



'War Dogs' depart for 31st MEU

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

After months of preparation and training, the Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, departed in the early morning light Sunday to join the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, for their upcoming deployment.

While serving as the battalion landing team for the 31st MEU, which is the nation's only continually forward-deployed MEU, the "War Dogs" are slated to conduct exercises and operations with multiple allied countries.

Their mission will include Operation Tuscan Saber in

Australia, and exercises in the Philippines and South Korea, said 1st Lt. Garrett B. Shaw, a platoon commander for the unit.

In addition to the operations and exercises in the Pacific, the 31st MEU, including BLT 2/7, will be ready to respond to any humanitarian or contingency crises.

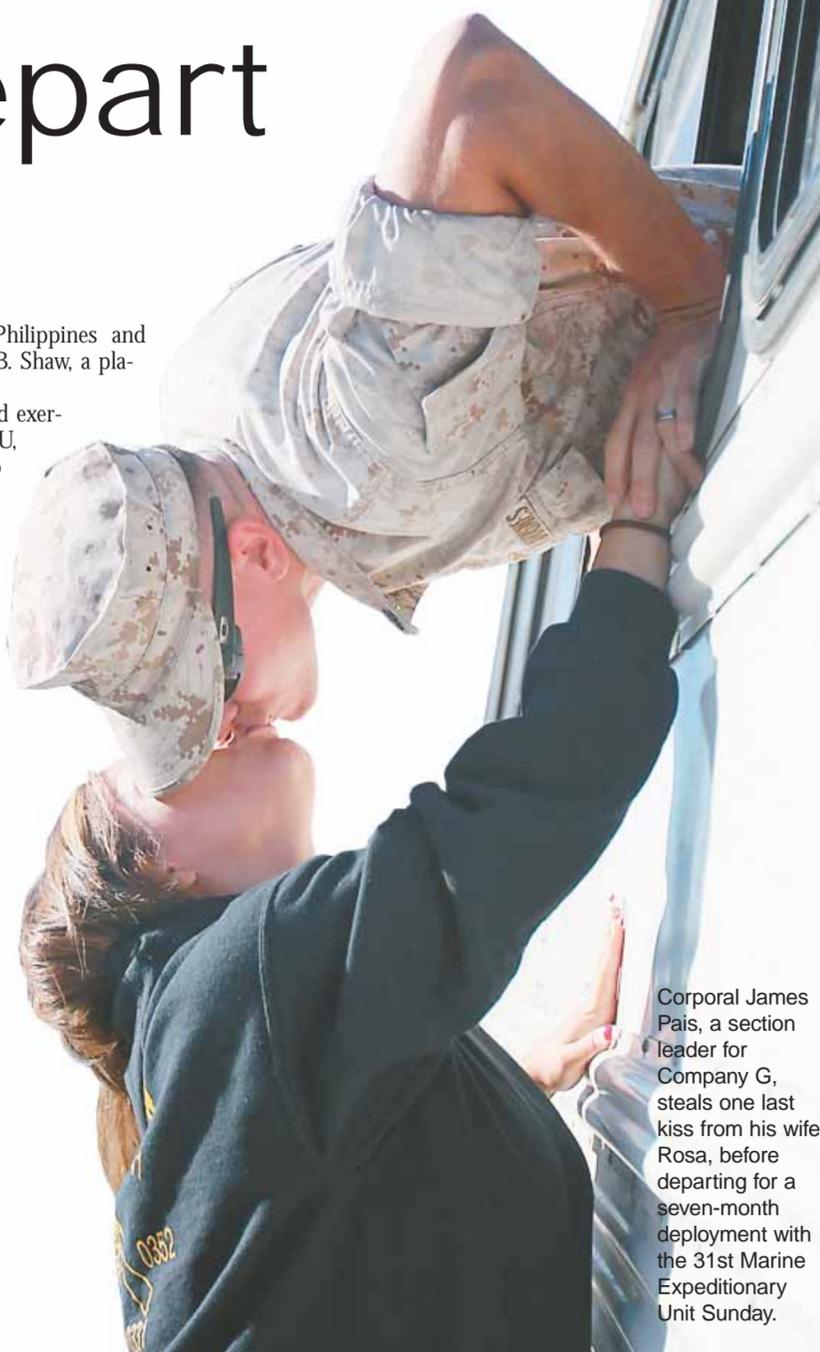
During their pre-deployment exercises, the Marines' and sailors'

See PACIFIC, A7



CAPT. CALEB D. EAMES

Marines and sailors of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, arrive at the Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, from California for deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit as the new battalion landing team June 3. The battalion has now become the ground combat element of the 31st MEU, and is scheduled to embark aboard ships of Amphibious Squadron 11 on a deployment in support of Theater Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The 31st MEU is the nation's only continually forward-deployed MEU.



Corporal James Pais, a section leader for Company G, steals one last kiss from his wife, Rosa, before departing for a seven-month deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Sunday.

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

3rd CEB welcomes new CO



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Lieutenant Col. John P. Sullivan Jr., the new commanding officer of 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, conducts the passing of the colors with the off-going commanding officer, Lt. Col. James H. Bain June 3 at the 3rd CEB compound.

LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion welcomed Lt. Col. John P. Sullivan Jr., as their newest commanding officer during a change of command ceremony June 3 at the 3rd CEB compound.

Sullivan, from Greenville, Miss., who is taking the reins from Lt. Col. James H. Bain, said he is excited about his first assignment as a battalion commander.

"I've been looking forward to this day for a long time," Sullivan said.

During the ceremony, the lineage of the battalion was read, giving everyone present a time to reflect on the unit's history.

"A change of command ceremony is an opportunity for a unit to reminisce about its past, the challenges it's been through and its significant accomplishments," Sullivan said. "Two years ago this battalion didn't exist, they reactivated the battalion. This was

See 3RD CEB, A4



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

The Marines of 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion salute their new commanding officer, Lt. Col. John P. Sullivan Jr., welcoming him into their family during a change of command ceremony June 3 at the 3rd CEB compound.

Sergeants' Course class 4-11 graduates



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

After completing the seven-week course, Sergeants' Course class 4-11 received their diplomas during a graduation ceremony in building 1707 Wednesday. The graduating class finished the course with a grade point average of 94.27 percent. Eight of the students were recognized for their outstanding academic achievement. They are: Sgt. Jake Reaves, Honor Graduate; Sgt. Mayra Garcia, first runner up; Sgt. Christopher McGuire, second runner up; Sgt. Danny Jaimes, the "Gung Ho" Marine. Sergeants Stephen Bare, Anthony Rodriguez, Dewayne Meats Jr. and Matt Hannula were recognized for academic achievement. Fourth platoon was named the "Iron Platoon" for accumulating the most points over several competitive physical training events during the course.

Alienware hummer tours nation



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

The Alienware Hummer Tour makes a stop at the Main Exchange to show off what their computers have to offer to patrons June 3. The Alienware Hummer is fully customized with computers, monitors and the latest games to give service members an idea of what the Alienware brand is capable of. The tour has made its trip cross-country, stopping at several military installations as well as commercial retailers.

Hey Combat Center fans!
Check out the official
MCAGCC social media
sites at:



<http://www.flickr.com/thecombatcenter>



<http://www.youtube.com/user/CombatCenterPAO>



<http://www.facebook.com/thecombatcenter>

Going paperless raises \$85,000 for military families

ELIZABETH HILLESTAD
TriWest

Making the simple switch to electronic statements means military families throughout the country will receive thousands in additional funding to help during a future time of need.

Through TriWest Healthcare Alliance's "Go Green & Give" campaign, more than \$85,000 was raised to help four national military charities in their mission of supporting military families.

All told, more than 17,000 TRICARE West Region households participated in the three-month effort.

Go green, TriWest gives green

For each of the 17,000 households that chose to go green and receive healthcare statements electronically, TriWest agreed to donate \$5 to one of four military charities:

- Armed Services YMCA
- Operation Homefront
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
- USO

"It's great to know that by simply choosing paperless options, our customers were able to help these four outstanding organizations – and ultimately, provide support to the men, women and children who do so much for our country," said TriWest President and CEO David J. McIntyre, Jr.

Clearing the clutter

TRICARE West Region beneficiaries can continue opting in for paperless healthcare communications, such as referral and authorization letters, claims and explanation of benefits statements, by visiting www.triwest.com/GoGreen.

Centerspeak

Marines give a Father's Day shout out.

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



LANCE CPL. ROBERT LUCERO
3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

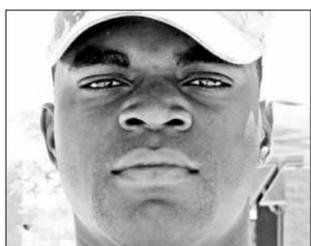
"To his father: I'd like to wish you a Happy Father's Day. And thank you for your hard work and obvious excellent parenting."



CPL. BRANT GREEN
3RD BATTALION, 11TH MARINE REGIMENT

To his father Barry Green of Blackford, Ky.:

"Happy Father's Day. I wish you the best. Thanks for all of the support."



CPL. MARQUICE BOWMAN
1ST TANK BATTALION

To his friend Cpl. Reynaldo Mendez on becoming a new dad:

"Keep up the good work. It's a learning experience and on-the-job training."

Hot Topics

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING

There will be a Provost Marshal's Physical Security/Crime Prevention Office Neighborhood Watch Meeting June 16 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Protestant Chapel. Personnel living in all housing areas invited to attend. For more information, call Staff Sgt. Melissa Polich at 830-5457.

IRONMAN AND IRONWOMAN EVENT

Get ready for the Ironman and Ironwoman event at the West Gym and Fitness Center, starting at 5 p.m. June 16. The competition is free and open to all MCCS-eligible patrons, aged 18 years and up, and will include pull-ups, sit-ups and push-ups.

MEDIAEVAL FUN AT LIFELONG LEARNING LIBRARY

Partake in the Lifelong Learning Library's Medieval amusements to win prizes, enjoy guest speakers and join in royal activities June 17 - July 29. This event is for children ages 5 to 12 years, and will be at the library every Friday from 10 - 11:30 a.m. Call 830-6875 for more information.

MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

Military Appreciation Night is June 14 at your respective club. Meet the Bud girls at the Officers' Club, 5 to 6 p.m., the Staff Noncommissioned Officers' Club, 6 to 7 p.m., the NCO Club, 7 to 8 p.m. and the Enlisted Club, 8 to 9 p.m. For information, visit <http://www.eatandstaymccs29.com>.

Marine Corps History

June 10, 1898

The First Marine Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Robert W. Huntington, landed on the eastern side of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The next day, Lt. Herbert L. Draper hoisted the American flag on a flag pole at Camp McCalla, where it flew during the next 11 days. Huntington later sent the flag with an accompanying letter to Colonel Commandant Charles Heywood, noting that "When bullets were flying, ...the sight of the flag upon the midnight sky has thrilled our hearts."

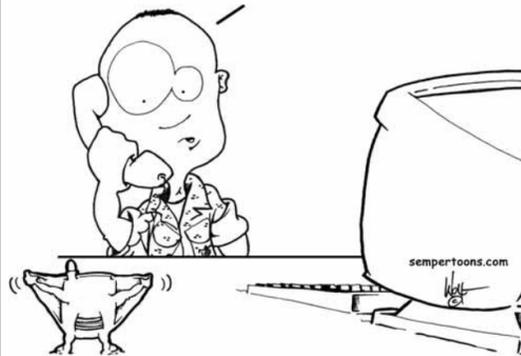


Immediately report any suspicious activity which may be a sign of terrorism, including:

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

830-3937

"Ahhh...hello, Help Desk?, This might sound weird, but... My Crackberry is flashing me."



Crazy comments found in the Help Desk Log Book

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

SUDOKU #2201

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES COURTESY OF © 2010 HOMETOWN CONTENT

SENT AWAY

[Puzzle solutions on A9]

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ACROSS

1. Surgery souvenir
5. Risked a citation
9. Give the thumb to
14. Curly cabbage
15. Moneeyed one
16. Kashmir cash
17. Nile wader
18. Exploitative sort
19. Walled city near Madrid
20. Is totally off the wall
23. Like excellent pastrami
24. Most acute
28. River of Tours
32. One word, in golf
33. Lay turf
36. Rudimentary seed
38. Like a doily
39. 5% of a fin
43. Stick on the dinner table?

DOWN

44. Baby-tooth taker
45. Mach I breaker
46. More high-spirited
49. Faddish language
51. Metal marble
53. It surrounds the pupil
56. Whiffs in wax
61. Box office buy, slangly
64. 2000 presidential also-ran
65. Nobelist Wiesel
66. Sky shade
67. Euclid's lake
68. Bat Masterson's weapon
69. Hitchcock assailants
70. Knock to the canvas
71. Got a load of

DOWN

1. Take off the top
2. Scheming bunch
3. Much the same
4. Put back into the freezer bag
5. Cold-shoulder
6. "El ___" (Marty Robbins hit)
7. Nights, in classifieds
8. Baseball's Jeter
9. One end of a #2
10. Part of JD
11. Prefix with center or dermis
12. "Fantasia" frame
13. Herbal quaff
21. Uppity one
22. Writer Buntline
25. Roy's wife Dale
26. Religious spin-offs
27. Meet overreptitiously
29. Wall overgrowth, perhaps
30. Dennis the Menace's dog
31. Inventor Howe

33. Transit map markings
34. Young hooter
35. Farm gear pioneer
37. Demonic
40. Bit of decorative stationery
41. Christian or Victorian
42. Skeptical sort
47. Sends to cloud nine
48. ___ Tin Tin
50. Where Rhodes is
52. Barely defeated
54. Mosaic, e.g.
55. "Goosebumps" series author R.L.
57. Folk history
58. Newsman Severeid
59. Try to locate
60. Top-rated tourney entrant
61. Apply gently
62. Israeli submachine gun
63. Mean mutt

Combat Center Spotlight



Name: Pfc. Irina Jones
Hometown: Gaithersburg, Md.
Unit: Headquarters Postal
Job title: Postal clerk
Job duties: Sort mail
What do you like most about your job? "I like dealing with people and practicing customer service."
Hobbies: Working out, sports, playing in my church worship team and song writing.
What are you involved with on the base? Body building, cross country, intramural softball and intramural basketball.
Where are you originally from? "I was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. I was adopted when I was 8-years-old and was brought to Maryland."
Most applicable saying: "Never let any barrier in your life stop you from accomplishing your goals."

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SGT. J. R. STENCE

General David Petraeus, the commanding general of International Security Assistance Force, greets Marines and sailors with Regimental Combat Team 1, at the RCT-1 headquarters in Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, May 30. Petraeus visited Camp Dwyer to evaluate coalition progress in Southern Helmand province.

Petraeus notes success in Southern Helmand

SGT. J. R. STENCE
REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM 1

CAMP DWYER, Helmand province, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan – General David Petraeus, the commanding general of International Security Assistance Force, toured Camp Dwyer on Memorial Day to evaluate Regimental Combat Team 1's

progress in Southern Helmand province.

Petraeus received a brief on counterinsurgency operations in the region, spoke to Afghan National Security Forces personnel, and addressed a gathering of approximately 75 service members inside the RCT-1 headquarters compound.

He noted progress in the

region, specifically in Marjah district, which was widely regarded as an insurgent stronghold less than two years ago.

"I have to tell you, I never would have expected to see the kind of progress that has been achieved there over the subsequent 15 months or so," Petraeus said.

During Petraeus' tour, Col.

David Furness, the RCT-1 commander, led him through the regiment's Combat Operations Center. The COC, a data hub on RCT-1 counterinsurgency activities, is manned by Marines and Afghan National Army soldiers. While there, Petraeus shook hands with coalition

See **PETRAEUS, A8**

Relief Society: 'We need more volunteers'

LANCE CPL. D. J. WU
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society can be a useful tool for Marines and sailors who are in need of financial help.

The NMCRS has been assisting Marines and sailors financially and educationally since 1905 and has helped them here in Twentynine Palms since the 1950s.

The society and its volunteers serve more than four million sailors, Marines and families, according to the NMCRS website.

The lifeblood of the society is in its volunteers, said Sarah Mota, the chairman of publicity for the Combat Center's NMCRS office. The volunteers at NMCRS do everything from serving as case workers and helping individual service members, to working as knitters who make blankets for relief efforts around the world.

NMCRS is always looking for new volunteers, said Mota.

"We need volunteers to keep on doing what we do," she said.

One program the society

stressed a need for is the Budget for Baby program. The program is entirely run by volunteers and is designed to serve new or soon-to-be parents. Volunteers make blankets at no cost to them, or with reimbursement by the society.

With a current roster of volunteers for the program at a little over a dozen, the society is in dire need of knitters.

All volunteers are trained by NMCRS in any section to which they want to donate their time.

One of the society's largest services is their Financial Assistance Program for emer-

gency needs. When Marines and sailors can't pay their bills or run into sudden expenses,

See **RELIEF, A8**

SJA CORNER

Auto loans: You're on the hook

1ST LT. NATHAN D. ADAMS
LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Whether you sell your vehicle, it gets impounded, or your vehicle gets destroyed, you are still responsible for the full balance of any outstanding loan. Several options exist to protect you from being stuck with a large bill. Guaranteed Auto Protection insurance is one way to do that.

GAP insurance covers the difference in your vehicle's actual value and what you still owe on your vehicle. For instance, if you buy a new car, your car devalues around 20 percent the instant you buy it and drive it off the dealer's lot. If you were to get into an accident at that time and total your car, regular car insurance would only fund 80 percent of the car's value. At that point, not only do you have no vehicle, but you also are stuck paying the remaining 20 percent of the auto loan you just took out.

Like all insurance, you buy GAP insurance hoping you never need it, but you're glad it's there if you ever do. A few situations eliminate the need for GAP insurance. First, check your regular auto insurance. If the policy says it will cover "full replacement cost" or "new car replacement," you do not need GAP insurance. Also, if you are paying cash for the full price of the vehicle, are paying more than 20

percent of the purchase price of the vehicle or are buying a used vehicle that won't depreciate very much over the life of the loan, you may not need GAP insurance.

Another important step in protecting yourself in vehicle purchases is to make sure you are paying a fair price. In a previous SJA Corner article, called "Car Purchases: An Ounce of Prevention," it was recommended that you get either a CARFAX or AutoCheck report detailing the history of your vehicle. Also, it is a good idea before purchasing any vehicle to take it to an independent, third party mechanic to look at your vehicle and see if there is any damage or other problems with your vehicle. Finally, you can look up the market value for a vehicle, using the make, model and with the same options by going to nada.com or kbb.com. In this way, you can make sure you not only are aware of any potential problems that could develop with your car, but you can also negotiate a fair purchase price for your vehicle.

The Legal Assistance Office is a resource you may use to help you decide if you need GAP insurance for your next vehicle purchase. We are also here to help you if you have any problems as a result of any vehicle mishaps. Call 830-6111 and make an appointment as early as possible.



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Observation Post
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LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Third Combat Engineer Battalion Marines show off their drill skills during a change of command ceremony, in which they welcomed Lt. Col. John P. Sullivan Jr. into the battalion June 3, at the 3rd CEB compound.

3RD CEB, from A1
no small feat.”

The Marines worked hard, trained hard and developed the combat capability of 3rd CEB, and in just a few short

months, so they could deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. They successfully executed a seven-month deployment to the admiration of all who observed them.

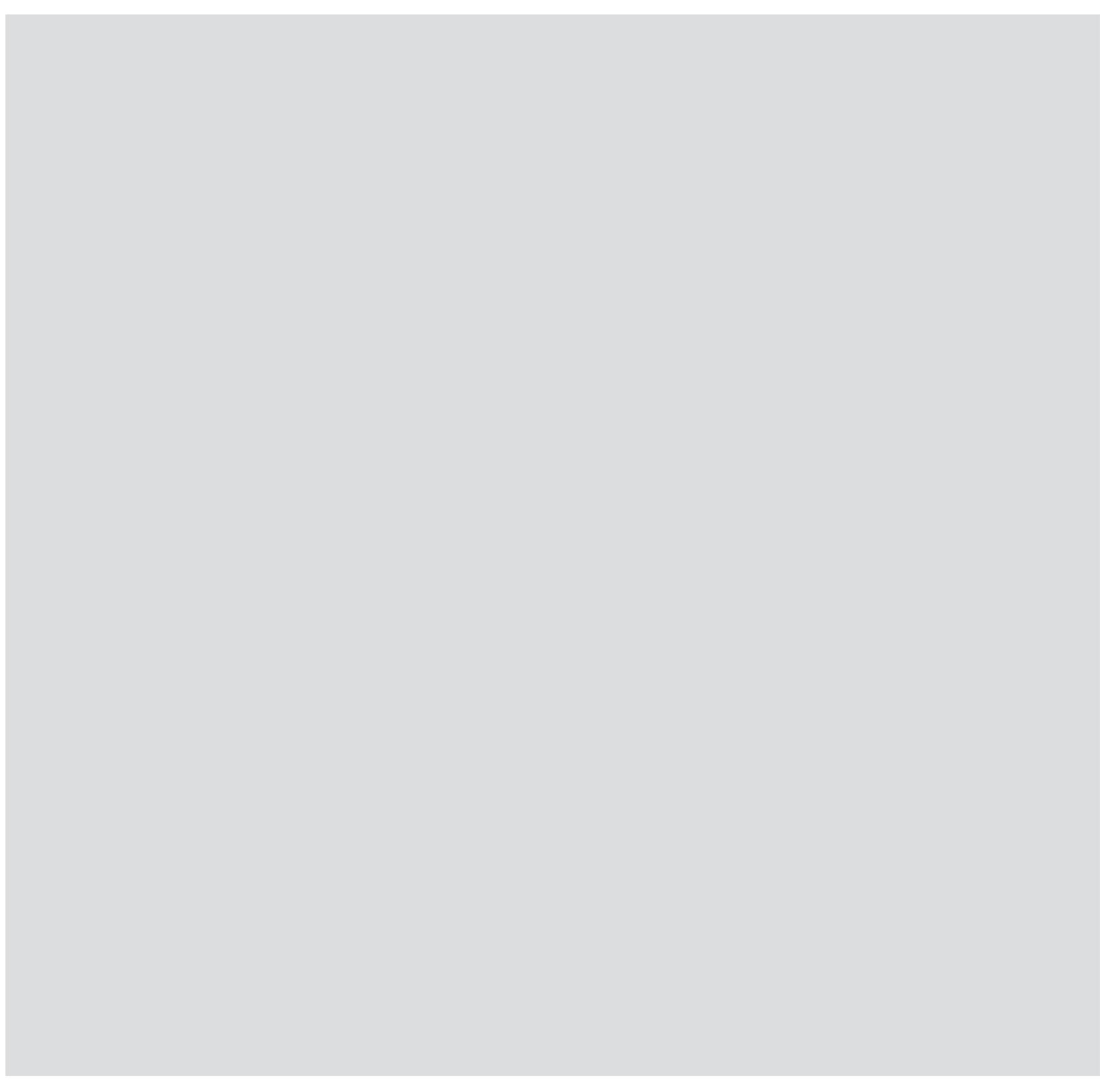
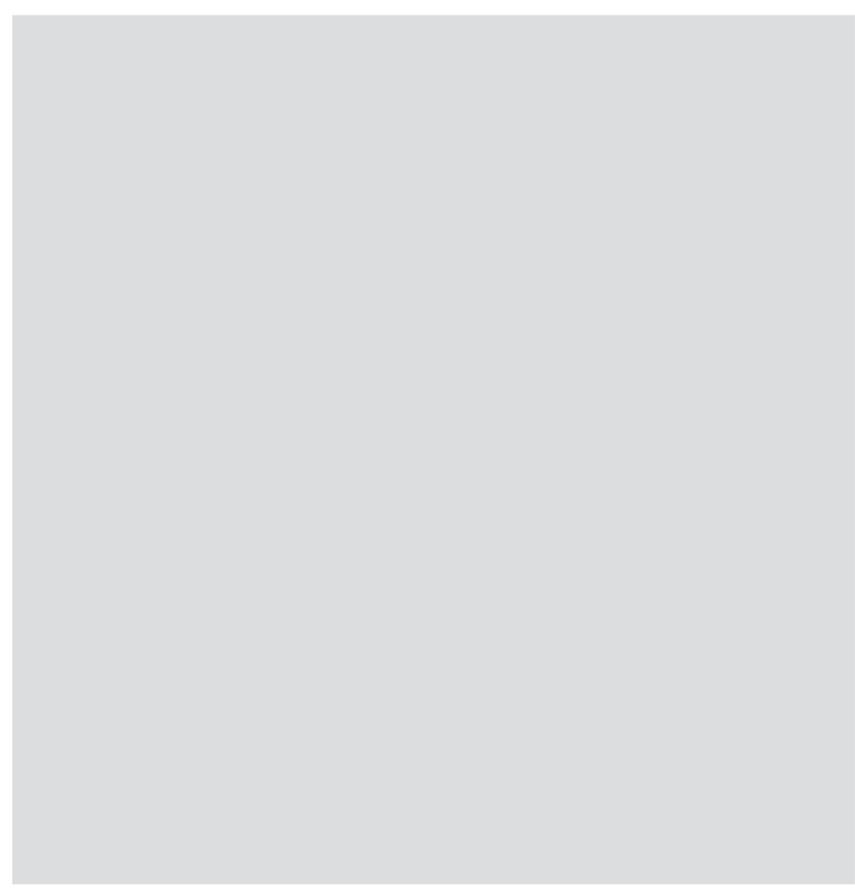
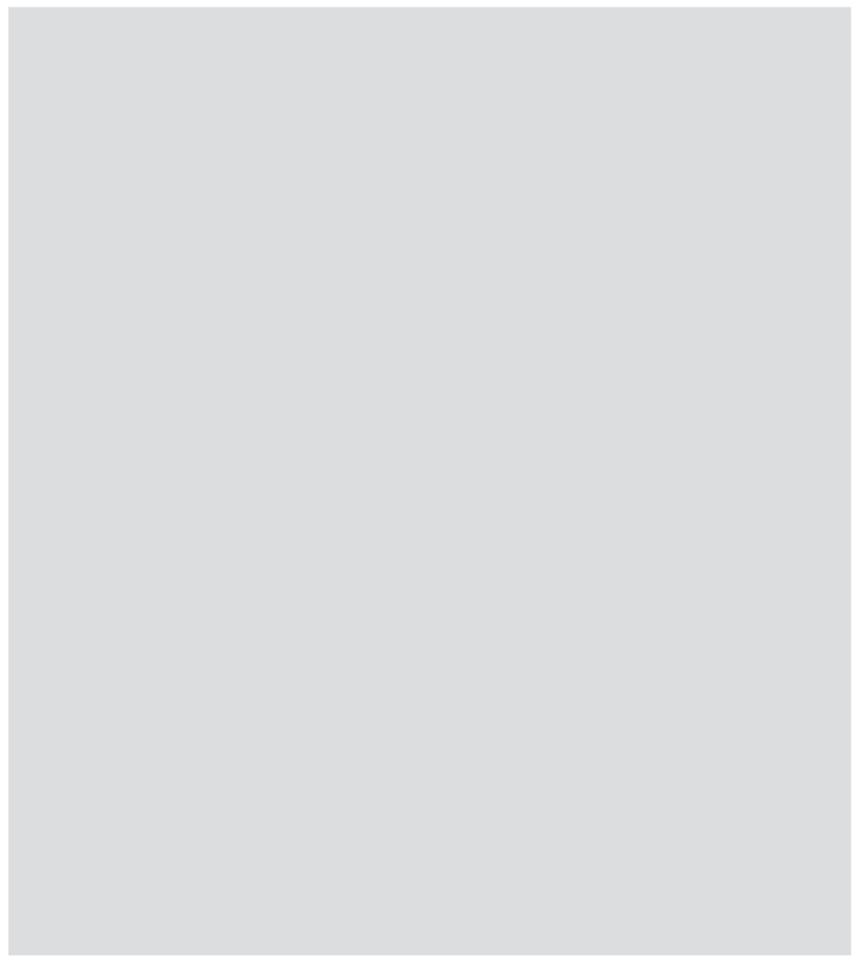
This was truly remarkable, Sullivan said. Sullivan is transferring from the Marine Corps University, where he taught phase one of the Expeditionary Warfare School

non-resident program. After two years of commanding the battalion, Bain said farewell to his Marines and their families, and thanked everyone who helped him during his time here.

“I’m in denial, I don’t have words,” Bain said, a

native of Shreveport, La. “I want to talk about [my Marines]. I’ve had the best staff, officers and Marines that I could ever hope to have. I am truly blessed. A wise man once said, ‘Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened.’” With his parting words,

Bain spoke directly to Sullivan, asking him to take full advantage of the opportunity. “This will be the most challenging and rewarding time of your Marine Corps career,” Bain said. “These Marines will do anything for you and do anything for the country. They are my heroes.”





Participants in the annual Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby speed down Adobe Road to the cheers of the crowd June 3. The derby is the opening event for the annual Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce Street Fair and Car Show.

Chamber, Combat Center host Soapbox Derby

CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Families from all over Twentynine Palms brought out their homemade soapbox racers and sped down Adobe Road toward victory during the annual Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby June 3.

The event was made possible with the joint efforts of the ASYMCA, the Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce and Combat Center volunteers.

"I think it is important for the cooperation between the city and the base," said Sgt. Maj. James Walsh, the battalion sergeant major for Headquarters Battalion. "Today's event is symbolic for the combined community involvement."

The Soapbox Derby drew 40 children from ages 5 to 14 years old.

"It is just a great way to get these kids out, moving and involved in the community," said Kelly Roybal, the ASYMCA special events coordinator. "It is a great way for the kids to have a really good time."

Before the event began, volunteers checked all children for proper safety gear and shared the same type of pride the parents felt for the

children's accomplishment in constructing the vehicles.

"He is absolutely stoked to be doing something like this and just to be able to help build this [soapbox] and then race it," said Ray Porter, whose son, Tyler, made a racer shaped like a train.

Many of the officials, parents and spectators saw the event as not just an opening for the annual Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce Street Fair and Car Show, but also a great family activity.

"This [goes] back to the old fashioned days of the Soapbox Derby, and I think this is an institution in the American society, and it is getting them out and giving them skills," Walsh said. "[They are] using their hands on more than a video game controller, and the kids are having a great time doing it."

The event ran smoothly because of Combat Center personnel who volunteered their time to ensure the safety of the children and to move the cars back up the hill.

"I hardly advertised for any volunteers," Roybal said. "They just called and said, 'I want to come out and help, what can I do?' We have volunteers that are inspectors, registering, and



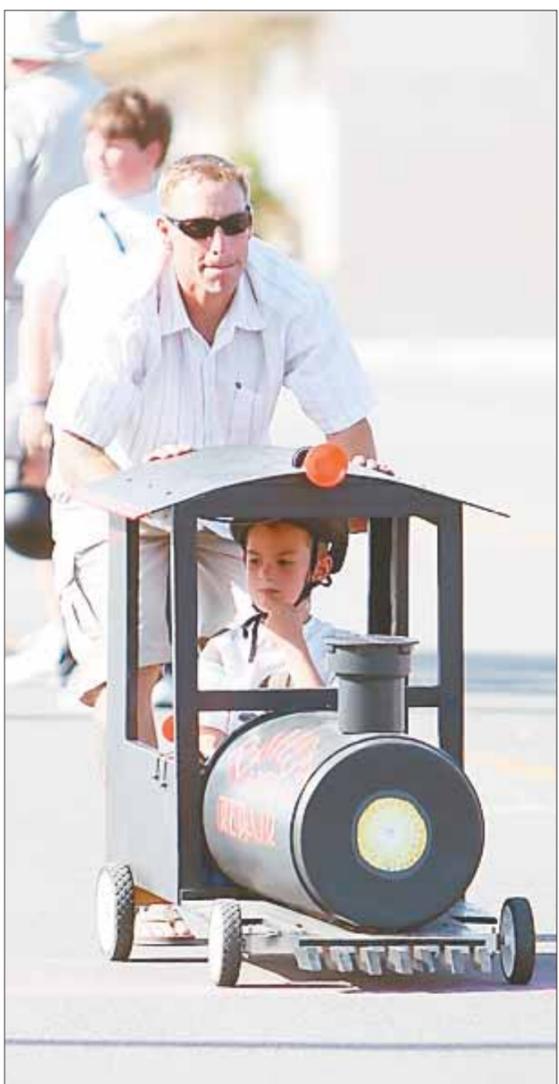
Racers in the annual Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby race neck and neck down the hill for their fastest times on Adobe Road June 3.

also along the side of the road and at the bottom, so if the child starts to wobble, they can be right there to grab them."

For more information on upcoming ASYMCA activities and ways to volunteer, contact Roybal at 830-7481.



Volunteers with the Armed Services YMCA push racers in the annual ASYMCA Soapbox Derby back up the hill on Adobe Road June 3. The volunteers also helped with registration and safety inspection and served as time keepers.



Ray Porter gives his son, Tyler, a small push in his train-shaped soapbox racer during the annual Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby on Adobe Road June 3.

And the winners are...

Armed Services YMCA choice: Car # 2228, Morgan Clingan
General's choice: Car # 2149, James Hooten
Mayor's choice: Car # 2211, George Mitchell

Stock Ages 5-8
 1st Place, Car # 2283 Nicholas Councill
 2nd Place, Car # 2230 Nathaniel Fender
 3rd Place, Car # 2239 Jacob Stacey

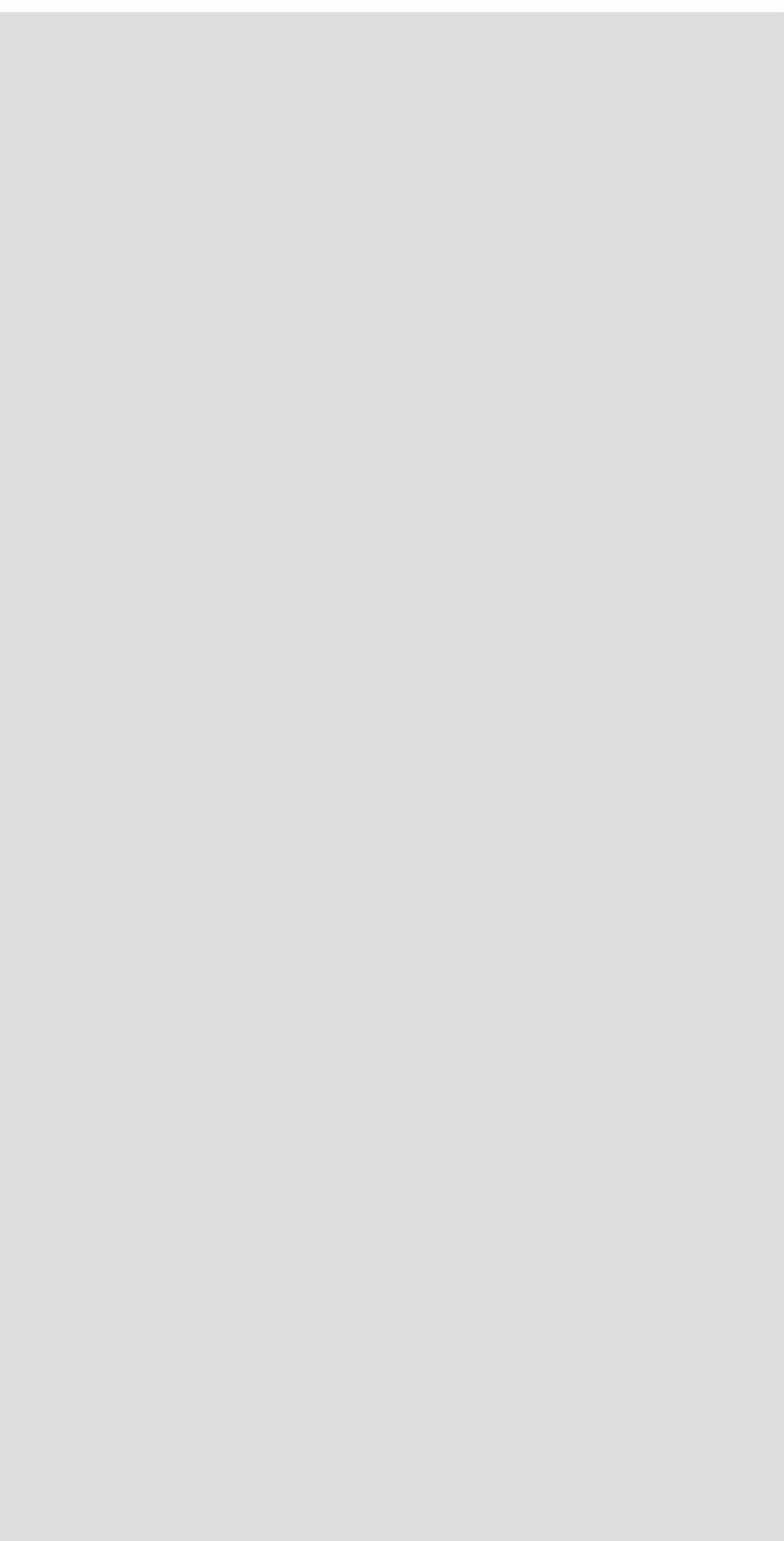
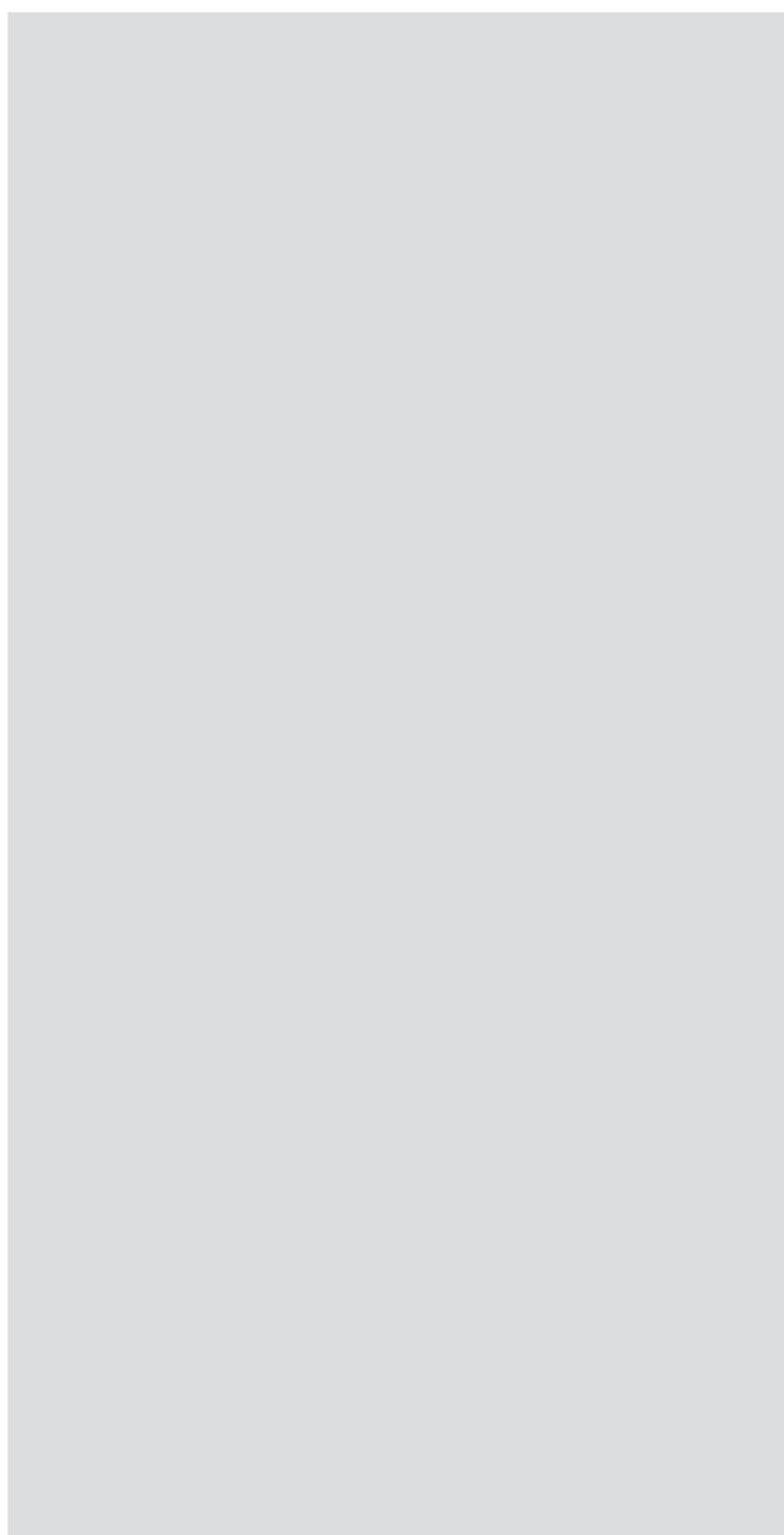
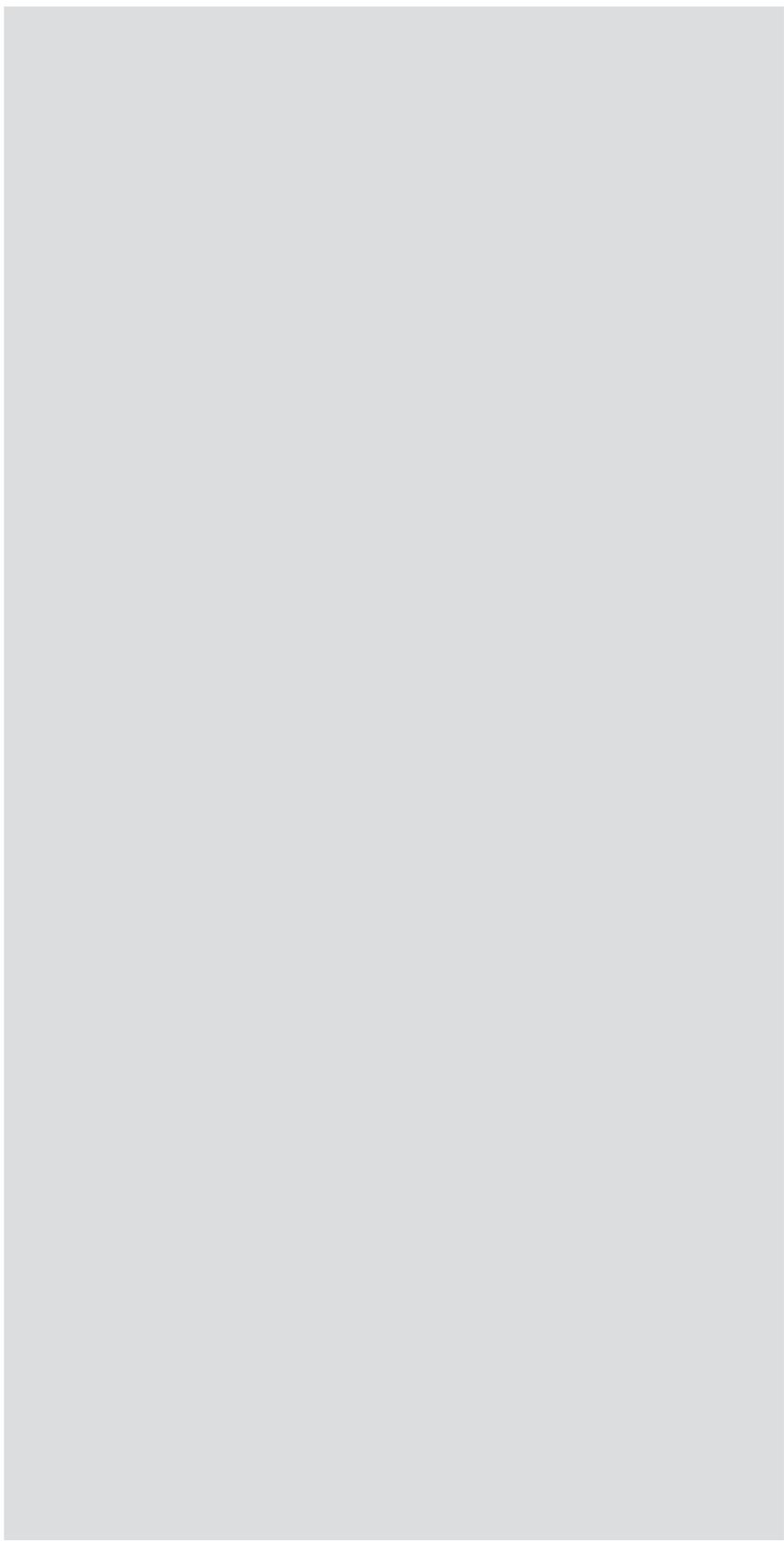
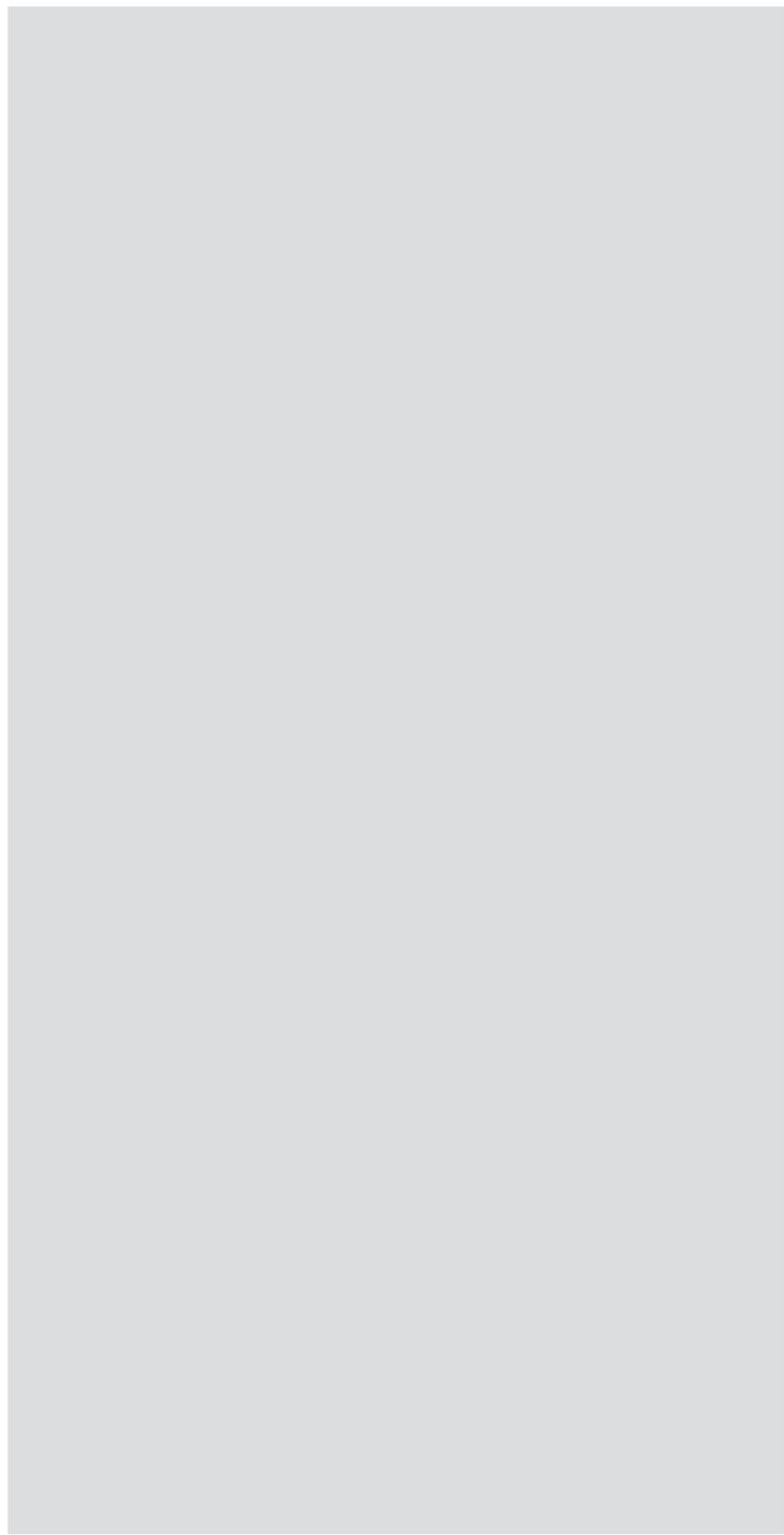
Stock ages 9-14
 1st Place, Car # 2238 Matthew Councill
 2nd Place, Car # 2203, Kailie Porter
 3rd Place, Car # 2208 Adrian Enriquez

Super Stock Ages 5-8
 1st Place, Car # 2215 Juan Carlos Valdez
 2nd Place, Car # 2214 Connor Andrews
 3rd Place, Car # 2080 Carson Estrada

Super Stock Ages 9-14
 1st Place, Car # 2131 Rachel Roybal
 2nd Place, Car # 2149 James Hooten
 3rd Place, Car # 2237 Gabriel Villescás



Jenuve Marruffo, a participant in the Armed Services YMCA Soapbox Derby, dashes down Adobe Road June 3. Participants in the derby raced twice, with their fastest time going for the first place trophy.



PACIFIC, from A1

training ranged from amphibious landings to helicopter maneuvers. They were also given multiple classes on how to prepare themselves for the long time away from loved ones, said 2nd Lt. Jeffery Medeiros, a battalion assistant logistics officer with 2/7.

"I think they are very well prepared," said Carrie Johnson, 2/7's Family Readiness Officer.

Johnson said she and several volunteers are committed to helping the families during the deployment.

"I have a really good team of volunteer spouses who have a lot of ideas of events and things to do," Johnson said. "One of the biggest things we have going on is the 'Walk to Okinawa.' The ladies

and parents are planning on doing a walk for how many miles it is to Okinawa and back. There is a webpage to blog and post their times and a tracker for the miles that have been walked. Our first local walk will be June 16 at the Physical Fitness Test course."

Despite the sadness many obviously felt in bidding farewell to their loved ones before boarding the buses, the unit's morale was upbeat.

"[Their spirits are] extremely high, they are excited to deploy," Shaw said. "Everybody is looking forward to getting out and shaking hands with other countries."

The Marines and sailors of 2/7 will finish their deployment and return to their loved ones in the beginning of next year.



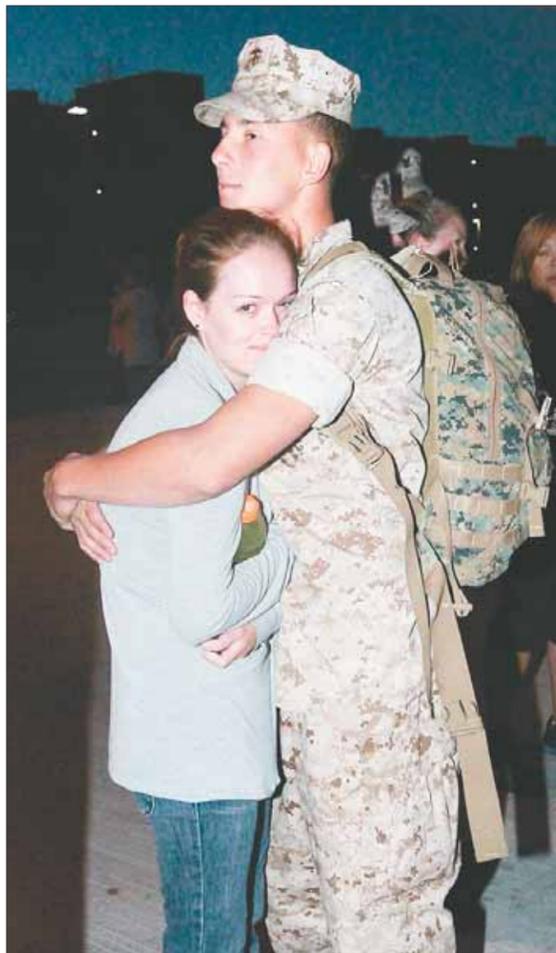
CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Friends of a departing Marine with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, make last minute memories before departing for a seven-month deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Sunday.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Lance Cpl. Aaron Rivera, an assistant patrol leader for Company G, 2/7, spends his last minutes playing games with his 2-year-old daughter, Scarlet, and his wife, Jerriann, before deploying to the Pacific with the 31st MEU Sunday.



CPL. ANDREW D. THORBURN

Lance Cpl. Joshua Thorpe, a mortarman with Weapons Co., 2/7, savors all the time he has left with his wife, Nicole, before departing for a seven-month deployment with the 31st MEU Sunday.

Ground-Breaking ceremony instills hope for growth in Marjah

LANCE CPL. KATHERINE M. SOLANO
II MEF (FWD)

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – As much as 85 percent of Afghanistan's economic activity is made up of agricultural enterprises in the Helmand and Nimroz provinces. This impressive economic stature makes these areas attractive opportunities for coalition forces to develop and promote independent agricultural growth.

With the help of the local government and co-operative members, mostly farmers, coalition forces have begun the planning needed to develop better agricultural processes. It began in Marjah, with a groundbreaking ceremony for a packing facility, May 29.

Marjah is an ideal place to begin sustainable agricultural projects, the primary reason being its extensive irrigation system, fed by the Boghra Canal. Equal dispersion of water resources allows for double cropping, or the harvesting of winter and summer crops on the same land.

"The process we have in this area is too old," said Abdul Mutalib, the district governor of Marjah. "We need a modern approach, and the international community is helping us with this."

This modern approach includes using the available water resources, as well as relying on the resiliency and will of the local population to thrive.

"The people requested this building to make a better market. It will definitely help the community," Mutalib added.

The Afghan people have relied on agriculture for hundreds of years to support



SGT. MALLORY VANDERSCHANS

An agricultural specialist for Marjah, Maggie Jones; U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, commander, Regional Command (Southwest); Afghan National Army Gen. Haji Mah Niazi; and Afghan national leaders plant shovels into the dirt during a groundbreaking ceremony outside Combat Outpost Hanson, in Marjah, Afghanistan, May 29, 2011. The ground breaking ceremony announced the start of a produce market construction project that will improve the economy in the Marjah District area of operations.

their families and their country, but it has not been easy.

"Farmers are hampered by adversities," said Capt. Mike McDowell, the civil affairs team leader with Regimental Combat Team 1. "There is a lack of road systems and there is no distribution system."

The packing facility will allow farmers to expand and manage their own businesses.

"This building represents a chance for local farmers to control their business, creates jobs, and gives them an opportunity to sell their own fruits and vegetables at a good price," said McDowell, a native of LaGrande, Ore.

The building process also includes a plan to develop

more roads in order to expedite the distribution process. Without the roads, the farmers will remain unable to sell all of the produce they harvest because they cannot get it out of the local community.

"Now, all the crops are harvested and sold at the same time," McDowell stated.

The excess supply versus the demand means the leftover produce rots, he said.

With a packing facility in the community, the farmers will be able to sanitize and wash, crate and pack, and ship the produce to farther reaches of the country.

"Farmers can, and will, produce more knowing they have a market beyond the locals," said Maggie Rhodes,

a United States Department of Agriculture representative. "This increased capacity for long-term agricultural growth and production will equal long-term stability."

It is the eventual wish of the project's investors and participants to be able to sell Afghan produce in the international market.

More buildings and plants are scheduled to be built in the near future.

"The success is the result of the contributions of the Afghan leaders sitting here today," said Maj. Gen. John A. Toolan, commanding general of Regional Command Southwest. "If it wasn't for [their] courage and hard work, things like today wouldn't be happening in Marjah."

RELIEF, from A3

the NMCRS is there to help them with interest-free loans and grants.

This program is also run by case workers and budget counselors who volunteer their time to help those in need.

The NMCRS personnel at

the Combat Center spend their days trying to help those in need and are always looking for new volunteers.

For more information

on volunteering for the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society call 830-6323 or visit them in the Village Center, building 1551.



SGT. J. R. STENCE

General David Petraeus, the commanding general of International Security Assistance Force, addresses Regimental Combat Team 1 Marines and sailors at Camp Dwyer, May 30.

PETRAEUS, from A3

personnel and briefly evaluated a few ANA soldiers on their knowledge of the area and their competence with communications equipment.

Petraeus also shared a brief Memorial Day message with Marines and sailors gathered outside the COC.

"I would ask that each of you privately ... remember those buddies, your personal buddies, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country in these endeavors," Petraeus said. "We must never ever forget them, and we must our country takes very seriously. So, on this Memorial

Day, let's resolve to continue the mission for which they gave their lives."

The mission of ISAF is to partner with Afghan National Security Forces and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to conduct counterinsurgency operations to secure the Afghan people, defeat insurgent forces and enable ANSF assumption of security responsibilities in the nation.

Regimental Combat Team 1 supports 2nd Marine Division (Forward), the ground combat element with Regional Command (Southwest). The RC marshals Marine Corps infantry, aviation and logistics elements in support of the ISAF mission in Helmand.



SGT. J. R. STENCE

General David Petraeus, the commanding general of International Security Assistance Force, evaluates an Afghan National Army soldier inside the Regimental Combat Team 1 Combat Operations Center, at Camp Dwyer, May 30. Petraeus visited Dwyer to evaluate counterinsurgency progress in Southern Helmand province, the region where RCT-1 operates.

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.

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

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**LOOKING
for local
entertainment?**

See page B2 for our
**LIBERTY CALL
section**

Combat Center Trader Ads**AUTOMOTIVE**

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

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

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

MISC.

EIGHT PIECE DINING SET. Very nice tile top, solid wood, light finish set that features an extra long, rectangle, legless table with removable center leaf. Includes six chairs and a two-seat bench. Very heavy and durable, yet semi-formal set. A must see. \$645. Call 362-5293.

STORAGE CONTAINER. An 8 x 10 foot rollup locking door, steel container in excellent shape. \$2,800. Call 362-5293.

FIREWOOD. Approximately two cords of dried, split, quality miscellaneous wood. Personally cut and hauled from Big Bear. Includes kindling. Sorry, delivery is not possible. \$295. Call 362-5293

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.

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

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

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

publish an ad.

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

service. Such ads must represent incidental exchanged not of sustained business nature.

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

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

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

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

Cell phone cameras now authorized for recruiters

LANCE CPL. DAVID FLYNN
MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The ability to take pictures on government issued cell phones will give recruiters another tool in their arsenal as they continue to accomplish the Marine Corps Recruiting Command's mission of putting the nation's most highly qualified men and women into the Marine Corps.

"A recently approved change in policy will soon enable recruiters to utilize their government issued cell phones to take pictures of applicants' tattoos and physical appearance," said Robert

Brown, assistant chief of staff, G-6, Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

The policy change, which was approved by the United States Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command, is in response to requests from recruiters on the street to use their camera phones.

According to Brown, recruiters will be able to take pictures using their issued smart-phones and send them to their MCRC e-mail account, via an approved Gmail account. However, officer selection officers, who are issued BlackBerrys, will be able to take pictures using the phone and send them directly to their MCRC e-mail address.

The updated policy will save recruiters time while putting together enlistment and officer commissioning packages.

"[The policy change] will benefit me because I'll be able to take pictures on the spot," said Capt. Randy J. Parks, officer selection officer, Officer Selection Station Providence, R.I. "Sometimes I don't have a digital camera on me, but I always have my BlackBerry. It will be easier if I can take a picture of an applicant and e-mail it to myself."

Phones issued to Marines from other commands will not have the cameras enabled, as the policy change only pertains to MCRC Marines.

Although the policy change has been approved, recruiters won't be able to use their phone cameras until detailed guidance and instructions are published. The command plans to publish guidance within the next 30 to 45 days.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LANCE CPL. DAVID FLYNN

Officer selection officers and recruiters will soon be allowed to use the cameras on their government issued smart phones and BlackBerrys after a new change in policy by Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The policy change, which will only affect MCRC, will allow recruiters and OSOs to take pictures of an applicant's tattoos and physical appearance and forward them to their government e-mail or approved Gmail accounts.

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



ADVERTISEMENT



Top players shine in all-star games

**STAFF SGT.
 LYNDEL JOHNSON**
 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The top players of the Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League clashed in the West Gym and Fitness Center for the all-star game Monday.

The best players of the league's nine teams were chosen by their teammates and coaches to display their talents in front of the all-star game audience. These exceptional players were a mix of families, Marines, and sailors who live or work aboard the Combat Center.

Although the five-game event was an unofficial exhibition of skill without a clear winner or loser. The players performed with intensity and a desire to compete.

Rachael Schroeder, a previous volleyball player at Holy Names University in Oakland, Calif., and wife of 1st Lt. Michael Schroeder, a platoon commander for 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, stated that the players she competed against could "most definitely hang in the college level."

David Sierleja, a player on several competitive beach and indoor volleyball teams, gave the all-star Game and the end of the season a grade of four out of five.

Those selected for the All-Star game were Scott



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL JOHNSON

All-star volleyball player, David Sierleja, attempts to get the ball over the stretched arms of Rachael Schroeder during the Commanding General's Volleyball all-star game Monday.

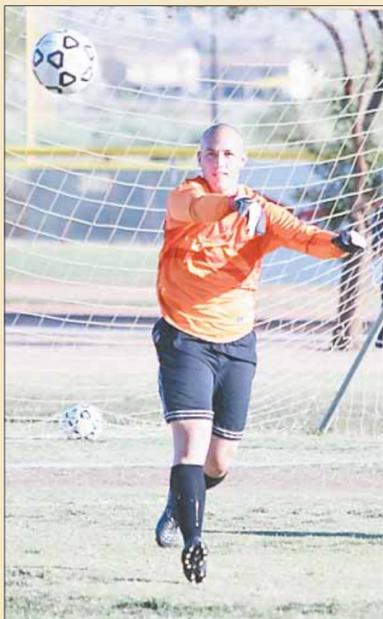
See ALL-STARS, B4

Rival battalion teams tie



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

Players from MCCES [left] and HQBN battle to head the ball on the field during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

The goalkeeper for the MCCES team throws the ball to a fellow player during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game against HQBN Tuesday.



LANCE CPL. SARAH DIETZ

A HQBN player punts the ball just before a MCCES player gets to it during a Commanding General's Intramural Soccer League game Tuesday. Last year's championship rivals tied the game 2-2 and are scheduled to have a rematch later in the season.

Teams play on as playoffs near



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

Ernie Enriquez of MCCES "M" reaches to catch the ball and secures an out against rival, MCCES Red during a Commanding General's Intramural Softball League game at Felix Field Wednesday.



LANCE CPL. D. J. WU

A player with MCCES Red makes the leaping catch in foul territory to record the out during a Commanding General's Intramural Softball League game at Felix Field Wednesday. This catch was one of many good catches made to win the game against MCCES "M."



Combat Center Clubs

Excursions Enlisted Club

Friday: Favorite Band T-shirt Night. Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m. DJ Gjettblaque, 8 to 11 p.m., Ladies Night
Saturday: Country Night with DJ Gjettblaque 8-11 p.m.
Thursday: Social Hour, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Bloodstripes NCO Club

Fridays: Social Hour with food, 5 to 7 p.m.
Monday: Free gourmet food bar 5 to 7 p.m.
Wednesday: 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.
Monday: Steak night and full dinner menu 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Monday-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

Monday-Friday: All-hands lunch, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Monday: Steak night, 5 to 8 p.m.
Thursday: 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 Farmers

The country/rock band performs
When: 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, June 10 and 11
Where: 53688 Pioneertown Road, Pioneertown
For more information, call 365-5956 or visit <http://www.pappyandharriets.com>.

Willie Boy's Weekend Line-Up:

Train Wreck

The popular rock band performs
When: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday, June 10

The John Linn Band Music Video Premier

The popular local country band performs
When: 9 p.m., Saturday, June 11
Where: Willie Boy's Saloon and Dance Hall, 50048 Twentynine Palms Highway, Morongo Valley
For more information, call 363-3343 or visit <http://www.willieboys.com>.

Kelly Corbin and Brent Lewis

Live music performances on sax and drums
When: 7 p.m. Friday, June 10
Where: 29 Palms Inn, 73950 Inn Avenue, Twentynine Palms
For more information call 367-3505 or visit <http://www.29palmsinn.com>.

Lower Desert

Pat Benatar with Neil Giraldo

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

The famous classic rock band perform their hits
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>.

Rodney Carrington

The comedian, actor, singer performs
When: 9 p.m., Friday, June 24
Where: Morongo Casino Resort and Spa
49500 Seminole Drive, Cabazon
For more information call 800-252-4499 or visit <http://www.morongocasinosort.com>.

The Lipizzaner Stallions

A dazzling troupe of horses and riders perform
When: 2 and 6 p.m., Sunday, July 24
Where: Fantasy Springs Resort Casino
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway, Indio
For more information call 800-827-2946 or visit <http://www.fantasyspringsresort.com>.

Sunset Cinema

Friday, June 10

6 p.m. – Soul Surfer, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Water for Elephants, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Arthur, Rated PG-13

Saturday, June 11

11 a.m. – **Free Matinee.** Tangled, Rated PG
6 p.m. – Marines Got Talent Show
9 p.m. – Madea's Big Happy Family, Rated PG-13
Midnight – Scream 4, Rated R

Sunday, June 12

2 p.m. – Rio, Rated G
6 p.m. – Hoodwinked Too, Rated PG
9 p.m. – Fast Five, Rated PG-13

Monday, June 13

7 p.m. – Scream 4, Rated R

Tuesday, June 14

7 p.m. – Arthur, Rated PG-13

Wednesday, June 15

7 p.m. – Hoodwinked Too, Rated PG

Thursday, June 16

7 p.m. – Your Highness, Rated R

Gibson battles depression with talking puppet

NEIL POND

AMERICAN PROFILE

"The Beaver"

Starring Mel Gibson and Jody Foster
Rated PG-13

Once upon a time, and not too long ago, Mel Gibson was one of Hollywood's biggest stars.

But in recent years, an ever-darkening cloud of alcohol abuse, rage-filled ranting and racist spew eclipsed the once-golden glow of his professional accomplishments. Many people wondered if Gibson had gone off the deep end.

So it's (choose one or more) ironic/fitting/weird that his new movie finds Gibson playing a man whose train has definitely left the tracks. In "The Beaver," he's Walter Black, a father, husband and businessman whose life has fallen completely apart due to a prolonged, debili-



COURTESY PHOTO

In "The Beaver," Mel Gibson plays Walter Black, a father, husband and businessman whose life has fallen completely apart due to a prolonged, debilitating depression. Walter's wife, played by the film's director, Jodie Foster, is forced to make marital adjustments when Walter discovers a beaver puppet that becomes his subconscious' surrogate.

tating depression.

Then Walter finds the beaver.

Actually, it's a beaver

puppet, and it becomes Walter's surrogate. It talks for him, in a slurred cockney burr that Walter channels from somewhere in his subconscious.

And despite how it sounds, it's not a comedy.

"The Beaver" takes its subject of mental illness seriously. Perhaps too seriously. The project was originally intended for either Jim Carrey or Steve Carell. It's interesting to think of how very different it might have been with either of those two comedic actors in the leading role instead of Gibson, whose personal baggage weighs Walter down with a pathetic sense of damage, doom and gloom.

The beaver never leaves Walter's left hand. He bathes with it, eats with it and brushes its bucked teeth. The beaver runs meetings at the toy company over which Walter serves as president. And in a scene that has to be a first for any two actors with four Academy Awards between them, Walter makes torrid love to his wife (Jody Foster) accompanied by the ever-present puppet.

After Walter's company hits it big with a wood-working beaver craft kit, inspired by you-know-what, the national media, including Matt Lauer and Jon Stewart, clamor for interviews with Walter's bizarre spokesrodent.

"Everybody loves a train wreck," muses the British-sounding beaver.

Foster, who also directs, piles on the symbolism in a subplot about Walter's teenage son, Porter (Anton Yelchin), whose term-papers-for-hire racket makes him a bit of a "puppet" himself. He has a crush on a pretty high school cheerleader (Jennifer Lawrence) with some bottled-up emotional issues of her own. At one point, Porter rages in frustration until he literally has a "breakthrough" – to the other side of his bedroom wall.

It's only been in theaters a few weeks, but "The Beaver" already appears to be box-office road kill. Perhaps moviegoers want to see something funnier, something splashier, something sunnier.

Or maybe they just aren't interested in seeing Mel Gibson in an onscreen train wreck that reminds them so much of the mess he's made of his real life.



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

Combat Center Leisure

Desert Detours: The Palm Springs Art Museum



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

Most places we've covered so far are best when experienced with family and friends. This week's Detour, the Palm Spring Art Museum, located at 101 Museum Drive in downtown Palm Springs, strikes a different note.

It is the perfect place to enjoy alone in quiet contemplation or in low conversational tones with a friend. Or, maybe even with children if they haven't gotten hold of too much sugar that day.

The best part about art is that it is open to interpretation and can take on a different meaning for everyone. There are no black-and-white-meanings in an art museum. Nobody is telling you how you should feel about something. It is one of the few types of places you can walk away from, taking with you an experience that is totally unique to you.

And it isn't just paintings. For instance, my three favorite pieces were made of abstract materials. "Somewhere Between Sleeping On The Stairs And In The Clouds" by Gavin Turk is essentially a pillow dipped in metal. "The Best That You Can Do" by Nicola Vruwink is made out of croqueted cassette tape. "Apart IX" by Antony Gormley is a man's hunched and lonely form built entirely from small, steel blocks.

I walked in knowing it'd be an afternoon well-spent, but that's because I happen to enjoy art museums. So far,

this has been my favorite Detour to cover.

However, if you're unsure about whether or not this is something you'd enjoy, now is the perfect time to broaden your horizons without worrying about spending money on something you may not like.

Admission is free to active duty service members and their families until Labor Day (Sept. 5 this year). Admission is also free to everyone the second Sunday of every month. Otherwise, entrance costs \$12.50 for adults, \$10.50 for seniors aged 62 and older, \$5 for students and is free for all children aged 12 and younger.

The museum has a little something for every taste, including four floors' worth of art, educational programs for just about every age, film screenings, workshops, symposiums and art lectures. Throughout the summer, there will also be a free film screening every Thursday. Find the schedule at <http://www.psmuseum.org>.

The three main levels are arranged by types of art.

The upper level features modern and contemporary art, the second features Mesoamerican art and the ground floor features Western and Native American art, special exhibitions and the gift shop.

There is a lower level that contains the theater, the Muse Café and entrances to the shaded, outdoor sculpture gardens. The gardens themselves, while also serving as the café's eating areas, are their own exhibits and are



COURTESY PHOTO

Patrons peruse the Palm Springs Art Museum's many exhibits. The facility features modern, contemporary, Mesoamerican, Western and Native American art, as well as several special exhibits that constantly change.

easily the most relaxing areas.

If you want to take memories home with you, the museum's photography rules differ slightly from most museums I've been to. Non-flash photography is allowed in every permanent exhibit. Just ask the super friendly museum staff which of the exhibits is off limits for photography (a very small portion overall) beforehand.

The facility itself is very wide open, clean and full of light. It is just the sort of place to relax out of the summer sun. The restrooms, which are on every level, are just as clean and bright as the

rest of the museum.

The only downside to my experience is the café itself, which isn't really a part of the museum experience anyway.

If you plan on making a day of the trip, I wouldn't plan to stay here for lunch. As it is a museum café, it has museum prices. The going rate for even the simplest of sandwiches is nearly \$10.

Your best bet is to head across the street to the downtown "strip" in Palm Springs

(within walking distance) and eat at one of the many dining establishments along Indian Canyon. Your choices will include everything from low-key burger joints to high-end sushi bars.

Don't worry about cutting your art browsing time short, though. Your ticket stub is good all day, and you can just walk back in after your meal.

The museum earned four palms out of five. Despite the café's slight fail at a reason-

ably-priced menu, it still ranks pretty high in my book, and I will definitely be taking advantage of the free admission at least a few times before the end of the summer.

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.



COURTESY PHOTO

A young artist creates her own masterpiece during one of the museum's many programs for kids.



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL JOHNSON

Volleyball all-star Shantica Dawkins from Team TMO dives for the ball during the Commanding General's Volleyball all-star game Monday.

ALL-STARS, from B1

McCormack, Kalalo Twivati, Sean Seaman, Shantica Dawkins, Elijah Gonzales, Dave Mangum, Shane Brooks, Wendy Hanson, Michael Ehrhart, Jackie Priester, Vincent Bullion, Rachael Schroeder, Phillip Walter, Steven Santana, Allison Cappela, Mila Setafene, Cali Scott, Mark Anderson, Tanya Wheeler and Ryan Anderson. The alternate selections were Sony Powers, Daniel Hollywood, Kirby Winn and Danielle McKeever-Smith.



STAFF SGT. LYNDEL JOHNSON

Shane Brooks tips the ball over the net during the Commanding General's Intramural Volleyball League all-star League game Monday.

Athlete of the Week



COURTESY PHOTO

The Marine Corps Running Team hold their first place trophy in the Plymouth Half Marathon at Plymouth, England. This week's athlete, Sin Carrano, is bottom row right.

Name: Sin Carrano

Hometown: Annandale, Va.

Unit: Public Affairs Office

Recognition: Along with the rest of the Marine Corps Running Team, defeated the British Royal Marines and Navy team in the Plymouth Half Marathon in Plymouth, England May 29.

Favorite aspect of the sport: "I can be alone for up to three hours, and you just have time to think. It is just my time, and no one bothers you."

Advice for aspiring players: "Don't try to run every run at a PFT pace, and stretch all the time. It's the most important thing to do after every run. It'll help you out in the long run."

How did it feel when the team won the half marathon? "All the girls came in before any of the British Royal Marines and Navy crossed the line, so it felt good. It's like going to a home game for the other team and totally crushing them."

What did your team do to prepare for the marathon? "We're coached by Joe Pueblo, and he does an online coaching method. We log in our miles online."

What do you focus on when you are trying to improve your run? "Depends on what I am trying to improve for. For a marathon it's always about mileage, and for a shorter race like a 5K you try to work on interval running"