

OBSERVATION POST

MCAGCC TWENTYNINE PALMS

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Since 1957

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Keeping the Combat Center clean

NREA enforces environmental maintenance

PFC. MICHAEL S. CIFUENTES
HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS

The Combat Center's Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs support branch is tasked with one of the most important jobs in the community.

The branch is responsible for keeping the Combat Center's environment in good condition, which includes the upkeep of the installation's water, air and ground.

The NREA personnel are also

tasked with overseeing all environmental compliance issues, ensuring all units aboard the Combat Center are in compliance with environmental regulations. "We do this through the commanding general's environmental inspection program," said Scott Kerr, head of the base's NREA compliance support branch.

The environmental inspection program is an inventory of all environmental practices that exist at each location of the base. It identifies who is involved in these

practices, such as recycling, water separation, hazardous material storage and wash racks, from the unit's supervisor to worker level.

The support branch developed environmental standard operating procedures to cover the environmental practice types. The NREA inspector general conducts technical assist visits three times a year where he validates the installation's activities and practices.

"Inspections require documentation or a checklist," said Kerr. "We go through all the installation's units and see that they are being trained for awareness in recycling, keeping the water clean and keeping hazardous materials and substances out of the environment's natural circulation."

Once a year, the support branch conducts a formal inspection with the commanding general.

All inspection results are kept on file for the inspector general's program at Headquarters Marine Corps, Quantico, Va. As of 2004, the Environmental Management System program is now required by the Department of Defense. Headquarters Marine Corps established a series of policy letters



COURTESY PHOTO

A badger pokes his head out of his hole at range 500.



COURTESY PHOTO

Combat Center environmental experts stress that feeding wildlife, including coyotes, is illegal in California. It creates an imbalance in the food chain, endangering humans and pets.

See NREA, A4

Flying Tigers take on harsh Bridgeport terrain



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A crewman with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 conducts a pre-flight inspection on a CH-53E Super Stallion May 20 on the flight line at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif.

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

With its freezing temperatures, and mountainous terrain, Mountain Warfare Training Center not only challenges and attracts the ground element of the Corps, but also the Flying Leathernecks.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., turned their CH53-E Super Stallions north to test them against the white peaked mountains and thin, high altitude air.

"There's less air up here, so when the rotor blades are essentially slicing the air, there are fewer air molecules to create lift," said Capt. Elizabeth Laquidara, a pilot and operations officer with HMH-361 Flying Tigers. "[The training] makes you an all-around better pilot and air crew. The colder air has a different effect on the engine and air frames itself. It is all-around better training that we don't get back in Miramar."



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A CH53-E Super Stallion with HMH-361 lands at the Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., flight line May 20 during high altitude training.

While learning to deal and adjust with the new environment, the group practiced terrain flights, external lifting and landing in the snow, things many of the pilots have never

See HELO, A5

Combat Center launches 'Green Energy' website

GUNNERY SGT. SERGIO JIMENEZ
PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF

A small group of environmental management and conservation experts are launching a website which may help the Combat Center be considered as the greenest installation in the Corps.

The installation's success with the use of renewable energy, sustainability, improvements in energy efficiency, reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions and enhanced procurement can seem counterintuitive in a place perceived to be a desolate desert outpost.

This is one of the misperceptions the Combat Center's Green Council intends to correct with the launch of their Green Energy website at <http://www.green29.org>, said Eddie Valls, an Environmental Compliance Support staff member with the installation's Natural Resources and Environmental

Affairs Division. The site will be dedicated to public outreach and education, or in other words, let the rest of the world in on the well-kept secret of the Combat Center's environmental success.

Although many know the Combat Center is where 90 percent of Marines train prior to going into combat, not many know it received two Secretary of the Navy environmental awards in March, or that the Combat Center was named the best Marine Corps installation in the world in its category, by the Secretary of Defense as part of the Commander in Chief's Installation Excellence Awards in 2010 and 2011.

Few know the sprawling 800,000-acre installation produces most of its own energy, or that it is recognized by the Department of Defense and Secretary of the Navy as a leader in recycling,

See WEBSITE, A3



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, salute their commanding officer during an awards ceremony at Felix Field Friday. Cpl. Patrick Rowe, Lance Cpl. Jose Velasquez, Cpl. Edward Huth and Maj. Patrick McKinley, were awarded Bronze Star Medals and Lance Cpl. Brian Murphy was awarded the Purple Heart Medal.

Ceremony recognizes 'Cutting Edge' warfighters

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

May 20 marked a day of celebration and appreciation when five Marines were recognized for valor on the bat-

tlefield at Felix Field.

Corporal Patrick Rowe, Lance Cpl. Jose Velasquez, Cpl. Edward Huth and Maj. Patrick McKinley were awarded Bronze Star Medals with combat action devices.

Lance Cpl. Brian Murphy was also awarded a Purple Heart during the same ceremony.

All the Marines earned their awards during 3rd battalion, 7th Marine Regiment's deployment to

Afghanistan last year.

Corporal Rowe, who served as a machine gun team leader with Company L, 3/7, rescued a wounded Marine

See AWARDS, A6

TRICARE to beneficiaries: 'Get Fit' this summer

SHARON FOSTER

TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

The lifestyle choices that beneficiaries make every day can affect – positively or negatively – their health. If beneficiaries focus on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices and being physically active, they can help reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity.

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Participation in sports and staying physically active can strengthen a beneficiary's body and mind.

"All branches of the military are seeing members, dependants and retirees that have problems with their weight," said U.S. Public Health Service Cmdr. Aileen Buckler, TRICARE population health physician. "TRICARE is encouraging all beneficiaries to 'Get Fit' this month. Our 'Get Fit' campaign was started to increase obesity awareness and get beneficiaries moving."

TRICARE launched an updated "Get Fit" web page with a new section focusing on monthly healthy living tips. The slideshow presentations provide suggestions for activities and information to help beneficiaries make healthier food choices and stay active. Each month, TRICARE also introduces a new health theme to promote work-life balance.

Fitting regular exercise into a daily schedule may seem difficult at first, but it's easier than many think. Beneficiaries should consider the stairs instead of the elevator or even walking on the golf course instead of using a cart. Committing to a program like the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award can help many stay motivated, as can finding a workout buddy. To find out more about this program, go to <http://www.presidentschallenge.org/celebrate/active-lifestyle.shtml>.

How much physical activity is enough? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 420 minutes or more of physical activity a week for children 6-17 years old. This can include playground games, basketball and soccer. For adults 18-64 years old, 150 minutes of physical activity is recommended each week. Yes, that's a lot of biking, swimming and lifting weights, but exercise isn't something beneficiaries should give up as they get older.

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things beneficiaries can do for their health. It can help prevent the onset of many health problems. If a beneficiary is 65 years of age or older, generally fit and have no limiting health conditions, 150 minutes of physical activity each week is also good. This can include heavy gardening (digging, shoveling), walking and aerobic activity. Picking physical activities they enjoy and that match their abilities will help beneficiaries stick to a routine.

Moderate activity levels are safe for most people. But if beneficiaries have a chronic health condition such as heart disease, arthritis or a disability, they should talk with their doctor about the types and amounts of physical activities that are right for them. Physical activity is also important during pregnancy. But, again, beneficiaries should talk to their doctor to find out what's appropriate.

Beneficiaries should get their kids involved in the fun too. Take a peek at first lady Michelle Obama's website, "Let's Move!," geared toward ending childhood obesity in the United States. Beneficiaries play a key role in making healthy choices for them and teaching them to make healthy choices for themselves. The website can be found at <http://www.letsmove.gov>. To learn more about healthy choices and physical activity, go to TRICARE's "Get Fit" website, <http://www.tricare.mil/getfit>.

Centerspeak

What significance does Memorial Day have for you?

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



PFC. JOSHUA MOORE

COMPANY B, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"I have relatives that have fought and died for our country."



SGT. NATHAN GORDON

COMPANY A, MARINE CORPS COMMUNICATION-ELECTRONICS SCHOOL

"It's important for the American people to celebrate the men and women who have sacrificed themselves for us."



LANCE CPL. MARK ISAKSON

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

"It's a day of remembering. It's helped my family to become supportive of the military."

Hot Topics

ALIENWARE MOBILE TOUR

The Alienware Mobile Tour will be stopping at the MCX on June 3, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. This tour will feature a military-grade H1 Hummer kitted-out with hardcore Alienware gaming systems and accessories. There will be demo gaming and a chance to win some sweet Alienware swag.

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.

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 26, 1969

Operation Pipestone Canyon began when the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, began sweeps in the Dodge City/Go Noi areas southwest of Da Nang. It terminated at the end of June with 610 enemy killed in action at a cost of 34 Marines killed.



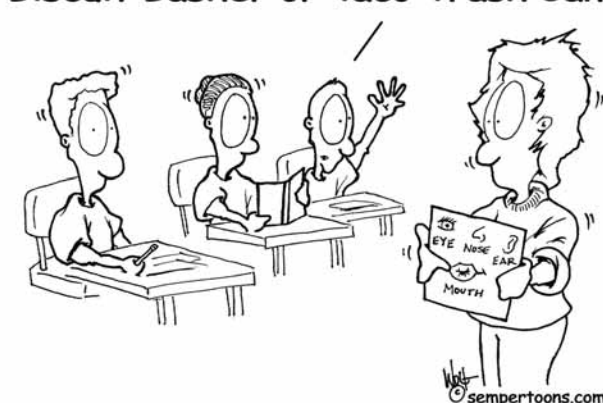
Eagle Eyes

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

"It's also known as your Pie Hole, Cookie Cruncher, Biscuit Basher or Taco Trash Can!"



Marine Kids in School

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

SUDOKU #2186

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

INFORMATION PLEASE

[Puzzle solutions on A7]

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68					69					70				

ACROSS

1. Crucifixes
6. Modify to one's needs
11. Victoria's Secret item
14. See eye to eye
15. Boldness in battle
16. Tarzan portrayer Ely
17. The largest of a Spanish island group
19. Escape clause
20. Friendly
21. Miracle__ (plant food brand)
22. Suffix with sermon or kitchen
23. Wee particle
25. Covered with peat moss, say
27. Duke or baron
31. Webmaster's creation
32. [sigh]
33. Old hands
35. Anthony Quinn title role

DOWN

38. __ Bingle (Crosby)
39. Time on the job
41. Summon a genie, in a way
42. __ Martin (classic car)
45. On the briny
46. Banjoist Scruggs
47. Black cat, maybe
49. In an aimless manner
51. Puts a match to
54. Pare down
55. Off one's rocker
56. Fate of Wednesday's child
58. "Don't move a muscle!"
62. Biblical judge
63. Do something
65. __ Bernardino
66. Like most Turks
67. Pong maker
68. "For shame!"
69. Commendment word
70. Deluded

34. Dummy Mortimer
36. Ives of "East of Eden"
37. With adroitness
40. Protectionist's tax
43. Skip over
44. Bottom line
46. International accord
48. Fairly modern
50. Common roof top item, once
51. That is, classically
52. Big bashes
53. Bulgaria's capital
57. List-ending abbr. '99. "Zounds!"
60. Zilch
61. March slogan starter
63. __ Cruces, NM
64. Tiny colonist

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Staff Sgt. Michael Rivera
Hometown: Brooklyn, N.Y.
Unit: Company B, Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School
Job title: Data chief/instructor
Job duties: Trains Marines to be successful data Marines, and serves as a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor.
What do you enjoy most about your job?: "I love my job, and I love being able to make a difference in the Marine Corps."
What is your most memorable moment in your position?: "After a MCMAP period of instruction, the class surprised me with a plaque. Just knowing I inspired the Marines is a great feeling."
How long have you been with MCCES?: Two and a half years.
Hobbies: Riding his motorcycle and driving his Mazda RX-7.

OBSERVATION POST

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New top enlisted for 'Magnificent 7th'

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The 7th Marine Regiment welcomed Sgt. Maj. Scott Samuels, as their new regimental sergeant major, during a ceremony held across the street from Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field May 20.

Samuels came to the regiment from 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, where he served as battalion sergeant major. He took over for Sgt. Maj. Michael Kufchak, who has served as the unit's top enlisted Marine for the past three years.

Samuels said he looks forward to leading his Marines. He kept his speech short and told his Marines he prefers to let his actions speak for themselves.

After the ceremony he went to the award ceremony at Felix Field for Marines with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, to congratulate the Marines and to introduce himself to the battalion.

"It's a great regiment," said Samuels, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. "It's the largest infantry regiment in the Marine Corps, and I couldn't ask for a better place to be. I look forward in serving in combat with [the regiment] and preparing for that."

Kufchak, from Warren, Ohio, thanked his friends and family for their support and wished Samuels the best in the regiment.

The two men know each other well and have previously served in Afghanistan together.

Kufchak will be moving on to his new position as division sergeant major for the 1st Marine Division.



LANCE CPL. CARLOS L. SANCHEZ-VALENCIA

Sergeant Maj. Scott Samuels accepts the noncommissioned officer sword from Col. Austin Renforth, his commanding officer, during a relief and appointment ceremony, officially naming him the regimental sergeant major for the "Magnificent 7th" May 20.

Feed the DAWGS gives back



DIANE DURDEN

Military Working Dog handlers from the Provost Marshal's Office and 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force Marines and their families were treated to grilled steaks during a Feed the DAWGS barbecue at Felix Field May 14. The Feed the DAWGS program was established in 2007 when two Vietnam veterans, and former military dog handlers, decided to host a barbecue for the Marine dog handlers at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. The program has since expanded to providing cookouts for military working dog units throughout California and Arizona. "It's our way of giving back [to the Marines] and showing our appreciation for their service," said Jonathan Hemp, Army veteran and co-founder of Feed the DAWGS.

WEBSITE, from A1

energy and waste management, utilities conservation, power generating capacity and cost savings. These initiatives save the government as much as \$7 million annually in energy costs, according to the website.

The Combat Center is also home to the Corps' largest co-generation plant, which converts waste heat from the electricity-generation process into hot water for heating and cooling aboard the installation. It currently generates 60 percent of its own energy year-round, and has reduced its energy impact on the southern California power and energy system.

It is also home to one of the largest federally-owned solar arrays.

Initiatives like these not only make the environment

safer and reduce costs, they help the warfighter. The more we save, the more we can provide to those who

are preparing to fight for us, said Valls. "Ultimately, these efforts help ensure that the Combat Center will

continue to train Marines in live-fire maneuvers and urban operations for years to come."

SJA CORNER

SGLI pitfalls for the unwary

1ST LT. NATHAN D. ADAMS

LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Death is a fact of life. For Marines, it is an even greater reality. In recognition of the risks of our calling, we receive Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance. This \$400,000 of life insurance coverage is often the greatest asset Marines have to pass to their loved ones.

Unfortunately, Marines seeking to ensure their minor children receive these benefits can create more hardship for their families during an already stressful time if they are not careful.

In general, beneficiaries make claims to SGLI for payment by presenting a copy of the service member's death certificate. Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries have two options for payment. The recommended method is to demand a lump sum payment up front.

Under that option, SGLI will send a check for the full amount that the beneficiaries can control and invest as they desire.

If beneficiaries do not demand a lump sum payment, the SGLI provider will set up an account with them to hold the money. This demand deposit account is not FDIC insured and pays a virtually nonexistent interest rate.

Problems occur when Marines designate their minor children as beneficiaries. SGLI will not pay money out to minor children. Minor children cannot own property in their own right until they reach the age of majority (18 in most states). To get the money distributed for the benefit of the minor children, the child's guardian will have to go to court and get a judicial order appointing them as guardian (note: even if the Marine's spouse is the child's parent, if the child is listed as a beneficiary, the spouse will still have to go to court). The guardian will then have to send the judge's order appointing them guardian to SGLI. Once SGLI has received the papers and approves the guardianship, and if the guardian requests a lump sum payment, SGLI will then send the money to the guardian to be used for the support and benefit of the minor children.

To avoid these issues, the Legal Assistance Office helps service member setup their wills to include testamentary trusts or Uniform Gift to Minor's Act (UGMA) provisions. These provisions address the problems of passing property to minor children. The Legal Assistance Office can also help Marines their SGLI beneficiary election form matches their will.

Please call us at 830-6111 to set up an appointment with one of our attorneys.



COURTESY PHOTO

A desert tortoise spends its day cruising the sands of the Combat Center. Marines and sailors training aboard the installation do their part to keep the endangered species safe by ceasing all activity immediately upon encountering a tortoise. The animals must be safely relocated before training can continue.



COURTESY PHOTO

A tarantula soaks up the warming sun's rays. The Combat Center's many solar panels also soak in the sunlight and provide renewable energy for the installation.



COURTESY PHOTO

A Cooper's Hawk surveys the Combat Center skies.



COURTESY PHOTO

A sidewinder rattlesnake makes his mark in the Combat Center sands. Programs like the Environmental Management System keep these sands safe for the installation's animal inhabitants.

NREA, from A1

implementing the EMS system here in March 2004.

"The EMS program is a continual cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing and improving the processes and actions that an organization undertakes to meet its environmental goals," said Patrick O. Mills, manager of Hazardous Waste branch. "Our EMS program is based on the 'plan, do, check, act' model. This stage continues the step-by-step action plan for developing and implementing the commanding general's environmental inspection program. At this point, we identify problems with the EMS program and act to resolve these issues."

Each active unit in the Combat Center is assigned an environmental coordinator, and they meet every month for a conference with members of the NREA support division here, said Mills. Issues regarding activities and practices that are connected to the Combat Center's environment are discussed and are forwarded to Headquarters Marine Corps.

"EMS can result in both business and environmental benefits," said Mills. "For example, EMS may help you improve environmental performance, enhance compliance, prevent pollution and

conserve resources, reduce risks, increase efficiency, reduce installation costs, enhance our image with the public, and improve employee awareness of environmental responsibilities. Developing and implementing EMS may also have some associated costs, including staff and employee time, costs for training of base personnel, costs associated with hiring consulting assistants when needed, and costs for analyzing environmental impacts and improvements."

The mission for the Combat Center's NREA support branch is to conduct environmental inspections of all activities aboard the installation through the newly developed EMS program. The NREA support branch will continue to direct action, set forth responsibilities, and add on references for the Combat Center's environment. By implementing the EMS program, they will provide policy and information concerning the commanding general's environmental inspection program.

To learn more on how base personnel can play their role in maintaining an excellent environment in which to live, call the base NREA support division at 830-7634.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Major Hans Petter Loeken [left] and Capt. Kay Bjornar Oyas, both officers on the Norwegian defense staff, show their excitement before their first Osprey ride May 10. The visitors are departing from Miramar to the Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport for their annual orientation tour.

Allies conduct annual tour of training areas

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The United States and Norway have been allies since 1949, working together to improve each other's military, store and maintain each other's equipment, and build stronger bonds between the nations through an agreement called the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program Norway.

In support of the MCPP-N, annual orientation tours are conducted to the training areas home to each partner nation.

Nine Norwegian officers, involved in the MCPP-N, were given the opportunity, May 7 to May 14, to see the multiple angles of training the Corps covered, such as the desert sands and Enhanced Mojave Viper of the Combat Center, a flight in an Osprey from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, the high altitude training of the Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, and the very beginnings of a Marine's journey in the Marine Corps, Recruit Depot San Diego.

"We are trying to give them an overall view of the Marine Corps," said Kevin Finch, a

prepositioning analyst for Headquarters Marine Corps. "We are also displaying capabilities that we have to honor our agreement to reinforce Norway should the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] northern rank need reinforced." The alliance the two nations hold is greatly beneficial for each country as they consider financial and defensive issues.

"It's important to them because they are pretty dependent on NATO assisting them should they ever get invaded," Finch said. "It's important to us because we have about a [Marine

Expeditionary Unit] worth of equipment prepositioned over there in Norway and they pay for half the program. It is very cost effective to us."

On a deeper level, the visit went further than annual protocol. The visit encouraged camaraderie among the nations and an interaction that promoted a positive understanding of each other, a rare opportunity for the nations.

"It is very important to see a bolder perspective of what the U.S. Marine Corps is doing," said Capt. Oystein Wemberg, a

See ALLIES, A7



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A crew chief from HMH-361, looks out the window of a CH-53E Super Stallion during a flight over the MWTC, Bridgeport, Calif. Many of the pilots have never flown in the center's high altitude and snowy conditions.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A CH-53E Super Stallion crew from HMH-361 tests their aircraft at the MWTC Bridgeport, Calif., May 20.

HELO, from A1

done before.

"This is like a once-in-a-career type of [training] for us," said Sgt. Jeremy Lombard, quality assurance representative for the squadron. "We get experience landing in the snow, high altitude and forest."

History reminds the Flying Tigers of the importance of high altitude training, even when deployed to the deserts of Afghanistan. On Dec. 10, 2010, in the mountains of Jalalabad, Afghanistan, an Army CH-47 Chinook was forced to land during an operational flight because of unknown troubles with the aircraft.

The HMH-361 Marines took their CH-53E Super Stallions to recover the Chinook in unfamiliar high altitude, low power conditions. The team successfully recovered the craft.

"All-weather fighters need to be able to get in any zone or area at any time," said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Bultman, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the unit. "We support the guys on the ground, wherever they are."



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A CH-53E Super Stallion crew from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 test their aircraft on snowy terrain at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., May 20. For many of the Marines, this was the first time they landed in snow.

Marine Corps Harriers return to Afghanistan

CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

2ND MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FWD)

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – One of the first Marine Corps Harrier squadrons to see action in Afghanistan has returned after nearly a decade.

Marine Attack Squadron 513, which first deployed to Afghanistan in 2002, will also be the first Marine Corps Harrier squadron to fully operate in Afghanistan since the departure of VMA-231 in 2010.

“We were the first deployed out here, and now my Marines are ready, trained, equipped and motivated to get moving on this deployment,” said Sgt. Maj. Scott E. Cooper, the VMA-513 sergeant major, and a native of Huntington Beach, Calif. “I have complete faith in them for success.”

The AV-8B Harrier is a short take-off, vertical landing aircraft the Marine Corps has used since 1985. The 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) employs the Harrier as a close air support aircraft for Marine, Afghan and coalition troops on the ground in southwestern Afghanistan.

Beginning May 24, the AV-8B Harriers of VMA-513 will provide close air support for Marines and their Afghan and coalition partners operating in southwestern Afghanistan, as the F/A-18 Hornets of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 122 prepare to return home to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C.

“I am proud of my Marines and what they have accomplished out here during the deployment,” Lt. Col. John A. Bolt, the VMFA-122 commanding officer, and a native of Tavares, Fla. “These Marines are the future of the Marine Corps and it gives me hope for the future of Marine Corps aviation.”

The Marines and sailors of VMFA-122 spent seven months at Afghanistan's Kandahar Airfield, from which they provided close air support for U.S. Marines, and Afghan, British, Georgian and other combined team forces operating in Nimroz and Helmand provinces.

“The Marines are going to be able to slow down for a couple months, recuperate and regenerate,” said Sgt. Maj. David A. Cadd, the VMFA-122 sergeant major. “They are true warriors. They worked tirelessly and lived up to their missions. Their mission was to ensure those ground troops were protected as best as possible and they accomplished that.”

According to Bolt, VMFA-122 was the first Marine Corps squadron deployed to Afghanistan to use the GBU-54 Joint Direct Attack Munition, a laser-guided bomb kit that allows for



CPL. SAMANTHA H. ARRINGTON

A Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 122 F/A-18 Hornet rests under a hangar prior to flight from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, May 21. VMFA-122, deployed out of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., will soon depart Afghanistan following a seven month deployment providing close air support for U.S. Marines, and Afghan, British, Georgian and other combined team forces operating in Nimroz and Helmand provinces. “I am proud of my Marines and what they have accomplished out here during the deployment,” said Lt. Col. John A. Bolt. “This is the future of the Marine Corps and it gives me hope for the future of Marine Corps aviation.”

traditionally unguided weapons to be used in precision strikes.

“That was a success for us,” said Bolt. “It allowed us to engage multiple targets and better support the ground troops.”

Cooper, VMA-513's senior enlisted Marine, said that this is the first deployment for many of the Marines in his squadron, but he believes the Marines are well trained, capable and ready.

“There is nothing impossible for the Marines of the squadron,” said Cooper. “Their hearts are in the right places, they are focused on their missions and they want to be here.”

“I'm excited to be out here on a combat deployment,” said Cpl. Brandon W. Keilers, a fixed-wing aircraft mechanic with VMA-513, and a native of Tomball, Texas. “This is what I've wanted to do since I joined, and now I'm finally here doing what I love.”



PFC. SHAUN DENNISON

AV-8B Harriers with Marine Attack Squadron 513, deployed out of Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., rest at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, following their arrival, May 20.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Corporal Edward Huth, a section leader with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, accepts his Bronze Star Medal with a handshake from the battalion commander at Felix Field Friday.

AWARDS, from A1

while under enemy fire and saved his life.

Lance Cpl. Velasquez also risked his life for his fellow Marines while serving with Company L, 3/7, in Afghanistan. Velasquez carried a casualty 200 meters to an aid and litter team and then continued to lead his team to clear an enemy compound.

Despite a gunshot wound to his right shoulder, Cpl. Huth provided supporting fire from his left arm, which allowed his squad to move safely on the battlefield.

Huth then jumped into action to help a fellow Marine who was shot by pro-

viding suppressive fire and moving him out of danger under intense enemy fire until a medical evacuation team came to the scene.

Shortly after, a third Marine was wounded and was unable to move himself to the evacuation aircraft. Huth again placed himself in harm's way to carry the casualty to the evacuation site. His actions saved the lives of many Marines.

Huth stood proud as he received his award, but his humble attitude stood out as he remembered that day.

“I just did what anyone else would have done,” added Huth. “I was there at the right time, and thank God everyone lived.”

Leadership also plays its role in a successful mission. Maj. McKinley showed zeal-

ous initiative while serving as commanding officer for Company I, 3/7 in Afghanistan. His leadership in combat operations made the area between Musa Qual'eh Wadi and Sangin a dangerous place for Taliban forces.

Through McKinley's extraordinary guidance, his unit earned the trust of the local populace and support from Afghan government institutions integral to the success of their mission.

The selfless and courageous actions of these Marines are shining examples of the honor and brotherhood the Corps holds so highly.

“I'm happy [about the award,] but there are other Marines that do this every day and don't get recognized. So this is for them too,” Huth said.

COMBAT CENTER BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRAYDEN TUCKER LAWRENCE

Born to Sgt. Hal and Loren Lawrence
May 16, 2011

LILYANA FAITH BARNETT

Born to Sgt. William and Catherine Barnett
May 14, 2011

MYLINA GRACE BARNETT

Born to Sgt. William and Catherine Barnett
May 14, 2011

LILYANNA ELIZABETH HORTON

Born to Cpl. Justin and Annie Horton
May 15, 2011

AARON BRADLEY SMITH

Born to Lance Cpl. Nathan and Alisha Smith
May 14, 2011

AIDYN ARTHUR DIBBLE

Born to Lance Cpl. Eric and Erika Dibble
May 10, 2011

MALIAH SARII ISRAEL

Born to Pvt. Akeem and Varshae Israel
May 11, 2011

JAYCEE LYNN BAKER

Lance Cpl. Timothy and Patricia Baker
May 10, 2011

JAXSON DEAN ANDERSON

Born to Petty Officer 2nd Class Chris and
Miranda Anderson
May 9, 2011

LIA GISELLE GUTIERREZ

Born to Sgt. Carlos and Gleisi Gutierrez
May 9, 2011

MARYBELLE ALICIA SCHMELZEL

Born to Cpl. Kenneth and Rachele Schmelzel
May 4, 2011

ZOEY ISABELLE GARMENDEZ

Born to Cpl. Irving and Yanira Garmendez
May 4, 2011

CADEN WAYNE MUTZ

Born to Lance Cpl. Christopher
and Allison Mutz
May 4, 2011

MARCUS JAYDEN TERRY

Born to Sgt. Brian and Kerry Terry
May 1, 2011

ISAAC CASTAÑEDA

Born to Staff Sgt. Jesus
and Sandra Castañeda
April 29, 2011

NOELIA VICTORIA DAGUE

Born to Gunnery Sgt. Gregory and Ada
Dague
May 2, 2011

NATALIE ELIZABETH KLISE

Born to Sgt. Thomas and Robin Klise
April 27, 2011

JAKAI JON-CORNELIUS

CANTRELL
Born to Staff Sgt. Derrick and Beth Cantrell
April 26, 2011

JAMES ANTHONY DALDOS

Born to Cpl. James and Candi Daldos
April 27, 2011

ANNABELLA MARIE KING

Born to Cpl. Ciara Berger
and Mathias King
April 25, 2011

OSCAR CONTRERAS III

Born to Lance Cpl. Oscar Jr.
and Amanda Contreras
April 26, 2011

MICHAEL RYDER NELSON

Born to Michael Nelson
and Lance Cpl. Kimberly Nelson
April 22, 2011

TOMAS DANIEL SOLANO

Born to Sgt. Tomas and Christina Solano
April 22, 2011

ARAIN MICHAEL METZ

Born to Lance Cpl. Ronald and Ashley Metz
April 20, 2011

CAITLIN VICTORIA MCCOWN

Born to Staff Sgt. Carlos and Hollie McCown
April 18, 2011

KINZIE MAE SOWELL

Born to Sgt. David and Krystal Sowell
April 16, 2011

MARCUS ANDREW ORDONEZ

Born to Sgt. Michael and Du Ordonez
April 15, 2011

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

MELZER JR.

Born to Lance Cpl. William and Lisa Melzer
April 13, 2011

CAMILA DELACRUZ

QUINTANILLA

Born to Cpl. Jose and Belinda Quintanilla
April 13, 2011

LILLEY AMEHLIA VRIEZE

Born to Lance Cpl. Alan and Yicel Vrieze
April 11, 2011

AYDEN NOLLEN CHERRY

Born to Pfc. Joshua and Shane Cherry
April 10, 2011

ELDER ARTURO GARRIDO-

CECILLO

Born to Sgt. Elder Garrido
and Maibel Cedillo Vega
April 6, 2011

EMMA ROSE BEARD

Born to Staff Sgt. Adam and Susan Beard
April 7, 2011

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 wor-

ship

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.

ALLIES, from A5

member of Norway's defense staff. "It is also important to meet the people here to have a better connection and relationship. It is [beneficial] to see the facilities so we have a better understanding of the daily work [concerning] the prepositioning program for Norway. It has really been amazing here."

The MWTC facility's location held a unique appeal for the Norwegian officers.

The snow capped mountains and cold weather training courses ignited a certain interest and familiarity among them.

"Bridgeport was important because it is a mountain training and cold weather operations [environment], which are Norwegian specialties, so that

was very interesting for us to see," Wemberg said.

Wemberg also said the trip was very informative, and above all, very impressive.

"Everything we have seen so far is according to our expectations. The honor, pride and professionalism of the Marine Corps is great," he added.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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

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-

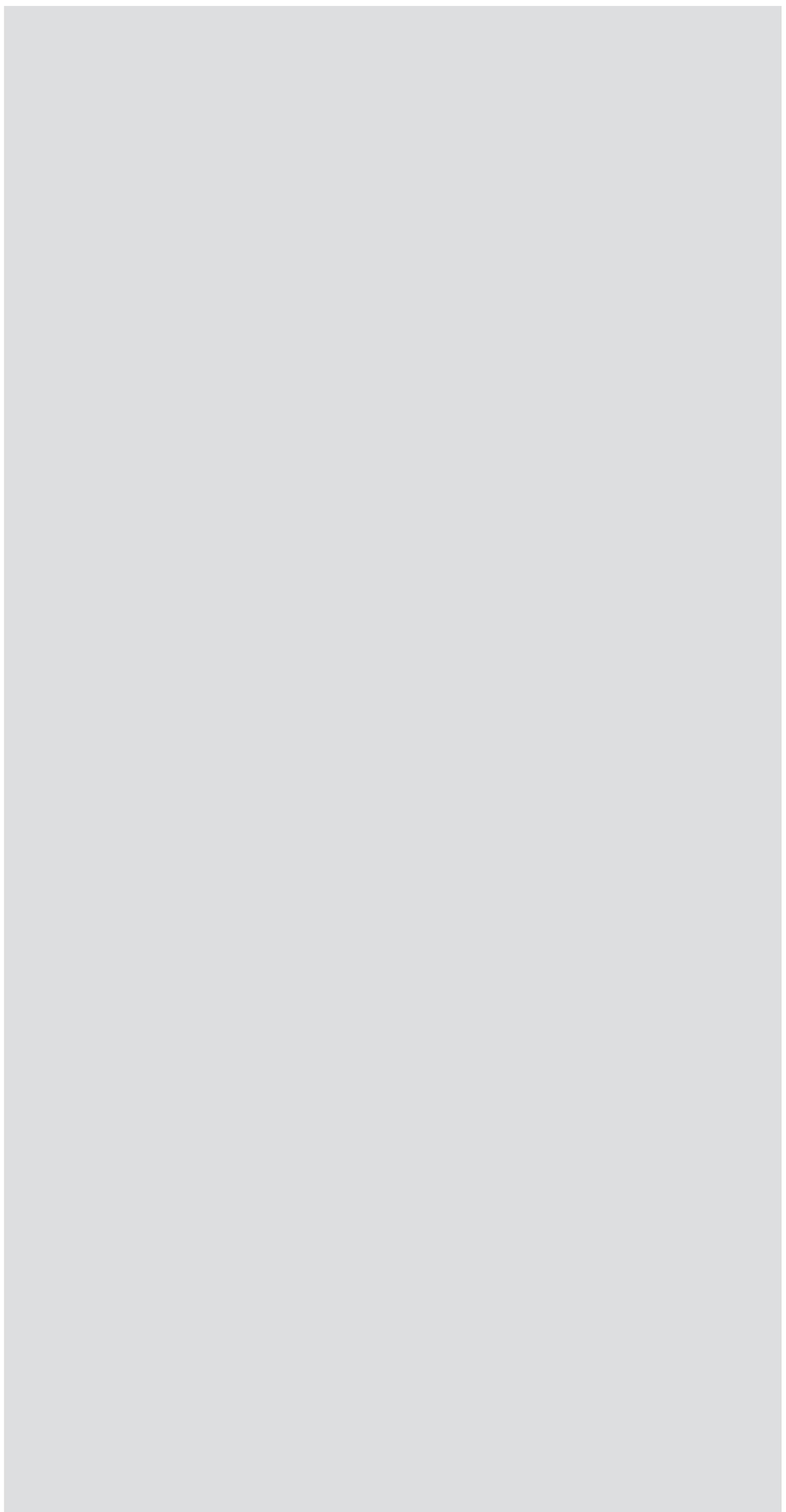
dental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

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.





"Bridesmaids" is a hilarious fem-centric comedy, page B2

'We Salute You' concert huge success

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

Every year, Marines, sailors and their families make sacrifices for the safety of this country. To honor everything these brave men and women do, the Marine Corps Community Services held the 7th annual "We Salute You" concert at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field, Saturday.

"In 2005 we held the first 'We Salute You' concert to honor the Marines, sailors and family members for the sacrifices they make," said Kelly Coe, the marketing manager for the Marine Corps Community Services. "We have carried on that tradition every year since then."

The event began in the afternoon with small games and blow up attractions for the Combat Center personnel and their families to enjoy before the concert's opening performance.

"We come here every year because it is a time to spend with the younger Marines, see what they do, plus the kids get to socialize with the other kids at the same time," said Gunnery Sgt. Luis Espinosa, the admin chief for the commanding general. "It is really good for the kids and the single Marines on a Saturday."

After the sun set, the lights came on and the concert began with a blast. Country duo Bomshel exploded onto the stage and had the full attention of the crowd.

They put on a great show and their music was good for a country music group from outside the big names, said Lance Cpl. Steven Cheney, a rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. "They are hot, they were 'bombshells,' if you would," he added.

After performing classics like "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," they rocked the crowd with original songs like "Fight Like a Girl." Bomshel departed the stage to sign autographs as Clay Walker began his performance.

He is one of our favorite artists and a great guy, said Gunnery Sgt. Chris Shotwell, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge for logistics in 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion. He and his family said they knew he was going to sing all their favorite songs.

Walker didn't disappoint the crowd bringing out some of his



Country music star Clay Walker gets the crowd clapping to "When She's Good She's Good" during the 7th annual "We Salute You" concert at Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field Saturday.



Dandre White, 12-year-old son of TriWest employee Samantha White, slams his fourth out of five ringers during the 7th annual "We Salute You" concert.



Kristy Osmunson, a singer and musician with country duo Bomshel, jams on her guitar during their original song "19 and Crazy."



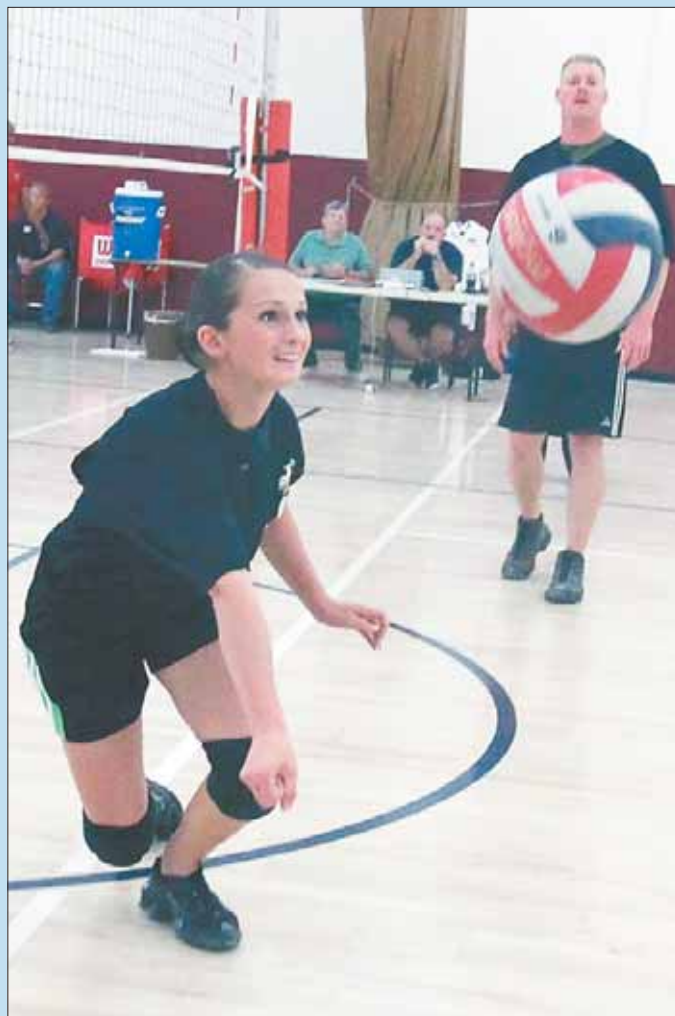
Country duo stars Kelley Shepard, the lead singer for Bomshel, and Kristy Osmunson, the fiddle player, rock the Combat Center's Lance Cpl. Torrey L. Gray Field with their hit song "Fight Like a Girl."

Summer sports in full swing



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Players from MWSS-374 [right], and HQBN battle each other to head the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game Tuesday at Felix Field. HQBN dominated MWSS-374 by beating them 18-1.



LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Stephanie Bilbrey, a player with MCCES, stretches out for the ball during a Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League playoff game against East Gym at the West Gym and Fitness Center Tuesday. MCCES put up a strong fight and kept the score close, but lost both matches to East Gym.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Steve Whitten, the pitcher for Green Thunder, serves up the ball against PMO Chaos in a Commanding General's Intramural Softball League Wednesday. Strong hitting from PMO Chaos led to their dominating victory over Green Thunder 16-5.



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: Techno Night with DJ Jayborg 8-11 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Monday: Club closed for Memorial Day

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Monday: Club closed for Memorial Day
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: Club closed for Memorial Day
Tuesday-Friday: All-Hands lunch, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Full dinner menu, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 5 to 7 p.m.

Combat Center Officers' Club

Tuesday-Friday: Lunch served, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Monday: Club closed for Memorial Day
Thursdays: Taco Night, 5 to 7 p.m.

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

Local Events

Pappy and Harriet's Weekend Line-Up:

The Jackie Young Band

Description: The country/rock band performs
When: 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 27

Solid Ray Woods

Description: The soul, rhythm and blue artist performs
When: 8 p.m. Saturday, May 28
Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

Sublime Tribute

Description: The punk/reggae/ska band performs
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday, May 27

The Barnyard Boyz

Description: A blend of rock and country
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Saturday, May 28
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 27 and 28
Where: Theatre 29
73637 Sullivan Road, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 361-4151 or visit <http://www.theatre29.com>.

Lower Desert

3rd Annual Bongo in Morongo Comedy Show

Description: Radio DJs Mark and Brian's comedy show
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.morongocasinosort.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.morongocasinosort.com>.

Tesla

Description: The hard rockin' group performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, July 8
Where: Agua Caliente
32-250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
For more information call 888-999-1995 or visit <http://hotwatercasino.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, May 27

6 p.m. – Hanna, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Source Code, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Lincoln Lawyer, Rated R

Saturday, May 28

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee.** Narnia: Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Rated PG
2 p.m. – Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Sucker Punch, Rated PG-13
9 p.m. – Arthur, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Your Highness, Rated R

Sunday, May 29

2 p.m. – Hop, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Soul Surfer, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Scream 4, Rated R

Monday, May 30 - Memorial Day

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

Tuesday, May 31

7 p.m. – Sucker Punch, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, June 1

7 p.m. – Diary of a Wimpy Kid 2, Rated PG

Thursday, June 2

7 p.m. – The Lincoln Lawyer, Rated R

'Saturday Night Live' star Wiig shines in bawdy comedy

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"Bridesmaids"

Starring Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph and Rose Byrne
Rated R

June is the month for weddings, and "Bridesmaids" gets the party started with a bridal-shower blast of brassy hilarity and a cast of ferociously funny females.

"Saturday Night Live" standout Kristen Wiig finally gets the chance to shine in a leading role, and shine she does, as writer, star and co-producer. Move over and make way, Tina Fey.

Wiig plays Annie, an unmarried 30-something whose love life, automobile, self-esteem and finances are



COURTESY PHOTO

Utilizing a large cast of funny females, "Bridesmaids," is a hilarious, feminine and sweeter version of the movie "Hangover."

equally in tatters. Asked by her childhood best friend, Lillian (Maya Rudolph, Wiig's real-life gal pal and "SNL" cast mate), to be the maid of honor at her

wedding, Annie gamely goes along with the plan, even though she can't afford it.

Can their friendship survive Annie's well-intentioned but hopelessly mangled attempts at managing things?

The laughs start early and roll through nearly every scene, cresting in a gross-out gem of gastrointestinal distress in a bridal shop and an episode of madcap mayhem on an airplane.

"Bridesmaids" will inevitably be compared to another movie about a rowdy pre-nup party. But it's not just a "Hangover" for women. It's sweeter and smarter than that, and its R-rated bawdiness bobs in a rich, robust undercurrent of genuine emotion and honest observation about relationships both within and

across gender lines.

Melissa McCarthy, Molly in TV's "Mike and Molly," steals just about every scene in which she appears as Megan, the groom's sister, whose significant girth and libidinous appetite for life gives the movie a center of gravity in more ways than one.

The movie is loaded with funny women, all given funny lines and funny things to do, including Rose Byrne (Ellen Parsons on TV's "Damages"), Wendi McLendon-Covey from "Reno 911" and Ellie Kemper, who plays Erin on "The Office."

"Bridesmaids" also marks the final film appearance of veteran actress Jill Clayburgh, who died last year, as Annie's ditz, doting mother.

Jon Hamm from "Mad Men" and Irish actor Chris O'Dowd play the movie's only two significant males, and their characters couldn't be any more different. One's a self-absorbed playboy who turns to Annie only when his other gal pals aren't available, the other an awkward, nice-guy cop interested in more than Annie's busted taillights.

But "Bridesmaids" truly belongs in every way to Wiig, who makes sad-sack Annie believable, relatable and lovable, even when she seems to be having trouble finding anything to love about herself. She's a comedic goldmine.

It's difficult to imagine almost any group of girlfriends NOT wanting to make "Bridesmaids" a movie-night outing. And there's plenty for guys to like, too. So fellas, don't be afraid – you might even learn a thing or two.

Romantic comedies are notoriously hit-and-miss, but this one's a bulls-eye. Leave the kids at home and come prepared for a rippingly funny, laugh-out-loud cascade of fem-centric riffs on love, friendship and a time-honored ritual that, when everything goes right, ends with "I do."

SALUTE, from B1

biggest songs like "She Won't Be Lonely Long, Where Do I Go From You, When She's Good She's Good" and many more. As he finished his last song, the crowd started chanting "Encore," until he enthusiastically complied.

The concert was the biggest success with more than 1,000 Combat Center personnel and family members and will continue every year for the foreseeable future, Coe said.

For More information on MCCS or to see upcoming events visit <http://www.mccs29palms.com> or call 830-6163. For more information on Clay walker and his music, visit <http://www.claywalker.com>.

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: Luckie Park



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.

SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

EDITOR / PRESS CHIEF

When it comes to leisure, there isn't much to do in the actual city limits of Twentynine Palms (besides sunbathe in the back of an El Camino – true story). Sure, there are things to do and places to go, but to relax and just enjoy the great outdoors, it is slim pickings.

Luckie Park, located off of Two Mile Rd. and Utah Trl., is the largest of the four outdoor parks in Twentynine Palms.

In the spring and summer

months, an average weekday afternoon means softball games and playground time for the younger rug rats.

But the facility is a crowd pleaser with two playgrounds, three shaded picnic areas, two lighted basketball courts, a lighted soccer field, four lighted baseball fields, four horseshoe pits (two sets of two), two racquetball courts, relatively clean restrooms and Twentynine Palms' only skateboard park, also lighted.

If this is the first you're hearing about this place, this is a good time to check it out.

The park's swimming pool opens this weekend, and stays open until Labor Day weekend. Starting June 12, the pool will be open daily from 1 to 5 p.m.

The pool is the only area of the park that requires admission. Summer swim fees are \$3 for adults, \$2.75 for children aged 2 to 17, and \$1.25 for seniors aged 55 and older. Lap swim season passes are available for adults and seniors at \$30. Renting out the pool for private parties is also an option. Call the Twentynine Palms Recreation Office at 367-7562 for more information or scheduling.

Besides the permanent sports complexes, the area plays host to a variety of concerts throughout the year, the most recent of which was the multiple-weekend-long Spring Concert Series. Keep an eye out on the Chamber of Commerce website at <http://www.29chamber.org> for upcoming concerts and other events.

My favorite part of the park, and I know this is a small thing, but it has grass!



SGT. HEATHER GOLDEN

Gabriel Villescas, a player for the local Diamond Jacks youth softball team, approaches third base after hitting an infield triple during a game against The Storm at Luckie Park's baseball diamonds Wednesday. The park features a variety of sports complexes and a swimming pool, which will open this weekend.

As in take-off-your-shoes-and-run-barefoot grass. As in lay-out-a-blanket-under-a-tree-with-a-book grass.

The only downside? No pets allowed. And this is a big one for me. My Corgi-Pitt mix, Lucy, is my lil' buddy, and I'd love to take her with me. However, silver lining – no pets means no accidentally stepping in anything when you run around barefoot in all that grass I mentioned.

Despite the zero pets policy, this place takes a four out of five palms for me. There's something for everyone, and so far, it's one of the few totally kid-friendly places

that's equally fun and low-cost for the single Marine escaping the barracks and the family man with a veritable tribe of younglings in tow.

Editor's Note: "Desert Detours" is a weekly series exploring opportuni-

ties 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.

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LANCE CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Sergeant Dustin Kaiser, a saxophone player with the Combat Center Band's brass ensemble, plays to the crowd during a Spring Concert Series performance at Luckie Park April 23. The self-titled "Bandini Band" performed most of their numbers among the crowd before rejoining the concert ensemble on the stage.

Athlete of the Week



Name: Michael Smith

Unit: Headquarters and Services Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment

Hometown: New Bloomfield, Penn.

Recognition: Won two gold medals in the Armed Forces Pankration Tournament in Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Saturday. He won in the 220 and 215 pound bracket. This was his first pankration tournament.

What's your favorite part of the sport?: "I love to fight. I love the alpha male mentality, and it's also a legal way to beat somebody down."

Do you have any advice to any aspiring athletes?: "Never quit. The discipline, conditioning and martial arts skills that you take from it is very beneficial and awesome."

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