

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

March 25, 2011

Since 1957

Vol. 54 Issue 12

Army Special Forces sharpen skills, train with Marines at CAMOUT



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

An Army Green Beret instructs two Marines to perform a house clearing exercise aboard the Combat Center's CAMOUT facility March 19, during a Joint National Training Capability program, exercise.

CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

An Army Special Forces team called on Marines to help them sharpen their skills aboard the Combat Center's Combined-Arms Military Operations in Urban Terrain complex, the Corps' largest and most realistic training facility March 12 through 25.

Infantry with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and non-infantry Marines from Headquarters Battalion, served as students for a team of Green Berets from a Special Forces Operational Detachment A, 5th Special Forces Group, as they practiced techniques they will use to train indigenous personnel and foreign military units in the event they are deployed overseas.

The training, part of the Joint National Training Capability program, brought Marine Corps and Special Operations Forces units together during an Enhanced Mojave Viper exercise to share tactics, techniques, and procedures and facilitates rapport-building before combat deployments around the world. EMV is the Corps' premiere 28-day, combined arms, live-fire pre-deployment training exercise conducted aboard the Combat Center.

Given the strategic importance seamless service integration has on the joint battlefield, the combined training gave the Green Berets a first-hand view

of how the Marine Corps operates in the battle space and gave the Marines a better understanding of the composition and mission of an Army SFODA.

This coordination and synchronization between Marines and Green Berets is crucial on the modern battlefield since both share integral roles, whether it involves intelligence gathering, foreign military training and advising or conducting combat operations, said the Special Forces detachment commander for the SFODA.

"Marine battalions act as battle space owners on the ground, and an SFODA operates within those same battle spaces," said a Special Forces team sergeant, who requested to remain anonymous. "De-confliction with those battalions and battle space owners is critical to ensure both the battalion and ODA can achieve maximum effectiveness and that their efforts aren't going counter to one another - which can happen if there's not cross-talk."

As a battle space owner, a Marine commander in a combat zone would be responsible for maintaining security and knowing what military operations are taking place in his operating area. The presence of a Special Forces team would be a very important thing to know with that level of responsibility and given the fast pace

See CAMOUT, A8

Combat Center earns two new SecNav environmental awards

GUNNERY SGT. SERGIO JIMENEZ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF

The Combat Center was named the top Marine Corps installation in two environmental awards program categories in the Fiscal Year 2010 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Awards competition, according to a Navy release Wednesday.

The Combat Center was the best in Sustainability in both the Team and Non-Industrial Installation categories.

The installation received the awards as a result of the NREA team's effective implementation and management of pollution prevention, range sustainment, greenhouse gases, and high performance energy and other programs, designed to meet or exceed installation and federal sustainability goals, said Maj. William M. Rowley, director of the

See ENERGY, A5

Desert testing attracts Thai VIPs

LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The harsh climate of the Mojave Desert can not only take its toll on the Marine or sailor working all day in the sun, but it also puts military equipment and vehicles through the ringer, making the Combat Center an ideal place to test equipment.

Lieutenant Gen. Surapun Wongthai, director of Cobra Gold Exercise and director of joint operations at the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters in Changwatthana, Bangkok, Thailand, and Royal Thai Navy Rear Admiral Sanyalak Rungsampan, deputy director of Joint and Combined Exercise Planning, visited Camp Wilson March 17 and 18, to observe equipment tests at the Western Area Research Test and Evaluation Center.

"We are working in great cooperation with WARTEC," Wongthai

said. "We feel this cooperation we have is of mutual benefit."

Unlike the tropical climate the general and rear admiral are accustomed to, the harshness of the desert allowed them to get a new perspective on how equipment will hold up in harsh, foreign environments.

After learning about other past and current equipment tests, the VIPs toured Camp Wilson's experimental forward operating base.

They viewed experiments such as the Soil-Air Heat Exchanger, Deployable Renewable Energy Alternative Module, solar powered flood lights, water cooling system, and various forms of field-expedient foam insulations.

All of these projects were designed to help the war fighters better accomplish their missions.

"We [WARTEC] exist for that 18-year-old in the foxhole," said John

See THAI, A7



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Members of the Combat Center's Western Area Research Test and Evaluation Center show Lieutenant Gen. Surapun Wongthai and Rear Admiral Sanyalak Rungsampan new equipment being tested March 18 at Camp Wilson.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Col. Austin E. Renforth, the incoming commanding officer of 7th Marine Regiment, accepts the unit's battle colors from Col. Randall P. Newman, the outgoing commander, symbolically taking command of the 'Magnificent 7th' during a Change of Command Ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

Magnificent 7th receives new commander

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The winds of change swept across the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field March 17 as Col. Austin E. Renforth, took command of 7th Marine Regiment from

Col. Randall P. Newman, the outgoing commanding officer of the regiment.

Renforth comes to the unit after serving as the branch chief, special plans branch in the J-5 for the North American Aerospace Defense Colorado Springs, Colorado.

His previous assignments

include 2nd Light Armored Recon Battalion commanding officer, Regimental Combat Team 1 operations officer, and Maritime Special Purpose Force commander for the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

As he spoke to the Marines, sailors and special guests at the ceremony he gave, his impres-

sion of the Magnificent 7th.

"To me, this is the premier regiment of the Marine Corps," Renforth said. "To be a part of it is truly special."

"Certainly there is nothing to add [to the unit]," he said, "I just want to continue

See RENFORTH, A5



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines with 7th Marine Regiment march into position during the unit's Change of Command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.



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



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>.

How to be the MVP of your health team

TYLER PATTERSON

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

As one saying goes: If you don't have your health, what have you got?

Remember, it's your health. You should work with your doctor, your nurse, your pharmacist – all the other members of your health team – to manage your health.

Not only is your health a precious resource, so is your time. To help make sure you are making the most of your medical appointments, here are a few tips to keep in mind when visiting your doctor:

Update your roster: Accurate contact information is vital to keep you up-to-date on appointments and test results. Wrong information in DEERS can affect your eligibility for some care. Learn how to update your DEERS contact record online at www.triwest.com/bwe.

Be ready for pinch hitters: You may be referred to a specialist for care your primary care manager cannot provide. If that happens, remember to wait for your authorization letter to arrive before setting your specialty care appointment. Register for a secure [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) account and receive an electronic version of your authorization letter in hours, instead of waiting for days on the mail. Follow the directions in the letter to make sure you don't get a claims curveball later.

Play as a team: When you are seeing a new doctor or specialist, share any medications or tests from your other doctors. This goes double if you have multiple prescriptions, or are taking over-the-counter medicines.

Preparation is key: It can be easy to forget things during an examination. Preparing in advance can help eliminate those "I should have asked..." moments while you're heading home.

You are a critical part of your healthcare team. You owe it to yourself to be involved!

TriWest understands that you need the best team to help you do, and feel, your best. That's why TriWest has built a robust TRICARE provider network in the west region. The providers' focus should always be on you – the TRICARE beneficiary – and TriWest works to support your providers so they can create and carry out your game plan.

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Mike Chlebik
Unit: Business Performance Office
Hometown: Euclin, Ohio
Job title: Program analyst
Duties: Obtain data, perform statistical analysis and summarize the data into a picture.
What is your favorite part of your job?: "To see people light up when their data tells them something, when they can make sense of their data."
Significant Achievements: Retired math professor at Copper Mountain College, heavily involved in Blessed Sacrament Church in Twentynine Palms. service and commitment to the Corps as an active duty and retired Marine.
Hobbies: Music, amateur radio operator, teaching, board games.
Biggest pet peeve: "When people call me a 'Civilian Marine.' When I am a Marine, I am just retired."
Time of service: Retired as a lieutenant colonel after 20 years, and served 3 years in civilian service.



Centerspeak

Who would play you in the story of your life?

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



CPL. DANIEL PATTERSON
MARINE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE SQUADRON 1

"Robert Downing Jr., because he is a strong actor and has wide variety of roles he has been in."



STAFF SGT. JORGE LOPEZ
COMBAT LOGISTICS BATTALION 7

"My oldest son, because he sees me as his mentor."



SGT. BRANDON DELFIORENTINO
WOUNDED WARRIOR BATTALION

"Billy Bob Thornton, because he is ridiculous."



LANCE CPL. RYAN MARTIN
COMPANY B, 3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

"Ben Affleck, because he is from Boston."

Hot Topics

TECHNOLOGY EXPO

The Combat Center's bi-annual Technology Expo, a one-day event, will be held on-site at the Officers' Club from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 29. The VIP Tour for all Twentynine Palms leadership will begin at 9:30 a.m. The main event is open and free to all within the Combat Center community. For more information or to see a list of exhibiting companies, visit <http://www.federal-events.com>.

MYCAA LUNCH AND LEARN SEMINAR

Kaplan Continuing Education is offering a MyCAA Lunch and Learn seminar at MCCS Lifelong Learning, building 1524 N, on Seventh Street, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 14. The event will cover health-care, business and IT educational certificates offered through their program. To register, call 954-540-6429 or e-mail Amy Steinberg at asteinberg@kaplan.edu by April 12.

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 25, 1945

A 300-man Japanese force launched a vicious final counter-attack in the vicinity of Airfield Number 2 on Iwo Jima. Army pilots, Seabees and Marines of the 5th Pioneer Battalion and 28th Marine Regiment fought the Japanese force till morning but suffered heavy casualties - more than 100 killed and another 200 American wounded. Nearly all of the Japanese force was killed in the battle.



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

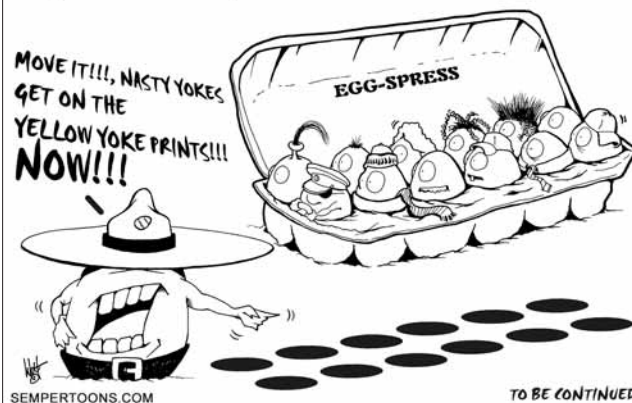
PART 1 of a 4 PART SERIES

SemperToons Presents: How Easter Eggs get hard for Easter.

The eggs come from all over the United States to YOKE Depot, CANDY EGGO. Where they meet their Senior Easter Egg Instructor "HARD BOIL".

His job, to get these ordinary eggs Hard Boiled and ready for coloring before Easter!

They arrive on the Depot EGG-SPRESS.



SEMPERTOONS.COM TO BE CONTINUED

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

SUDOKU #2123

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

KENNEL MIXUPS

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16					
17				18						19					
20			21						22			23			
24									25		26				
			27				28	29							
30	31	32				33						34	35	36	
37					38								39		
40				41	42					43	44				
				45						46					
47	48	49								50			51	52	53
54				55		56	57	58							
59				60									62		
63							64						65		
66							67						68		

ACROSS

1. Capt.'s superior
4. ___ salts
9. Wisdom tooth, e.g.
14. "___ Maria"
15. Part of a ream
16. St. Theresa's birthplace
17. Card player's cry
18. Hypnotized or anesthetized
19. Part of SST
20. Mixed-up headline?
23. She raised Cain
24. "Tennis, ___?"
25. ___ up (bungled)
27. Towel holder
28. "Dallas" matriarch
30. Test tube glass
33. Mixed-up coward?
37. Lawyer's take
38. Tends to the socks
39. "___ Lazy River"
40. Mixed-up kaleidoscopic critter?
43. Hell night heavy
45. More reserved
46. Little pooch
47. Rita of "West Side Story"
50. Post-review rewards
54. DDE's arena
55. Mixed-up night guard?
59. Rich kid in "Nancy"
61. Diarist Nin
62. Gone by
63. Autograph hound's target
64. On tenterhooks
65. Sound from a Siamese
66. Pothook shapes
67. "Like a Rock" singer Bob
68. ___-K (toddlers' school)

DOWN

1. Molten rock
2. Birdlike
3. Lind, "The Swedish Nightingale"
4. Vernal or autumnal ___
5. Gave up the football, in a way
6. Beef unit
7. Smelter materials
8. Chicago exchange, for short
9. ___ bone (protuberance behind the ear)
10. Ab ___ (from day one)
11. Actor's memorization
12. Still in the game
13. Competed at Indy
21. Party pooper
22. "___ and ___ well"
26. Reversal of direction, slangily
28. Box score blemish
29. Singer k.d.
30. Rank below cpl.
31. Thumbs-up vote
32. Prot. or Cath.
33. Fall out of contention
34. Detergent brand of old
35. Unlock, poetically
36. Long-snouted fish
38. "___ Believe in Magic?" (Lovin' Spoonful hit)
41. Diamonds, to hoods
42. Shady threat
43. More throaty
44. In the thick of
46. Pat on the back, e.g.
47. Choreographer Cunningham
48. Siouan speakers
49. Kaiser and egg
51. Rascal
52. Rarin' to go
53. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" penner
56. DC baseballers, for short
57. ___-jerk reaction
58. Yin's counterpart
60. Chanteuse Peggy

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

The Observation Post is published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense or the United States Marine Corps, under exclusive written contract with the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Observation Post are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States government, the DoD, or the United States Marine Corps. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DoD or Hi-Desert Publishing of the services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif. 92278. All photos, unless otherwise indicated are Official USMC Photos. Questions can be directed to the Public Affairs Office, located in building 1417, during normal working hours at 830-6213 or FAX 830-5474. The Observation Post is made with 60 percent recycled paper.

3rd LAR strikes insurgent hub during Operation Raw Hide II

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. JEREMY ROSS**

*3RD LIGHT ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE
BATTALION*

PATROL BASE WOLF-PACK, Afghanistan – A task force headed by 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion struck a key insurgent trafficking hub on the Pakistan border at the beginning of an operation designed to stem the flow of narcotics, weapons and fighters into, out of and around southern Afghanistan, March 14-17.

The raid took aim at the Bahram Chah village complex, the most trafficked

import and export point for insurgent opium and logistics in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, and marked the kinetic opening of Operation Rawhide II.

Third LAR Companies C and E rolled into the rocky foothills along the province's southern border and probed the Bahram Chah bazaar and two villages flanking it. The Marines were backed by the firepower and maneuverability of their light armored vehicles and supported by a host of coalition air, Marine artillery and mortars, and Army route clearance assets.

The raid was intended to

locate and destroy any structures harboring insurgents or illicit materials to include weapons, explosive device-making materials and narcotics production facilities, especially within the bazaar, said Lt. Col. Kenneth Kassner, 3rd LAR commanding officer.

The bazaar had been identified as a major production point for improvised explosive devices and opium, while the adjacent Juma Khan and Haji Wakil villages were known to house these and other illicit activities and insurgent

See 3RD LAR, A5



A light armored vehicle crew with Company C, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, watches a Marine AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter veer off after destroying an insurgent structure in the Bahram Chah bazaar with a Hellfire missile during Operation Rawhide II, Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 14.



Sgt. Jesse Walden [right], chief scout with Company C, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and Lance Cpl. Logan Snow, a gunner with Company C, scan the Bahram Chah Valley for insurgent activity from their light armored vehicle during Operation Rawhide II in Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 14. The four-day raid on the key insurgent trafficking hub on the Pakistan border targeted insurgent fighting positions and structures used to produce opium and harbor explosives and other illicit materials.



Sgt. Jesse Walden, chief scout with Company C, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, fires a light anti-armor rocket at an insurgent fighting position in the Bahram Chah valley during Operation Rawhide II in Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 16.

First Team welcomes new top enlisted



DIANE DURDEN

Sgt. Maj. Keith Coombs accepts the non-commissioned officer's sword from Lt. Col. Todd Simmons, battalion commander, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, during a ceremony appointing him the battalion sergeant major at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field March 18.

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

The Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, marched onto Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field to welcome Sgt. Maj. Keith W. Coombs and bid farewell to Sgt. Jam. Paron A. Lewis during the unit's relief and appointment ceremony March 18.

Coombs, who is coming to the Combat Center from 9th Engineer Support Battalion, Okinawa, Japan, said he is happy and honored to be with 7th Marines.

"I'm looking forward to being with 1/7 and being back in Twentynine Palms again," said Coombs when speaking with the battalion after the passing the sword portion of the ceremony.

The passing of the sword from the outgoing to the incoming sergeant major signifies the transfer

of this sacred position, entrusting the new sergeant major with the care of the unit's Marines.

Coombs, from Vernon, N.Y., brings with him recent and very relevant operational experience, said Lt. Col. Todd Simmons, First Team's battalion commander.

"You're the right man at the right time for this unit, to help us prep for the next time we have to go outside the wire," Simmons said.

Welcoming one sergeant major meant saying goodbye to another. Simmons thanked Lewis, from Kansas City, Kan., for his leadership and mentorship to the battalion.

"You were my personal backbone, my right arm, a great friend and mentor," Simmons said. "You were

See FIRST, A7

1st Tanks leader credits his Marines for award

CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

A 1st Tank Battalion leader was recognized as the 2010 Marine Corps Motor Transportation Maintenance Officer of The Year, but said the credit isn't his to take.

Chief Warrant Officer John A. Kerns is scheduled to travel back to his home state of Virginia for the Marine Corps Motor Transportation Symposium and awards dinner, March 29-31 where he will be the first ever to receive the award.

Kerns, from Winchester, Va., said he attributes his success as a leader to his Marines.

"My success is the success of the Marines I work for," Kerns said. "The lance corporals, [non-commissioned officers and staff NCOs] are some of the best I've worked for in the Marine Corps.

"I'm the guy that's directing traffic, and they're the guys who do all the work," he added. "The credit goes to them, and the award I'm receiving is a testament to



CPL. M. C. NERL

Chief Warrant Officer 2 John A. Kerns, a 1st Tank Battalion leader, was recognized as the 2010 Marine Corps Motor Transportation Maintenance Officer of The Year.

their abilities, and their wants and desires to do good things and accomplish the mission."

Maj. Ronald Dean Storer, the executive officer of the battalion and a native of

Idaho Falls, Idaho, said Kerns' abilities, knowledge and outstanding organization, is what earned him the unit recognition, and the overall award.

"We stood a [Field Supply Maintenance Analysis Office] inspection in January of 2010, and his shop, across the board scored a 97 percent, which led to our battalion receiving a 99 percent, which is unheard of in today's operational tempo," Storer said. "Without the work him and his Marines do down there daily, we don't move tanks in the field."

Kerns arrived at the Combat Center in August 2009, and immediately got to work, according to his commanders.

"Chief Warrant Officer [2] Kerns is a tremendous combat multiplier here at this battalion," Storer added. "His leadership over the last year and a half since I have been here as [executive officer] has just been tremendous. He's met every task and mission. His maintenance accountability is spot on."

Sergeant Steven McColl, the former platoon ser-

geant for motor transportation maintenance in the battalion, said Kerns' calm demeanor and willingness to instruct his Marines is what makes him a great leader.

"He has a pretty cool style of leadership, but it is also challenging," said the Savage, Minn., native. "He makes you learn your job and be more proficient at work, but he is very laid back. He's not the type of person to yell, but you don't ever want to cross that line with him."

McColl added his officer-in-charge is not only a good person to work for, but he also has genuine concern for his Marines, which is why he has been so effective at helping them improve themselves.

Kerns described his personal philosophy on leadership as one of teaching and mentoring.

"I think if you take care of the Marines, and congratulate them for doing a good job, the mission will accomplish itself," he said. "A mission accomplished is based on taking care of Marines."

Hospital offers diabetes management 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.

SJA CORNER

SJA to offer mediation services

CAPT. DAVID SEGRAVES

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Disputes occur all the time. Whether they are over terms of a divorce, interactions between neighbors or arguments over security deposits, all too often they escalate until they end up in court.

Even seasoned litigators warn their clients against "rolling the dice" in court. The Legal Assistance Office will soon be offering an option to handle disputes in a collaborative manner, outside of court, through mediation.

Mediation involves both sides coming together to find a mutually agreeable solution to a problem. The mediator serves as an objective party facilitating the agreement. Mediation is possible where both sides have an interest in resolving the issue and will consent to mediation. Parties must be willing to work towards a resolution – not simply presenting their facts and waiting for an arbitrator or judge to make the decision.

Finally, participants must have the authority to engage in binding resolutions. The mediators will normally be legal assistance attorneys trained by the National Conflict Resolution Center; however, these attorneys will not be advocates for either side. Moreover, the mediation will not begin an attorney-client relationship with either party. The mediator may use his/her legal

education to clarify mutual mistakes of law, but his/her main duty will be facilitating the problem-solving.

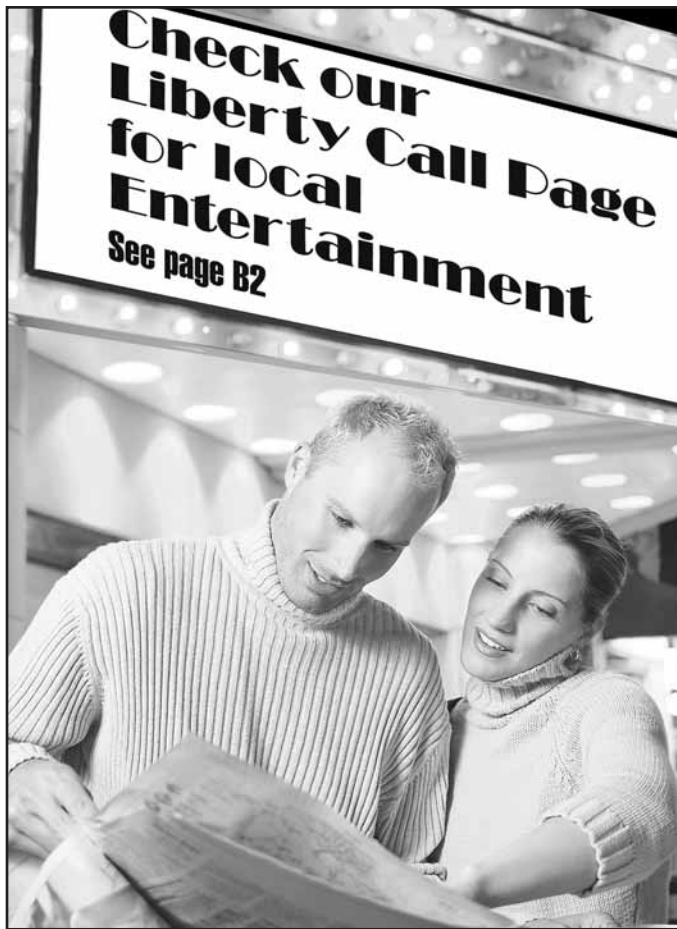
One area of focus for the Legal Assistance mediation program will be divorces. Currently, the Legal Assistance Office only handles uncontested divorces. Ideally, this mediation program should help resolve the issues that serve as barriers to our current service.

When done with divorce mediation, the parties should have a separation agreement in hand and be ready to file. Other cases will resolve in an agreement or contract between the parties.

We will be compiling a list of potential participants. Soon we will begin the process with a class on the mediation process where both sides must sign an agreement to mediate. After this agreement is signed, we will schedule a mediation time. Clients should expect to dedicate two-hour blocks of time for their mediation.

Mediation should save our clients substantial costs and stress by avoiding attorneys and courts. Instead of passively waiting for an outside party to make a ruling, clients can take the initiative and work towards a solution with the assistance of a trained mediator.

Those interested in the program should contact the Legal Assistance Office at 830-6111.



3RD LAR, from A3

fighters, said Capt. Allen McBroom, Company C commanding officer.

Bahram Chah sits on a valley floor, hundreds of kilometers from the nearest Afghan government seat and far outside the range of the normal coalition security presence. The area had long been a favorite staging and distribution point for insurgent activity, and a hotbed for the opium processing and exporting that serves as the financial lifeblood of the insurgency, Kassner said.

"For the enemy, Bahram Chah is isolated from much of the coalition's activity," he said. "They know it takes effort for us to conduct operations this far south.

"If [the enemy] can't get his fighters and weapons in, that destabilizes his efforts, and if he can't get his narcotics into Bahram Chah to convert into opium, then that greatly reduces the financial strength of the insurgency."

When the Marines entered the valley on the morning of March 14, the area was quiet. The bazaar and adjacent village were like ghost towns. The calm was soon broken by a series of small arms, rocket propelled grenade and mortar attacks from hillside fighting positions as the Marines moved to isolate the bazaar and Juma Khan village. Over the next three days, sporadic insurgent attacks continued while the Marines worked to clear their objectives of improvised explosive devices and locate insurgent structures to destroy.

Throughout the raid, periodic explosions echoed through the valley as the battalion used virtually every



SGT. JEREMY ROSS

Marines with Company C, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, scan the hills of the Bahram Chah valley for an insurgent mortar spotter during Operation Rawhide II in Helmand province, Afghanistan, March 16. Throughout the four-day raid on the key insurgent trafficking hub on the Pakistan border, insurgent spotters attempted to creep over the hill line to call in fire on Marine positions.

supporting arms asset available to the Marine Corps to clear lanes through IED-infested routes and destroy insurgent buildings and fighting positions. The support included everything from artillery and mortars to helicopter-launched Hellfire missiles and engineer vehicle line clearing charges.

When the dust had cleared on the morning of March 17, the bazaar lay in ruins, one of the few structures left untouched being the local mosque. Specific buildings from which the battalion had taken fire or within which Marines had observed explosives or narcotics processing were destroyed in the adjacent Juma Khan village.

While the bazaar was not completely destroyed, rebuilding it to the point that it can be used again will cost the insurgency precious manpower and resources, said Maj. Oscar

Rodriguez, 3rd LAR operations officer.

The battalion was able to achieve significant surprise and deception during the raid, rendering many of the insurgent defenses ineffective. Intelligence reports had estimated hundreds of IEDs and enemy fighters waiting to defend the valley, said Rodriguez.

"Our endstate was disruption of an enemy logistics hub, and we accomplished that," he explained. "[The enemy] spent a lot of time building up his defense and emplacing IEDs, and we pretty much just swallowed him."

No coalition forces were killed, no serious casualties were sustained and no civilian casualties occurred during the course of the raid. At least 50 insurgent fighters were killed, Rodriguez said.

Much of the fighting during the raid took place between insurgents based in the hills and Marine LAV crews firing back with their 25mm cannons and machine guns.

On March 15, an element of dismounted scouts with E Company clearing a section of Juma Khan village came under intense fire from a group of insurgents that had apparently lain in wait in the seemingly deserted village, Rodriguez said.

The Marines took cover and ensuing air and artillery strikes killed the insurgent fighters, he added.

In the wake of their attack on Bahram Chah, 3rd LAR plans to launch the next

phase of Operation Rawhide II, which will consist of interdictions in the far south of Helmand province.

The battalion, the most southern-based unit in Helmand province, has been conducting interdiction efforts in the form of vehicle checkpoints and clearing targeted villages in the Helmand river valley to the north of here since arriving in Afghanistan in November. The unit will now shift its efforts further south toward the wide-open and largely unpatrolled desert leading up to the Pakistan border, Kassner said.

The raid and increased interdictions were timed to coincide with the start of the insurgency's seasonal offensive, which has traditionally begun in the spring, he added.

"This operation will be used as a spoiling attack for the enemy's seasonal offensive, and therefore greatly disrupt any plans he has for his spring and summer campaigns," he explained.

The raid served as a follow-up to a similar operation, Steel Dawn II, carried out by 1st LAR in October. That operation differed from Rawhide II in that 1st LAR forces spent less time in Bahram Chah and did not follow up with the same shift in interdictions planned by 3rd LAR.

"We have conditioned the enemy that we strike Bahram Chah and leave," said Kassner. "During Operation Rawhide II, we are going to strike and stay. It will be very disruptive to his efforts."

RENFORTH, from A1

the success that has already been set forth. There were great commanders before me, there will be great ones after me."

Newman, a native of Economy, Ind., is heading to the Marine Air Ground Task Force Staff Training Program at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., but he said he will always keep a special place in his heart for the Marines of the Magnificent 7th. He ended by turning the attention back to the unit itself.

"I don't want to go, but I am proud to be able to present the men today," he said. "What I offer to you, the men behind me, is truly the Magnificent 7th. Men who came into our Corps not wondering if they were gonna fight, but absolutely sure they were going to fight. I'd ask you for a standing ovation for the men that got everything done."



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Marines and sailors salute the national ensign during the 7th Marine Regiment Change of Command ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Thursday.

ENERGY, from A1

Combat Center's Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Division.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus commended the winners in a Navy press release.

"Your impressive accomplishments and steadfast dedication to a greener future are exactly what's important in the Navy and Marine Corps leadership teams," said Mabus.

Rowley said his staff and other installation stakeholders are proud and pleased to receive the awards. The NREA team has and will continue to strive to integrate effective environmental stewardship with the Combat Center's mission of relevant combined arms training, said the Verdi, Nev., native.

The SECNAV award winners will be honored during the annual awards ceremony at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., June 7, 2011.



SGT. JEREMY ROSS

A light armored vehicle crew with Company C, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, engages insurgents with their 25mm cannon in the Bahram Chah valley, Helmand province, Afghanistan, during Operation Rawhide II, March 14.



JUDY PARK

Twentynine Palms High School students help a Marine make a pie for the evening's dinner crowd at Phelps Mess Hall March 16 during a Combat Center job shadowing event.



JUDY PARK

Dennis, a military working dog, smiles for the camera after demonstrating his skills to Twentynine Palms High School students during a Combat Center job shadowing event March 16.

Students shadow desired careers

JUDY PARK

TWENTYNINE PALMS HIGH SCHOOL

Students from Twentynine Palms High School experienced a day in the life of their desired professions March 16 through the Combat Center Job Shadow Program.

The program allowed students to see a multitude of everyday job opportunities through demonstrations by professionals.

Depending on their selected fields, the students spent the morning immersed in everything from law enforcement, meteorology, nursing and robotics to cosmetology, photography, culinary

arts and construction.

"This is a good program because it allows Marines to work and teach, while students can experience multiple varieties of job opportunities," said Kristina Streeter, the installation's community relations officer, in charge of the job shadowing program. "The Combat Center is all about building a good relationship with the community."



ELLA RAMIREZ

Twentynine Palms High School students learn about military working dogs at the Provost Marshal's kennels during a Combat Center job shadow program March 16.



JUDY PARK

A military working dog demonstrates how strong his bite is at the Provost Marshal's kennels during a Combat Center job shadowing event March 16.



COMBAT CENTER BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS



AUTUMN DOTY

Born to Cpl. Phillip and Erica Doty March 16

CHARLOTTE JUNE GIBSON

Born to Sgt. Daniel and Amy Gibson March 15

OLIVIA ELIZABETH HOUSTON

Born to Sgt. Christopher and Jametra Houston March 14

BRENDA ALIHA ESPARZA

Born to Sgt. Luis and Jessica Esparza March 13

TEHYA ALYSSA JOHNSON

Born to Justin and Satin Johnson March 10

ANALEIGH ELIZABETH SCHAFFENBERG

Born to Cpl. Otto and Shakira Schaffenberg March 10

GABRIEL ALLEN TITAN LEWIS

Born to Sgt. Bruce and Ana Lewis March 10

RAELENE AMILEA DAVIS

Born to Lance Cpl. Jimmy and Kristina Davis March 8

ENOLA LAXMI PEPKE

Born to Lance Cpl. Randolph and Nisha Pepke March 11

KAYLEE MARIE ADDY

Born to Cpl. Nathan and Felisha Addy March 8

CAMDEN EMILY ROACH

Born to Sgt. Brendon and Mary Roach March 8

COLTON MICHAEL MCDOUGALL

Born to Lance Cpl. Josh and Jackie McDougall March 7

SCARLET JEAN GIANNONI

Born to Sgt. Derrick and Norma Giannoni March 7

RAELENE AMILEA DAVIS

Born to Lance Cpl. Jimmy and Kristina Davis March 8

ELLIE MARTINEZ

Born to Lance Cpl. Guillermo and Lize Martinez March 6

HUNTER JAMES MILLER

Born to Lance Cpl. Robert and Jacquilyn Miller March 4

STORY NICHOLE EVANS

Born to Petty Officer 3rd Class James and Stephanie Evans March 6

GENA GRACE BILDERAIN

Born to Gunnery Sgt. Steven and Amber Bilderein March 2

SEAN MCHUGH PORTER

Born to Capt. Pete and Stacy Porter March 3

GAVIN JAMES SNELLER

Lance Cpl. August and Rebecca Sneller March 1

SAMUEL AARON WOLFLEY

Born to 2nd Lt. Aaron and Chelsea Wolfley Feb. 28

BRYSON ALLISTER MURRAY

Born to Staff Sgt. Ian and Suzanne Murray Feb. 23

ANYA MAY-LOUISE HURTADO

Born to Timothy and Meghan Hurtado Feb. 20

SAGINIA KPOTO AND ELHAJ MOMODOU KPOTO

Born to Lance Cpl. Momo and Idiatou Diallo Feb. 19

CORA LYNNE NORMAN

Born to Major J. P. and Jaime Norman Feb. 15

CAMERON ELLIOT VILLARREAL

Born to Cpl. Lisa and Sgt. Zachary Villarreal Feb. 14

ZACHARY JAMES VILLARREAL JR.

Born to Cpl. Lisa and Sgt. Zachary Villarreal Feb. 14

LUKE EMERBON TERRELL

Born to Capt. Andrew and Amy Terrell Feb. 15

BRYNN TAYLOR HOLLOPETER

Born to Capt. Geoffry and Michelle Hollopeter Feb. 14

HANNAH LEE RANDAH

Born to Sgt. Adam and Natasha Randah Feb. 9

JACOB BRENT ALEXANDER

Born to Sgt. Nicholas and Kandis Alexander Feb. 9

COHEN PARKER PIERCE

Born to Lance Cpl. Randy and Jodie Pierce Feb. 8

COMBAT CENTER RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Sunday

Immaculate Heart of Mary
8:45 a.m. - Confessions+
9 a.m. - Rosary
9:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass*
9:30 a.m. - Children's Liturgy of the Word
4 p.m. - Choir Practice
4:15 p.m. - Confessions+
4:30 p.m. - Rosary
5 p.m. - Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
9 a.m. - Calvary Fellowship (Contemporary Worship*)
9 a.m. - Children's Church
10:30 a.m. - Redemption (A blend of traditional and contemporary worship)
10:45 a.m. - Children's Church*)

Weekday Events

Immaculate Heart of Mary
Mon.-Fri. 11:45 a.m.-Catholic Mass
Christ Chapel
Mon. - Fri., noon - Prayer

Tuesday

Christ Chapel
9 a.m. - Christian Women's Fellowship* (Sept.-May)

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

Wednesday

Immaculate Heart of Mary
First Wednesday, 6 p.m. - Baptism preparation class and 7 p.m. - Knights of Columbus

Thursday

Immaculate Heart of Mary
9 a.m. - Adult Class
6 p.m. - Children RCIA
6:30 p.m. - RCIA (Sept.-April)
7 p.m. - Gr. 7 and Confirmation

Friday

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

Legend

* Indicates child care is provided
+ Call 830-6456/6482 for confession appointments

Muslim prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 87.
Jewish prayer space is available in the Village Center, room 93.
For information call 830-5430.



DIANE DURDEN

Sgt. Maj. Keith Coombs [left], incoming sergeant major for 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, shakes hands with Sgt. Maj. Paron Lewis, the outgoing sergeant major, during a relief and appointment ceremony at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field March 18.

FIRST, from A3

the one constant for every success First Team has had over the last three years."

Lewis, who is reporting to Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, Miramar, Calif., thanked everyone for their support throughout his time with the battalion. He then wished the Marines he served with a special goodbye.

"Go forth and do great things," Lewis said. "I'll be looking from afar."

THAI, from A1

Bower, the senior research scientist with WARTEC. "We test and assess new technology to help them do their job better, quicker and faster. We let the Marines tell us what works and we listen."

As they toured the area, the visitors gathered ideas to take back with them, Wongthai said.

"We hope to adopt the idea of WARTEC for our [Defense Science and Technology Department]," he added.

Wongthai happily offered an invitation to the U.S. military to use the tropical cli-

mate of Thailand.

Cooperation between allies is important for mission success, Bower said.

"What's going on in Japan highlights why we as a Corps need to be engaged with our Far East partners," Bower said. "With them coming out here and being engaged helps us understand them as well as them understanding us, what we can help with and provide and what we can't."

ADVERTISEMENT

SUDOKU

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

M	A	J	E	P	S	O	M	M	O	L	A	R	
A	V	E	Q	U	I	R	E	A	V	I	L	A	
G	I	N	U	N	D	E	R	S	O	N	I	C	
M	A	N	B	I	T	E	S	C	A	T	E	V	E
A	N	Y	O	N	E	L	O	U	S	E	D		
R	O	D	E	L	L	I	E						
P	Y	R	E	X	F	R	A	I	D	Y	D	O	G
F	E	E	D	A	R	N	S	U	P	A			
C	A	L	I	C	O	D	O	G	H	A	Z	E	R
C	O	Y	E	R	P	O	M						
M	O	R	E	N	O	R	A	I	S	E	S		
E	T	O	J	U	N	K	Y	A	R	D	C	A	T
R	O	L	L	O	A	N	A	I	S	A	G	O	
C	E	L	E	B	T	E	N	S	E	M	E	W	
E	S	S	E	S	S	E	G	E	R	P	R	E	

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.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Infantry and non-infantry Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment and Headquarters Battalion, conduct a house clearing operation March 19 at Range 220, as part of a joint training exercise with Army Green Berets.



CPL. ANDREW S. AVITT

Combat Center Marines check the second floor during a house clearing operation with Army Special Forces March 19 at Range 220.

CAMOUT, from A1

of combat operations.

"There's always a cultural difference between the Army and Marines and differences in standard operating procedures and acronyms. That's one of the reasons we chose to train with Marines," said the team sergeant.

Working with the Marines, specifically those who were not infantry by trade, also helped the Green Berets experience a situation similar to what they may encounter when working with foreign forces in combat zones.

"Our intention was to train differing levels of capabilities," said the detachment commander. "On a tactical side, the infantry Marines have more experience to draw from, but what I wanted to offer my detachment was the opportunity to deal with 20 personnel that had varying levels of experience, much like indigenous elements and operating forces that we will be working with in country."

"If the Marines don't understand something or if something my guys are telling them could be explained better, my guys are able to hone their training and teaching skills, which is a large part of what I need them to do overseas," he added.

Throughout the 12-day training exercise, the Marines learned to properly maintain weapon systems and went through a combined 78,000 rounds of ammunition, shooting weapons like the M240 Medium Machine Gun, M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, MK-19 40mm Grenade Launcher Machine Gun, MK-47 40mm Grenade Launcher Machine Gun, M2 Browning .50 Caliber Machine Gun, M4 Carbine, M203 40mm Grenade Launcher and the AT-4 Light Anti-Tank Weapon.

"For the infantry Marines, it gave them a chance to work through some of their gun drills and some of their [standard operating procedures]," said the team sergeant. "For the support guys, this was an opportunity to familiarize and truly get comfortable behind those weapon systems. So if they ever find themselves in a combat situation, they now have that level of comfort, 'I know what I am doing and I can take on that threat.'"

The mixed group of Marines offered a realistic training group for the Special Forces detachment as they worked to bring everyone up from their shared rifleman background up to complex tactics involving close quarters combat in a live-fire environment. Given the short amount of training time available, the team's members needed to be on their "A game."

"At first, a couple of my guys were hesitant, but at the end of the day, what [an] ODA does is solve problems," said the detachment commander. "About half of the Marines had never cleared a room, or building for that matter. But in the span of about 12 hours, we were able to go from dry and

blank fire to conducting a live-fire shoot house with all 20 Marines," he said.

"I think it's those kinds of results that speak volumes of the Marines out here, their level of discipline and commitment. It speaks to my detachment members and their ability to properly train a lethal fighting force," said the detachment commander.

According to several of the Green Berets, they were also very impressed with the expansive and detailed CAMOUT facility, and the value it could serve for future training opportunities.

"This facility is second to none that I've seen," said the team sergeant. "The attention to detail is impressive," he said, referring to a fully-furnished Afghan hotel that he saw as he explored a section of the 274-acre complex.

"Had I known about the size and features available at the CAMOUT, I would have recommended we bring multiple detachments here," said the team sergeant.

The team also worked with a command team of 10 role players who spoke either Dari or Pashto and acted based on cultural norms, adding to the realism of the exercise.

The culminating point of the joint force's training took place during the final stages of the exercise. The SFODA, Marines and 10 Afghan role players combined to conduct two raids in 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion's areas of responsibility as the two units carried out their tasks in Enhanced Mojave Viper. This cross-boundary movement required the Special Forces team to properly communicate with the adjacent Marine units regarding intelligence, routes, danger areas and objectives.

"If we were to arrest an individual who happened to be a political figure or a religious figure within that community and detain him, the population within that battle space may have concerns or issues," he said.

The Marine commander for that area would then have to deal with the repercussions. The team leader's coordination keeps that commander from being blindsided so they are able to deal with any situation that might arise as a consequence of an SFODA operation, he said.

In sensitive situations like this, communication is crucial, he said. "Maybe we won't go after this guy just yet, but we are thinking about it. We may wait until the conditions are right to ensure we are achieving the effect that meets higher's intent."

The key to making this coordination and communication more fluid in combat: training together during pre-deployment exercises such as EMV.

"Our primary intention in coming out to participate in EMV was to integrate SOF and Marine elements," said the detachment commander. "This reduces confusion on the battlefield, saves lives and ultimately enhances mission accomplishment."



'Desert Detours' visits Big Bear Lake, page B3

Garden brings ancient history to life

LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Combat Center's Archeology and Paleontology Curation Center built and planted a historical garden right outside its facilities with the help of volunteers.

The endo-botanical garden is filled with plants used by early Mojave Desert-dwelling Native Americans for food, medicine and dyes.

The 70 plants in the garden have been researched and are known to serve purposes to people in the past. As study of historical Native American culture continues, more plants may be added to the garden, Chamberlain said.

"If one group used them, most likely other tribes used them as



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Volunteers plant native desert vegetation in an endo-botanical garden outside the Combat Center's Archeology and Paleontology Curation Center Monday.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Sergeant Heath Sparks, a volunteer worker with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, plants vegetation in the newly-established endo-botanical garden outside the Combat Center's Archeology and Paleontology Curation Center Monday.

See GARDEN, B4

Volleyball season sets off



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Players on the East Gym and Camp Wilson teams face off at the net during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League game Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Vincent Bullion, a player for East Gym, spikes the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League game against Camp Wilson Tuesday. East Gym won two of the three games in the match.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Rachael Schroeder, a player for the East Gym team, bumps the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League game against Camp Wilson Tuesday.

The Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball standings

Team	Win	Loss
East Gym	1	0
3rd CEB	1	0
MCCES	1	0
Mistfits	1	0
IPAC	0	1
vltal signs	0	1
Tank Bas	0	1
Team Wilson	0	1
TMO	0	0



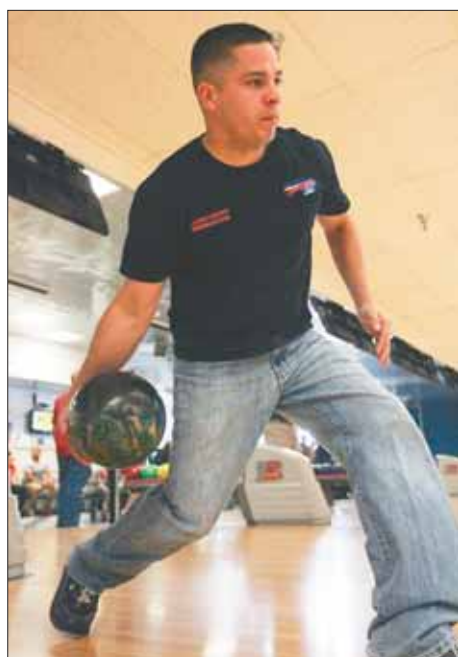
LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Wendy Hanson, the coach of the Camp Wilson team, sets the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League game against the East Gym Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

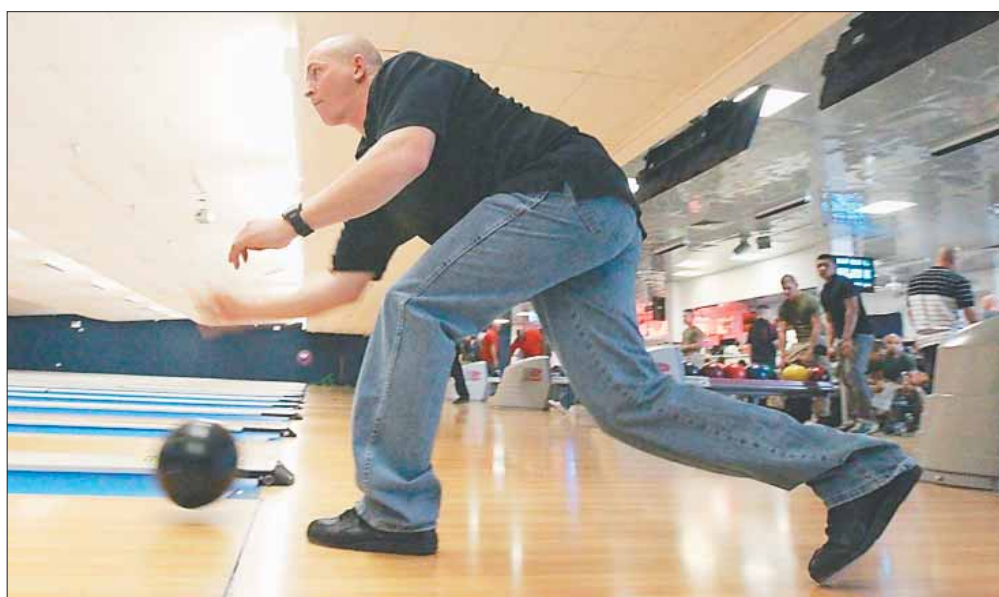
James Spivey, a player with Team 10, performs the curved roll of bowling during the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League Wednesday.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

James Anderson, a player with Double Secret Probation, prepares to roll the ball during a league match Wednesday.

Keep bowlin' along



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Jeffery Reed, a player with CLB-7, hurls the ball for a strike during the Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League Wednesday.



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Fridays: Social food, 5 to 7 p.m.; Ladies' night, 8 to 11 p.m.; DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m.
Saturdays: Variety Night with DJ Gjettblaque 8 to 11 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with Food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Monday: Chicken nuggets and nachos
Wednesdays: Baked ziti, garlic bread sticks, green salad, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Bosses Night, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour with Food, 5 to 7 p.m.

Hashmarks 29 SNCO Club

Fridays: Dinner, full menu, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., Social hour 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., DJ, 8 to 11 p.m.
Mondays: Steak night and full dinner menu 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday: All-Hands lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 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:

Ritmo Loco

Description: The Afro/Cuban jazz band performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday, March 25

I See Hawks in LA

Description: The Los Angeles rock band performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, March 26
Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

The Brad Mercer Band

Description: The blues and classic rock artist performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, March 25

The John Linn Band

Description: The country/rock band performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, March 26
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: Crossover with Joel, Kenny and John

Description: Enjoy Yucca Valley newest live music trio
When: 7 to 9 p.m., Saturday March 26
Where: The Rib Company Lounge
56193 Twentynine Palms Highway, Yucca Valley
For more information call 365-1663.

Lower Desert

Jamie Foxx Concert Hotel Special

Description: The film and TV actor/comedian performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, April 9
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.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.morongocasinosort.com>.

LeAnn Rimes

Description: The country singer/songwriter performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, April 29
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.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 25

6 p.m. – The Roommate, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Eagle, Rated PG-13
Midnight – The Mechanic, Rated R

Saturday, March 26

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee**, The Princess and the Frog, Rated G
2 p.m. – Justin Bieber: Never Say Never, Rated G
6 p.m. – Just Go With It, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Rite, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Sanctum, Rated R

Sunday, March 27

2 p.m. – Gnomeo and Juliet, Rated G
6 p.m. – Unknown, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – I Am Number 4, Rated PG-13

Monday, March 28

7 p.m. – The Mechanic, Rated R

Tuesday, March 29

7 p.m. – The Rite, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, March 30

7 p.m. – Just Go With It, Rated PG-13

Thursday, March 31

7 p.m. – Gnomeo and Juliet, Rated G

Marines protect turf against space alien invasion

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Battle: Los Angeles"

Rated PG-13
Starring Aaron Eckhart, Michael Peña and Michelle Rodriguez

If the central idea of a movie can be expressed in just a few words – or, even better, in the title itself – it's considered to be high concept. A high-concept movie doesn't require a lot of explanation for someone to understand what it's about. It's high on idea, low on noggin work.

Like "Battle: Los Angeles."

As you'll grasp instantly, it's about a battle, and set in Los Angeles. Specifically, it's about a platoon of U.S. Marines defending their California turf against aliens. And I'm not talking about undocumented immigrants. These aliens come from outer space, toting some serious not-of-this-world



COURTESY PHOTO

"Battle: Los Angeles" is about a platoon of U.S. Marines defending their California turf from a force of invading aliens.

firepower, and they're in no mood to negotiate.

Aaron Eckhart plays Staff Sgt. Michael Nance, the clenched-jawed, com-

bat-hardened 20-year veteran of the group. And wouldn't you know it: The ink is barely dry on his retirement papers when that offshore meteorite shower turns out to be something far more ominous.

The dutiful but reluctant sarge, pulled back into action just when he thought his last tour of duty was behind him, is only one of several combat clichés in "Battle Los Angeles," which resembles many "traditional" war movies in its casting stereotypes, simmering personality conflicts and acts of heroic battlefield self-sacrifice.

Michelle Rodriguez (Ana Lucia on TV's "Lost") arrives at the movie's midpoint as a tech sergeant with an impor-

tant hunch about how to disable the aliens' command centers. Michael Peña plays one of a handful of civilians, including two children, the soldiers are charged with evacuating before an alien-infested area gets blown to smithereens by the U.S. Air Force.

There are several impassioned, hoo-ha, men-at-war speeches, constant explosions and gunfire, and rubble, rubble everywhere. Shaky, handheld camerawork gives the viewer an unsteady, you-are-there sensation of dodging bullets and other projectiles along with the characters. It sometimes feels like a videogame, with a gritty, grunt's-eye-view of the kill-or-be-killed battle zone.

The aliens themselves are a mysterious lot. They look a bit like cosmic cousins to the ones from last year's "District Nine," tall, spindly and insect-like. But we rarely get a good, up-close look. They're usually at a distance, an ever advancing extraterrestrial army of ground troops backed up with some serious aerial support – lethal, unpiloted, people-seeking drones.

It makes for a lot of high-concept bang-bang, boom-boom, not a lot of character development or situational nuance, and unless you're a real action-movie junkie, probably not your idea of a good time.

But in a modern era as America weighs "appropriate" measured responses to a rogue's gallery of despots across the globe, it's somewhat refreshing to watch a bunch of gung-ho G.I.s rippin' and roarin' and gettin' it done, unequivocally united against a foe that's unmistakably, irredeemably bent on wiping out American life as we know it. There's no room for diplomacy or even discussion on this movie's hard, life-or-death line between good guys and bad guys.

If "Battle: Los Angeles" sometimes resembles a promo film for the U.S. Armed Forces, that's OK. If ever there were a time, place and situation to root, root for the home team, this would seem to be it.

So eat some leatherneck lead, E.T. – and semper fi, space scum!

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Big Bear Lake



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.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CPL. M. C. NERL

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

With amazing scenery, a distinct smell of mountain air and a very friendly population used to seeing Marines, Big Bear, Calif., is a definite must for either the single Marine or an entire family wanting to get out of Twentynine Palms for the weekend.

While the end of the bi-annual ski season is upon us, the city still offers great recreation for the entire family to enjoy. If you're "of age," then yes, it's even better.

Lodging is usually the biggest problem when traveling to most popular places. Awesome, low-priced hostels are all over this town for those interested in staying on the mountain. My top pick is The Big Bear Adventure Hostel for its friendly staff and the opportunity



Skiing is huge in Big Bear. Anybody who knows of the place has probably heard of it because of its mountains for snowboarding and skiing. While it does cost a pretty penny to enjoy it all, it is quite a good time.

to meet a diverse crowd of those ready to party. Plus, it's only \$27 a night to stay in the dorms.

Big Bear Lake itself is extremely picturesque, with spots for fishing, as well as boating. There is even a small cruise tour available during the right seasons around the lake.

The area is a great getaway for a cheap, quiet weekend. There is some absolutely amazing scenery out there, nature hiking and biking trails snake through the town's mountains. Had the weather not been so poor this weekend, I would have been able to tell you more about these places. But, good luck finding your way around a white-out mountain in the rain.

The small town also features quite the night life, with multiple bars, pubs and lounges for one to get their drink (responsibly) on.

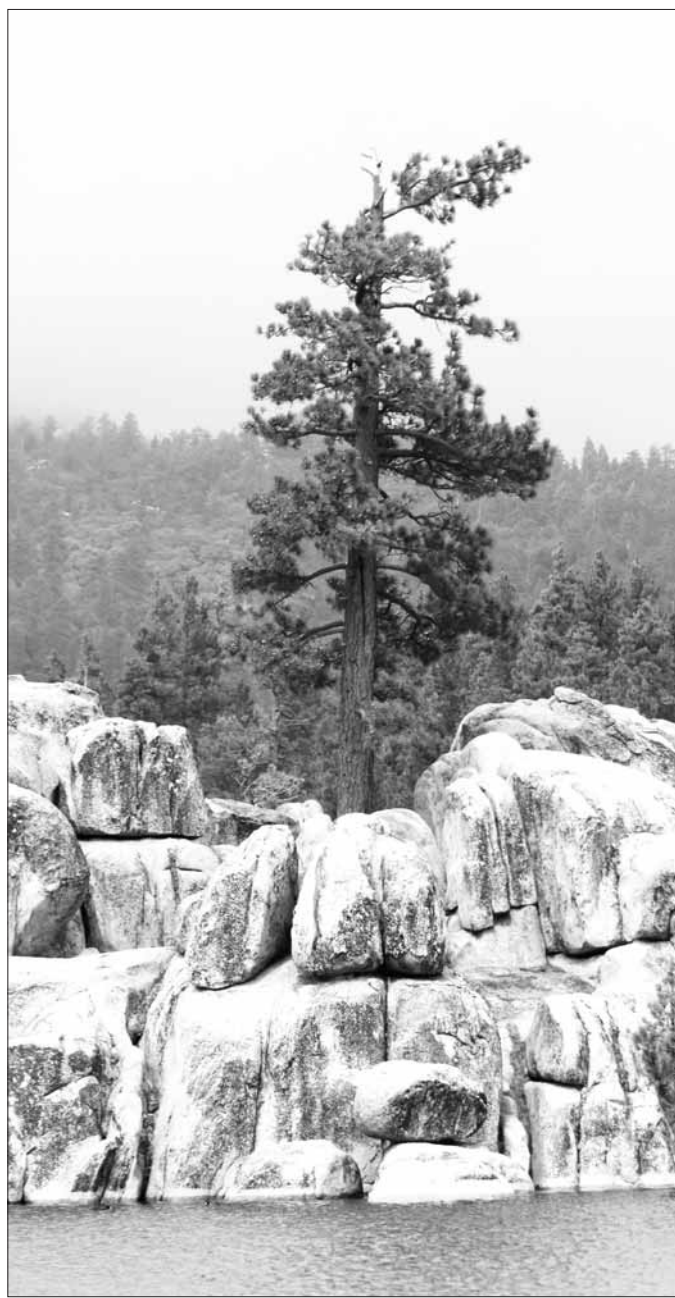
Big Bear's availability of microbrews is also impressive. One of my favorite watering holes, the Big Bear Mountain Brewery, for their selection of great beers and a small collection of T-shirts for sale.

On that note, let's move on ways to avoid tourist traps.

You're going to see a lot of stores, obviously because it's a town built on tourism.

For your own sake don't go in to these places. And if you do, don't buy anything because it's all outrageously expensive. I even found one place that had the coolest original Star Wars and G. I. Joe battle play sets I've ever seen, but don't tempt yourself into this place, a thousand dollars can disappear very quickly.

On a final note, and I know it sounds cheesy, but the visitors' center there is actually an outstanding place to check out. The



Big Bear Lake has some downright awesome scenery. This little island is nestled away in part of the bay known as Boulder Park Bay, during the right seasons you can rent canoes, take tours and go fishing and hopefully catch something here.

staff is very knowledgeable and friendly, and very accommodating to even some of the odder requests for entertainment.

Despite all the fun I had, the town only gets 3 1/2 out of 5 palm trees, just for the weather this weekend and the obscene prices of gas and just about everything else in the great state of California.

Athlete of the Week



Names: Jacalyn Cooper

Units: East Gym and Fitness Center

Hometown: Joshua Tree, Calif.

Recognition: Most Valuable Player for the East Gym volleyball team

Favorite aspect of the sport: "The team camaraderie and the high intensity of the game."

Advice for aspiring players: "Keep moving. There is never a dull moment in volleyball. Always be ready for anything."



Check out the excellent visitors center. The staff is very knowledgeable and friendly and can accommodate just about any request.

Did you know?

If you are active duty, retired military or a family member, you can place a FREE ad in our Combat Center Trader Ads

See page 7 for details and limitations

Fight Club 29 conquers grappling tournament



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Fight Club 29 mixed martial arts team members pose with their medals after winning at the Grapplers Extreme in Corona, Calif., Sunday. The team also took first place in the team award. [Top row from left] Brett Parker, gold medalist in 195 pound weight class and silver in absolute; Edwin Nunez, silver medalist in the 185 pound beginner bracket; coaches James Clark, Mark Geletko, William Harrington; Brad VanDusen, gold medalist in 175 pound weight bracket. [Bottom row, from left] Dom Waters, gold medalist in the 185 pound absolute and silver in weight; Rafael Saldana, gold medalist in 185 pound weight and absolute bracket; Mario Martinez, gold medalist in 165 pound absolute and silver in beginners bracket; and Arthur Powell, gold medalist in the 165 pound beginners bracket.

GARDEN, from B1

well," said Nicholas Chamberlain, a cultural resource specialist for the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Center. "I am still learning about their native uses."

The garden has more than just a historical purpose. It is also designed to "open the eyes" of viewers to the true beauty of desert wildlife.

"We wanted people to see that the desert isn't just some dirt pit," said D'Anne Albers, a curation assistant for the NREA. "There are beautiful plants here and they had use, a lot of Native Americans are still using these plants."

Marine and sailor volunteers lended their hands to the project.

"I just wanted to get out here and get involved," said Petty Officer 2nd Class James Carnes, a religious program specialist with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "It's an opportunity to give something to the base community."

Each plant is slated for detailed labeling.

The garden, funded by the National Environmental Education Foundation, is scheduled to be open to the public by Earth Day, April 22.

For more information on the new garden, contact Nick Chamberlain at 830-7650.



LANCE CPL. SARAH ANDERSON

Volunteers plant native desert vegetation in an endo-botanical garden raised outside the Combat Center's Archeology and Paleontology Curation Center Monday. The garden is filled with plants used by early Native Americans for food, dyes and medicine.