

OBSERVATION POST

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Since 1957

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Leaders ready Marines for DADT repeal as training deadline nears



SGT. BEN J. FLORES

General James F. Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, sits in on a Senate hearing March 1. He testified before the Armed Services Senate Committee about the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" on Capitol Hill Dec. 3, 2010.

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Although Title 10 United States Code Section 654, more commonly known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," is still in effect in the Armed Forces, the Marine Corps is making sure all of its Marines are ready if and when it is repealed.

Execution for Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Marine Administrative Message 108/11, states that all tier 3

training and education must be completed by May 31.

The tier 3 training consists of a message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, and a standard presentation loaded with all the pertinent information on what to be ready for once the repeal is set in place. The training also provides vignettes, demonstration scenarios to clarify the policy and test Marines' decision-making abilities, accord-

ing to the rules and regulations after the repeal of DADT. The training is a requirement for all Marines, sailors assigned to Marine units and civilian supervisors.

The brief does not force anyone to change their beliefs, rather, its main purpose is to educate Marines on the repeal and its effects. It also emphasizes that discrimination against any Marine will not be tolerated.

See DADT, A8

Corps' financial aid programs make managing money easy

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Every day Marines, sailors and their spouses make choices, big and small, that can make or break their financial plans for years.

The Marine Corps has multiple financial aid programs available to help Marines, sailors and their families remedy financial problems or avoid them altogether.

While there are many ways to ruin one's finances and credit score, one pitfall stands out among the rest, said Sandra Little, the Combat Center's personal financial manager.

"They don't know where their money is," she said. The surefire way for Marines to get into financial trouble is "not keeping track with their expenses."

From the beginning of their careers, Marine are ingrained with the importance of accounting for weapons, gear and personnel. They should pay the same respect to their financial assets and know where their money is going, said Little.

When a Marine encounters an obstacle in combat or in life, they have to have a plan and take action. It is no different with money, said Little.

"The first thing [we are] going to do is set up a budget," she said.

This first step requires the Marine or sailor to be completely honest with the specialist about his or her spending habits. This conversation can also provide an eye-opener as to how much cash they actually have and how much they waste.

"What I find most of the time is that most of the money is there, but it is being spent frivolously," Little said. "Provided they stay on this budget that we are going to establish together, they are going to see this residual cash and start doing better things with it."

For individuals who spend responsibly but still need help right away, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is an emergency source that can offer help.

"We provide financial assistance and education for our Marines and sailors for any verifiable need," said Raymond Caldwell, director of the NMCRS aboard the Combat Center.

The NMCRS provides interest-free loans and grants for emergency transportation, funeral expenses, medical/dental bills (patient's share), food, rent, utilities, disaster relief

See MONEY, A5

The new breed



SGT. JESSE STENCE

Sergeant Steven Basham, a native of Hawesville, Ky., gathers with approximately 20 dog-handlers and improvised explosive device detection dogs throughout the RCT-1 battalions to conduct training at Camp Dwyer, Helmand province, Afghanistan, April. 13. Basham is the kennel supervisor with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. The dogs and their handlers received training in verbal and non-verbal commands, emergency and routine medical training, and the latest tactics for finding IEDs.

Corps unleashes Labs in counter-IED fight

SGT. JESSE STENCE
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 1

CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Afghanistan - The Marine Corps believes it has found the right dog for the counter-IED fight, but it's not the traditional military working dog.

It's a Labrador Retriever. Unlike the German Shepherd, which was carefully bred to herd sheep and fend off predators, the Labrador Retriever was bred to go fetch.

Originally created to help Canadian hunters catch game, today's typical Labrador is catching Frisbees. The energetic, yet even-tempered, canine has become arguably the most common household pet in the world.

Yet the Labrador remains an able hunter, and therefore a competent aid to Marines conducting the delicate search for makeshift explosives, say those familiar with the Marine Corps' counter IED efforts.

Sergeant Steven Basham, the kennel supervisor with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, said the Marine Corps began taking more interest in Labradors after an Auburn University study highlighted the breed's hunting instinct, disposition and the dog's ability to be controlled with whistles and arm signals.

Although some German Shepherds have been converted to "bomb dogs," they're more difficult to remotely control than the Labradors - a disadvantage in the current counterinsurgency environment.

"Bomb dogs were mainly created for the urban terrain, whereas the [Labradors] were meant to work off leash," explained Basham,

from Hawesville, Ky.

Typically, Marines push the Labradors out front during patrols, Basham said. Labradors can smell 17 different odors associated with homemade explosives, and the dogs' noses can sometimes detect what the Marines' combat metal detectors can't, he explained.

With its unique abilities, the Labrador has created a tactical niche for itself within the Corps' counter-IED strategy. The trained Labradors are officially called IED Detection Dogs, and Marine Corps Systems Command has designated a program manager to further incorporate the IDD's into coun-

terinsurgency operations.

Lieutenant Col. Kenneth Burger, the program manager, said the IDD force is already slated to increase from 315 to 647 dogs.

"The first handler course that reflects the increase in IDDs started April 9, 2011, but will not be realized in-theater until September 2011, when the first unit will deploy with an increased number of dogs," said Burger, from Tacoma, Wash. "The number of IDDs deployed will go from some 130 to approximately

See DOGS, A6

Healthy-eating kid wins big at Commissary



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

On May 4, Cyndy Fuels, the store manager, and Steve Haas, a produce manager at the Combat Center's Commissary, presented a bike to 12-year-old Jessica Fairfield, daughter of Larry Fairfield, a retired Navy veteran, in celebration of Nutrition Month and the National Month of the Military Child. Jessica was one of 35 children who turned in a record of fruits and vegetables they ate during April. The commissary staff set up a display to educate patrons on the importance of nutrition.



CPL. SEAN P. CUMMINS

Lance Cpl. Trevor M. Smith, a 20-year-old combat tracker dog handler from Myrtle Beach, S.C., with II Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Task Force 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, taunts Grek, a German Shepherd. Laborador Retrievers will soon replace German Shepherds when searching for improvised explosive devices and tracking down the insurgents who made them.

TRICARE program for dependents to age 26

BRIAN P. SMITH

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

What are the TRICARE choices for a college student who turns 23? What about for 21-year-olds who lost their eligibility due to age? These young adults now have an option for TRICARE coverage.

TRICARE Young Adult

TRICARE Young Adult is medical and pharmacy coverage for dependents. An eligible enrollee has a TRICARE-eligible sponsor, is unmarried, is not yet 26 years old and is not eligible for their own employer-sponsored healthcare coverage. Each enrollee pays a monthly premium (\$186). Eligibility, coverage, cost and enrollment information is at trwest.com/TYA.

Coverage

TRICARE Young Adult currently provides the same coverage as TRICARE Standard. The sponsor's status will determine the catastrophic cap, deductible and cost shares. Dental coverage is not included.

Cost

A payment covering the first three monthly premiums (\$558 total) is required with the initial enrollment. Automatic recurring monthly payments by credit/debit card or electronic fund transfer are required. You can set up recurring payments on the enrollment application.

Premiums may not be paid via sponsor's allotment. TRICARE Young Adult Premiums cannot be combined or paid with the sponsor's other TRICARE premium or fee. Bill payments set up and made through a bank will not be accepted.

Enrollment

1. Download and fill out the TRICARE Young Adult Application (trwest.com/TYA).

2. Choose a coverage start date – either the first day of the next month (or the first date of a month up to 90 days in the future) or a date in the past (retroactive or continuous coverage).

• Submit (see step 4) the enrollment form with premium payment to TriWest before May 31 and you can request a May 1 or June 1 start date for coverage. Beginning June 1, you have to submit the application and payment the by the last day of the month before coverage starts.

• The first date of a month up to 90 days in the future.

3. Print the application. The young adult enrollee must sign and date the application.

4. Submit the signed application along with premium payment to TriWest.

• Fax: 1-866-259-0419; Mail: TriWest Healthcare Alliance, PO Box 43315, Phoenix, AZ 85080-3315; or submit at a TRICARE Service Center.

Coverage retroactive to Jan. 1 (or the first date of eligibility if after Jan. 1) is available during initial enrollment. If purchasing retroactive coverage, you will have to pay the monthly premiums dating back to the start of your retroactive coverage in addition to the initial three-month premium payment. Retroactive coverage will not be available for enrollments after Sept. 30.

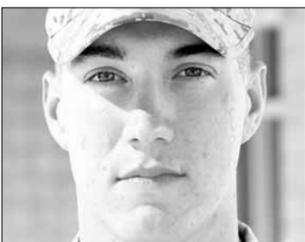
In October 2011, a TRICARE Young Adult Prime option will be available. Enrollment into this option will also require a monthly premium.

Want to stay updated with TRICARE Young Adult information? Follow us at <http://www.facebook.com/TriWest> for all things TRICARE – including the Young Adult program.

Centerspeak

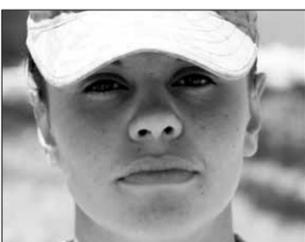
Marines congratulate their Class of 2011 graduates.

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



LANCE CPL. ROBERT SMITH
1ST BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT

“To my friend Blake, graduating from Olivet College in Olivet, Mich. – “Congratulations for graduating from college. Good luck becoming an officer in the Marines.”



LANCE CPL. YVETTE CERNA
HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

“To my sister Sofia, graduating from Hobbs High School, Hobbs, N. M. – “Congratulations! I'm proud of you. I knew you could make it through.”



LT. COL. JEFF JOHNSON
MOJAVE VIEVER SUPPORT DETACHMENT

“To my son Gunnar, graduating from the sixth grade at South Junior High School, Saint Cloud, Minn. – “Congratulations! Good luck in baseball.”

Hot Topics

MARINE SECURITY GUARD SCREENING

Headquarters Marine Corps and the Marine Security Guard Screening Team will screen Marines for MSG duty June 3 at 8 a.m. at the Protestant Chapel, bldg 1541. The team will play a video and give a presentation. For more information, see your unit's career planner.

AEROBICS MARATHON

The East Gym and Fitness Center will host an Aerobics Marathon May 18. Spend the whole day or participate in any number of classes. Prize giveaways will be at the end of each class. Participants are encouraged to bring water and towels. For times and event information, call 830-3381.

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.

Marine Corps History

May 10, 1945

The 22nd Marine Regiment, 6th Marine Division, executed a pre-dawn attack south across the Asa River Estuary and seized a bridgehead from which to continue the attack toward Naha, the capital of Okinawa.



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 #2173

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

OPUS 1000

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

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66						67									68

ACROSS

1. "Quiet on the ___!"
4. Former West Coast NFLers
10. Toy pistol ammo
14. Numero ___ (first-rate)
15. Shoelace hole
16. Lhasa ___ (Tibetan dog)
17. 1993 Jeremy Irons movie
19. Shoe-shiner's application
20. Prefix with dynamic
21. Gobble up
22. ___-El (Superman's birth name)
23. Spock, Sulu, McCoy, et al., to the Enterprise
26. Make ashamed
29. 1977 Ron Howard movie
33. "... the grace of God ___"
34. On sabbatical
35. ___ Paulo, Brazil
36. Dental woe
39. Schlepper
41. Weight-and-fortune cost, once
42. US/Canada's ___ Canals
43. Campus mil. org.
44. Equi- relative
46. Self-righteous
51. "Maria ___" ('40s hit)
52. She flaunted a conical-cupped bra
54. In a blue funk
55. SHO rival
57. Fam. tree folks
58. Where to order a stack
60. DJ who dubbed himself "The Fifth Beatle"
63. Philandering fellow
64. "M*A*S*H" prioritizing system
65. Theory suffix
66. Etta of old comics
67. Like a fence's goods
68. Taoism founder

DOWN

1. Poison ivy relative
2. Sports casting great
3. Musician on the road
4. Net-touching serve
5. Yeoman's "yes"
6. Lease again
7. Autostrada auto, for short
8. Disappear à la the Wicked Witch
9. Pig's digs
10. Cantaloupe kin
11. Sign flashed in TV studios
12. Air pump abbr.
13. Sufferer of the d.t.'s
18. Wrecker's fee
22. "K-K-K-___"
24. Telephonic 6 trigram
25. Tabloid staffer
27. Getz of jazz
28. Gibson of old oaters
30. Concoct, as a plot
31. Meadow mom
32. Hot breakfast fare
36. Queens's Arthur ___ Stadium
37. Partner of calm and collected
38. Sinks one's putt
40. Baseball's "Master Melvin"
41. Abbott, to Costello
43. Crack the books
45. Benchmark: Abbr.
47. Peeved
48. Not knowing right from wrong
49. ___ wonder (musical flash in the pan)
50. Except if
53. "Don't ___!" ("I haven't the foggiest!")
55. On the disabled list
56. Con ___ (vigorously)
58. Rankle
59. Weed whacker
60. McKinley, Hood, et al.: Abbr.
61. Improve, as whiskey
62. Cash on the Ginza

Combat Center Spotlight

Name: Cpl. Edward Bravo
Hometown: Las Vegas
Unit: Training Tank, Headquarters Battalion
Job title: Life Guard Manager
Job duties: Supervising lifeguards to make sure they monitor the water.
What are some interesting things about you?: "In my off time I train dogs, and I am certified by the American Kennel Club as a Canine Citizen Evaluator."
How did you get your job?: "I was FAP'ed out [Fleet Assistance Program] to the Tank from 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, in August of last year."
What do you like most about your job?: "Stepping in there and pulling someone out or resuscitating someone who drowned. That makes it all worthwhile."
What is the weirdest/funniest thing that has happened in your job?: "The funniest thing was experiencing the aquatic levels of the Marines. A Marine started to think that he was drowning and was asking me to pull him out. I told him when he started drowning, I would. So he grabbed his neck and started making the choking



sound. I ended up assisting him for the rest of the swim qual and he passed just fine."
Significant achievements: Certifies Marines and civilians as lifeguards.
Hobbies: Dog training, hiking and camping.
Time at Combat Center: Three years, 11 months
Time in the Military: Four years, nine months

OBSERVATION POST

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Story time at Combat Center Library

STAFF SGT. LYNDEL N. JOHNSON

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Parents with children ages 3 to 5 may notice that keeping their loved ones sitting in one location for an extended period of time can be a difficult task. Every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., the Lifelong Learning Library capitalizes on this energy and turns it into an educational experience with a program called Story Time.

Story Time is a hidden jewel that not only is a scholastic experience, but a fun one as well. When most

people hear the words "story time," the sight of children sitting in a circle listening to a teacher read a story comes to mind. Although this may occur at the Lifelong Learning Library, this is only part of the experience. To develop a love of reading in Combat Center children, the library developed a program that stimulates cognitive learning. Their intent is to teach these future leaders of America to learn by combining several activities such as reading, touching, watching and listening.

Using this unique teaching style, the children believe they

are just playing instead of learning. According to Shannon Dombkowski, her daughter loves the activities so much that she "sings all the songs at home, and asks to go to the library every day."

At times, the classes are small because many parents are unaware of the program. Ursula Morales, the program coordinator, is working to bring more visibility to Story Time aboard the Combat Center.

Mary Salas, wife of Sgt. Victor Salas, a squad leader at Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, said she was searching for a program for her daughter Mya Salas, and didn't know Story Time existed. She attended the program after being "invited" to the event by a friend.

When asked if Mya liked the event, she smiled and said that she wished Story Time was available "every day of the week."



Madison Dombkowski, daughter of Staff Sgt. Richard Dombkowski, an instructor at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, enjoys Story Time.



Story Time brings smiles to the faces of the children at the Lifelong Learning Library May 10.



Participants of the Lifelong Learning Library's Story Time have fun while learning.

Deployed Marines congratulate graduates via video

DIANE DURDEN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Two Twentynine Palms High School seniors received special congratulatory video messages from their deployed fathers, Tuesday during the school's senior banquet.

First Sgt. Marcus Chestnut and Sgt. Maj. Peter Cooper are both deployed to Afghanistan, and were unable to attend their children's graduation ceremonies. With the help of technology and caring people back home, they were able to be

there in some way and bring a smile to their children's faces.

Surrounded by friends and classmates, Dromynique Chestnut heard his name announced over the loud speaker. The expression on his face quickly moved from surprise to happiness as he watched and listened to a video from his dad, who is the first sergeant for Combat Logistics Battalion 7.

"Congratulations! Job well done!" said Chestnut in a video produced in Afghanistan. Chestnut is serving at Camp

Dwyer on a 7-month deployment in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"My dad surprised me," said Dromynique after watching the video with his classmates.

Classmate Kirsten Cooper received a similar greeting from Afghanistan. Kirsten was not able to attend the banquet. However, she did see and hear her father's message with friends and school personnel earlier that day.

"I need you to know that your dad is overwhelmed with pride and joy," said Kirsten's dad, Sgt. Maj. Peter Cooper, the squadron sergeant major of Marine Attack Squadron 513, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

Like most children of military members, Dromynique has grown accustomed to his father being deployed and not being able to attend special occasions. His absence is never easy, he said.

"I feel empty when he's gone," said Dromynique sadly. But it was obvious the video helped to fill that void, because talking about it and seeing his Dad brought a smile to his face.



DIANE DURDEN

Dromynique Chestnut, son of 1st Sgt. Marcus Chestnut, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, watches a video of his dad congratulating him on graduating from high school. The video was played during a banquet held at Twentynine Palms High School, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Tuesday to honor the graduating class of 2011. Chestnut is serving on a 7-month deployment to Afghanistan and will not be able to attend his son's graduation ceremony.



DIANE DURDEN

Dromynique Chestnut, son of 1st Sgt. Marcus Chestnut, Combat Logistics Battalion 7, smiles at a video of his dad congratulating him on graduating from high school during a banquet Tuesday.

California UAV squadron takes over in southwestern Afghanistan

CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FWD)

CAMP DWYER, Afghanistan – A new Marine Corps unmanned aerial vehicle squadron took responsibility for supporting Marines and coalition troops in



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

Corporal Christopher Jones, an unmanned aerial vehicle technician with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, and a native of East Hartford, Conn., operates the controls of a RQ-7B Shadow UAV, preparing it for launch from Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, April 30.

southwestern Afghanistan with aerial surveillance, May 7.

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, deployed out of Twentynine Palms, Calif., will now provide Marine Corps UAV support in Nimroz and Helmand provinces using the RQ-7B Shadow and Boeing ScanEagle UAVs.

“I believe we provided a good changeover for VMU-3 to set them up for success,” said Lt. Col. Mikel R. Huber, the commanding officer of VMU-2. “I hope they take everything we worked for and build upon it.”

With turnover complete, the outgoing squadron, VMU-2, will prepare to return home to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C.

“The Marines did a great job out here,” said Huber. “Now it’s time to go home so the Marines can take some much deserved rest.”

VMU-3, established in 2008, is one of the youngest squadrons in the Marine Corps, but has already completed one deployment to Afghanistan.

“We want to show and demonstrate the capabilities of our new squadron and the Shadow,” said VMU-3 executive officer Maj. Matt L. Walker, a native of Breckenridge, Colo. “We’ve got a great team of Marines, from our most junior Marines to our commanding officer, to do this.”

Though the squadron is one of the newest in the Marine Corps, the VMU-3 leadership said professional experience will help provide support to grunts on the ground.

“I have deployed five other times using UAVs,” said Sgt. Chad D. John,

an unmanned aerial vehicle operator with VMU-3, and a native of Shiprock, N.M. “I used an older UAV, the Pioneer, before I operated the Shadow. This new UAV has great capabilities and offers great support for the troops on the ground.”

To help prepare for their deployment, VMU-3 vehicles logged more than 800 hours in training, including working with Marine Corps ground units slated to deploy.

“We did a lot of training prior to coming out here,” said the VMU-3 squadron sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. James Lee Johnson, Jr., a native of El Paso, Texas. “A lot of units we trained with are deploying here. We were able to establish working relationships and rapport with them to better support their missions.”

Headquartered at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, deployed Marine Corps UAV squadrons use small, light-weight vehicles that are able to stay in the air for several hours to supply Marines and their coalition partners with aerial information throughout combat missions.

Additionally, Marine Corps unmanned aerial vehicle intelligence analysts within the UAV squadrons provide real-time aerial surveillance for troops on the ground using the ScanEagle and the RQ-7B Shadow unmanned aerial vehicles.

Connect with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) throughout the deployment. Stay up to date with the latest 2nd MAW (Fwd.) news, photos and videos at <http://www.facebook.com/2ndmawfwd>.



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

Corporal Christopher Jones, an unmanned aerial vehicle technician with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, prepares an RQ-7B Shadow UAV for launch from Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, April 30. The squadron, which deployed out of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., assumed the duties of providing UAV support in the Nimroz and Helmand provinces, May 7.

SJA CORNER

Estate planning options for parents

CAPT. SHANNON MAWSON

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Every parent wants to make sure their child is taken care of in the event of the parent's passing.

Giving property in a will is fairly simple to do. However, when the recipient is a minor child, there are important options a parent should consider.

A child cannot receive property until they have reached the age of majority. For most states, that's 18. In the mean time, an adult must hold the property for the child.

Two common options to hold property for a minor child in a will are: (1) a trust, or (2) the Uniform Gift to a Minor Act (UGMA) and the Uniform Transfer to a Minor Act statute (UTMA) which is an extension of UGMA. There are benefits to both options. Parents should consider what they believe will be in the best interest of their child when making this choice.

Essentially, a testamentary trust is its own legal entity and is created in a person's will. Real estate, money, life insurance policies and SGLI benefits are some of the more common types of property used to fund a trust. The trustee is a person designated in the will to oversee the managing of those properties for the beneficiaries. Trusts can last as long or as short as you want them to last. With a trust, you can give your trustee the discretion to decide when to make distributions and how much. The property and value can also grow for the future benefit of your children and their children. You have the ability to set a predetermined time or event when the trust expires, such as when minor beneficiaries reach a specified age or achieved a milestone in their life, such as completing an educational goal.

With a UGMA/UTMA provision, the custodian maintains all the property held in custodian accounts and must distribute the property outright to the children when they turn the age of majority. Most states have set the age of majority for a UGMA to be 18 and a UTMA to be 21. Like a testamentary trust, a UTMA provision can be written into a will for the benefit of minor children. A UTMA is a very inexpensive way to hold assets for a minor, whereas a trust can become very expensive to maintain. The key difference with a UGMA/UTMA is the testator/testatrix has no ability to control how and when the assets are to be distributed to the beneficiary. Once the minor reaches the specified age of majority, they are to receive all assets held in the UGMA/UTMA account outright.

The key question an individual with minor children should ask themselves is: “What are the end results I want to see for my child to receive my estate?”

If the answer to this question is the parent just wants their children to receive their estate with minimal costs incurred, then a UGMA/UTMA provision would be the best option.

However, if the person wants to ensure that their children are mature enough to manage a large amount of money before receiving it, then a testamentary trust would be more appropriate.

The Legal Assistance Office can provide further information on these options and how to implement them with a will and SGLI. Call 830-6111 to set up an appointment.



Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in the **Observation Post Classified section**

MARADMIN brings big changes to reenlistments

**LANCE CPL.
CHRISTOPHER P. BAINES**
HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

ARLINGTON, Va. – Recent changes in reenlistment procedures will help the Marine Corps identify and retain only the most qualified Marines by approving them through selection boards.

Marine Corps Administrative Message 273/11, guidance to all Marines implemented May 5, outlines the new competitive reenlistment

procedures, which can affect Marines in both First and Subsequent Term Alignment Plans, though first term Marines will feel the biggest impact. First term Marines are those serving in their first enlistment, whereas subsequent term Marines are those who have already reenlisted.

For fiscal year 2012, beginning Oct. 1, the system will change from the standard commander's recommendation to a career planner's tool with four ratings,

which will allow commanders to evaluate the Marines based on their performance and eligibility to take on a boatspace, or designated slot, for fast-filling military occupational specialties.

"A fast-filling MOS is when there are more reenlistment submissions than available FTAP boatspaces," said Lt. Col. Michael Landree, head of Enlisted Retention and Career Counseling Section, Manpower Management, Enlisted Assignments, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. "In order to determine which Marines receive these boatspaces, we conduct a board to reenlist the most qualified Marines."

The highest rating, Tier 1, is for Marines with outstanding performance records, whereas Tier 4 is for Marines closer to the minimum standards for reenlistment. Marines will be evaluated against others in the same military occupational specialty and year group, or the shared year those Marines entered the Corps.

Some Marines will also have the option to perform a lateral move into a highly technical, high demand, low density MOS, such as counterintelligence or explosive ordnance disposal.

"Headquarters Marine Corps will evaluate Marines based upon their education



SGT. JESSE J. JOHNSON

First Lieutenant Matthew T. Hawkins, Company L Executive Officer, delivers the Oath of Enlistment to Cpl. Tan Dulongphant, during a reenlistment ceremony held on the foc'sle aboard USS Carter Hall in the Mediterranean Sea, Sept. 15, 2010.

and training scores, and match them with highly technical MOSs that they qualify for," said Landree. "This gives Marines greater options when reenlisting rather than just their primary MOS."

In addition, the reenlistment window has been expanded to 90 days. It now begins July 1 and ends Sept. 30.

For more information, Marines should contact their unit's career planner.

To read the new policy, see MARADMIN 273/11 at <http://www.marines.mil/news/messages/Pages/MARADMIN273-11.aspx/>.



STAFF SGT. JENNIFER BROFER

Sgt. Joshua Shoda, an explosive ordnance disposal technician for 1st EOD Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), recites the Oath of Enlistment during a reenlistment ceremony aboard Forward Operating Base Jackson in Sangin, Afghanistan, Sept. 18.



PFC. FRANKLIN E. MERCADO

Petty Officer 3rd Class Stephen Mitchell, a corpsman with Combat Logistics Regiment 27, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, finalizes his reenlistment package and is congratulated aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 10, 2011.

MONEY, from A1

assistance, childcare expenses, essential vehicle repairs and unforeseen family emergencies, Caldwell said.

The organization even has its own squad of financial counselors who are familiar with life in the Corps and are eager to help.

The organization should not be used as a personal piggybank whenever someone is simply running low on cash.

"If a Marine has a need, then he will have to bring certain documents to prove the need," he said. "Loans and grants are given on a case-by-case basis."

Improper financial management can affect not only personal goals, but can also have a negative impact on professional ones, too.

Security clearances, including something as simple and universally necessary as the certificates required to use a

common access card, are some of the most common ways Marines can be affected, Caldwell said.

When Marines and sailors apply for their security clearance or to receive credentials, they receive a background check from the Department of the Navy Central Adjudication Facility. The DONCAF looks into multiple security problems, including the applicant's financial history.

Since the start of 2010,

79 percent of the investigations for security clearances denied or revoked were related to poor financial responsibility, said Michael Sanford, the Combat Center's security manager. This could mean losing a job or being denied a lateral move into another job.

"If they are in a [military occupation specialty] required to handle classified material, they will have to be removed [to another MOS,]"

Sanford said.

Staff Sgt. Robert Shake, a Marine Awaiting Training staff noncommissioned officer with Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School, stressed the connection of personal finance and Marine Corps values.

"Anything we do should represent our Marine Corps values," he said.

Before making any major financial decisions, Little recommended consulting a finan-

cial specialist. These major decisions can include marriage, renting or buying a home, buying a car or any other major purchases that might require applying for a loan.

For more information or to set an appointment for financial counseling, contact Little at 830-7342. For more information on the NMCRS, visit their website at <http://nmcrs.org> or call the Combat Center's NMCRS office at 830-6323.

Motorcycle season has arrived

CMC SAFETY DIVISION

Spring is here, and summer is rapidly approaching. This means one thing - motorcycle riding season has arrived.

The majority of Marine Corps motorcycle mishaps and fatalities are still occurring on sport bikes, and although we have come a long way, there is still work to be done.

This means the Marine Corps will continue to focus our training and education efforts in this area. Many of our motorcycle fatalities involve excessive speed, loss of control or impact with other vehicles. The primary causal factors are often the rider's lack of training or riding experience. Although some

riders have all of the right training, and personal protective equipment, mishaps occur when riders are too confident on their bikes. Every motorcycle rider must know their own limits on a bike, regardless of experience, training or skill level. We must all continue to reinforce the importance of motorcycle safety, training, and mentorship programs.

Reckless behavior often triggered by other stressors is also becoming a serious concern. Marines with other significant stressors in their lives such as relationship troubles, going through a divorce, or Marines pending separation may be more likely to make a reckless decision on a motorcycle or behind the wheel of a car.

It is critical that leaders at all levels continue to mentor and educate Marines to keep them aware of the risks involved each and every time they get on a motorcycle.

Dangerous Practices on a Motorcycle

- Lane splitting, although legal and a common practice in California, can be very dangerous. When choosing to split lanes, all riders should consider the consequences. However, other drivers need to remember that lane splitting IS legal in California, so please respect riders' rights, especially with the long lines to enter the installation's gates.

- Texting, cell phones, and iPods can be dangerous distractions to motorcycle riders. Watch out for drivers -

not watching out for you!

- Stunting and other foolishness on the road will not be tolerated. If interested in these types of activities, take it to the track or other sanctioned events. Perform stunts and tricks in a controlled environment with appropriate support. The street is not the place to test your limits - take it to the track.

- Marines should always wear an approved motorcycle helmet when on a motorcycle. The Marine Corps does not have any other recognized helmet law or order, there are NO exceptions for any Marine, no matter what the state residency or duty status is.

Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

Marine Corps Motorcycle Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements are:

- Department of Transportation-approved helmet; eye protection, full face shield or approved motorcycle glasses or goggles; full fingered gloves;



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Bikers with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment weave their way through Joshua Tree National Parks winding roads during 2/7's first motorcycle ride Sept. 10.

long sleeves; long pants; and over-the-ankle footwear. Remember, dress for the crash - not for the ride.

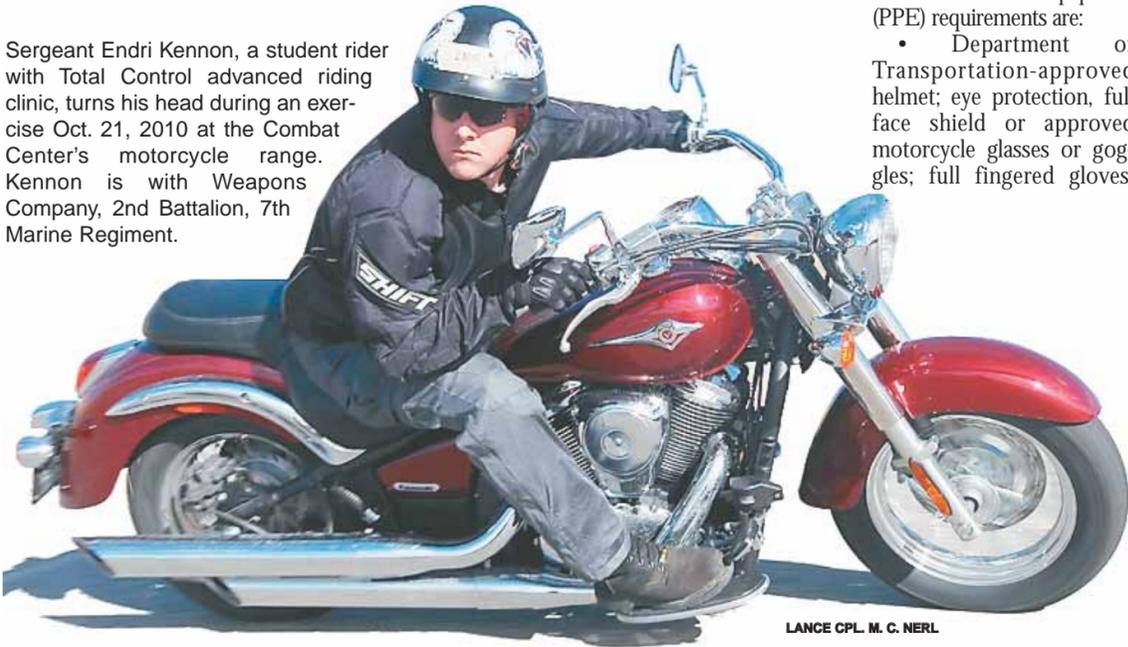
- Off-road riders shall adhere to all PPE requirements above with additional items such as approved riding boots and shin guards. Chest protectors, neck restraints and other addition-

al protection measures. These are highly encouraged.

- New motorcycle safety course graduates from the Basic Riders Course, the Experienced Riders Course and the Advanced Riders Course, are eligible for a 25 percent off motorcycle PPE

See BIKE, A7

Sergeant Endri Kennon, a student rider with Total Control advanced riding clinic, turns his head during an exercise Oct. 21, 2010 at the Combat Center's motorcycle range. Kennon is with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment.



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL



LANCE CPL. M. C. NERL

Student riders working at a Total Control advanced riding clinic wait to execute proper turning techniques Oct. 21, 2010, at the Combat Center's motorcycle range. The students are service members aboard the Combat Center.

DOGS, from A1

285. A typical infantry battalion that used to get 13 dogs will now get 34."

Not only is the program increasing in size, it's increasing in sophistication.

Burger said the Marine Corps is signing on more field service representatives to provide ongoing training to the canines and their handlers.

"In conjunction with the increase in IDD, each unit receiving IDDs will also be

given a FSR who will not only train in the [U.S.] with the unit, but will deploy with them as well," Burger said.

The FSRs are necessary because dog handlers receive limited training, Burger said. Traditional han-

dlers attend a formalized Department of Defense school to earn a secondary military occupational specialty, whereas IDD handlers receive about five weeks of basic instruction and four weeks of integration training with their unit. The training is simply designed to give the handlers basic skills without interfering with their pre-deployment training, he said.

"Due to the limited training the IDD handlers receive, FSRs become very important, as they provide oversight on in-theater training and can conduct in-theater homemade explosive imprinting."

"Our FSR requirement has increased dramatically," added Burger. "Where we once had three FSRs in theater supporting the IDD program, we'll now grow to 12: one per unit with IDDs, and two at [each Regimental Combat Team]. This increase will not go into effect until Sept. 11, on par with the increase of IDDs in theater."

Currently, two private contracting companies conduct this specialized instruction, American K-9 Interdiction, based out of Carrsville, Va.; and K2 Solutions, Inc., Southern Pines, N.C.

"The IDDs undergo 14 weeks of training prior to being presented for certifi-

cation. However, even upon certification, the dogs and handlers must continuously train to maintain proficiency and conditioning," Burger said.

"Full unit integration training occurs during the unit's participation at Enhanced Mojave Viper, [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.]," Burger said. "Prior to deployment, handlers will also participate in one week of refresher training."

According to Burger, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to show the program is helping in the counter-IED fight; however, because the program is new, progress is difficult to quantify.

"We have just recently begun to receive qualitative data on a monthly basis that provides a correlation between the number of patrols with IDDs and the number of IED finds," he said. "We continue to try to improve the reporting process and how to adequately determine IDD success."

Basham said Marines should remember that there is no perfect solution to IEDs. Just as metal detectors can't detect non-metallic bomb parts, dogs may not be able to smell trouble every time.

However, as the counter-IED fight evolves, the Corps has yet another weapon to unleash.

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.

BIKE, from A6

coupon good at any Marine Corps Exchange. Coupons are received from the instructor upon completion of applicable training. Recipients must have Exchange privileges and successfully complete an installation-sponsored motorcycle safety course.

Motorcycle Training Requirements

- All Combat Center motorcycle riders must have a valid motorcycle endorsement or license to operate any motorcycle on all public roads or highways.

- Within 120 days of completing the BRC, all riders must attend the next level of training, (e.g. the ERC or ARC.) Ideally, advanced training should be completed immediately after the BRC – the sooner the better!

- All riders must complete follow on, continual

education and training every three years.

- All motorcycle riders should become active members in a command sponsored motorcycle mentorship program or club.

- Off - Road Riders - Use the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Dirt Bike course for beginners, seek other advanced training as your skills develop, and appropriate PPE is required.

Other Training Considerations

- The course curriculum of all MSF courses is universal. (e.g. installation sponsored classes, other DoD services sponsored MSF courses, or local community college courses.)

- Advanced Rider Track Day is intended to help riders understand the limitations of their bikes and themselves, as riders. It can be used to meet the three year refresher training requirement; however it is NOT Level III training and does not qualify the rider to be a mentor.

- There are no additional classes, training, or courses required between installations beyond proof of successful completion, such as a signed MSF completion card, a card or completion certificate for advanced training or other training approved by CMC Safety Division.

- Check with your insurance provider for discounts related to additional motorcycle safety training.

- Commanders are encouraged to take advantage of the motorcycle surveys available on the Marine Corps Climate Assessment Survey System (MCASS). Visit <http://www.semperfisurveys.org> for more information and to set up a survey for your command or unit.

Editor's Note: This was adapted from the CMC Safety Division's May 2011 "Did You Know" Safety and Force Preservation newsletter.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

S	E	T	L	A	R	A	M	S	C	A	P	S	
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K	E	T	T	S	T	O	L	E	N	T	S	E	

Combat Center Trader Ads**AUTOMOTIVE**

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.

MISC.

NORDICTRACK CX1000: Elliptical workout \$300 OBO. 361-3509

BABY ITEMS: 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.

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. D. J. WU

Marines aboard the Combat Center learn what is expected of them during a Don't Ask, Don't Tell tier 3 presentation in the classroom building Tuesday. The presentation was part of required training to prepare Marines for the repeal of DADT.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Sergeant Maj. James Walsh, the Headquarters Battalion sergeant major, discusses a scenario designed to test the decision-making abilities of Marines and their understanding of the rules and regulations covering the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

DADT, from A1

and that remains true.

"Leaders at all levels must set the example and must be fully committed to the Department of Defense intent to sustain unit effectiveness, readiness and unit cohesion," according to MARADMIN 108/11

Leaders like Headquarters Battalion sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. James Walsh, who gave a DADT tier 3 training brief Tuesday, said, "It doesn't matter if you agree with

the repeal or not; as Marines, we're here to follow orders."

While face-to-face delivery of the brief is the preferred method, personnel who make it to commander or office-in-charge briefs will be directed to MarineNet to complete the training online.

As it stands, the repeal is not yet in effect and all policies concerning DADT are still being upheld. But the education and training is a step in the successful and smooth implementation of the repeal.

ADVERTISEMENT

TOUGH MINDED OPTIMISM
by Lou Gerhardt



When Osama bin Laden was killed, I was fascinated by the reaction of men and women throughout our country.

However, here's what appalled me. A major New York City newspaper on May 2 ran a front page that contained only three words: "Rot in Hell."

Now, I would remind you that I am not a Pollyannaish idiot. I fought on the front lines in the Belgium Bulge in 1944 and am a proud life member of a VFW. But I suggest that sometimes we get carried away and allow our emotions to overwhelm our best judgment.

May I introduce to you the Rev. Martin Luther King, the father of Martin Luther King Jr.

As most of you know the Rev. King's son Martin was killed April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. But most of you probably do not know that another son drowned in a swimming accident sixteen months later.

Then on June 30, 1974, King's wife, Alberta Williams King, was killed by a crazed youth as she played "The Lord's Prayer" on an organ in Ebenezer Baptist Church.

But King said he bore no malice to the men who killed his son and his wife. "There are two men I am supposed to hate," he wrote in 1981. "One is a white man, the other is black and both are serving time for having committed murder."

"I don't hate either one. There is no time for that, and no reason either. Nothing that a man does takes him lower than when he allows himself to fall so low as to hate anyone."

This message sponsored by:

**Mike Lipsitz
Landers**

Dr. Lou can be reached at 760-367-4627
800-995-1620
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Hundreds run through hospital hills

LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
 COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Marines, sailors and civilians participated in a rugged run for the 25th annual Ridge

Run behind the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital May 6. The Ridge Run consisted of five and eight kilometer races, weaving through the ridges overlooking the hospital.

Awards were given to the top three runners, in each age group and squad time. Over the years, the race coordinators have made changes to make it safer, without sacrificing difficulty.

"There were a few treacherous spots going downhill with rocks, so we have altered it," Tennison said. He also said more challenging uphill paths were added to keep the course's intimidat-

ing reputation intact. About 10 percent of runners choose the five kilometer path because it is considered benign with only one hill and a shorter distance, said Ed Tennison, a coordinator

for the run. However, the vast majority take on the eight kilometer course, which features many ups and downs with twists and turns and

See RUN, B4



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Runners sprint off the starting block during the eight kilometer course of the 25th annual Ridge Run near the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital May 6.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

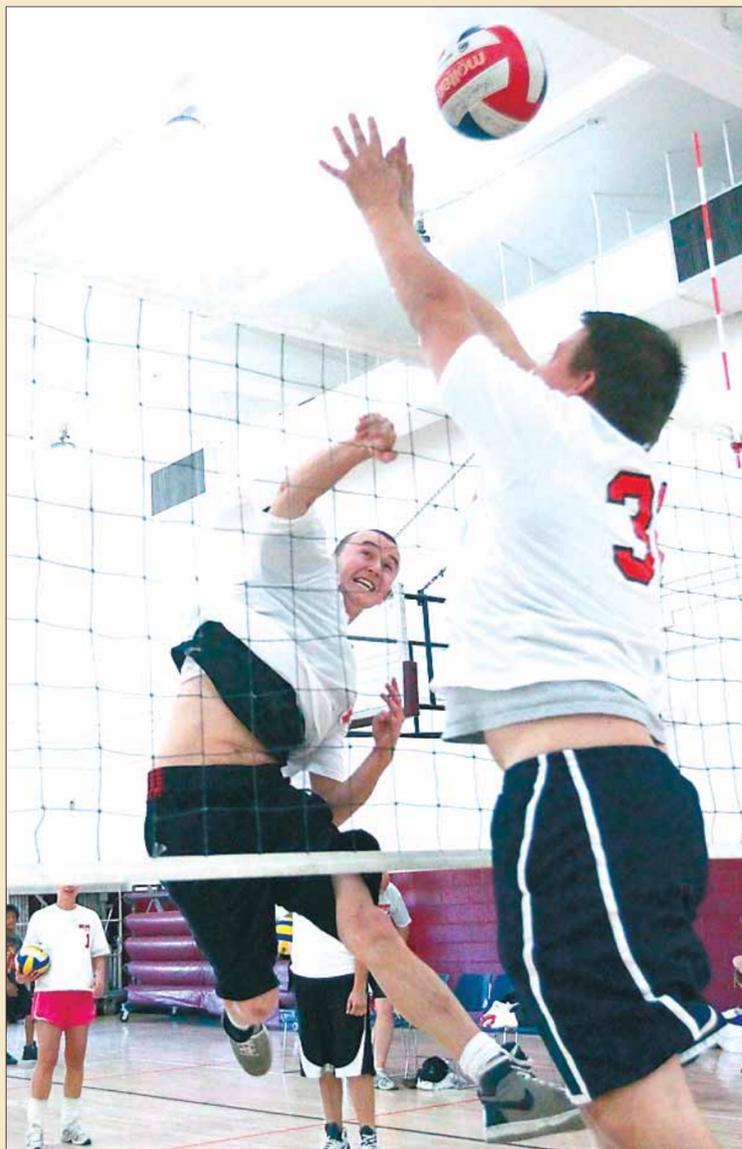
Participants line up to register or sign in for the 25th annual Ridge Run, held by the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, May 6.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Friends help fellow participants finish the eight-kilometer Ridge Run by running alongside them during the 25th annual Ridge Run, behind the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, May 6.

League goes all out weeks before playoffs begin



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Scott McCormack, a player with Wilson, practices spiking the ball against his teammate before a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League game at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday.

Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League standings

Team	Wins	Losses
Misfits	7	0
3rd CEB	7	0
East Gym	4	3
Tatitlek	4	3
MCCES	3	4
TMO	3	6
Paper Cutz	2	5
Tanks BAS	2	6
Vital Signs	1	6



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Shane Brooks, a player with CEB, sets up for a teammate to spike the ball during an intramural volleyball league game at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Rachael Schroeder, a player with East Gym, slams the ball for a point during an intramural volleyball league game at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday. East Gym won both games.



Liberty Call

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: Variety Night with DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m.
 Wednesday: Bosses Night, 5 to 7 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.
 Wednesday: Catfish special, full dinner menu, 4:30 to 8:30 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.

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

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up:

Sara Petite and the Sugar Daddys

Description: The Americana/bluegrass band performs
 When: 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 13 and 8 p.m. Saturday, May 14
 Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
 For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

The Susan Oliver Band

Description: The country/rock band performs
 When: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday, May 13

The Barnyard Boys

Description: The country/rock band performs classic hits
 When: 7 to 10 p.m., Saturday, May 14
 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

The Bongo at Morongo Comedy show

Description: An evening of standup comedy
 When: 7 p.m., Saturday, June 4
 Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
 49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
 For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinoresort.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>.

Pat Benatar with Neil Giraldo

Description: The classic lady rocker performs
 When: 8 p.m., Saturday, June 11
 Where: Agua Caliente
 32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
 For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.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 13

6 p.m. – Sucker Punch, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – Limitless, Rated PG-13
 Midnight – Lincoln Lawyer, Rated R

Saturday, May 14

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee.** Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Rated PG
 2 p.m. – Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Rated PG
 6 p.m. – Red Riding Hood, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – Battle: Los Angeles, Rated PG-13
 Midnight – Paul, Rated R

Sunday, May 15

2 p.m. – Hop, Rated PG
 6 p.m. – Hanna, Rated PG-13
 9 p.m. – Source Code, Rated PG-13

Monday, May 16

7 p.m. – Limitless, Rated PG-13

Tuesday, May 17 Double Feature

5 p.m. – Sucker Punch, Rated PG-13
 Followed by – Lincoln Lawyer, Rated R

Wednesday, May 18 Double Feature

5 p.m. – Red Riding Hood, Rated PG-13
 Followed by – Battle: Los Angeles, Rated PG-13

Thursday, May 19 Double Feature

5 p.m. – Hanna, Rated PG-13
 Followed by – Paul, Rated R

Story of big top love triangle goes big screen

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Water for Elephants"

Starring Reese Witherspoon, Robert Pattinson and Christoph Waltz
 Rated PG-13

Reese Witherspoon and Robert Pattinson find adventure, danger and romance as part of a ragtag Depression-era circus in "Water For Elephants," Hollywood's adaptation of the bestselling 2006 novel of the same name.

Witherspoon plays Marlena, a beautiful equestrienne whose radiant, sequined entrances atop a magnificent trained steed, the show's star attraction, make audiences swoon. Pattinson is Jacob, a young college student who hops aboard the circus train, quite literally, after the tragic death of his parents and the loss of his father's veterinary practice.

Christoph Waltz, so memorable as a deliciously malicious Nazi in "Inglorious Basterds," plays August, the circus ringmaster and Marlena's domineering husband. August can be a charmer, but he rules with an iron fist and treats people – and animals – with equally sadistic disdain. The air becomes charged with volatility whenever he's around.

The ensuing love triangle between the three main characters takes shape around an elephant named Rosie, which August acquires on the cheap after another struggling circus goes out of business. Rosie becomes the emotional bond that brings Marlena and Jacob together, and the eventual object of August's violent, raging jealousy.

The movie does a good job of capturing the circus atmosphere and immersing the viewer in its uniquely tempting world. We're intro-



DAVID JAMES

The charismatic but dangerous circus boss August, played by Christoph Waltz [left], hosts an intimate toast attended by his wife Marlena, played by Reese Witherspoon, newcomer Jacob played by Robert Pattinson and Rosie the elephant.

duced, on a walk through the clickity-clackity moving train cars, to the performers: clowns, acrobats, roustabouts, hoochie-coochie girls. We learn, alongside Jacob, about how things work on both the inside and the outside.

One particularly elegant, almost dreamlike scene captures Jacob's wide-eyed wonder after his first night on the train. As he wanders around in the golden glow of the morning sunshine, he marvels at the boxcars being unloaded, the tent stakes being pounded into the ground, the raising of the center pole – and the wondrous sight of the lovely Marlena.

Almost all movie adaptations of popular novels cut narrative corners, and this one is no exception. "Water For Elephants" has the story, characters and setting right, but much of the book's symbolism – about water, elephants and the cir-

cus and train as metaphors – are missing. Even the title hangs in limbo, with no real context to explain it. Viewers who haven't read the novel will wonder why it's called "Water For Elephants," since that particular action is never referenced or depicted.

The movie, does, however, show other elephant services – but "Lemonade For Elephants," "Booze For Elephants," or "First Aid For Elephants" just don't have the same literary ring.

Pattinson, 24, best known for the "Twilight" movies that made him a teen heartthrob as a hunky vampire, still has some room to grow as a leading man. His performance as Jacob seems a bit wooden for a character that ends up fighting for both his love and his life.

Witherspoon is a fine actress, and she looks terrific, especially close-up when the movie's "retro" lighting

bathes her in luxurious luminescence like a screen queen from a bygone era. It's nice to see her in a serious, sensuous role that almost makes you forget about the comedy flops "Four Christmases" and "How Do You Know." And how many actresses get to put "elephant riding" on their resumes?

But it's getting hard for any star, in any movie, to share a scene with Christoph Waltz and not be completely eclipsed. August is the story's "bad guy," but it's impossible to take your eyes off him – or fail to understand how Marlena, in the circumstances she eventually describes, could have fallen for his silver-tongue charms.

Pattinson and Witherspoon may be the movie's heart, but Waltz provides the high-voltage hydropower that keeps "Water For Elephants" driving toward its explosive, destructive conclusion.



DAVID JAMES

Marlena, played by Reese Witherspoon and Jacob, played by Robert Pattinson, comfort Rosie the elephant after she is beaten by ring master August.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Local open mic nights



Welcome to "Desert Detours," a series that follows our correspondents around on their explorations of southern California. 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

Press Chief/Editor

After the rousing success of checking out a local theater last week, I decided to stay within the arts spectrum and take in the local music scene this week.

The high and low desert is a huge base for the musically-inclined, and open mic nights attract both the inexperienced minstrel trying out the spotlight and the veteran band refining their stage presence in between gigs.

A majority of open mic nights are free, and you can catch everything from self-written indie tunes, spoken word and ska to heavy metal, country and even a little classic rock. All you need to know is where to look on what day.

I've been to a handful of these places between Twentynine Palms and Palm Springs. If you get lucky, you can catch a great night out for merely the cost of drinks, some bar food and pitching in a few bucks for your designated driver's gas. If you're one of those loves-the-stage types, this could be your chance at local fame.

Disclaimer: Bar food consumption is at your own risk, unless you're hitting up something like a bar n' grill, which typically features a full menu and a full kitchen.

If you're looking to go no further than a five minute ride from base, there is always Headquarters on Adobe Road.

Just so you know, Headquarters is one of my least favorite joints to hit up, but its close proximity to the base makes it appealing enough. The place is a bit too open and well-lit for my taste, but does feature plenty of seating and enough pool tables to go around. On the other hand, I know plenty of people who do love it, although more for their Tuesday Taco nights than their open mic nights, which are on Wednesdays.

Head a bit further down the highway, and you'll find the JT Saloon, which features live bands most of the week, with the DJ stylings of Arianne Barroga filling in the rest of the time. The Saloon's open mics are Tuesdays. The atmosphere runs the gamut from being a nice quiet place to grab lunch to jam packed on weekends. Drinks are reasonably priced, service is relatively snappy, and most of the bartenders are quite friendly.

Yucca Valley dwellers have two nearby places as options – Kokopelli's Kantina on Twentynine Palms Highway and Pappy and Harriet's in Pioneertown.

Kokopelli's doesn't have a scheduled open mic night, but one of their house bands, the Dirtboys, typically open up the stage to anyone who wants to jam every first and last Wednesday of the month.

The rock band belts out everything from classic rock to metal. As much as I dig the Dirtboys, their sweet tunes aren't enough to keep me going back to Koko's, which has been re-invented as a night club. You're better off just stringing up some flashing Christmas tree lights, amping up the stereo and rocking out in your barracks room. Your room is about the same size as the bar, and the alcohol is cheaper. Plus, you don't have to worry

about cab fare.

On the other end of the spectrum is Pappy and Harriet's, whose open mic nights are Mondays. If you're looking for the epitome of what an open mic night should be, this is it. Officially titled "Ted Quinn's Open Mic Reality Show," the line-up is long enough that artists arrive extra early just to ensure they get a slot before closing. And you never have to wonder if you'll be serenading an empty room. Not a chance – it always has plenty of patronage on Mondays.

Random note: A few co-workers and I dubbed Pappy's Mondays as "Margarita Mondays" because a good margarita served in a mason jar is never something to pass up. This is one of the few bars where I recommend ordering food. Pair that margarita with their

sour dough grilled cheese and

a side of pinto beans, and you're in business.

And this leads us to my favorite open mic night (or afternoon, rather). If you have an open Sunday, the Palm Canyon Roadhouse on the strip in Palm Springs is the place to be. This is one of those bar n' grill set-ups I mentioned earlier, and one of the best places to satisfy grilled cheese cravings. Musicians filter in early, while the sun's still up, for some mingling and a few drinks before taking the stage. This place has a "Cheers" vibe, because the bartenders literally know the names of most of the regulars. Drink prices are very reasonable, and there hasn't been a day spent there that I don't run across a couple of characters.

Quick tip: Although I'm not mentioning names, because anonymity is a treasured rarity, I've run across my



Staff Sgt. Joe Evans, an emergency management specialist with the Combat Center's Mission Assurance office, sings along to "Simple Man" by Lynyrd Skynyrd at the Palm Canyon Roadhouse in Palm Springs during an open mic night.



Spankshaft drummer Russel Waldron wails away during the band's first open mic night at Ignition in Palm Springs.



Jared Engelmier strums out a tune at the Palm Canyon Roadhouse in Palm Springs during an open mic night. Jared is also the front man for the Renegades of Funk, the bar's house band, which plays most Friday and Saturday nights.

fair share of rock legends there who spend quiet Sundays at the Roadhouse blending in with the rest of the patrons – grabbing a bite, nursing a beer or two and checking out the local talent.

Many times, these greats can't resist the urge to get up and jam with whoever happens to be on stage.

As for the rating, open mic nights as a whole gets three out of five stars from me, because the bar experience itself can be hit-or-miss.

My advice? Get out and explore. Check local dive bars' schedules for open mic nights. You just might find one you love.

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



Daniel Wood serenades the crowd with his sweet sax sounds during an open mic night at Kokopelli's Kantina in Yucca Valley.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Participants in the 25th annual Ridge Run, sponsored by the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, push their bodies through the final stretch of the eight kilometer run behind the hospital May 6.

RUN, from B1

provides a safe challenge for the runners.

This reputation is one many runners said can't (or won't) scare them.

"I think it is going to be a cake walk," said Seaman James Louck, a corpsman with the Adult Medical Care Clinic before the start of the race. "I think we are only showing up to perform. Everyone beware, we are coming home with the silver cup."

The cup is awarded each year to the group of runners who finish the eight-kilometer run with the fastest time.

"In the past, we had it so all squads had to finish together, but it would take away the chance for the individual age group," Tennison said. "Your squad time is based on the last person who crossed the line, so you are [still] eligible for the individual awards."

Participants and run coordinators described the run as a success, something they attribute to the military's sense of pride and competitive spirit.

"I think it is a challenge for all Marines and sailors to test themselves to see how good they can do with all these hills and sand," said Master Sgt. John Thacker, a Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School curriculum scheduler and avid runner. "We all enjoy getting together and doing stuff like this."

Not long after crossing the finish line, some runners are already looking forward to the next Ridge Run, when they can conquer the ever-looming ridges that cast shadows upon them every morning.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Kale Liechty
Hometown: Hobart, Ind.
Unit: Company A, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School
Recognition: Overall winner of the 25th annual Ridge Run with the finishing time of 48 minutes and four seconds.
Favorite aspect of the sport: "It is a good stress reliever and I like to challenge myself."
Advice for aspiring runners: "When you are starting out, take it easy and build up to it."