



OBSERVATION POST

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More Marines with concussion, TBI qualify for Purple Heart

CAPT. PATRICK BOYCE

MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS, Quantico, Va. – A decision this month by the commandant of the Marine Corps will allow more Marines and Sailors who served with Marine commands in combat to receive the Purple Heart for mild traumatic brain injuries or concussions. Under the Marine Corps' revised criteria announced in Marine Administrative Message 245/11 published April 15, the Marine Corps will no longer limit award of the Purple Heart for mTBI/concussions solely to those cases where the Marine lost consciousness.

According to Lee Freund, head of Military Awards Branch at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, the purpose of this new MARADMIN is, "To get the word out on the commandant's decision to revise the previous Purple Heart criteria for mTBI...[and] to inform Marines and Sailors serving with Marine commands in combat of the basic rules for determining Purple Heart eligibility for all types of wounds or injuries."

MTBI/concussions, which can be caused by a blast or blow to the head, will now qualify for the Purple Heart if a medical officer makes a disposition that the Marine is "not fit for full duty" for more than 48 hours due to the persistent signs, symptoms, or findings of impairment from the concussion, provided the disposition was made within seven days of the event.

This change is retroactive to the start of the Global War On Terrorism, which began Sept. 11, 2001.

The two basic eligibility requirements for award of the Purple Heart established in executive order and Department of Defense regulations remain unchanged: the wound or injury must be the result of direct or indirect enemy action and must have required treatment by a medical officer at the time of the wound or injury.

However, MARADMIN 245/11 provides revised criteria by which Marine commanders will apply the second of these eligibility requirements to cases of mTBI/concussion where the visible signs and symptoms of the severity of the injury may not be apparent.

"Very mild concussions that resolve quickly without prolonged impairment will not qualify for the Purple Heart," said Freund.

Prior to release of the MARADMIN, an mTBI/concussion only qualified for the Purple Heart if there had been an observed loss of consciousness (LOC). As explained in the message, recent medical research has shown that an mTBI/concussion without LOC can result in more serious brain impairment than earlier believed. Symptoms of mTBI/concussion can include headaches, intolerance of sunlight, temporary amnesia and decreased cognitive functions.

MTBI/concussion is a physical injury, caused by the inflammation of brain tissue that can have long-lasting effects if not diagnosed and managed properly.

"We've learned a lot more about mTBI and concussions during the last six months," said Freund.

According to Cmdr. Dave Tarantino, director for clinical programs for Marine headquarters' health services, traumatic brain injury is divided into three categories from most to least severe: severe or penetrating, moderate and mild. Severe or penetrating TBI and moderate TBI have previously qualified for the Purple Heart because those injuries require evacuation to a medical treatment facility where the injury can be treated by a medical officer. However,

See PURPLE HEART, A5

Portland Marine engages enemy, leads team to safety

CPL. ADAM T. LEYENDECKER II

II MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (FORWARD)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PAYNE, Afghanistan – For much of their deployment, Marines of 3rd Light

Armored Reconnaissance Battalion have found an insurgent force which was reluctant to fight them toe-to-toe. Rather, the enemy has relied more on

See KNERR, A4



CPL. ADAM T. LEYENDECKER, II

[From left to right], Marines with 3rd Platoon, Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Staff Sgt. Yobani Tejada, Cpl. Samuel E. Sirman, Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua I. White, Lance Cpl. Luis Maldonado-Santiago, Pfc. Tyler A. Nikkel, Lance Cpl. Levi R. Hale and [center] Lance Cpl. Jesse K. Knerr, stand in front of their vehicle at Forward Operating Base Payne, Helmand province, Afghanistan, April 26.



CPL. ADAM T. LEYENDECKER, II

Lance Cpl. Jesse K. Knerr, section leader for 3rd platoon, Company E, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, poses for a photo at Forward Operating Base Payne, Helmand province, Afghanistan, April 25. Knerr successfully led a fire team of five troops to safety during an ambush.

1st Tank Battalion comes home

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

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Cheers, giddy screeches and laughter echoed throughout the 1st Tank Battalion compound Sunday as family

members reunited with their Marines and sailors in Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, as the main body came home from their recent deployment to Afghanistan.

"It is so great to have

See TANKS, A8



Lance Cpl. Richard Falconbury hugs his sisters Angelina Lewis [right] and Sammi Grello and his nephew Noah after he exited the bus Sunday, during Company B, 1st Tank Battalion's, homecoming at the 1st Tank Battalion compound. The sisters came all the way from Knoxville, Tenn., to welcome their brother home.



Sergeant Mat Foucault holds his 5-day-old baby girl for the first time shortly after he exited the bus Sunday at the 1st Tank Battalion compound.

CAX for Kids teaches children skills to handle deployments



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

A participant in the CAX for Kids runs through an inflatable obstacle course at the CAX for Kids event at Felix Field April 27. The obstacle course was one of many fun activities used to help kids understand the life of a Marine.

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Combat Center kids got a taste of the Marine Corps and what their parents do at the CAX for Kids event, hosted by Lifestyles, Insight, Networking, Knowledge, Skills at Felix Field April 27.

The event brought kids together to have fun, but also to learn things about the Marine Corps, such as uniform regulations, how to pack a sea bag and maneuvering an obstacle course.

"We bring the kids here to help them assimilate to a military lifestyle," said Suzanne Benson, a L.I.N.K.S. mentor.

The participants also got to meet other children who have gone through similar experiences, unique to being in a military family like parents' deployments and frequent moves between duty stations.

The children were

divided into squads, which were also their teams for each competition.

"We want them to understand what their mommy or daddy actually does," said Amber Bilderrain, the L.I.N.K.S. Program Manager. "A lot of them just think that mommy and daddy just fight bad guys."

Along with games and presentations, the kids learned different ways to cope with the hardships involved when one or both of their parents are deployed.

Chesney Benson, daughter of L.I.N.K.S. mentor, Suzanne Benson and whose father is currently deployed, has been to several CAX events and said that she enjoys participating in the games and being with the other kids.

The event featured active duty volunteers from several units aboard

See CAX, A7

flickr

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>.

YouTube

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

facebook

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

Centerspeak

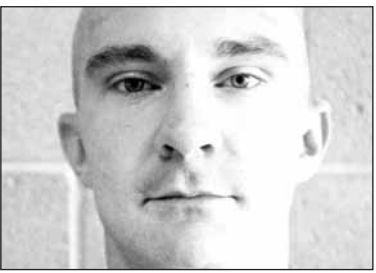
What are some ways to stay safe on long road trips?

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



LANCE CPL. CLARK SABO
COMPANY A, MARINE CORPS
COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

“Sleep before, so you are well rested for the trip.”



STAFF SGT. THOMAS SNYDER
COMPANY A, MARINE CORPS
COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

“Swap out drivers, keep everyone fresh while behind the wheel.”



MASTER SGT. STACEY HENDERSON
COMPANY B, HEADQUARTERS BATTALION

“Ensure you have all the tools you might need [like a] flare, spare tire, and get your vehicle inspected beforehand.”



LANCE CPL. KYLE WHITLOW
COMPANY E, 2ND BATTALION,
7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“Know your route, not just how to get there, but also to be able to find your route if you get lost.”

Hot Topics

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

Take mom out for brunch at the Combat Center's Officer's Club from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. May 8. Cost for adults is \$19.95. Children eat for \$9.95. Reservations are required. Call 830-6610. View the full menu at <http://www.eatandstaymccs29.com>.

VARSITY SOFTBALL TRYOUTS

Varsity softball tryouts will be ongoing every Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m., and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Felix Field #2. For more information, call Skip Best at 830-4092 or Jack McNellie at (910) 546-6475.

ASYMCA SOAPBOX DERBY

Armed Services YMCA is accepting registration for the annual Soapbox Derby, scheduled for June 3 on Adobe Road. The derby is open to kids aged 5 to 14. Register with the ASYMCA at building 192, across from the Marine Mart. Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The fee is \$20 per child and includes a soapbox kit and a sheet of plywood to help in their car's construction.

AEROBICS MARATHON

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., May 18, the East Gym and Fitness Center will host an Aerobics Marathon. Join any number of classes. Prize are given at the end of each class. Bring water and towels. For more information call 830-3381.



Eagle Eyes

Immediately report any suspicious activity 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: CREATED BY GUNNERY SGT. CHARLES WOLF, USMC/RET.

SUDOKU #2166

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

Marine Corps History

May 5, 1983

In Beirut, Lebanon, a UH-1N helicopter carrying the commander of the American peace-keeping force, Col. James Mead, was hit by machine gun fire. The six Marines aboard escaped injury. Mead and his crew had taken off in the helicopter to investigate artillery and rocket duels between rival Syrian-backed Druze Moslem militiamen and Christian Phalangists that endangered French members of the multinational force.

CATCHING A SNOOZE

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
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17						18						19		
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52					53			54			55			
56				57			58		59					
60				61			62				63	64	65	
66				67						68				
69				70						71				

ACROSS

1. Buffalo hockey player
6. Middle of Flintstone's yell
11. Early hrs.
14. For the birds?
15. Shoreline recess
16. "Can't Help Lovin' ___ Man"
17. Headline announcing a sax player's retirement?
19. Nada
20. ___ y Plata (Montana's motto)
21. Patricia of "Hud"
22. Windy City el initials
23. Knot art
27. Rod, Martha, or Jon
29. Claro residue
30. Full of chutzpah
32. Hefty volumes
33. Dish out whoppers
34. The Andrews Sisters, e.g.
35. Jack, Quarterback-turned-politico
36. Veg out
38. Grant's side
40. Belfry critters
43. "___ Torino" (Eastwood movie)
45. Sign on a staff
47. Dander
48. Eskimo people
50. "Love Story" author Erich
51. Big Bertha, for one
52. Most resembling Caspar Milquetoast
54. Decked out
56. Ullmann or Tyler
57. Deck quartet
59. Bard's before
60. Docs' org.
61. Creator of 3/4 cartoons?
66. Sticky stuff
67. Kate's sitcom friend
68. Keaton of Woody Allen movies
69. Bambi's aunt
70. Have a craving
71. Starts the pot

DOWN

1. Get droopy
2. NYC's Park or Lex
3. Half a quarter
4. Stropped item
5. Application filler
6. SW or NE
7. Author unknown: Abbr.
8. Like Muddy Waters's music
9. Sired, biblically
10. Jock
11. Commercials for an ax?
12. ___ d' hôtel
13. March festive date, for short
18. Big hit in "The Natural"
23. Shopaholic's hangout
24. Home to most of Turkey
25. Latin revolutionary's French home?
26. Land of the leprechauns
28. Where life begins
31. ___-over (narrator's job)
35. Did a pizzeria chore
37. Estrada or Satie
39. Gymnast Korbut
41. Like Annie Oakley's aim
42. Fax, say
44. Eroded, as with acid
46. Site of the legendary Fountain of Youth
48. White Rabbit's lament
49. ___ Marcus (retail chain)
50. "___ by Starlight"
53. Butcher-shop sight
55. "Jurassic Park" bug trapper
58. Trapper to the sauce
62. Meditative sect
63. Rebellious Turner
64. Ending with ethyl or methyl
65. Marv Albert catch word

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Deb Helton
Hometown: Wooster, Ohio
Unit: G-7 (Force Protection)
Job title: Installation Emergency Manager
Job duties: Coordinates all support functions during an installation response to large scale emergencies and natural disasters, and prepares installation response and facilitates the execution of full scale domestic exercises.
What do you like most about your job?: "Getting to build mission capability and enhance other while knowing one day they will be highly necessary to save Marines and their families."
Significant achievements: Ran response and recovery operation for a tornado in South Carolina and was part of team in charge of the response of Hurricane Katrina. She also coordinated the Combat Center's emergency response efforts during the statewide Golden Guardian 2010 and upcoming 2011 exercise.

OBSERVATION POST

Commanding General Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III

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M-ATV course preps servicemembers for combat

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

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines and airmen across southern California came to 1st Tank Battalion's compound aboard the Combat Center to learn about the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle in order to help prepare themselves to fight for Operation Enduring Freedom overseas.

The five-day course was taught by instructors of TJ FIG Inc., a company that provides technical logistics services, according to the company's mission statement.

During the course, the Marines learned the vehicles' basic maintenance and common glitches they may encounter when operating in a combat environment.

"By having training here, they learn how to get the job done fast, so in-country, their brain can process quickly what to do in tough situations," said Dan Raniewicz, an instructor for TJ FIG.

The service members

learned maintenance skills, identifying parts and how to drop the belly armor to get to vital parts of the engine.

After inspecting the vehicles and taking them for a drive, the instructors "bugged" the vehicles, causing them to malfunction and forcing the students to immediately apply what they learned.

"We wanted to make sure that none of them will leave here without [knowing how to fix a broken M-ATV]," Raniewicz said.

The instructors weren't the only ones who took the course seriously. The students said they appreciated the value of the information, knowing full well that the M-ATV is a vehicle used commonly overseas.

"This is my first time working on M-ATVs," said Lance Cpl. Josh Slavens, a tank mechanic with Company C, 1st Tanks. "I'm going overseas [later this year], and knowing this stuff is really going to help. I have learned a ton and definitely advise others to take this course."



Students in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle course inspect the vehicles to familiarize themselves with the parts and learn the in and out of the vehicle April 26 at the 1st Tank Battalion compound.



Marines joke with their fellow airmen students while inspecting a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle engine during the M-ATV course April 26 at the 1st Tank Battalion compound.



A student in the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle course inspects a tire of an M-ATV as a practical application exercise to get familiarized with the vehicle April 26 at the 1st Tank Battalion compound.



Lance Cpl. Josh Slaven, a student of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle course inspects the engine of the M-ATV while checking for damaged parts April 26 at the 1st Tank Battalion compound.

Marines, local volunteers clean Tengan River area

**GUNNERY SGT.
CINDY FISHER**

MARINE CORPS BASES JAPAN

URUMA CITY, Okinawa, Japan – Camp Courtney-based Marines joined more than 150 Japanese volunteers for the 23rd annual Tengan River Cleanup in Uruma City near the camp April 24.

The Marine volunteers, from 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Camp Courtney's Camp Operations, along with a handful of their family members, helped Japanese volunteers pull tires, rusted metal trash cans, plates, plastic and other trash from the mud and mire of the Tengan River's overgrown banks. The volunteers also cut down the bamboo, grass, weeds and trees that choked the banks of the river.

Before the cleanup began, Toshio Shimbukuro, Uruma City mayor, thanked volunteers for their efforts.

"We cannot achieve 23 years of Tengan River Cleanups without your sup-



GUNNERY SGT. CINDY FISHER

Lance Cpl. Andrew Rubio Jr. [left], with Headquarters Company, Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, passes debris to Lance Cpl. George Lemmer III, also with Headquarters Co., while cleaning the overgrown banks of the Tengan River in Uruma City near Camp Courtney April 24.

port," Shimbukuro said.

After so many years of cleaning the river, the water quality has improved and fish have returned to the river, Shimbukuro said, adding that

planting flowers as part of the cleanup every year has also brought butterflies back to the area.

He also told those gathered that Marines recently

returned from helping clean up Sendai Airport in mainland Japan.

Marine participation in

See RIVER, A7

3rd LAR conquers range 104

STAFF SGT. LYNDEL N. JOHNSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Abraham Lincoln once stated "If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six sharpening my axe."

The remain behind element of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (3rd LAR), a unit that has a unique blend of Marines that have already deployed and Marines that have just graduated from the School Of Infantry, spent a day

at range 104, firing multiple weapon systems thus sharpening their "axe" in preparation for a future deployment.

The day's objective was to fire high

See 3RD LAR, A6



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL N. JOHNSON

Lance Cpl. Anthony Sword, with 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, throws a grenade as Staff Sgt. Glenn Hendea, a point safety officer for Company B, 3rd LAR, stands by to ensure the Marine's safety at range 104 April 28.

KNERR, from A1

improvised explosive devices and indirect fire.

However, on April 20, Lance Cpl. Jesse K. Knerr, section leader for 3rd Platoon, Company E, 3rd LAR, and a native of Portland, Ore., found that when insurgents have their backs against the wall, they are left with no choice but to fight.

The mission of the day was to conduct a search of an area that hadn't been explored by coalition forces, but was suspected of being a site for possible insurgent fighting positions.

When Knerr and his fire team patrolled the area, they found structures made of rock, which blended into the ridge of the mountain. This was different than the buildings they were accustomed to seeing, which were mainly mud huts.

Knerr signaled for his team to search the structures, where they found battery packs, rocket-propelled grenades, enemy propaganda and half-eaten meals that were still warm.

After radioing in the intelligence, Knerr and his fire team followed a trail outside the buildings, which led up the ridge of the mountain to a small cave with an even bigger cave about 100 meters above it.

As they walked up the ridge, the fire team found fighting positions all along the ridge. Suddenly, they began taking small-arms fire from insurgents in the bigger cave, only about a football field's length away from their positions.

The fire team immediately found cover.

It was around 4:30 p.m. when Staff Sgt. Yobani Tejada, platoon sergeant for 3rd platoon, received a radio

call from Knerr stating that his team was engaged by enemy fire on the mountain ridge.

Tejada, who was in a light armored vehicle at the bottom of the mountain, told the Marines to find cover so they could provide fire from their turret and call in air support.

Knerr realized he had to come up with a plan to get his Marines out of there safely.

Spotting an area which supplied sufficient cover, Knerr directed the Marines to suppress the enemy's fire while each of them advanced toward the area.

After the Marines were clear, Knerr radioed back to Tejada, who had two vehicles simultaneously suppressing the enemy's fire. The insurgents returned fire with rocket-propelled grenades, but came no closer than 100 meters of the vehicles. Air support arrived in the form of

F/A-18s, which destroyed the enemy positions.

Afterward, Knerr said he was thankful that he and his fire team made it out safely.

"I knew that we all had to come together at that very moment when we were under fire and execute my plan perfectly or lives could be lost," said Knerr. "In a situation like that, there is no room for error."

Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua I. White, a corpsman who was with the fire team, said he and the other fire team members give credit to Tejada for preparing them for the situation.

"He's always told us to strengthen our mind, or we'll lose it," said White.

In this particular battle, the strong mental awareness of Knerr and his fire team made all the difference in successfully getting the team out of a dangerous situation.

SJA CORNER

A basic overview of small claims court

1ST. LT. NATHAN ADAMS

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Many people get into disputes that require a judge to resolve, but the amount of money involved is not enough to justify hiring a lawyer. Small claims courts address this very issue.

Small claims court are a less expensive way to settle these disputes quickly with most cases going to trial between 20 and 70 days after the date the suit was filed.

People go to small claims court for many reasons. Most often, people go to small claims court over disputes in minor car accidents, minor property damage, landlord/tenant disputes and collection of money owed. Generally, an individual can ask for any amount up to \$7,500 in a small claims action. Filing a small claims action costs between \$30 and \$100 depending on how much money you are suing for and how many times you have brought a small claims suit in the past 12 months.

Neither businesses nor individuals may hire a lawyer to represent them in small claims court. Unless you happen to be suing a lawyer, you will not have to worry about facing an attorney. However, either party may consult a lawyer before going to small claims court.

The negative side of the "no lawyers" rule is that you are now responsible for gathering and preparing all evidence needed at trial and for presenting that evidence to the judge yourself. You will also be responsible for finding the person

you are suing and arranging for service of process, which gives the other person legal notice they are being sued.

No matter the outcome of the case, at least one party is leaving court unhappy with the results. The rules for appealing the decision in California state that if you brought the suit you cannot appeal the decision. If you are the defendant, you have 30 days from the date the clerk mails the Notice of Entry of Judgment to file a form called Notice of Appeal, which costs \$75.

If a small claims judgment is appealed, there will be a new trial, but lawyers can be hired for the appeal.

You are responsible for collecting your judgement. The courts will not collect your judgment for you. You cannot begin to collect on the judgment until after the 30 days in which to appeal the decision have passed.

If the defendant does not pay you voluntarily, it will be your responsibility to find the defendant again, get service of process again and take them to court to have a judge compel them to make an accounting of their property and sources of income. Small claims decisions are good for 10 years, and can be renewed at your option after that.

As was mentioned earlier in the article, you may consult with an attorney before going to court whether you are the plaintiff or defendant.

The Legal Assistance Office is a resource you may use to help you decide if small claims court is the right decision. For help in your small claims case, please call 830-6111.



1st MarDiv Association honors past, present women Marines

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN**

EDITOR/PRESS CHIEF

A luncheon in honor of women in the Corps brought active Marines face-to-face with their history Saturday.

The event, sponsored by the 1st Marine Division Association at a country club in Palm Desert, Calif., featured raffles, friendly conversation, music provided by a small ensemble from the Combat Center Band and gift bags for the attending Marines.

This year marked the second year the organization has hosted the luncheon, and they plan to continue the tradition in coming years, said Buddy Sklar, a 1st MarDiv Association member who helped with the initial planning.

"There are people out there who don't even know there are women Marines,"

he said. "We want to get women Marines out and show them that we appreciate what they do."

Among the guests were retired and former Marines, including three women who served during World War II.

"It was very awesome to be in their presence," said GySgt. Rena Bruno, the company gunnery sergeant for Headquarters Battalion. "They saw everything firsthand when we were just getting accepted into the Corps. It is important to see the history that was made before and appreciate how far we've come." Bruno is from the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation, Fort Totten, N.D.

The guest speaker for the day was retired Lt. Col. Alison Clardy, who is also the wife of Brig. Gen. H.

See LUNCH, A6



Alison Clardy, a retired lieutenant colonel and the guest speaker for a luncheon in honor of women Marines, exits the podium to a standing ovation after her speech at the event, hosted by the 1st Marine Division Association, in Palm Desert, Calif., Saturday. She is also the wife of Brig. Gen. H. Stacy Clardy III, the Combat Center commanding general.



Retired Sgt. Maj. Ray V. Wilburn pulls the next winning raffle ticket out of the basket at the luncheon Saturday. Prizes included rounds of golf and a dinner for two.



A small ensemble from the Combat Center Band was on hand to provide musical entertainment for the luncheon guests Saturday.

PURPLE HEART, from A1

there are no definitive medical tests to diagnose mTBI or determine its severity.

"In order to assess mTBI and concussions, corpsmen and medical officers rely on a combination of history, physical examination, clinical signs and symptoms and other findings," said Tarantino.

The DoD guidelines in effect in the combat theater for the last year require that any service member involved in a potentially concussive event must be placed

under a 24-hour period of observation to determine if they have suffered an mTBI/concussion. That period of observation can be extended if the member exhibits signs or symptoms of an mTBI/concussion. However, evaluation by a medical officer or assignment to administrative light duty solely for the purpose of observation or screening will not be considered justification for the Purple Heart.

If a medical officer determines that the Marine is "not fit for full duty" for a period greater than 48

hours due to signs, symptoms or findings of impairment from the mTBI/concussion caused by enemy action, then the injured Marine's command will indicate that information in the remarks section of the Marine's Personnel Casualty Report.

In some cases, the Marine's final disposition may not be known when the initial PCR is released. Additional medical information can be included in supplemental PCRs.

Given the natural resilience of the brain, combined with proper diagnosis and management, most Marines who have suffered from

mTBI/concussion recover fully and experience a very high return to duty rate, explained Tarantino.

Marines, to include veteran Marines, whose medical record contains documentation that a prior mTBI/concussion was caused by enemy action since Sept. 11, 2001 – meeting the revised criteria – may submit a reclama through their original chain of command at the time of injury.

"The Marine Corps will continue to maintain the importance of the Purple Heart Medal at the same level as when it was first approved

for combat wounded Marines during World War II," said Freund.

Marines should refer to MARADMIN 245/11 for specific award criteria and reclama submission information at <http://www.marines.mil/news/messages/Pages/MARADMIN245-11.aspx/>.

Reclamas can be scanned and emailed to hqmc.manpower.ph_mTBI_reclama@usmc.mil (or sent via regular post to Commandant of the Marine Corps (MMMA), Headquarters Marine Corps, 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, VA, 22134-5103).



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Active and retired women Marines gather for a parting shot after a luncheon hosted by the 1st Marine Division Association, in Palm Desert, Calif., Saturday. Among the retirees in the group were World War II veterans.

LUNCH, from A5

Stacy Clardy III, the Combat Center's commanding general.

During her time at the podium, Mrs. Clardy echoed Bruno's thoughts on realizing how far women have come in the Corps, but also said it is important to remember that a Marine is a Marine, no

matter the gender.

"Any time anyone wants to recognize the accomplishments of women Marines, it is important, so long as it is done in a way that doesn't suggest they are any different," said the Albuquerque, N.M., native.

The luncheon was very successful in accomplishing that goal, she added,

saying she is very appreciative of what groups like the 1st MarDiv Association do for the Corps.

"What an organization like this does for the Marine Corps is just phenomenal," Mrs. Clardy said.

Sklar said the association hopes the number of attendees continue to rise in coming years.



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL N. JOHNSON

A 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion Marine sharpens his skills while an instructor looks on at range 104 April 28.



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL N. JOHNSON

Marines from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion receive their safety brief prior to attacking range 104 on April 28.

3RD LAR, from A4

explosive weapons that the Marines usually do not have the opportunity to practice with. The first weapon fired was the shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapon. Although a small amount of the Marines from this unit have been in the Marine Corps for more than two years, this was the first time they have fired the SMAW.

"[Firing] the SMAW is additional training that they may have not received in the School of Infantry," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Decarvalho, one of the unit's platoon sergeants.

Contrary to the belief that completing tasks without prior experience can often times result in a negative experience; Lance Cpl John Phillips, an RBE Marine who was just promoted from being an amphibious reconnaissance vehicle driver to a gunner, stated that although this was the first time firing the SMAW, the shoot was his "favorite" event of the day. Lance Cpl. Anthony Sword, another RBE Marine agreed, saying that "this is one of the most motivating training" days he has ever participated in.

After firing the SMAW, the Marines fired the AT-4; an 84mm unguided anti-tank

rocket launcher, and practiced throwing live grenades on the grenade range.

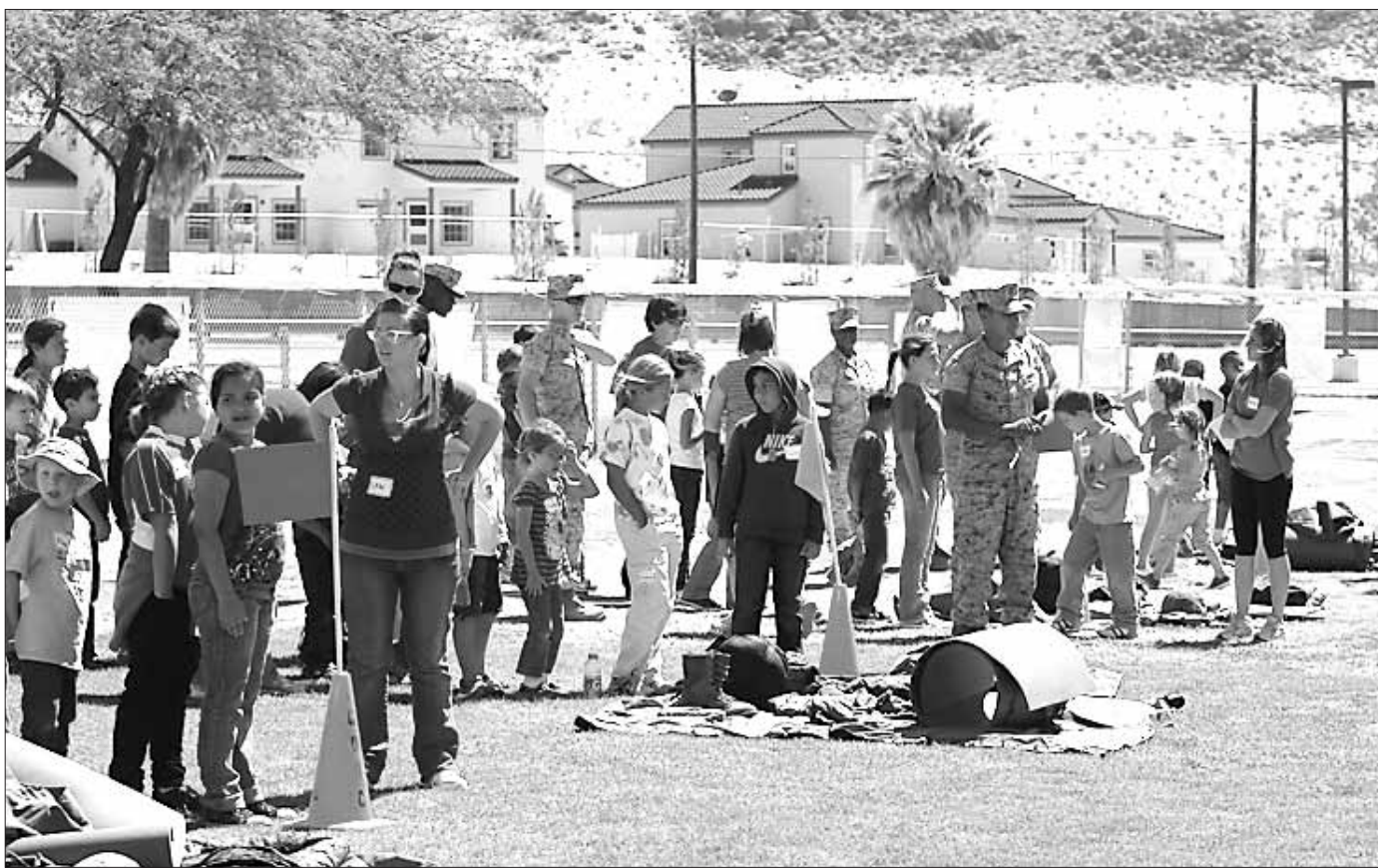
Although some of the Marines may not use these weapons during the upcoming deployment; Decarvalho said he believes that "Marines should be trained for any situation that may pop up, no matter what their [military occupational specialty] may be."

The Marines of 3rd LAR were focused and intent on becoming proficient in weapons that they do not normally use. In case a conflict occurs in the future, these Marines are confident they will perform masterfully.



LANCE CPL. JOSHUA C. SLONE

Combat Center children and their families look on as a military working dog and his handler demonstrate the dog's capabilities during the CAX for Kids event at Felix Field April 27.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Children of military families got ready for the sea bag drag at the CAX for Kids event at Felix Field April 27. The kids were divided into squads and raced to see who could pack a sea bag and drag it across the finish line first.

CAX, from A1

the Combat Center. The volunteers helped lead the kids in some of the competition, as well as demonstrated Marine Corps knowledge and how to perform the obstacle course.

The CAX taught the kids that they are not alone in their experiences and that there are always ways to deal with the stress of deployed love ones.

The organization plans two CAX for Kids events per year, and spaces fill fast. The sign-up for this CAX lasted two days before filling up. To ensure your child's spot in the next event, keep checking back on the L.I.N.K.S. page at <http://www.mccs29palms.com> for the next scheduled event.

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 more information call 830-5430.

ADVERTISEMENT

RIVER, from A3

projects, such as the Tengan River Cleanup, is vital for maintaining a healthy relationship with the communities surrounding military bases here, said Col. Robert C. Clements, commanding officer of Headquarters Battalion, 3rd MarDiv, and camp commander for Camp Courtney.

Many of the Marine volunteers said they thought the cleanup would be a simple walk along the riverbed picking up trash. They soon learned differently, as they were faced with clearing brush taller than themselves.

Removing the dense brush from sections of the Tengan River's banks helps reduce the potential for flooding because it allows more room for the river to

expand during rainfalls.

Clements said he participated in last year's cleanup and knew this would be a lot of hard work. Volunteers would have to slog through dense vegetation that must be cut down into brush and dragged away for disposal.

The amount of work to be done was surprising, but he was just here "to do good things," said Lance Cpl. Andrew Rubio Jr., with Headquarters Company, Headquarters Bn., 3rd MarDiv.

Private First Class Benjamin Cook, with Military Police Company, Headquarters Bn., agreed.

"I think it is a good thing we're doing, and I think the community would like it," Cook said.

Volunteering in the sur-

rounding community is not just good for the community and the relationship between the military and local government leadership, it is also beneficial for the Marines who

participate, Clements said.

"Most Marines who take part in these activities enjoy it immensely, and get more out of it than the local communities," he said.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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Combat Center Trader Ads

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

2008 TOYOTA YARIS. \$10,000 OBO. Approximately 58K miles. Good condition. Consistent maintenance. Call 622-4562.

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

2007 SUZUKI BOULEVARD. Black and chrome, 1600 CC, \$3,000 in extras included. Asking \$12,500. 401-3739.

2006 PONTIAC SOLSTICE. Fully loaded, excellent condition, 21,500 miles. \$13,500. Call 819-2773.

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DIAMONDBACK MOUNTAIN BIKE.

Like new. \$100. 413-4015.

COLLECTIBLE SPORTS, SCI-FI CARDS: Baseball, football from mid 80's to 90's. Star Trek and Star Wars collectible cards too. Individual heroes, team sets or make an offer on the whole collection. Call Stephen at 567-7921.

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 inci-

dental 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 DIETZ

Heather Lynch leaps into the arms of her fiancé, Cpl. Nic Doucette, immediately after he steps off the bus Sunday during the Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, homecoming at the 1st Tanks' compound.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Boys hold up signs for their returning Marine as they anxiously await his return shortly before the buses pulled up carrying the Marines and sailors of 1st Tank Battalion's Company B Sunday.

TANKS, from A1

them home," said Jany Wasdin, the family readiness officer for 1st Tank Battalion. "Their deployment went relatively smooth, and we are just happy to have them safe and sound."

Families traveled from all over the country to welcome their Marine or sailor home.

"I didn't want to miss it for anything," said Sammi Grello, sister of Lance Cpl. Richard Falconbury, a Marine with 1st Tanks. Grello came all the way from Knoxville, Tenn., with her son and sister to welcome her brother home. "We wanted to honor him for what he's done and we wanted someone to be here for him when he came back."

The excitement level at the 1st Tanks compound could not be matched as family and friends saw the buses approach with their Marine or sailor inside.

"It feels so good to be home," said Cpl. Jared Swartz, an ammunition technician with 1st Tanks, Co. B.

The company assisted 1st Combat Engineer Battalion in their seven-month tour by conducting route clearance missions, and finding and destroy-

ing improvised explosive devices to keep the vehicles and Marines in them safe as they travel.

On all accounts, the deployment was a successful one. Everyone came home safely and the company had no casualties, besides a few concussions during the deployment.

Although finished with their primary mission, the Marines and sailors of Co. B, said they still feel like they had more to do. As much as they missed their families, the process to "let go" when they were relieved of assignment was difficult.

"I have this feeling that our job isn't done," Swartz said. "When you are over there, you make it personal. It can be hard to give up what you were working on for the past seven months to someone else. You want to come home, but at the same time you hold onto [the mission] and want to see it through."

Swartz said he keeps in touch with the Marines and sailors who took over his position in Afghanistan to check up on them and see if everything is still going well.

The dog handlers of Co. B will be home next week, completing the company's homecoming.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Donna Doucette looks at her 5-year-old granddaughter, Alexis Huebner, as they both anxiously await the arrival of Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, who returned from Afghanistan Sunday.



Combat Center Challenge trophy goes to 2/7

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DIANE DURDEN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

The Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, were dubbed the ultimate champions and took the winner's trophy for the Combat Center Challenge April 29.

"The strategy for success for 2/7 is just constant determination," said Sgt. Maj. Michael Woods, the unit's battalion sergeant major.

The competition was extremely tough during the week-long challenge, which was sponsored by Marine Corps Community Services. Teams competed in a multitude of events for the coveted trophy, previously held by 1st Tank Bn.

Competition began April 26 when 10 teams teed off in a four-man scramble golf tournament at Desert Winds Golf Course. Headquarters Bn. took an early lead in the Challenge, winning the golf tournament with a score of 65.

Contestants gathered at the East Gym and Fitness Center that afternoon for the bench press competition. Participants had three chances to press their weights. The tone for the week's competition was set with teams from 2/7, HQBN and 1st Tanks taking first, second and third, respectively, with less than a pound's difference between them.

Multi-day tournaments in water polo, paintball and basketball also began that afternoon. Units entered teams in all events. Larger units entered multiple teams in some events, using as many teams as allowed by the letter of instruction published by MCCA.

"You have to play in order to win," said Staff Sgt. Juan Gonzalez, battalion ammunition chief, 1st Tank Bn.

Teams from 1st Tanks weren't the only ones confident last week.

"We're taking home the trophy to our sergeant major," said Cpl. William



Marines and sailors from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, triumphantly hold the Combat Center Challenge trophy at Felix Field April 29. The battalion won after competing against other units throughout the week in sporting events and battle skills.



Marines from 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, pull the rope one last time before the red flag crosses the line of victory at Felix Field during the final and winning event of the Combat Center Challenge April 29.



Lance Cpl. Caleb Walcott, a machine gunner with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, helps his teammates push a humvee during the Hummer Push competition at Felix Field April 29. The competition was part of the week-long Combat Center Challenge where units competed in various sporting events and battle skills.

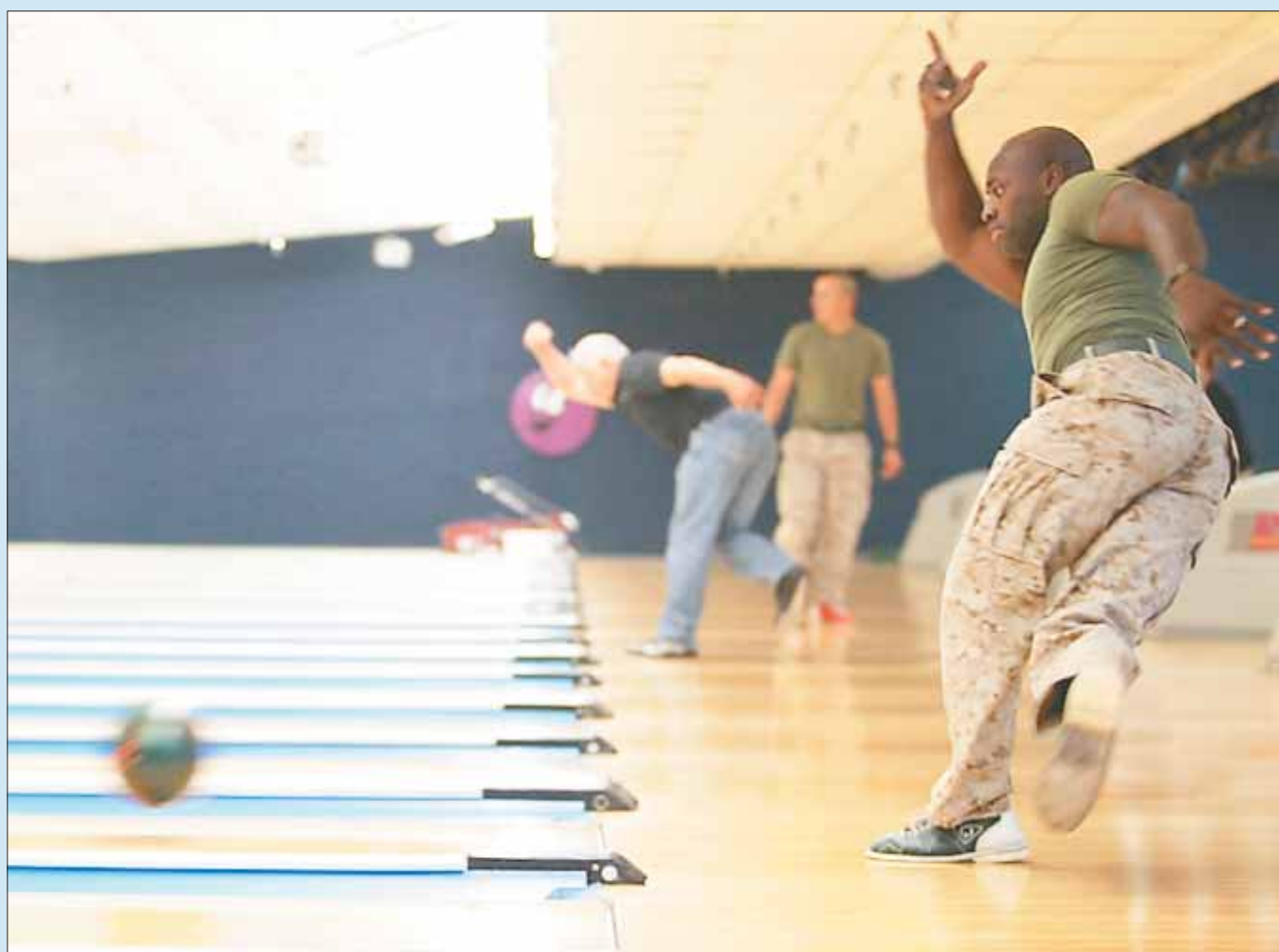
See 2/7, B4

Intramural Sports Updates



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Fred Merkel, a catcher with MCCES Red, slams the ball into the outfield to score a run during a Commanding General's Intramural Softball League game against 3/11 Wednesday.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Michael Haynes of the Freefallin Angels, follows through on his muscled roll at Sandy Hill Lanes bowling center during a Commanding General's Intramural Bowling League match Wednesday.



Liberty Call

Gripping Civil War drama spotlights aftermath of Lincoln assassination

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"The Conspirator"

Starring Robin Penn Wright, James McAvoy, Kevin Kline and Evan Rachel Wood
Rated PG-13

Robert Redford is much better known as an actor, but he directs rather than stars in "The Conspirator," a gripping dramatization of an event that happened just as the bloody Civil War was drawing to a close.

Robin Wright Penn gives a powerful performance as Mary Surratt, a boarding-house operator charged with conspiracy after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The shooter, John Wilkes Booth, had been known to hold clandestine meetings, attended by her son, in Mary's inn.

Mary's son, John, fled and evaded the dragnet of Booth's associates after



COURTESY PHOTO

"The Conspirator," is a gripping dramatization of an event that happened just as the bloody Civil War was drawing to a close. Robin Wright Penn gives a powerful performance as Mary Surratt, a boarding-house operator charged with conspiracy after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln's murder. But Mary was rounded up along with the other men, imprisoned and charged with treason.

Frederick Aiken (James McAvoy) is a Union army hero fresh off the battlefield and anxious to resume his law practice. He's none too pleased with being assigned Mary's public defender, but soon sees she's being railroaded.

He wants her to have a fair trial, not a government-sanctioned lynching. Kevin Kline plays Lincoln's hawkish Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who ominously intones that "someone must be held accountable" for the Chief of State's murder, even if it means bending judicial rules. Evan Rachel Wood is Mary's distraught daughter, Anna, called to account for her own connections to Booth.

Tom Wilkinson, who memorably portrayed Ben Franklin in the HBO series "John Adams," is Sen. Reverdy Johnson, a former Secretary of State who thinks the military trial of Mary, a civilian, is a perversion of the U.S. Constitution.

Stephen Root, a chameleon of a character actor with more than 150 movie and TV roles to his credit, has one brief, but solid scene as a former employee of Mary's. His unease on the witness stand

convinces Aiken his damaging testimony is tainted.

"The Conspirator" conveys the heaviness of its story and its setting – a torn nation desperate to heal the lingering wounds on both sides of its Mason-Dixon line.

At times it seems a bit heavy-handed and overly portentous, as if Redford is trying too hard to drive home the parallels to modern-day concerns about the differences between justice and revenge, especially in times of anxiety about war, tyrants, terrorism and rampant fear about enemies who strike from within.

But the movie avoids depicting Mary Surratt as a martyr, and it leaves the matter of her guilt or innocence deliberately murky. "Have you ever cared for anything greater than yourself?" she asks her young attorney, and it's unclear whether she's referring to the son her maternal instincts won't let her betray, or the Southern cause she may still support in her heart.

How this incident ends is a matter of record. But most viewers probably won't be familiar with Surratt's tale, making "The Conspirator" a riveting review of a fascinating historical footnote.



COURTESY PHOTO

Frederick Aiken, played by James McAvoy [left], is a Union army hero fresh off the battlefield and anxious to resume his law practice.

Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m., Ladies Night
Saturdays: Country Night with DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Monday: Free Gourmet Bar Food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Free gourmet bar food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7 to 9 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, 6 to 11 p.m.
Mondays: Steak night, 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.
Monday: Steak Night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Thursdays: Right Hand Man Night, 4:30 p.m.
Sunday: Mother's Day Brunch, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up:

An Evening with Jim Lauderdale

Description: The Americana/bluegrass band performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday, May 6

The Return of Mike Stinson

Description: The Americana/country/rock band performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 7
Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

Over the Wall

Description: The electronica/folk/pop band performs
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday, May 6

Ghost Train

Description: A new local band playing country/rock hits
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Saturday, May 7
Where: Willie Boys Saloon and Dance Hall, 50048 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley
For more information, call 363-3343 or visit <http://www.willieboys.com>.

"Barbecuing Hamlet"

Description: A small town attempts to produce "Hamlet"
When: 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday, May 6 and 7
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>

Lower Desert

Dionne Warwick

Description: The R&B legend performs her hits
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 14
Where: Spotlight 29 Casino Resort
46-200 Harrison Place, Coachella
For more information call 866-377-6829 or visit <http://www.spotlight29.com>.

The Moody Blues

Description: The classic rock band performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 14
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Earth, Wind and Fire

Description: The famous '60s R & B funk band performs
When: 8 p.m., Saturday, May 28
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

The Doobie Brothers

Description: The famous classic rock band performs
When: 6:45 p.m., Saturday, June 18
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, May 6

6 p.m. – Rango, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Battle: Los Angeles, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Paul, Rated R

Saturday, May 7

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee.** Yogi Bear, Rated PG
2 p.m. – Mars Needs Moms, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Rango, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Red Riding Hood, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Limitless, Rated PG-13

Sunday, May 8

2 p.m. – Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Sucker Punch, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – The Lincoln Lawyer, Rated R

Monday, May 9

7 p.m. – Battle: Los Angeles, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, May 10

7 p.m. – Red Riding Hood, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, May 11

7 p.m. – Rango, Rated PG

Thursday, May 12

7 p.m. – Mars Needs Moms, Rated PG



COURTESY PHOTO

Frederick Aiken, played by James McAvoy, is none too pleased with being assigned as Mary's public defender, but soon sees she's being railroaded. Robin Wright Penn plays Mary Surratt, whose inn was a meeting place for John Wilkes Booth and his conspirators.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Twentynine Palms' Theatre 29



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

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN**
EDITOR/PRESS CHIEF

Today marks a new era of Desert Detours (even though the previous "era" lasted merely weeks, and most of you just found out we had a Detours in the first place). You may have noticed a name change at the top of the article. The originator of Detours, Cpl. M.C. Nerl, is hanging up his uniform and heading home. From now on, Detours will rotate between all our writers. It's our sad attempt to replace the one and only Nerl. But, bear with us...

That being said, I decided to stay local this week and discovered a hidden treasure. I got a sneak peek into Theatre 29's newest play at the John Calver Theater, on the corner of Sullivan Rd. and Adobe Rd. in Twentynine Palms.

"Barbecuing Hamlet," a farce on William Shakespeare's original, written by Pat Cook, does literally that. I'm not going to go all spoiler alert on you, but chaps are involved. So are swords, neon orange electrical tape and a baseball bat-wielding, scene-stealing janitor. Also, the only time "to be or not to be" was uttered was when one character reminded Hamlet that he forgot to say it.

This could go two ways for Shakespeare lovers – you're either going to embrace it as a refreshing new twist, or you're going to hate it as a blasphemous travesty. I chose the former. Two thumbs-up from my point of view.

The new take on the classic also makes it a fun experience for those of you who ran from Shakespeare in high school, or those who think a "Hamlet" belongs on a dinner table and not a stage.

If you're expecting a melodramatic tragedy, you will be disappointed. It is

very much a comedy, and a well-acted one at that, with actors as eccentric and varied in personality as the characters they portray.

Now seems like a good time to mention that many of the players, including the male lead, are active duty, reserve or retired service members, installation employees and other members of the Combat Center community. One 1st Tanks Battalion Marine and his wife made working the play a family affair (even though he specifically asked not to be pointed out... which is specifically why I mentioned him). So, 1st Tanks readers, make sure to go out and support. Your brother is the one in suspenders and cuffed high-water jeans. :)

That brings me to another aspect of Theatre 29 that makes it a good candidate for some after-work fun.

Not only are there family-friendly plays to see, but auditions for upcoming plays are open to everyone. Even if you aren't the "spotlight" type, the producers can usually find something for everyone, from acting and building sets to sewing costumes and helping out as a stagehand.

The performance sched-



Hal, played by David Wu, shares a moment with his girlfriend, Margo, played by Lisa Goldman, after the characters' butchered production of "Hamlet" is pronounced a success by the other players during Theatre 29's "Barbecuing Hamlet." The play features an oddball crew of community actors who try to perform Shakespeare's classic with an Old West twist.

ules for each play run about a month. Factor in another a month or two beforehand for rehearsals, and that's a good chunk of time to make new friends and have a blast giving back to the community.

The facilities themselves are also pleasant. The theater is small, with comfortable seating and a well-maintained air conditioning system, making it the perfect escape from the outdoors during the desert summer. The two unisex restrooms were also very clean. The condition of the restrooms is a big deal to me, and many times, ends up

being a deal breaker.

"Barbecuing Hamlet" ran about two hours, including intermission. Even though a snack bar will be open before each show starts, I recommend sippy-cups and small snacks for fidgety children. But don't tell them I told you because outside snacks are generally not encouraged.

Tickets run between \$8 to \$12, and are available on the group's website at <http://www.theatre29.org>. Information and schedules for the current and upcoming shows are also available on the site.

The opening night of "Barbecuing Hamlet" has already sold out, but all other showings still have spaces left. The play runs May 6-June 4, with shows every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.; one show on Thursday, May 19, at 7 p.m.; and one matinee show Sunday, May 29, at 2:30 p.m.

I give Theatre 29 four out of five palms for several reasons, including how much there is to do, from watching plays to being in plays, and for how casual and comfortable theater is. But, mostly, the entertainment factor of "Barbecuing Hamlet" itself "played" the biggest "role" (pun intended).

One line in the play said it best – "Barbeque and Hamet, what a combination."



Mary Beth, played by Jessica Lomeli, swoons as Hope, played by Cheryl Gillon, steadies her. Mary Beth and Hope are "in character" for a play-within-a-play during Theatre 29's production of "Barbecuing Hamlet."



Lamar, played by Pete Henkel, clings to Theodora, played by Marty Meider, after he thinks the stage is infested with rats during Theatre 29's "Barbecuing Hamlet."

Editor's Note: "Desert Detours" is a weekly series exploring opportunities for Marines and sailors from a firsthand perspective. All mate-

rial 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.



Margo, the director of the play-within-the-play, played by Lisa Goldman, attempts to contain her frustration with her rag-tag cast as they spend more time arguing than rehearsing for their Old West rendition of Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

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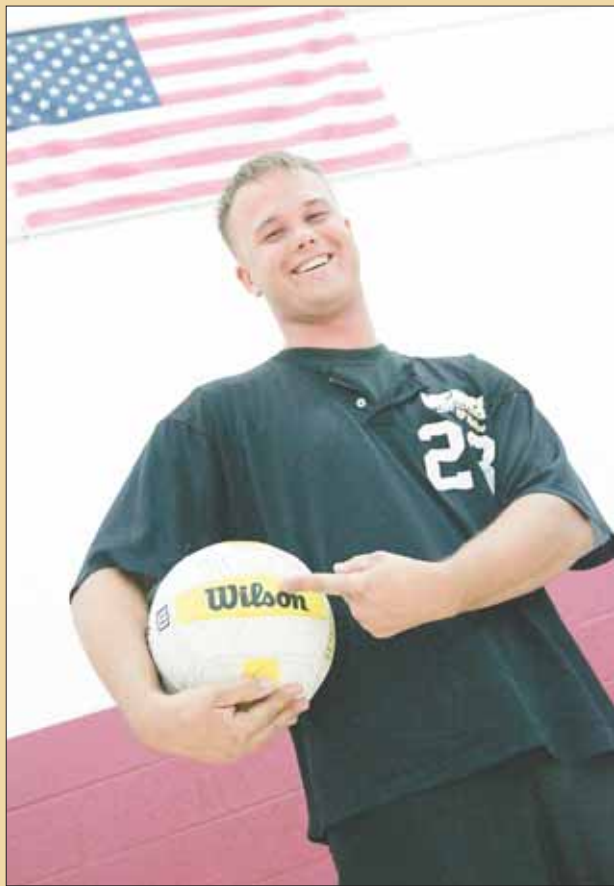


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Athlete of the Week



Name: Ben "Like Jack" Daniels

Unit: 3rd CEB

Hometown: Sheboygan, Wis.

Recognition: MVP for the 3rd CEB Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League team in their winning game against the Paper Cuts

What is your favorite part of the sport?: "It's a good workout, and it's a lot of fun."

Any advice for any aspiring athletes?: "Work hard, and don't give up."



DIANE DURDEN

Staff Sgt. Jason McConville, a tank mechanic with 1st Tank Battalion, attempts to block a pass by administrative specialist Lance Cpl. Jessilyn Yaeger, from Headquarters Bn., during the final match of the water polo tournament at the Training Tank April 28. Teams competed in the tournament as part of the Combat Center Challenge.



DIANE DURDEN

Administration specialist Cpl. Courtney Dye, with Headquarters Battalion, carries a Marine during the fireman's carry portion of the Combat Fitness Test competition. The CFT was one of several events units competed in during the Combat Center Challenge at Felix Field April 29.

2/7, from B1

Reimund, a machine gunner with 2/7. Reimund's team took first place in the volleyball tournament, with HQBN and 1st Tanks taking second and third.

Sports were not the only events teams competed in. The Zone hosted a "First to Fight" tournament.

"First to Fight" is a computer-based video game where players fight in simulated combat. Settings in the game allow players to see the impact alcohol and drug use have on their combat skills.

Communications technician Cpl. Ryan Sesler, from 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, was a last-minute addition to his team.

"I'm on light duty," Sesler said. "Playing [First to Fight] was the only way I could support the unit."

On the final day of competition at Felix Field, events moved away from sports to challenging the units' tactical skills. An M-16 assemble/disassemble relay, Combat Fitness Test and pull-up and sit-up competition were just a couple of events.

Teams continued to be neck-in-neck as they com-

pleted the Corpsman race, won by HQBN, and the Hummer Push, won by 1st Tanks.

Determining which of the top teams would earn the trophy came down to the final event, the Tug-of-War. Five teams competed in a double elimination tournament.

With one last tug of the rope, in a final match against Combat Logistic Battalion 7, the 2/7 team pulled the red flag across the line to victory.

An awards ceremony was the final event of the day. Kathleen Bourikas, the MCCS area coordinator, thanked everyone for their enthusiastic participation.

"Because of you, the entire event was a complete success," she said.

The Combat Center Challenge trophy, which has made its home with 1st Tanks for the past several years, was presented to 2/7's battalion commander Lt. Col. Donald Tomich by Col. George Aucoin, the Combat Center's chief of staff.

"Ready for all, yielding to none!" the 2/7 motto, could be heard across the field as the Marines and sailors held up their trophy proudly and carried it off to its new home for the next year.