and then we will get practices in and improve from there."

The MCCS Sports Department staff said watching the teams play match after heated

match gave them high hopes for this year's league.

"The games were very competitive," Husted said. "There is no cut-and-dry favorite of winning this year title. Every team will be battling all season long to capture the title of Intramural Volleyball Champions."



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Starr Baxter, a player with Misfits, bumps the ball back over the net during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball pre-season game at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday.

LT. DAN, from B1

them strong: I have Vietnam [veterans] in my family."

To speak to the Marines about the program and encourage them to take advantage of it, Jay Vargas, a Medal of Honor recipient and Vietnam veteran, spoke to the crowd before the concert.

"It took me a long time to open up," Vargas said. "This program is great, and I encourage you to call the number."

The band played an assortment of familiar songs from a variety of genres, making it easy for the audience to dance and sing along with their favorite tunes.

The band also involved the audience, randomly pulling

people on-stage to sing along with the group.

The night even included a theater-wide conga line.

Many of the volunteers for the event were excited about Sinise's appearance, and said they just "had to get in on it."

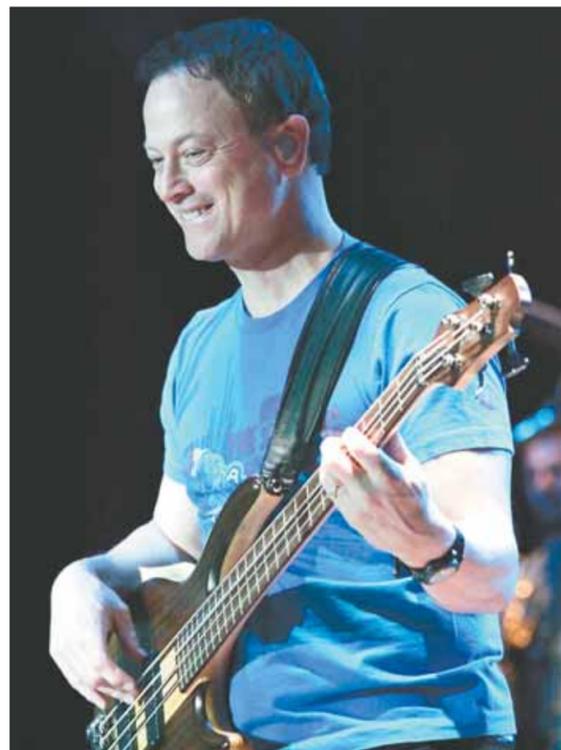
"He's my favorite actor," said Pfc. Cody Bowen, a student at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School and volunteer at the event. "It's awesome that somebody so big takes the time to come here."

The night ended with Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III, the installation's commanding general, presenting a Marine Corps running suit with "Lt. Dan" embroidered on the back to Gary Sinise.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

A vocalist with the Lt. Dan Band sings "You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman" to a Marine she caught whistling at her in the crowd during a concert Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Gary Sinise entertains the crowd after a song during his concert featuring the Lt. Dan Band Saturday at the Combat Center's Sunset Cinema.